

**(His)story of the European Society of Research  
on the Education of Adults (ESREA): A narrative  
history of intellectual evolution and  
transformation in the field of adult education in  
Europe**

**Research report**

Dr Katherine Nicoll, University of Stirling, UK  
Professor Gert Biesta, University of  
Luxembourg, Luxembourg  
Natalie Morgan-Klein, University of Stirling,  
UK

June 2014

## **Acknowledgements**

We thank the Chair of the ESREA Steering Committee for his continuing support through the duration of this research. We thank also those who were interviewed for the project for their contribution.

Barry Hake, the first and founding Secretary of the European Society of Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA), identified documents available from the early days and steered us to publications where the early history of ESREA and its activities and purposes were documented. His contribution was essential for the success of this project and we thank him for his sustained engagement.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH AND THE REPORT.....	5
1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE .....	5
1.2 WIDER CONTEXT .....	5
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	6
1.4 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	6
1.5 OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT .....	8
2. A HISTORY OF THE ORGANISATION: STRUCTURES, EVENTS, DEVELOPMENTS .....	9
2.1 ESREA’S FOUNDING PHASE: 1991-1998 .....	9
2.1.1 The founding of ESREA (1991-2).....	9
2.1.2 Intellectual purpose (1992) .....	9
2.1.3 Organizational structure.....	9
2.1.4 Election of members to the Steering Committee (1992).....	10
2.1.5 The institution of early thematic research networks .....	10
2.1.6 An ESREA journal (1992) .....	11
2.1.7 A ‘State of the art study’ and regional network (1992) .....	11
2.1.9 An emerging technological profile (1996) .....	12
2.1.10 Support for PhD students .....	13
2.1.11 Liaison with SCUTREA (1997).....	13
2.1.12 Early research network activities.....	13
2.1.13 Early research publications (1991-7) .....	14
2.1.14 A triennial conference (1995) .....	16
2.1.15 Cooperation with national and European organisations ( - 1998) .....	16
2.1.16 Early membership.....	17
2.1.17 Financial support .....	17
2.2 A SECOND EVOLUTIONARY PHASE: 1998-2007.....	17
2.2.1 Election of a new Chair and members (1997).....	18
2.2.3 Management issues of database and communication (1988).....	18
2.2.4 The end of regional status (1998).....	19
2.2.5 Membership .....	19
2.2.6 Collaborative projects (-1998) .....	21
2.2.7 Research networks (1998) .....	21
2.2.8 Triennial conferences (1997-2007) .....	23
2.2.9 Publications (1998-2007).....	23
2.2.10 Co-operation with European organisations.....	24
2.2.11 Funding, membership and European projects .....	25
2.2.12 Statutes (2002) .....	26
2.2.13 A system to fund and support PhD students.....	27
2.2.13 Election of a vice- Chair (2005) .....	27
2.2.14 Planning a new location for the Secretariat (2007) .....	27
2.2.15 ESREA’S future direction .....	28
2.3 A THIRD EVOLUTIONARY PHASE: 2007 – 2012 .....	28
2.3.1 A new Secretariat and Secretary (2007) .....	29
2.3.2 New activities and aspirations (2007-2008) .....	29
2.3.3 Administrative change .....	29
2.3.4 ESREA’S publishing and dissemination strategy .....	29
2.3.4 Network activity (2008-2012).....	30

2.5.5 Triennial conferences (2007-2012)	31
2.5.6 Publications (2007-2013)	31
2.3.8 Publishing and membership	32
2.3.9 International and European relations	32
2.3.10 Support for the mobility of members	32
2.3.11 A question or the role of research	33
2.3.11 A research journal	33
2.3.12 Election of a vice-Chair 2001-2013	33
<b>3. THE TRIENNIAL CONFERENCES: AN EVOLUTION OF INTELLECTUAL AGENDA 1995-2013</b>	<b>34</b>
3.1 Adult learning and social participation 1995	34
3.2 Learning to live in the learning society 1998	34
3.3 Wider benefits of learning: understanding and monitoring consequences of adult learning 2001	35
3.4 Old and new worlds of adult learning 2004	35
3.5 Adult learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity 2007	36
3.6 Adult learning in Europe - understanding diverse meanings and contexts 2010	36
3.7 Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times 2013	36
3.8 SUMMARY REFLECTION	37
<b>4. AN EVOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THEMATIC RESEARCH NETWORKS 1991-2013</b>	<b>42</b>
4.1 Cross-cultural influences in the history of European adult education	43
4.2 Active democratic citizenship and Adult learning	45
4.3 Social movements and the history of the education of adults	46
4.4 Residential adult education and popular movements	46
4.5 Life-history and biographical research	46
4.6 Adult education and the labour market	48
4.7 Migration, Ethnicity, Racism and Xenophobia	50
4.8 Continuing Professional Education	51
4.9 Access, equity, participation and organizational change	51
4.10 gender issues and adult education	52
4.11 Older learners	53
4.12 Between global and local: adult learning and development	54
4.13 Policy Studies in Adult Education	54
4.13 SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION	55
<b>5. INTERVIEWS</b>	<b>60</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION	60
5.2. THEMATIC ANALYSIS	61
5.2.1 Generations and generational shifts	61
5.2.2 The research-policy-practice triangle	63
5.2.3 The European dimension, the question of language, and centre of gravity	67
5.2.4 Shifting agenda's? Intellectual shifts? Methodological shifts?	68
5.3 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION	70
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>7. REFERENCES</b>	<b>76</b>
7.1 ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY	84

## **1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH AND THE REPORT**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

The (His)story of the European Society of Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) project aims to contribute to understandings of the evolution of the field in Europe through the 'case' of the ESREA. ESREA is a European organisation for promoting and disseminating empirical and theoretical research into adult education and learning through its research networks, conferences and publications. It has existed as an organisation over the last 20 years. It has been an important focus for this work in the European context, contributing to and shaping research and scholarly activity in the field, and acting as forum and conduit for dissemination of understandings of the diverse and disparate contexts from which its members derive.

The ambition of the research carried out has not simply been to produce a systematic account of the activities and events of ESREA, but to use this, together with some original interview data from key figures in ESREA's history, to construct a narrative history of its intellectual evolution and transformation. As a case study it will contribute useful and much needed history, helping the field identify and understand its current configuration. This knowledge is intended to support the field in developing scenarios for the future.

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in the academic study of adult education in Europe – its research and scholarship – and its future. This interest has come from the educational research community as well as policy makers and politicians. Much discussion has focussed on the current configuration of the field and has tended to take the present as a reference point for developing scenarios for the future. What has been lacking in much of this is more detailed understanding of the evolution and transformations of the field that takes into account its complex and diverse socio-political, institutional and intellectual history. This project hopes to contribute in developing such understanding through an empirical and narrative history of the case of ESREA, its evolution and transformation, as part of and in contribution to the field.

### **1.2 WIDER CONTEXT**

The field of adult education studies encompasses empirical and theoretical research and scholarship from a range of perspectives. It faces significant new challenges arising from the internationalisation and intra-institutionalisation of policy and practices and from within the research community itself, perhaps in particular in the European context. From European policy makers there has been a sharp turn towards practice and demand for knowledge about 'what works' (Biesta 2007), an increasing, but largely unquestioned emphasis on the need for interdisciplinarity, and the shift in focus from formal and national adult education provision towards life-long and life-wide learning in a European 'space'. There are ongoing concerns about capacity-building in relation to adult education and regarding the methods, methodologies and theories of research. These all raise important questions about the existing configuration of the field and its intellectual resources.

Change is happening in the field. Adult educators in formal and non-formal sectors in Europe are coping with change in contexts, contents and teaching methods, and the emergence of ICTs (Buiskool et al. 2009). Where some follow the earlier positions of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2003) the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA, 2006) and the European Commissions' network to provide information on and analysis of European Education systems and

policies (Eurydice, 2007), to argue that change requires an increase in the quality of provision and new skills and competencies (Buiskool et al., 2009), there are those who suggest a struggle over 'qualities' in the field (Jutte et al. 2011). Here there has been interest to identify events in this struggle, so as to better understand what is at stake in proposed changes.

