



European Society for Research on the Education of Adults

Société Européenne pour la Recherche en Formation des Adultes

Europäische Gesellschaft zur Forschung in der Erwachsenenbildung

Sociedad Europea para la Investigación en Educación de Adultos

Associazione Europea di Ricerca in Educazione degli Adulti

Report 2014 -2016

Introduction

Twenty five years after its foundation, the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) is a lively, well-established and known organisation. Its focus is on developing high quality research on the education and learning of adults in a multitude of contexts and activities. ESREA brings together individual researchers and academic institutions from Europe and the larger world. Its horizontal, self-organizing structure, based on a number of research networks, coordinated by convenors, and a light, low budget, diffused organization, has fostered and fuelled the development of a solid collaborative community of experienced and early scholars from different countries, languages, academic cultures, and disciplines.

ESREA has not only grown in members and networks throughout the years, it has also extended its purposes by providing high quality open access resources for the publication and dissemination of research, through the establishment of a journal - The European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA) - and a book series "Research on the Education and Learning of Adults", with Sense Publishers. Another focus for future development is to sustain new and early researchers in adult education and learning.

At the end of its triennial mandate, the outgoing Steering Committee prepared this report to offer a view of what has been and what could be further developed.

The Steering Committee 2014-2016

The 12 members of the SC in the last three years were:

- **Chairperson: Laura Formenti**, Milano Bicocca University, Italy
- **Vice-chair: Adrianna Nizińska**, University of Lower Silesia, AAE, Poland
- **Rosanna Barros**, University of Algarve, Portugal
- **Jean-Michel Baudouin**, University of Geneva, Switzerland
- **Andreas Fejes**, Linköping University, Sweden
- **Karin Filander**, University of Tampere, Finland
- **Aiga von Hippel**, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany
- **Emilio Lucio-Villegas**, University of Seville, Spain
- **Barbara Merrill**, University of Warwick, UK
- **Marcella Milana**, University of Verona, Italy
- **Henning Salling Olesen**, Roskilde University, Denmark
- **Georgios Zarifis**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

The Action Plan 2014-2016

Since the 2011-2013 mandate the SC has prepared an action plan which was published on the website, as a tool to define priorities, policies and actions that need to be taken to achieve ESREA's aims and to offer concrete means for

associates to develop their research within an open, inclusive and active community. The Action Plan was intended to promote a reflexive process in ESREA's meetings and activities, inward and outward, i.e. about the field, its ongoing evolution, and ESREA's role in it. It also addressed the need not only to grow as an association, but to imagine new strategies, to position ourselves in a changing world and to offer good possibilities to our associate members. The chapters of the Action Plan (full text is in the website) addressed:

1. Outreach and recruitment activities
2. The role of research networks and conferences, cooperation with national associations
3. Publishing activities
4. Training of new researchers and research capacity building
5. Participation in policy research at European level

This plan helped the SC to take deliberate actions to improve communication, to connect with other associations, to be strategic in the organization of conferences and to monitor activities related to publication. The SC meeting in Maynooth, September 2016, made an assessment of each point and highlighted some aspects that could be addressed in the future:

1. After 25 years, ESREA is vibrant due to its self-organizing/self-funding structure: the number of associates is stable notwithstanding the crisis; economic issues compel us to reflect on strategies for inclusion. Outreach and recruitment activities will need more attention in the future, especially to guarantee representatives from countries that are less present/less rich; a new website (under construction) will provide better, more accessible information; practical changes in procedures for memberships and communication with associates will also help;
2. Relationships between the SC and research networks, among networks, and with the editorial groups have been slightly enhanced with letters from the SC to the convenors and meeting at the Triennial (see below), but more systematic and effective contacts should guarantee a clearer ESREA's identity and policy, inside and outside, and the feedback from Networks onto the SC; the new website will have a page for each network, hopefully self-managed by convenors; common routines for conferences and communication will also help to create ESREA's more shared style;
3. Publishing activities are flourishing (see below); actions were taken to share ideas on the book series and more collaboration between networks and RELA;
4. The number of bursaries for doctoral students, to sustain their participation to conferences, was augmented; initiatives addressed to doctoral students were taken, such as support to summer and winter schools, prizes at Triennial Conference, etc. This area needs to be developed in the future. A possibility to sustain an "ESREA branded" curriculum for doctoral studies was discussed.
5. Some work has been done. Collaboration has taken place with other networks and UNESCO; supporting discussions on policy in different contexts. It was decided that this work will continue: as researchers we need to build a constructive dialogue with policy makers and stakeholders. A section in the newsletter will be dedicated to what is going on concerning policy.

