

# ESREA

European Society for Research on the Education of Adults

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4<sup>th</sup> International Seminar of the ESREA Network ‘Between Local and Global: Adult Learning and Development’ (Seville, May 20-22, 2010)

## **Transforming/Researching Communities**

This 4<sup>th</sup> Seminar is organised by the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) and the University of Seville (Spain). In previous Seminars the topics have been focused on *Human Development and Adult Learning* in Faro (2006) and on *Local and Global*, discussing identities as a social creation related with learning processes, in Wroclaw in 2008. In Magdeburg (2009), the Seminar focused on landscapes and the biographical aspects not only with the regard to people, but emphasising those that carved territories.

This 4<sup>th</sup> Seminar will try to carry on the discussions that emerged from the previous three: about margins and mainstreams, places and spaces, participation, mediation, diverse methodological approaches, etc.

The Seminar will focus on **Transforming /Researching Communities**. In a traditional view the first step to carry out Local Development processes is to research on the community and people’s desires and needs and then acting over the community, not necessarily using participative methodologies.

But, we can think and act in a different direction. First of all, people’s needs, wishes and desires are not *blowing in the wind*. They are social constructions that stem from the history of the community as well as from collective learning processes, etc. If needs are social constructions we can (re)define them implementing a participatory method opposite to the model of social diagnosis.

On the other hand, we cannot separate transformation and research into two different moments from each other. Using a simile from quantum physics, we can consider these two faces – transformation and research – as a particle and/or wave. Sometimes it can be a particle, sometimes it can be a wave. Sometimes we are researching communities and, at the same time, we are transforming them. Research helps us to act together with people living in a particular community and practices of transforming communities could be a generator of learning processes that help local people to acquire a better knowledge of the community.

We would like to encourage participants to reflect in this direction. The terms of the debate are very ample and include methodologies, the role of development agents,

tensions between local and global, processes of social learning, etc. This is the challenge that we suggest to you and that we think is a new step in the rich process of creating and recreating this network.

Abstracts and papers that follow this main theme will be welcomed. The following sub-themes can be debated:

1. Policy and politics to transform communities.
2. Researching/transforming exclusion for inclusion through local development.
3. Research methodologies in local development.
4. Social Movements and their contribution to researching/transforming communities.

Important dates:

- Deadline for abstracts: December 20, 2009
- Notification of acceptance: January 20, 2010
- Deadline for delivering full papers (if you wish to be included in Conference Proceedings) April 1, 2010

More information – including fees, website and email address and accommodation – will be available in October 2009.