Contributions to discussion, as noted above, tend to take the current configuration of the field as a reference point in developing scenarios for the future. What is generally absent is an informed understanding of the evolution and transformations of the field that takes into account its intellectual history. On the one hand, from the side of policy in Europe, there has been argued a need for agenda setting and coordination of the research effort (OECD 1997, Tavistock Institute 2002). On the other, from the side of research and scholarship, we can see an emerging discussion about the current state and future of the field (Borg & Mayo 2008, Sloep et al. 2008, von Hippel & Tippelt 2010). Here the dominance of the English language is seen to help create 'invisible colleges' (Larsson 2010) across the field. The field of research is positioned as undergoing paradigm wars (Field 2004) similar to those of the social sciences in the 1980s, where there is the possibility of uncritical self-identification by researchers within paradigms that are incommensurable (Malewski 2010).

It is therefore important for those in the field, and ESREA as part of this, to be able to stand back far enough to identify ESREA's key events and activities and their wider contexts and relationships, but also to pursue better temporal understandings of the constitution of intellectual resources through ESREA's events and activities as they have emerged in a complex interplay of relations within the field and with changes occurring more widely. Without better understanding of the dynamic, political, powerful and historical interplay it is not clear how the current or future intellectual directions for the field might be informed.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Our research has been informed by the following questions to which we return in the final section of this report.

1. What have been ESREA's events and activities, and their wider contexts and relationships (meetings, conferences, groups, issues, aspirations, interruptions, 'outputs' (publications), people, networks, rules and structures, impact etc.), and what do they reveal about the evolution and transformation of ESREA's intellectual and organisational agenda?
2. What have been ESREA's key intellectual resources, their continuities, changes and transformations and wider contexts and relationships?
3. What is the intellectual history of ESREA as a 'case' in the intellectual evolution of the field and in terms of a wider socio-political, institutional and intellectual history?

### **1.4 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Our research has been based on a number of sources:

- documents about ESREA
- documents from ESREA: archives and websites
- information from key informants
- information about conferences and network
- interviews with 4 ESREA members<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> We initially interviewed 5 ESREA members but one interviewee decided to withhold the data.

As this has been a small project, our mappings, descriptions and interpretations have been limited by the time available, but also by the fact that most of the written and archival sources that we were able to trace were incomplete. There have been many times when documents have contradicted each other in detail, and where no doubt detail has been missing. It is important to keep this in mind when reading our report and engaging with our observations and interpretations.

What follows in the sections 2, 3 and 4 of this document is the result of our analysis of central ESREA administrative documentation that contained information about ESREA's events and activities, wider contexts and relationships (meetings, conferences, groups, issues, aspirations, interruptions, 'outputs', people, networks, rules and structures, impact etc.). Few documentary records existed for early phases, so the ensuing text is constructed from records available. Section 5 is based on the interviews we conducted.

Key to analysis of the central records of ESREA has been a documentation of ESREA's founding objectives in Article 6 of its constitution in 2002, a journal article on ESREA from *Report* (2002), some archived records from the early ESREA website (ESREA 1997-2001) and the later archive of this site between 2002 to 2007 (ESREA 2002-2007)<sup>2</sup>. Central from this site has been an ESREA Secretariat Annual Report (ESREA Secretary 1999). Central also has been a contribution from Hake of the early the work of ESREA published in the Mauch Report (Hake 1999a) on World Trends in Adult Education Research, for the UNESCO Institute for Education, and a further description by Hake (1999b) on the early activities of ESREA in a publication from the Centre and International Society for Comparative Adult Education edited by Reischmann, Bron and Jelenc (1999). Helpful also for the later periods have been the recorded minutes of Steering Committee meetings available from 2005 from the current ESREA website. Records of the early work of ESREA have thus been limited to a few documents written later and for particular purposes. However, they are key statements of the past activities of ESREA and its aspirations and intentions.

Our method for the identification and description of ESREA's events and activities, wider contexts and relationships has thus been to identify what ESREA has regarded as key in promotion of its work (as determined in its objectives and statements of these) and follow the unfolding of activities and events in relation to this, together with interruptions, changes of direction and evolutions as this occurred. Thus, we have followed the path of ESREA's research networks, triennial conferences, publications, support for PhD students etc. as these have been recorded. We have identified people involved as far as we have been able. In the latter part of this analysis we focus specifically on the triennial conferences and research networks in what these can say about ESREA's intellectual evolution and transformations and intellectual resources. We have focussed our discussion of these activities and events in these terms and in what these have revealed about the evolution and transformation of ESREA's intellectual and organizational agenda over its history.

What we put forward in what follows, therefore, is a basic story of the organization, how it developed and what it did between its founding in 1991 and 2013. This work has been guided by the first and second research questions: 'What do these events and activities, contexts and relationships reveal about the evolution and transformation of ESREA's intellectual and organizational agenda?' and 'What have been ESREA's key intellectual

---

<sup>2</sup> For ease of citation in this report, archived websites are cited as 'ESREA 1997' for the archived records 1997-2001 and 'ESREA 2004' for the archived records 2002-2007. Where documents pertain to a specific year other than 1997 or 2004 the name of year is identified within the citation. Thus, the ESREA text 'ESREA Research into the labour market' on the 2001 archived record of the website will be cited as '(ESREA 2001, in ESREA 2004)' and footnoted to indicate the title of the page. The 'ESREA 2004' reference in the reference list gives URL access to the site.

resources, their continuities, changes and transformations and wider contexts and relationships?’

In addition to document analysis we have conducted interviews with 5 ESREA members who, in our view, have played an important role in the development of the organisation. Our discussion of the data from 4 of these interviews is presented in section 5. Our main ambition here has been to add narrative detail to the publicly available information about ESREA’s activities documented in this report. While there is an extensive body of literature on narrative, narrative history and narrative learning (Polkinghorne 1988; 1995; Franklin 2011; Goodson et al., 2010) that highlights the conceptual, theoretical and methodological complexities of narrative and the use of narrative data in historical research, we have treated the interview data firstly as an additional source of information about the development and evolution of ESREA and secondly as providing us with a window on the way in which this has been experienced by a number of individuals who have played and/or are continuing to play a central role in ESREA. Our selection of interviewees has been opportunistic or emergent (see, e.g., Charles & Becker 1999) in that, within the time and resources that were available to us, we selected a small number of individuals who, given our emerging understanding of ESREA and its history, would be in a good position to add additional detail about the development and evolution of ESREA and who would also be able to share some of their reflections on this process. We have, therefore, not sought to find any ‘meaning behind the meaning’ (Tedder & Biesta 2009), but have treated the interview data as a record of information and experience.

Information and insights from analysis of documents and existing accounts and interviews begin to shape an answer to the third research question: ‘What is the intellectual history of ESREA as a ‘case’ in the intellectual evolution of the field and in terms of a wider socio-political, institutional and intellectual history?’ This is a question relating to the emergence and development of ESREA’s intellectual and organizational agenda and resources and how this can be viewed from a wider perspective.

## **1.5 OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT**

The report consists of six main sections. After this introduction, we provide in Section 2 an overview of the history of ESREA as an organisation. We have characterized this history in three phases narrating shifts in administrative activity and aspiration. These coincide with three moments where the Steering Committee changed and there was a change in the Chair or Secretary of that committee. Section 3 of the report discusses ESREA’s triennial conferences, looking particularly at the evolution of main conference themes in relation to wider developments in the field of adult education policy and practice. Section 4 discusses ESREA’s networks, partly providing a description of the networks and their foci, and partly discussing and reflecting upon what the history of the networks reveals about the development of ESREA in the field in which it operates. In section 5 we present a thematic analysis of our interview data, grouped around 5 themes. In the final section we return to the research questions and provide a synthesis of findings.

## 2. A HISTORY OF THE ORGANISATION: STRUCTURES, EVENTS, DEVELOPMENTS

This second section is divided into three main parts, identifying documentary evidence of structures, events, activities and developments related to what have been characterized as three phases of evolution, derived from the documents available. This begins to answer the question: What do events and activities, contexts and relationships reveal about the evolution and transformation of ESREA's intellectual and organizational agenda?