Conferences 2014-2016

The ESREA Triennial Conference was held the 8-11 September 2016, at Maynooth University, Maynooth, Ireland.

In the triennium, the following fifteen network conferences were organized (see titles and programmes in the website):

2016

Life History and Biography Network, 3-6 March, Canterbury, England.

Interrogating Transformative Processes in Learning, 26-27 June, Hellenic Adult Education Association, Athens, Greece.

Education and Learning of Older Adults (ELOA), 17-19 November, University of Wrocław, Poland.

2015

Access, Learning Careers & Identity, 25-27 November, University of Seville, Spain.

Gender and Adult Learning, 8-10 October, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Education and Learning of Older Adults, 14-16 October, Jönköping University, Sweden.

Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professionalisation (ReNAdET), 11-13 November, Open University of Cyprus.

Life History and Biography, 5-8 March, University of Milano Bicocca, Italy.

2014

Education and Learning of Older Adults, 22-24 October, University of Malta.

Policy studies in Adult Education, 18-20 June, Aalborg, Denmark.

Between Global and Local: Adult learning and Development, 26-28 June, University of Lisbon, Portugal.

Interrogating transformative processes in Learning, 26-27 June, Hellenic Adult Education Association, Athens, Greece.

Migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia, 13-15 May, Wrocław, Poland.

Work life and Learning, 31 March – 2 April, University of Osnabrück, Germany.

Life History and Biography, 6-9 March, University of Magdeburg, Germany.

Forthcoming conferences and seminars:

Life History and Biography Network, 2-5 March 2017, University of Aarhus, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Development, 25-27 May 2017, University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland.

Policy Studies in Adult Education, 8-10 June 2017, University of Verona, Italy.

Publication activities

The European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA)

In the period 2014-2016, RELA has published six issues with a total of 37 papers. Download statistics increased steadily, with a total of 22.274 unique visitors in 2014, 23.391 in 2015 and a foreseen number of 26.000-28.000 in 2016, based on projections.

During the period 2014-2016, RELA has also become included in SCOPUS, one of the major indexing databases. An application to the Swedish Research Council was approved, supporting RELA with funding for the years 2015-2017. A publication plan for 2017-2018 is already in place, with current and forthcoming calls for papers.

The editorial group has met twice each year, discussing the publication plan, calls for papers, quality issues, managerial issues etc. A meeting with network conveners was organized during the triennial conference in Maynooth in order to collaborate more strictly.

Book series

An agreement between ESREA and Sense Publishers was signed to publish a series entitled *Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, whose scope is to provide

an in-depth insight on the diversity of current research on adult education in diverse teaching/learning contexts in both geographical and cultural terms in Europe. Research on adult education has been characterised by different intellectual traditions, theoretical and methodological approaches and which are still alive today in Europe from the north to the south and from the west to the east.

The content of the series reflects the wide range of research activities undertaken by ESREA's members and networks.

This book series will appeal to an international audience as it engages with current and relevant empirical research, a range of theoretical perspectives and knowledge thus stimulating debate, discussion and knowledge dissemination in the field in a democratic and heterogeneous way.

In the period 2014-2016, **Series Editors** (on behalf of ESREA) were:

Emilio Lucio-Villegas (University of Seville, Spain)

Barbara Merrill (University of Warwick, United Kingdom)

Marcella Milana (Aarhus University, Denmark)

Henning Salling Olesen (Roskilde University, Denmark)

Editorial Advisory Board: **Michal Bron Jr**, (Södertörn Univ. College, Sweden), **Anja Heikkinen** (University of Tampere, Finland), **Francoise F. Laot** (University Paris-Descartes, France), **Linda Morrice** (University of Sussex, United Kingdom), **Joanna Oustrouch-Kamińska** (University of Warmia and

Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland), **Angela Pilch-Ortega** (Graz University, Austria), **Andreas Wallo** (Linköping University, Sweden), **Georgios Zarifis** (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

Books published in 2014-2016 are:

Adult Education Policy and the European Union. Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives. Edited by Marcella Milana and John Holford.

