

# European Society for Research on the Education of Adults

ESREA



## ESREA Migration, Racism and Xenophobia

### Research Network Conference

#### Diversity and Social Cohesion – are these incompatible objectives?

What is the role of adult education and adult educators in understanding these tensions and contributing to the development of diverse societies?

University of Sheffield, UK

December 2-3 2009

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## Conference Theme

- What is the nature of the different migrations, racisms and belongings in the different parts of Europe?
- Where and in what ways do people learn to live in and with difference?
- How can we understand the role of adult education in processes of belonging and community formation?
- Are adult educators reinventing democratic citizenship in the context of multicultural societies or not?

Is Europe's, and the world's, current economic crisis a turning point in how we conceive and organise multicultural society? The economic crisis followed quickly on the political shock wave produced by Ireland's rejection of the Lisbon Treaty. Lisbon was a response to the expansion of the EU, an attempt to re-order political arrangements and to realise various economic and military aspirations within Europe. Rhetorically it was hailed as the maturing of the EU and of welcoming in the 'new' Europeans. It saw the dominance of a particular kind of cosmopolitanism that privileged supra-national settlements and denounced 'nationalism' of all kinds. But this was based on a particular economic order which is now falling down around us. The prosperity of the 'old' Europe created a set of conditions for a positive approach to expanding the EU's borders. 'Old' Europe needed 'new' Europe's cheap labour and markets. EU expansion was also driven by a political and military desire to isolate a resurgent Russia. Now that the economic base for expansion has collapsed what will be the position of the 'new' Europeans?

We are already witnessing a re-working of multicultural space. Before the economic crash there had already been a number of labour struggles organised around tensions between domestic and 'new' labour migrants. But in the wake of increasing unemployment are we likely to see a rise in inter-group conflict? In the current economic situation will we see the accession states fully integrated into the EU or will 'old' Europe set up new internal divisions? We are witnessing further regulation of refugees and asylum seekers across Europe and a re-working of relations with Europe's Muslim communities within the context of an American led 'War on Terror'. In the political domain we are seeing a more confident extreme right contesting the authority of a discredited establishment.

The period of Europe's positive aspiration for a common European space saw the emergence of discourses of lifelong learning and the learning society and their translation into a range of policy initiatives and new institutional arrangements. In its *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000) the European Commission cited promotion of active citizenship and the need to 'learn to live positively with cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity' as one of the two joint aims of lifelong learning across Europe. This engaged adult education with social and political discourses which constructed and sustained otherness and difference, and with contested concepts such as: citizenship, multiculturalism, integration, inclusion and exclusion. It highlighted the need for adult educators to explore new forms of citizenship, built on recognition of a plurality of perspectives, and which recognized issues of marginalisation, inequality and power. Where are we now?

If adult education, and adult educators were involved in a project of inclusion and belonging in a European space what is our role now? The European project always had its internal tensions; it always struggled with an abstract ideal of an inclusive European citizen and the Other (migrant). It continues to have an unresolved relation with its minority ethnic and linguistic communities. In other words the European project has always contained a tension between diversity and cohesion. Responses

to these tensions have manifested themselves formally through language acquisition programmes, inter-cultural learning, skills development, and citizenship education. But they have also manifested themselves informally through the construction of autonomous cultural spaces, minority language maintenance, labour struggles, and political action (either based on ethno-political allegiance or within existing indigenous political formations). Adult educators, either working for the state or independently, have been involved in all of this work.

The current crisis offers us a chance to reflect critically on our involvement in struggles over a European multicultural space. It also offers us an opportunity to actively construct a new European agenda for adult education in relation to migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia.

### Call for Papers

Proposals are invited for papers related to the conference questions. Abstracts should be one side of A4 maximum (450 words in 12 point) and should include a title but not the author/s name/s or institution/s. These should be stated in the email accompanying the abstract together with name, institutional affiliation, phone and postal details. Authors should indicate which of the conference questions they are addressing. Abstracts should be submitted in the first instance to Simon Warren by e-mail on [s.a.warren@shef.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.warren@shef.ac.uk).

### Important Dates

- All abstracts for papers to be submitted by **31 August 2009**.
- Response of acceptance of paper proposals by **21 September 2009**
- Final papers (of no more than 3000 words) should be submitted by **1 November 2009**.

### Conference Fee

£ 80/40 ESREA Member (Individual/PhD Student)

£ 130/80 Non ESREA Member\* (Individual/PhD Student\*\*)

\*We would encourage you to become an ESREA member. Membership provides you with reduced registration fees for ESREA networks and conferences. To join ESREA then go to: [www.esrea.org/pub/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=10256&a=70795](http://www.esrea.org/pub/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=10256&a=70795)

\*\*Student bursaries may be available from ESREA. See the ESREA website for more information.

Fees will include refreshments and lunches on Wednesday 2 and Thursday 3 December. The Conference dinner (optional) on Wednesday evening will be additional.

### Organising Committee

Rozalia Ligus, Instytut Pedagogiki (Department of Education), Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa (University of Lower Silesia), Poland

Linda Morrice, Centre for Continuing Education, University of Sussex, UK

Joke Vandenabeele, Centrum voor Sociaal-Culturele en Arbeidspedagogiek (Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Participation), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

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