### 2.1 ESREA'S FOUNDING PHASE: 1991-1998

A summary record of ESREA's structures, events and activities derived from documents available and laid out below in historical sequence for the first phase: the founding of ESREA (1991-2); intellectual purpose (1992); organizational structure; election of members to the Steering Committee (1992); the institution of early thematic research networks; an ESREA journal (1992); identification of a 'state of the art study' in European Countries and regional network for countries in transition (1992); an emerging technological profile (1996); support for PhD students; liaison with SCUTREA (1997); ESREA's early research network activities; early research publications (1991-7); a triennial conference (1995); cooperation with national and European Organizations (-1998); early membership, and; financial support. This sub-section ends with a summary and some reflections on this data, as characterizing a first phase.

#### 2.1.1 The founding of ESREA (1991-2)

The European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) was founded in December 1991. The organisation had its roots in discussions within the adult education research community in Europe at various conferences in 1989-91.<sup>3</sup> Early in 1991, Barry Hake of Leiden University drafted a proposal for the creation of ESREA and circulated it to professors of adult education around Europe, receiving a positive response from more than 80 university departments. He circulated these responses at the annual meeting of the European Bureau of Adult Education in September of that year, which led in December to the first meeting of the ESREA provisional steering committee at Leiden University, the Netherlands. The meeting was convened by Barry Hake and chaired by Kjell Rubenson (Linköping University). Other participants were identified as: Peter Alheit (University of Bremen); Agnieska Bron (University of Upssala); Pierre Dominicé (University of Geneva); Bastiaan van Gent (Leiden University); Walter Leirman (University of Leuven); Dick Taylor (University of Leeds); Jukka Tuomisto (University of Tampere); and Alexandra Withnall (University of Warwick).

#### 2.1.2 Intellectual purpose (1992)

ESREA's early purpose was stated in the German *Report*, a news article regarding ESREA (Anon 1992: 112, our translation), '... that as well as bringing together different research initiatives ESREA's purpose was to establish an interdisciplinary forum for the development of research approaches as they apply to the education of adults'. This news article, aimed to raise awareness of ESREA and attract individual and institutional members.

#### 2.1.3 Organizational structure

At the first meeting of the ESREA provisional steering committee at Leiden University it was decided that Leiden University would have the role of ESREA Secretariat with Barry

---

<sup>3</sup> These conferences were: meetings of the International Conference on History of Adult Education, European Bureau Adult Education (EBAE), UNESCO Institute for Education, Erasmus-ICP Studies in European Adult Education.

Hake as Secretary, and a draft constitution was agreed. Participants agreed that ESREA would be a democratically governed society, with individual and institutional membership, and triennial election of members of the steering committee. The work of ESREA would be done through:

- thematic research networks with annual research seminars;
- a triennial European research conference;
- a series of publications;
- support for PhD students;
- and a quarterly newsletter.

Brochures for the organisation were to be written in English and French. The intention was to have a steering committee that was as representative as possible of the different regions of Europe (Anon, in Faulstick-Wieland et al. 1992).

#### **2.1.4 Election of members to the Steering Committee (1992)**

The year 1992 saw the first election of members to the ESREA Steering Committee. Those who had joined the provisional steering committee were formally elected for a three-year term, with the exception of Walter Leirman. To improve the regional representativeness of the ESREA Steering Committee it was decided to invite a limited number of additional members regarded as experts in their region. The existing members of the steering committee were therefore joined by two additional members: Licinio Lima (Portugal) and Maurizio Lichtner (Italy). Kjell Rubenson continued as Chair.

#### **2.1.5 The institution of early thematic research networks**

The creation of specialist European research networks was a key priority for ESREA in these early days. The purpose of the networks was later reported as decided at the first meeting in 1991:

At the very first meeting of the provisional steering committee in December 1991, it was decided that ESREA would concentrate its efforts on the creation of European research networks. The purpose of these research networks is to establish active co-operation between researchers working in specific areas of interest. ESREA research networks organize an annual seminar and are intended to publish a selection of the seminar papers. Each network is managed by a convenor responsible for the preparation of a mission statement and the activities of the network. The secretariat provides support to the network convenors where appropriate.

(ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

Clearly aligned with ESREA's purpose to establish an interdisciplinary forum for the development of research approaches, these networks were intended to: 'a) link researchers with common interests in specific areas of research; b) hold regular European research seminars, c) encourage joint publication of research, and d) contribute to the training of young researchers' (Hake, 1999: 290).

The initial networks formed the research emphasis for this interdisciplinary forum as it emerged. What these themes were was significant in shaping the possibilities. Between 1991 and 1992, five or six research networks for the development of research approaches appear to have been initiated. The first ESREA network established in 1991 was called 'Cross-cultural influences in the history of European adult education'. This network was set up by Martha Friedenthal-Haase (Tübingen/Leipzig), Stuart Marriot (Leeds) and Barry Hake in July 1991 just prior to the founding of ESREA and was adopted by ESREA at the outset.

During 1992, four further ESREA research networks were listed in the news item about the establishment of ESREA in the German educational journal *Report*:

- ‘Life history and biographical research in adult education’, chaired by Peter Alheit (Bremen); Agnieszka Bron (Linköping); and Pierre Dominicé (Geneva)
- ‘Adult education and the labour market’, chaired by Werner Lenz (Graz) and Licino Lima (Braga).
- ‘Social movements and the history of the education of adults’, chaired by John Field (Warwick); Barry Hake (Leiden); and Dick Taylor (Leeds)
- ‘Residential adult education and popular movements’, chaired by Tom Schuller (Edinburgh) and Jukka Toumisto (Tampere)

(Anon, in Faulstick-Wieland et al. 1992): 112)

There is mention in ESREA documentation of the website 2002-2007 (ESREA 2004) that a network on ‘Migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia’ met during the early 1900s, and although activity fell away for a period it was later reformed. There appears also to have been a network on ‘Active democratic citizenship’ formed in the early 1990s (ESREA 2013a).

#### 2.1.6 An ESREA journal (1992)

The *Report 30* text that identified the early purpose of ESREA (Anon, in Faulstick-Wieland et al. 1992) noted that at the second meeting of the Steering Committee in April 1992 participants decided to establish an ESREA journal. The journal’s founding editorial board are listed as: Sally Westwood (Leicester) (manager); Peter Alheit (Bremen); Agnieszka Bron (Linköping); John Field (Warwick); Werner Lenz (Graz); and Licino Lima (Braga). It seems to have been intended that the journal would appear 6-monthly, as a joint publication by ESREA and the (UK) National Institute for Adult Education, and start in 1993. However, rather than set up its own journal at that time ESREA became a sponsor of the journal *Studies in Continuing Education*, with ESREA members on its editorial board.

#### 2.1.7 A ‘State of the art study’ and regional network (1992)

As part of its work during this period ESREA members initiated collaborative projects through which, in 1992, a ‘State of the art’ study of research on the education of adults in European countries was launched (Hake 1999; Jelenc 1999). During 1992-4 country authors developed reports on national developments and trends in adult education research (Hake 1999a).

A regional network for countries in transition (post-Soviet countries) coordinated by the Slovene Adult Education Centre in Ljubljana appears as a strong theme of intellectual work in this very early phase of ESREA’s evolution. Representatives of all post-Soviet countries involved in ESREA’s the ‘State of the art’ study attended meetings of a regional network and were key to the production of reports by Jelenc (1994; 1996) called ‘Adult education research in the countries in transition: Adult education research trends in the former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic region’. Barry Hake, Michal Bron (Sweden), Staffan Jansen (Sweden) and Jindra Kulich (Canada) were involved in support of this network. In 1993 an ESREA European conference ‘Rethinking adult education for development’, was held in Ljubljana (Slovene Adult Education Centre). Following this conference, Zoran Jelenc of the Slovene Adult Education Centre co-ordinated the Central and Eastern Europe country studies for the ‘State of the art’ study of research on the education of adults in European countries.