Learning across generations in Europe. Contemporary Issues in Older Adult Education. Edited by Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha, Sabina Jelenc and Marvin Formosa.

Private World(s). Gender and Informal Learning of Adults. Edited by Joanna Oustrouch-Kaminska and Cristina C. Vieira.

Working and Learning in Times of Uncertainty. Challenges to Adult, Professional and Vocational Education. Edited by Sandra Bohlinger, Ulrika Haake, Christian Helms Jorgensen, Hanna Toiviainen and Andreas Wallo.

Researching and Transforming Adult Learning and Communities. The Local/Global context. Edited by Rob Evans, Eva Kurantowicz and Emilio Lucio-Villegas.

Every book was published in paperback, hardback, e-book. The last option is an open access e-book to guarantee one of the missions of ESREA: to disseminate research and knowledge.

Books can be downloaded from the ESREA and Sense websites:

<http://www.esrea.org/publications?l=en>

<https://www.sensepublishers.com/catalogs/bookseries/research-on-the-education-and-learning-of-adults/>

At present, books are mainly downloaded from Northern and Central European countries, the USA and Canada.

Series Editors have maintained contact - including a meeting during the Triennial Conference in Maynooth - with Networks Convenors, to encourage them to submit book proposals.

Network Convenors and Steering Committee Meeting, Maynooth 2016

The Steering Committee of ESREA met most of the Network Convenors during the last Triennial Conference in Maynooth.

Participants:

Barbara Merrill (SC), Andrea Galimberti, Adrianna Nizinska (SC) - Access, Learning Careers and Identities

Fergal Finnegan, Annika Turunen, Jenni Pätäri, Henrik Nordvall - Active Democratic Citizenship and Adult Learning

Linden West, Laura Formenti (SC) - Life History and Biography

Eva Kurantowicz, Rob Evans - Between Global and Local

Joanna Oustrouch-Kaminska - Gender and Adult Learning

Linda Morrice, Annette Sprung, Angela Pilch Ortega – Migration, Transnationalisms and Racisms

Marcella Milana (SC), John Holford – Policy Studies in Adult Education

Bernhard Herta Schmidt – Education and Learning of Older Adults

Michel Alhadeff-Jones – Interrogating Transformative Processes

Sandra Bollinger, Hanna Toiviainen – Working Life and Learning

Henning Salling Olesen (SC), Rosanna Barros (SC), Ola Lindberg (?)

The networks on the History of Adult Education and Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professional Development are not represented.

The discussion addressed such themes as:

- visibility of ESREA during network conferences – do conveners take care of it? - and how to enhance knowledge of ESREA, as well as membership and active participation of conference participants to ESREA's activities;
- questions and remarks from the conveners to ESREA and to the SC.

Ideas from the discussion:

Networks are the strength of ESREA; sometimes they look like isles and far from the continent. Some people go to different networks and there are some connections, but more could – and should - be made. Small networks, besides, fear the future; the SC “rescued” networks when their activity was almost disappearing. It is also hard, sometimes, to feel a sense of belonging; visibility and communication about networks, their history and their activities/products need to be fostered, in general and at the Triennial conferences. This Triennial was meant to offer more space and visibility to networks (there was an invitation about that): some networks used this possibility and organized symposia or joint presentations, others did not. More connections-collaborations between network conveners need to be imagined for the future. On-line dialogue, virtual meetings are a possibility. How to increase knowledge, inside and outside, about the networks' work?

Actions that could be done: stronger relationships with RELA and the book series. A formal presentation during triennial conferences; the Secretary could be more active and visible in relation to network conferences. Knowledge and competence that are developed through networks' activities could be better shared across ESREA. A book of key issues from each network? A readable and updated list of network conveners, with detailed information in the new website. Create a virtual space for discussion between conveners.

Relationships with the world: researchers from other continents are interested in ESREA and in working with networks. Work to keep openness, be inclusive, and focus on dialogue. This also mean space for those who are alone in their institutions.

Other suggestions: More resources for PhD students: scholarships, publication possibilities. Investment on social media: Communication is the key function of the SC committee.