

## ***Wisdom and knowledge in researching and learning lives: diversity, difference and commonalities***

**The 2009 Conference of ESREA Life History and Biographical Research Network is being held at Società Umanitaria, in the city of Milano, Italy  
Thursday March 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Second call for papers: send your proposal now!**

**Final date for submission: December 17<sup>th</sup> 2008**

The 2009 Conference will address the themes of knowledge(s) and wisdom in research, adopting an intercultural framework for discussion. This means we will attempt to acknowledge, define, and discuss, in depth, the different “cultures” of biographical research, different paradigmatic influences, methodologies and epistemological assumptions that exist in the Network, and beyond, when researching and understanding lives.

*Biography, memory, narrative and knowledge* are very crucial issues in the field of education, in the study and experiences of lifewide and lifelong learning, and in adult life as a whole. They are studied as objects, processes or focuses, that enable us to understand the way people learn, the choices they make (including how these may be structured), the role and nature of story, and how they make sense of and compose meaning in their lives (as well as our own). They are the main focus of our research. Biographic, auto/biographic and life history approaches are the common ground for the participants in the ESREA Network on Life History and Biographical Research.

However, recent Conferences in the Network have involved debates about the meaning of auto/biographical and life history research, its knowledge base, and around the different ways of researching and interpreting lives, across Europe. This has inspired the idea, for the 2009 Conference, of a wide-ranging theme, to encourage a deep discussion among participants of their methodological, epistemological, political and philosophical premises in researching lives and learning. This includes the nature of the knowledge, which informs our work, and the knowledge –informal, tacit, hermeneutic, emotional, biographical, as well as more formal – that people use in learning and living, in educational contexts and in their lives as a whole. The debate about knowledge has also found expression in how research and the researcher are positioned: as more objective and scientific, perhaps, or as more intersubjective and hermeneutic.

The multicultural, multi-disciplinary identity of ESREA is to be celebrated but it also requires mutual understanding, dialogue and learning from each other. Difference and diversity, alongside commonalities, create opportunities for highly reflexive attitudes towards our research, and richer discussions of epistemological and methodological issues. This can include the recovery of wisdom as a constitutive dimension of learning, living, education and research.

- What is the impact of auto/biographical, biographical and life history research in the field of lifelong learning, education, in the lives of subjects, and in the researcher's relationship to (his/her) knowledge?
- How do the different "Life history and auto/biographical research" approaches and cultures address the theme of knowledge? How many "models of knowledge" are developing within this field, on geographical, linguistic, cultural, as well as disciplinary and interdisciplinary bases?
- What is the place of informal and tacit knowledge in learning lives and in doing research?
- What is the place of wisdom in our scientific community, in learning lives and in research?

The Conference will explore these and similar themes in Milano, Italy, from Thursday the 12th of March (starting late afternoon) to Sunday the 15th of March 2009 (morning).

**Organizers:**

- Laura Formenti, Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy
- Linden West, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK (convenor of the Network).

**Scientific Committee:**

Peter Alheit, Jean-Michel Baudoin, Agnieszka Bron, Duccio Demetrio, Loretta Fabbri, Laura Formenti, Marie Christine Josso, Ewa Kurantowa, Kirsten Larsen, Barbara Merrill, José Gonzalez Monteagudo, Luigina Mortari, Bruno Schettini, Maura Striano, Michael Svendsen, Sergio Tramma, Linden West.

**Partners:**

- ESREA
- Centro Studi Adulità Ettore Gelpi
- Società Umanitaria, Milano
- Rivista *Adulità*
- Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca, Dipartimento di Scienze Umane per la Formazione "Riccardo Massa"
- Dipartimento di Scienze Umane e dell'Educazione, Università degli Studi di Siena

**Local Organizing Committee:**

Dante Bellamio, Stefania Freddo (Centro Studi Adulità Ettore Gelpi)  
 Micaela Castiglioni, Ivano Gamelli, Emanuela Mancino (Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca)  
 Jennifer Coe, Alessia Vitale (Dottorato in Scienze Umane, Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca)

**Place:** Società Umanitaria, via San Barnaba, 28, Milano

The *Società Umanitaria* was founded in 1893 to provide better opportunities for migrants to develop new skills, knowledge and confidence; today the Società continue to create opportunities for adult learning. The building, very old (XV century) offers a delightful ambiance for learning and exchange of ideas. See: [www.umanitaria.it](http://www.umanitaria.it)

**Languages:** English (obligatory for the abstract), French, Italian.

**For French and Italian speaking colleagues:** it is advised to bring an English version or summary of the paper to facility communication. During the conference, no

professional translation is foreseen, but many colleagues are willing to help and facilitate dialogue, "ESREA way".

**Abstracts and proposals for posters and workshops are requested, to be submitted by**

**17th December 2008:**

**on one side of A4 only, with names, affiliations and contact details on a separate sheet.**

**Please mail to : [j.coe@campus.unimib.it](mailto:j.coe@campus.unimib.it)**

**Final deadline for papers 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

(for those who require their papers to be refereed for funding purposes, the deadline is at the end of January 2009).

**Fees for Conference (comprising coffee-pause and buffet lunch):**

Non members	€. 300
ESREA members	€. 250
Doctoral students	€. 150
One day fee	€. 130

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Please note that ESREA will be offering 2 bursaries (250 € each) for doctorate students. Information will be put on the website soon.

Information on accommodation will be provided shortly.