Country reports were presented as two integrative reports (Western European and Central and Eastern Europe) by ESERA at a UNESCO expert seminar in 1994. They were later published by UNESCO Institute of Education in 1999:

This report is a part of an international research project organized by the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg. The project is entitled *Adult Education Research: A World Trend Analysis*. Almost simultaneously with the launching of this UNESCO project, the newly established European Society for Research on the

Education of Adults (ESREA) embarked upon a similar study entitled *State of the Art Study of Research on the Education of Adults in the European Countries*. In close consultation, UIE and ESREA agreed to co-operate and it was decided that the ESREA study would comprise the European input to the UIE world-wide study. Furthermore, it was decided that the ESREA study would produce two integral reports which would deal with the Western European countries and the Central and Eastern European countries respectively. Dr Barry J. Hake of the ESREA Secretariat coordinated the ESREA project and prepared the ESREA report for the Western European countries. Dr Zoran Jelenc, Slovene Adult Education Centre, Ljubljana, was invited to prepare the ESREA report for the Central and Eastern European countries.

(Hake 1999a: 125, original emphasis)

The Secretariat Annual Report for 1998 indicates that:

The Slovene Adult Education Centre has played a continuing active role within ESREA in providing support for colleagues in the Baltic, Central and Eastern European countries. Meetings of ESREA members and others from these countries have attended meetings in Ljubljana (1995 and 1998), Kuanus (1997) and Tallinn (1996 and 1998). The emphasis here has been upon meetings of civil servants, national associations, researchers and students, and teachers of adults which have addressed the problems of adult learning in countries in social transition.

(ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

The 'State of the art' study investigated the:

- 1) organization and funding of university-based research;
- 2) disciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of research;
- 3) contribution of fundamental and applied research to the knowledge base;
- 4) training and continuing professional development for researchers;
- 5) participation in European research activities; and
- 6) analysis of developments and trends.

(Hake 1999: 293)

ESREA later collaborated with UNESCO Institute for Education in the production of an analysis of regional trends in educational research on adult education. Partners were involved in the analysis of current research trends and where possible, organising a regional workshop. The objective of this analysis for the UNESCO Institute, on behalf of UNESCO, was to 'strengthen the impact of educational research on the development of adult education and adult basic education, and to assess the present and possible contribution of universities and other research centres to such development' (Mauch 1999: 4).

#### **2.1.9 An emerging technological profile (1996)**

1995 was the year in which an ESREA website was proposed. In 1996, the ESREA email list server was established. This was separated from the Secretariat function in Leiden and managed by Tuomo Aalto of University of Helsinki, without cost to ESREA. In the ESREA Secretariat Annual Report 1998 (ESREA Secretary 1999), Hake writing the report as Secretary notes that the server had been made available to all ESREA members and other approved organisations. By 1999, more than 200 email addresses had been added and it had been used to disseminate information about new publications; events such as conferences and seminars; calls for partners in trans-national projects; and European Union policies and programmes (ESREA Secretary 1999). The technology afforded a platform to bring people together. One issue complicating this communication advantage

was variation in members' ICT arrangements: Hake expressed hope in his 1998 Report that increasing access to Windows would resolve software incompatibility problems.

It is not clear exactly when the ESREA website first went live – the first available archive indicates that it appeared in 1997. By 1999, visitors to the home page averaged 200 per month (ESREA Secretary 1999) and work had begun on improving the page by adding links to other websites relating to EU organisations and policy documents and other relevant bodies; there was also a plan to add links to the pages of individual and institutional members of ESREA. As was the email list server, the website was established and managed by Tuomo Aalto of the University of Helsinki.

#### 2.1.10 Support for PhD students

Within the first years ESREA was encouraging a small number of post-graduate research students to attend research seminars, conferences and meetings (Hake 1999b). This had involved working with the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, Inter-University Cooperation Programme (ERASMUS ICP).

#### 2.1.11 Liaison with SCUTREA (1997)

In June 1997 the ESREA Secretariat played a significant role in arranging an international conference, 'Crossing Borders, Breaking Boundaries' with the UK Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA). This conference was in co-operation with the North American research organization, Adult Education Research Conference (AERC), the Canadian Association for the Study of Education (CASAE), the main Canadian research conference, publisher of the *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, and also Adult Learning Australia (ALA), the main Australian body for adult and community education emerging out of the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE), the older Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE). There appear to have been two more such events in the following years.

#### 2.1.12 Early research network activities

Considerable network research activities had taken place over this early period: 'The success of these ESREA European research networks is indicated by the fact that more than 350 participants attended the seminars in 1994-95' (ESREA Secretary 1999: no page). The Report given by the Secretary in 1998 reaffirmed the early 1991 agenda to establish 'active co-operation between researchers' on particular interests in research on the education of adults, through annual seminars and the publication of seminar papers.

The activities of ESREA's European research networks, up to 1997, were reported as follows:

- a) life-history and biographical research convenors: Alheit (D), Bron (S) and Dominic, (CH). This network has held well-attended seminars Geneva (1993), Vienna (1994), Geneva (1995), Rome (1996) and Geneva (1997)....
- b) active democratic citizenship convenor: Bron (S), Field (UK), Malewski (POL)  
This network held its first seminar 10-13 September 1994 at Wroclaw, Poland. Members of the network met for the second time during ESREA 95 at Strobl in the parallel seminar group convened by Michal Bron. The third seminar was held at Strobl in September 1997....
- c) migration, racism and xenophobia convenor: Apitzsch (D)  
Seminars of the network were held Strobl (1994), Frankfurt (1995) and Rome (1996)...

- d) adult education and labour market convenor: Olesen (DK)  
Seminars have been in Ljubljana (1993), Strobl (1995), Leeds (1997)...
- e) cross-cultural influences in the history of adult education convenor: Hake (NL)  
This network has held seminars: Leiden (1991), York (1992), Strobl (1993); Salamanca (1994); Strobl (1996); Frankfurt (1997)....
- f) access for adults to higher education convenors: Merrill (UK)  
This network has held meetings in Leeds (1997) ...
- g) continuing professional education convenor: Chivers (UK)  
The network has held meetings in London (1994); Leiden (1995); Bruxelles (1996) and Vienna (1997). ...
- h) older learners convenors: Percy and Withnall (UK)  
Seminars have been held at Strobl (1996)...
- i) gender issues convenor: Ollagnier (CH)...

(Abbreviated from, ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

These networks identify the themes within and through which ESREA was bringing together initiatives and establishing forums for the development of research approaches. From this listing the earlier recorded 'Social movements and the history of the education of adults network' chaired by Field, Hake and Taylor had ceased to be active, along with the 'Residential adult education and popular movements' network previously chaired by Schuller and Toumisto. Emerging after 1992, from these records, had been additional research themes on adult education, of 'Access for adults to higher education', 'Continuing professional education', 'Older learners', and 'Gender issues'.

Analysis of the records held on the current ESREA website (ESREA 2013b) suggests that members of the 'Active democratic citizenship' network met first in 1991 at an 'Education as a social movement' seminar. The 'Migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia' thematic network had met early in 1990s and was reported to have fallen away by 1993, but then with a meeting in Strobl in 1994, became again active. The thematic network on research into 'Residential adult education and popular movement' mentioned early on (Anon, in Faulstick-Wieland et al. 1992) as chaired by Schuller (Edinburgh) and Toumisto (Tampere) is not listed later. The 'Social movements and the history of the education of adults' research network chaired by Field (Warwick), Hake (Leiden) and Taylor (Leeds) is also missing. There is record elsewhere that the 'Continuing professional education network met in Copenhagen in 1997, and in the same year in Bruxelles (Germany) and Riga (Latvia). The genesis, activities, naming and decline of research networks is thus not always evident from records.

### 2.1.13 Early research publications (1991-7)

ESREA had been concerned with the publication and distribution of research on the education of adults from its early days. Need for a journal was still being expressed at the end of this period: 'There is a real need, for example, for a European journal which publishes significant contributions to theory and empirical research on the education of adults' (Hake 1999b: 296). By 1999, ESREA had an agreement with the publishers of *Studies in the Education of Adults*, the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales) (NIACE) (Hake 1999b). The 1988 Secretariat Annual Report (ESREA Secretary 1999: no page) records intention by this time to increase the journal's European coverage: 'Given the absence of a research-based European journal for adult learning, we

hope to secure a more European element in this journal'. ESREA was to join the consortium of university organizations on whose behalf this journal was published. It also is reported to have an agreement with the editorial board of the new *European Handbook for Continuing Education*, published by Luchterhand Verlag.

By 1997, ESREA had been successful in publishing edited volumes of selected papers presented to the seminars of the ESREA European research networks and proceedings of ESREA European and Triennial European research conferences (Hake 1999b: 296). Research network publications recorded on archived and current websites (ESREA 1997; 2013b) are as follows:

- 'Life-history and biographical research', convenors: Alheit (D), Bron (S) and Dominic, (CH). This network identified one publication in 1995.
1. Alheit, P., Bron, A., Brugger, E. & Dominicé, P. (eds) (1995). *The biographical approach in European adult education*, Wein: Verband Wiener Volksbildung.
- a) 'Active democratic citizenship', convenors: Bron (S), Field (UK), Malewski (POL). This network records one publication in 1995.
1. Bron Jr. M. & Malewski, M. (eds) (1995). *Adult education and democratic citizenship I*. Published for ESREA by Tourun, Wroclaw: Wroclaw University.
- b) 'Migration, racism and xenophobia', convenor Apitzsch (D). No publications are recorded up to this date.
- c) 'Adult education and labour market', convenor: Olesen (DK). This network records three publications up to 1997.
1. Olesen H.S. (ed.) (1997). *Adult education and labour market III*. Roskilde: Adult education group.
  2. Olesen H.S. (ed.) (1996). *Adult education and labour market II*. Roskilde: Adult education group.
  3. Klenovsek T.V. & Olesen H.S. (eds) (1994). *Adult education and labour market I*. Ljubjana: Slovene Adult Education Centre
- d) 'Cross-cultural influences in the history of adult education', convenor: Hake (NL). There are five publications recorded between 1991 and 1997.
1. Friedenthal-Hasse M., Hake B.J. & Marriott S. (eds) (1991). *British-Dutch-German relationships in adult education 1880-1930: Studies in the theory and history of cross-cultural communication in adult education, 1*: Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
  2. Hake B.J. & Marriott S. (eds) (1992). *Adult education between cultures: encounters and identities in European adult education since 1890, 2*. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
  3. Marriott S. & Hake B.J. (eds) (1994). *Cultural and intercultural experiences in European adult education: Essays on popular and higher education since 1890, 3*. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
  4. Hake, B.J., Steele T. & Tiana A. (eds). (1996) *Masters, missionaries and militants: Studies of social movements and popular adult education 1890-1939, 4*. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
  5. Hake B.J. & Steele T. (eds) (1997). *Intellectuals, activists and reformers: Studies of cultural, social and educational reform movements 1890-1930, 5*. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
- e) 'Access for adults to higher education', convenors: Merrill (UK). There is one publication recorded in 1997.
1. Hill S. & Merrill B. (eds) (1997). *Access, equity, participation and organizational change*. Warwick: Published for ESREA by Department of Continuing Education, Warwick.

- f) 'Continuing professional education', convenor: Chivers (UK). There are no publications recorded to 1997
- g) 'Older learners', convenors: Percy and Withnall (UK). No publications recorded.
- h) 'Gender issues', convenor: Ollagnier (CH). No publications recorded.

There are two further publications listed:

- Jelenc, Z. (ed.) (1994). *Adult education research in the countries in transition: Trends in former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Baltic region*. Ljubljana: Slovene Adult Education Centre.
- Bisovsky, G., Bourgois, E., Bron, M., Chivers, G. & Larsson S. (eds) (1995). *Adult learning and social participation*. Papers presented in the working groups at the first European conference of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA), 18 to 22 September 1995 in the Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung Strobl/Austria.

The thematic research networks related to 'Life-history and biographical research', 'Active democratic citizenship', 'Adult education and labour market', 'Cross-cultural influences in the history of adult education' and 'Access for adults into higher education' were active in publishing their research papers over this period. The publication above from Jelenc is from the work of the Slovene Adult Education Centre in developing comparative country reports on adult education. The work from Bisovsky et al. (1995) emerged from the first of ESREA's triennial European conferences, with the theme of adult learning and social participation and was later published with Verband Wiener Volksbildung).

#### 2.1.14 A triennial conference (1995)

A conference of European research on adult education was organized and held by ESREA in this first period, called 'Adult learning and social participation'. This was the first of ESREA's triennial conferences (1995).

#### 2.1.15 Cooperation with national and European organisations ( - 1998)

Activities of cooperation at a national level were reported through joint meetings with national organisations in Baltic, Central and Eastern European countries in efforts to 'reconstruct the national forms of cooperation among researchers concerned with adult education' (Hake 1999b: 294). ESREA had also held a joint conference with the Spanish organisation GRUPO 90, in 1992, in Spain (Hake 1999b). In 1994, a symposium was held with the Kommission Erwachsenenbildung of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft (DGfE). Annual conferences were held with the Universities Association for Continuing Education (UACE) (1992, 1995, 1996), and in 1997, a meeting was held with the Standing Conference for University Teaching and Research on the Education of Adults (SCUTREA) in the United Kingdom, together with North American research associations in London.

ESREA had aspiration to work more closely with European organizations and through meetings organized by member states of the European Union during their presidency of the European Council of Ministers' (Have 199b: 296). European organisations important to engage with were identified as those: 'such as the European Association on the Education of Adults (EAEA), the European Association of Research and Development Institutes (EARDI), the European Universities Continuing Network (EUCEN), the European Lifelong Initiative (ELLI), together with governmental organizations such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Economic Co-operation in Development (OECD)' (Hake 1999b: 295).

ESREA encouraged members to engage in EU-funded research and the early ESREA website (1997a) provided links to relevant EU programmes.

### 2.1.16 Early membership

By 1998, ESREA had approximately 228 individual and institutional members. There was however concern that the majority of those who were active came from Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. There were calls for wider membership at this time:

Firstly, although ESREA members are located throughout Europe, but there is still a clear North-South divide... We hope to have made some progress with the recruitment of French-speaking members... Given the active Spanish contribution to ESREA, Greece, Italy and Portugal remain sources of concern... Germany continues to be a source of concern... Although we have a significant number of members in the Baltic, Central and Eastern countries, more needs to be done...

(Abbreviated, ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

There was then aspiration for ESREA to widen its geographical spread of membership. There was to be a recruitment policy going forward, improving co-operation with national associations, ensuring information about ESREA was better distributed, and suggestion of regional targeting of activities: 'improved dissemination of information and the organization of activities at a regional level for these countries' (ESREA Secretary 1999: no page).

### 2.1.17 Financial support

Membership subscription had been the main source of funding for ESREA's activities and supporting the work of the Secretariat (ESREA Secretary 1999). Other activities had been made largely possible by the 'hidden' sponsorship of the institutions - funding for conferences and membership travel. Other financial support was being sought and found for ESREAs network meetings. Finance, was indicated in 1998 as having been received from the Austrian Bundesministerium, other Ministries of Education, and UK's Economic and Social Science Research Council and British Council:

The Austrian Bundesministerium has been very supportive in providing free accommodation and meals for participants at numerous ESREA network meetings in the period 1993-1998. Support has been received for specific events from the province of Andalusia, the Ministries of Education in Finland, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, and the Economic and Social Science Research Council in the United Kingdom and the British Council.

(ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

European Union (EU) funding had also been found. Researchers associated with ESREA had been reported as successful by 1998 in gaining funding through the Targeted Socio-economic Research (TSER) of the FRAMEWORK IV programme, and through SOCRATES (Adult Education) and LEONARDO, PHARE and TEMPUS.

## 2.2 A SECOND EVOLUTIONARY PHASE: 1998-2007

A summary record of ESREA's structures, events and activities is laid out below in historical sequence for a second phase: the election of a new Chair and members to the ESREA Steering Committee (1997); management issues of database and communication (1998); the end of regional status for countries in transition (1998); encouragement of membership; collaborative projects (-1998); research networks (1998); triennial conferences (1997-2007); publications (1998-2007); co-operation with European organisations; funding, membership, and European projects; Statutes (2002); a system to fund and support PhD students; the election of a vice-Chair (2005); planning a new location for the Secretariat (2007); ESREA's future direction.

### 2.2.1 Election of a new Chair and members (1997)

The year 1997 saw new elections to the ESREA Steering Committee. The following people were elected as committee members for a three year term: Peter Alheit, Universität Bremen; Gerhard Bisovsky, Meidling Volkshochschule, Vienna; Etienne Bourgeois, University of Louvain; Agnieszka Bron, University of Stockholm; Pierre Dominicé, University of Geneva, Ramon Flecha, University of Barcelona; Henning Salling Olesen, Roskilde University Centre; Kjell Rubenson, University of Linköping; Vida Mohorcic-Spolar, Slovene Adult Education Centre; Richard Taylor, University of Leeds; Jukka Tuomisto, University of Tampere; and Alexandra Withnall, University of Keele. During the first meeting of the steering committee at Roskilde in December 1997, the Chairperson elected unanimously was Kjell Rubenson.

The following year, 1998, marked a transition for ESREA. It was the first full year for a new steering committee elected in 1997<sup>4</sup>. At the second meeting of the new steering committee, Bruxelles, Kjell Rubensen indicated his decision to resign the Chair. Henning Salling Olesen was elected as the new ESREA chair through a postal ballot held amongst elected committee members. During its meeting in Bruxelles the new steering committee invited three ESREA members to join its ranks representing France, Poland and Portugal - Dr Pierre Caspar, Arts et Metiers, Paris (France), Professor Dr Ewa Solarczyk-Ambrozik, University of Poznan (Poland), and Dr Maria Helena Anthunes, Lusofona University, Lisbon (Portugal). Thus, this year was distinct in both electing a new chair and new steering committee.

The Secretariat Annual Report for ESREA for the year 1998 (ESREA Secretary 1999) was published on the ESREA website. It emphasised the need for the Steering Committee to become more involved in steering: 'Given the burden of work placed upon the ESREA Secretariat, the convenors of the ESREA research networks, that the members of the ESREA Steering Committee become more directly involved in the translation of ESREA's strategy into effective practices' (ESREA Secretary 1999, no page). By the early 2000s, there were two dedicated two-day meetings of the steering committee held every year rather than one. When this meeting had been held annually it had usually been in conjunction with other ESREA events such as the triennial conference or network meetings.

The Annual Report (1998) (ESREA Secretary 1999) indicates a number of aspirations current at that time as well as identifying issues and referring to ESREA's wider relationships and influence (below is our syntheses from this report unless indicated).

### 2.2.3 Management issues of database and communication (1988)

The introduction of a new computer system and new financial system at Leiden in 1998 meant the need to migrate the ESREA membership database to Windows and this caused some difficulty. However, the move to Windows improved communication capabilities with and between members via email and the Website.

By 1998, ESREA was also communicating internally to its members through the publishing of ESREA NEWS annually. This was a newsletter of ESREA with information about research activities, research networks, and related European activities, 'such as the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme for adult and continuing education, and TEMPUS activities, and a list of conferences to be held in Europe' (Hake 1999b: 297). ESREA News was intended to become an electronic newsletter in 1999.

---

<sup>4</sup> It is not clear exactly when steering committee membership changed from 1992 going forward. It appears that membership may have changed in 1993 and 1997. From the 1997 Website (ESREA 1997), membership changed once more in 1999, and again in 2002 (SC 2002a) and 2005 (SC 2005a). Where the Chair and Secretariat remained the same, these membership changes have not been indicated in the report.

#### 2.2.4 The end of regional status (1998)

ESREA discontinued its regional network for countries in transition in 1998. 'The status and activities of the regional network on Countries in Transition (Spolar, SAEC)<sup>5</sup>' are now 'regarded as a full network rather than a regional network' (ESREA Secretary 1999: no page). The previous regional emphasis thus came to an end at this time. There was however an aspiration going forward to help recruit the newer European countries to transnational projects:

Now that many of these countries are candidate members of the European Union, it becomes increasingly important to secure their active participation in ESREA activities and their membership of ESREA-initiated transnational projects within the SOCRATES/ LEONARDO/ TEMPUS/ PHARE programmes and Framework 5. Information about these programmes is available on the ESREA web site. This calls for an active recruitment of participants in European projects. Calls for partners can be communicated through the ESREA E-mail server...

(ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

#### 2.2.5 Membership

The Secretariat noted in the Annual Report, 1998 (ESREA Secretary 1999), various matters relevant to membership aspirations from the 1997/8 period of transition. ESREA's first bilingual conference in Bruxelles in 1998 had led a number of French-speaking members to join ESREA. Highlighted were an increasing number of associated institutional members of ESREA - this as recognition by academic departments and national associations of the value of ESREA activities in the light of successful participation. A breakdown of the 228 ESREA members by country was provided.<sup>i</sup> This records the heavy weighting of the 228 members to the UK (with 47 members). Finland, Germany and Sweden then followed with the next highest membership numbers (with between 20 and 30 members), and Austria, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Slovenia then following (with 8-11 members). Other countries listed were then less well represented in membership.

Concerns were raised about the geographical reach of ESREA, the need to do more to encourage the active participation of members of the Baltic, Central and Eastern European countries and what was expressed as a north/south European divide through various measures (ESREA Secretary 1999, no page). ESREA identified the lack of membership from France, Greece, Italy and Portugal as those countries where new membership would be particularly encouraged. It identified activity by 1998 in promoting ESREA as a research organization in Germany, and in enlisting national bodies as associate institutional members. Various strategies to widen membership were identified as important to take forward, including the targeting of regions where membership was currently low:

The majority of active members continue to be located in Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. There are, therefore, two continuing areas of concern. Firstly, although ESREA members are located throughout Europe, but there is still a clear North-South divide among the membership of ESREA. We hope to have made some progress with the recruitment of French-speaking members in 1998 but this must be supported with information in the French language in order to retain their active participation. Given the active Spanish contribution to ESREA, Greece, Italy and Portugal remain sources of concern.

Among the north-central countries, Germany continues to be a source of concern given the relatively low number of the very numerous German colleagues who have become active ESREA members. ESREA has sought to address this issue in recent years but without much success. An article about

---

<sup>5</sup> Vida Mohorcic Spolar, Slovene Adult Education Centre

ESREA by Alheit and Hake during 1998 in Zeitschrift für Erwachsenenbildung gave rise to only 1 request for further information.

Although we have a significant number of members in the Baltic, Central and Eastern countries, more needs to be done on this front to secure their active participation in ESREA activities. It is hoped that the co-ordination of ESREA activities in this region by the national adult education associations (as associate institutional members) and the Slovene Adult Education Centre will produce the desired results.

Future recruitment policy should focus on: a) key research institutions providing post-graduate research training; b) closer co-operation with national associations in recruitment and holding of joint meetings; c) improved dissemination of information about the activities of ESREA in journals and meetings at the national level; d) the organization of ESREA activities at a regional level in order to achieve greater success in countries with low membership. The Secretariat proposes that ESREA could seriously consider, for example, the organization of more research network activities at the regional level in Southern Europe. Experience suggests that participation in regional activities is a constructive step towards wider participation.

The call was to increase research network activities in southern Europe and target activity to help enlist membership through joint meetings with national associations and better dissemination of information, but also to move the focus of research network and other activity to the south. The early ESREA archived website (ESREA 1997) identifies the following university departments as members of ESREA (Associate Institutional Members), illustrating the geographical spread at this time:

- Department of Continuing Education, Lancaster University
- School of Continuing Education, University of Leeds
- Birkbeck College, University of London
- Department of Continuing and Adult Education, University of Exeter
- School of Continuing Education, University of Nottingham
- Department of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Glasgow
- Division of Adult Continuing Education, University of Sheffield
- Division of Academic Innovation and Continuing Education, University of Stirling
- Adult Continuing Education, University of Southampton New College
- Department of Adult Continuing Education, University of Wales Swansea
- Centre for Continuing Education, University of Sussex
- Department of Education, University of Tampere
- Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, KU Leuven
- Adult Education Research Group, Linköping University
- Centre for Adult Educators, Linköping University
- Institut für Wirtschafts- und Erwachsenenpädagogik, Humboldt-Universität Berlin
- Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften der Universität Jena
- Abteilung für Erwachsenenbildung, Karl-Franzens-Universität, Graz
- Université de Genève
- University of Crete
- Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers
- National University of Ireland, Maynooth
- Adult Education Research Group, Department of Education, Roskilde University

Efforts were subsequently made to hold ESREA steering committee meetings in the south and south central of Europe. This can be seen in records showing their location during this period: Bruxelles (Belgium) (1998), Barcelona (Spain) (2000), Lisbon (Portugal) (2001), Geneva (Switzerland) (2002), Paris (France) (2002), Canterbury (UK) (2003), Wroclaw (Poland) (2003), Roskilde (Denmark) (2004), Wroclaw (Poland) (2004), Rome (Italy) (2005), Munich (Germany) (2006), Seville (Spain) (2006), Braga (Portugal) (2007), Seville (Spain)

(2007). Prior to 1998 meetings had been held annually in Manchester (UK), 1992), Seville (Spain) (1994), Strobl (Austria) (1995), Bremen (Germany) (1996), Roskilde (Denmark) (1997). Of the fourteen steering committee meetings recorded as held post-1997 to 2007, eight were held in Spain, Germany, France or Italy.

#### 2.2.6 Collaborative projects (-1998)

Collaboration in research projects through the new European Union funding streams was encouraged by ESREA in the work of research networks. Meetings were to be held in 1998 to achieve research funding within the Framework V, 1999 phase, for those specifically interested in research on higher education and lifelong learning:

ESREA members have used the ESREA research networks to develop collaborative research projects and to successfully submit these for European Union funding. Within the Targeted Socio-Economic Research programme of Framework IV, successful projects have included research on older workers, access to higher education, and organizational learning. A number of ESREA-initiated projects have been approved within the Adult Education funding line within the SOCRATES and LEONARDO programmes. The new Framework V research programme starts during 1999, while the revised SOCRATES and LEONARDO programs come on stream in 2000. This indicates the need for accurate and up-to-date information for ESREA members who wish to cooperate with others in European projects. To this end ESREA held a research meeting in Austria in September 1998 for those members with a special interest in research on higher education and lifelong learning.

(ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

ESREA at this time was looking for ways to support its members in gaining funding through these European research funding streams.

#### 2.2.7 Research networks (1998)

Thematic research network activity was emphasised as a key founding priority for ESREA in 1998 and going forward (ESREA Secretary 1999). Further, administrative arrangements were to be introduced, along with a list of current networks, their convenors and meetings to date.

The report lists five proposals for new networks submitted to the ESREA Secretariat in 1998 and approved by the Steering Committee:

- women's participation in popular adult education (CREA, Barcelona, ESP)
- learning for regional development, social economy and social regeneration (Jan Holmer, S);
- informal and self-directed learning (Philippe Carre, F)
- lifelong learning policies (Tom Schuller, UK);
- lifelong learning and higher education (Barry J. Hake, NL).

An emerging interest in research in lifelong learning is indicated in the naming of these new networks.

There are records from the current (ESREA 2013b) and archived ESREA websites (ESREA 1997) that the previously established networks held the following meetings between 1997 and 2007. They indicate the maintenance of the earlier substantial activity on the part of the thematic research networks, their convenors and members, moving through this phase. Two new networks were instituted towards the end of this period – a 'Between global and local: Adult learning and development' research network being instituted by Antonio Fragoso, (Portugal), Emilio Lucio-Villegas, (University of Seville, Spain), and Ewa Kurantowicz, (University of Lower Silesia, Poland) (SC 2005b), and a network called 'Working life and learning' (convenors not recorded).

- a) 'Life-history and biographical research' network:  
This network held conferences: in 2000 at Roskilde University, Denmark, in 2001 in Bad Bederkesa, Germany, in 2002 in Geneva, in 2003 in Canterbury Christ Church University, 2004 (Roskilde, Denmark with the Biography and Society section of the International Sociological Association), in 2005 in Anghiari, Italy, and in 2006 one in Volos, Greece. In 2007, the network held again a conference in Roskilde University, Denmark.
- b) 'Active democratic citizenship' research network:  
This network held a conference in 1999 (University Poznan), a seminar in 2001 (Bochum, Germany), a conference in 2003 (University of Leuven, Belgium), a joint conference with the International Sociological Association (University of Joensuu, Finland), two seminars in 2005 one with the Centre for Continuing Education, Institute for Multidisciplinary Social Studies, Russian Academy of Science, and one at the University of Tallin, Estonia. In 2007 a conference was held with the University of Minho, Portugal.
- c) 'Migration, racism and xenophobia' research network:  
This network held a seminar in 1998 in Vienna (Austria) and in 2003 there was a re-launch of the network at the University of Nottingham.
- d) 'Adult education and labour market' research network :  
This network had held seminars in Dubrovnick, Croatia (1998 and 1999), in Sevilla (2000) and in Roskilde (2002), a conference in Northern College, Barnsley, UK (2004). It held seminars at the University of Lower Silesia, Wroclaw, Poland (2005), at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Ljubljana (2006) and in 2007 at Northern College, Barnsley, UK.
- e) 'Cross-cultural influences in the history of adult education':  
A European seminar was held (2006) ESREA/SERFA.
- f) 'Access for adults to higher education' research network:  
A conference was held in 1998 (University of Barcelona, Spain), in 2000 a seminar was held jointly with the Centre for Research in Theories and Practices for Overcoming Inequalities (CREA), University of Barcelona, Spain. Conferences were held in 2003 with the University of Edinburgh and in 2005 a joint conference with the Sociology of Education Research Committee of the International Sociological Association. A conference and network re-launch was held in 2006 (Univeriste Catholique de Louvain, Belgium).
- g) 'Continuing professional development' research network:  
This research network had no recorded activities.
- h) 'Older learners' research network:  
This research network held a seminar in 1998 (Budapest, Hungary) and met three other times between 2004 and 2008.
- i) 'Gender issues' research network:  
This network held a first seminar in 1999 (Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany), and a meeting in 2000. In 2001 there was a seminar held at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. In 2003 a seminar was held at the University of Warwick, UK, and in 2004 there was a meeting following the ESREA Conference at the University of Wroclaw, Poland. In 2005 a seminar was held at the University of Geneva, Switzerland and in 2007 one at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland.

- j) 'Between global and local: Adult learning and development' research network :  
A seminar was held in 2006 in Faro, Portugal.
- k) 'Work life and learning':  
This network held a conference in 2007.

Research network activity involved annual or bi-annual meetings in the most cases during this period. Thirteen of the approximately fifty meetings recorded above were held in central or southern Europe. The 'Continuing professional development network' appears to have been no longer active later in this phase - although it planned a meeting 1999 in Tampere, no records were identified confirming that this went ahead.

### 2.2.8 Triennial conferences (1997-2007)

In 1998 there was a second ESREA triennial European research conference held. This second conference was called 'Learning to Live in the Learning Society: Challenges and Contradictions in Adult Learning'. It was organized by Professor Dr Etienne Bourgeois of the Catholic University of Louvain (ESREA Secretary 1999).

Triennial conferences held during this period from 1997-2007 were:

- 2nd ESREA triennial conference (1998) – 'Learning to live in the learning society: Challenges and contradictions in adult learning' (Bruxelles, Germany).
- 3rd ESREA triennial conference (2001) – 'Wider benefits of learning: understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning' (Lisbon, Portugal).
- 4th ESREA triennial conference (2004) – 'Between 'old' and 'new' worlds of adult learning' (Wroclaw, Poland).
- 5th ESREA triennial conference (2007) – 'Adult learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity: diverse lives, cultures learnings and literacies' (Seville, Spain).

The titles of these conferences show a focus on 'adult learning' between 1998 and 2007. Three of these four triennial conferences were held in central or southern Europe.

### 2.2.9 Publications (1998-2007)

Publications during this period, as listed on the current website (ESREA 2013b) were as follows:

'Active democratic citizenship':

1. Bron, A. Field, J. & Kurantowicz, E. (eds) (1998). *Adult education and democratic citizenship, II*. Published for ESREA Krakow: Impuls.
2. Bron, Jr, M. & Field, J. (eds) (2001). *Adult education and democratic citizenship III*. Wroclaw: Lower Silesian University College of Education.
3. Schemmann, M. & Bron Jr. M. (eds) (2001). *Adult education and democratic citizenship IV*. Krakow: Impuls.
4. Bron, Jr. M., Guimarães, P. & Vieira de Castron, R. (eds) (2009). *The state, civil society and the citizen: Exploring relationships in the field of adult education in Europe*. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang.
5. Wildemeersch, D., Stroobants, V. & Bron, Jr. M. (eds) (2005). *Active citizenship and multiple identities in Europe. A learning outlook*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.

'Gender issues':

1. Dybbroe, B. & Ollagnier, E. (eds) (2003). *Challenging gender in lifelong learning: European perspectives*. Roskilde: Roskilde University Press.

'Continuing professional development':

- Poell, R. & Chivers, G. (eds) (1999). *Continuing professional development in Europe*, ESREA CPD Network, Sheffield & Loughborough Universities, UK & Nijmegen University, the Netherlands.

‘Adult education and the labour market’:

- Olesen, H.S. (ed.) (1998). *Adult education and labour market IV*. Published for ESREA by Adult Education Research Group, University of Roskilde, and Inter University Centre Dubrovnik.
- Olesen H.S. & Forrester K. (eds) (1999). *Adult education and the labour market V*. Roskilde: Roskilde University press.
- Jørgensen H. C. & Warring N. (eds) (2002a). *Adult education and the labour market VII, Volume A: Papers from the 7th Seminar of the ESREA Research Network*, Roskilde May 2002. Roskilde: Roskilde University Press.
- Jørgensen H. C. & Warring N. (eds) (2002b). *Adult education and the labour market VII, Volume B: Papers from the research project "Work Life, Learning Environments and Democratisation" presented at the 7th Seminar of the ESREA Research Network*, Roskilde, May 2002. Roskilde: Roskilde University Press.
- Collado Broncano, M., Salling Olesen, H. & Puch Cisneros A. (eds) (2001). *Educación y formación de personas adultas y trabajo*. Adult education and the labour market. VI. Xàtiva.

‘Life history and biographical research’:

- West, L., Alheit, P., Anderson, A. & Merrill, B. (eds) (2007). *Using biographical and life-history approaches in the study of adult and lifelong learning: European perspectives*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.

Triennial conferences:

- Bisovsky, G. Â Bourgeois, E., Bron Jr, M, Chivers, G. Larsson, S. (eds) (1998). *Adult learning and social participation*. Vienna: Verband Wiener Volksbildung.
- ESREA (2001). *Wider benefits of learning: Understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning*. Lusofana University: Xativa.
- Bron, A., Kurantowicz, E., Salling Olesen, H. & West L. (eds) (2005a). *"Old" and "new" worlds of adult learning*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSWE TWP Poland.
- Lucio-Villegas, E. & del Carmen Martinez, M. (eds) (2007). *Adult learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity: Diverse lives, cultures, learnings and literacies. Vol. 1, 2 & 3*. Proceedings of the 5th ESREA European Research Conference. Seville: Diálogos.

Others:

- Hake, B.J. (ed.) (2005). *Workers as travellers, migrants and refugees: Border-crossings and the construction of proletarian public spheres in Europe 1890–1933*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hake, B.J., van Gent, B. & Katus, J. (eds) (2004). *Adult education and globalisation: Past and present*. Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on the History of Adult Education, Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag.

ESREA members were described in 1998 to ‘continue to make an important contribution to the “European Manual for Continuing Education”’ (ESREA Secretary, 1999 no page), indicating activities contributing to the publication and dissemination of research in other ways.

## 2.2.10 Co-operation with European organisations

ESREA continued its aspiration to develop close co-operation with relevant European organisations and national organisations. Relationships with European organisations identified by the Secretary as significant had been with EAEA, EARLI, EARDI, EUCEN and

CIDREE (ESREA Secretary 1999). The EAEA and EARDI particularly were major organizations for adult learning in Europe.

The effort for the development of co-operation was also with national organisations and this continued, particularly in ESREA extending its co-operation in the organisation of joint conferences:

ESREA also co-operates, where appropriate, with national organizations of researchers and national associations of adult education. This has proved very successful and needs to be developed in the future. ESREA is also frequently approached by organizations in other parts of the world with a view to co-operation in the organization of conferences or to provide information to ESREA members. We hope to extend this service in 1999.

(ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

The research network meetings listed above indicates continued activity with international and national organisations. Specific such cooperation from these records were from the 'Active democratic citizenship' network conference held in Leuven (2003), with a relationship with the Research Consortium for Social Learning, Governance and Active Citizenship in Europe [Solgace], Department of Education Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium. In 2004, the 'Life history and biography' network conference at Roskilde had been held with the Biography and Society section of the International Sociological Association [ISA]. The 'Active democratic citizenship' network in 2005, and the Access for adults to higher education network in 2005, also held joint activities with this body (the latter with the Sociology of Education Research Committee of ISA). The research network activity listed above shows also the formation of links with the Centre for Research in Theories and Practices for Overcoming Inequalities (CREA), University of Barcelona, Spain, and with the Service d'Enseignement et de Recherche en Formation d'Adultes [SERFA], in the Department of Continuing Education at the Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse.

ESREA was also engaged in co-sponsoring and collaborating through international conferences. In 2000 it engaged with the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) in Vancouver, Canada (ESREA 1997) in a forum to report on and consider adult education research with international research bodies:

- Adult Education Research Conference (AERC)
- Adult Learning Australia-Research Network (ALA-RN)
- Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE)
- Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA)

A 'Second World Meeting on Self-Learning' was held in Paris in 2000 (ESREA 1997). This was organised by GRAF and the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (CNAM) and patronised by UNESCO. As had been the case for the conference in Canada, some places were reserved for ESREA participants.

### **2.2.11 Funding, membership and European projects**

The report in 1998 identified various sources of funding successful in the earlier phase as in-kind support for ESREA, but also that ESREA's networks should look for funding from alternative EU sources into the future:

Membership subscriptions continue to be the main source of financial support for ESREA activities. This income supports the day-to-day administrative work of the secretariat and is used to cover the costs of travel, representation, faxes, E-mail, printing costs, postal charges etc. ...at the moment, a selective policy is operated with regard to the subscriptions charged to members from the ex-socialist countries. When problems are

notified to the Secretariat, it is current practice to allow institutions to pay the equivalent of the individual fee... Most participants who have taken part in ESREA's activities have covered their own costs or secured their own funding in order to be able to do so. ... ESREA networks need to do more to exploit the possibilities presented by their country's presidency of the European Union for periods of six months.

(ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

ESREA was looking for alternative ways to support the costs for its members in its research activities. Some success in securing funding through European funding programme mechanisms were seen as offering potential for financial support into the future:

The new SOCRATES and LEONARDO programmes from 2000 onwards, for example, include new opportunities for the funding of co-operative research activities. The same applies to the new programme of research under FRAMEWORK 5 which has now been agreed. It is vital, furthermore, to explore the possibilities of securing financial support for specific ESREA activities within these European programmes in the next two years.

The ESREA Secretariat seeks to provide members with information about European Union programmes and to encourage them to organize applications for projects. This information is disseminated through the E-mail server and links on the ESREA Home Pages. Furthermore, the Secretariat organized a meeting at Strobl in September 1998, with support from the Austrian government during their presidency of the European Union which was attended by 30 researchers with a special interest in the area of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning. This has led to the formation of two new research groups which intend to submit applications for funding. It is hoped to organize a second meeting in Strobl in 1999.

(ESREA Secretary 1999: no page)

The meeting on higher education and lifelong learning held in Strobl 1998 had led to a new focus for bids for research funding (ESREA Secretary 1999). A second such meeting was planned for Strobl in 1999, and ESREA was co-operating with the Finnish Ministry of Education during the Finnish presidency of the European Union for a meeting on 'Liberal adult education' to be held in Turku, in 1999.

#### 2.2.12 Statutes (2002)

There is an explicit statement of ESREA's objectives in Article 6 of ESREA Statutes from 2002:

Art. 6. The Society is devoted to encouraging and supporting *the advancement of high quality research* on the education of adults in the European countries.

a) The Society intends to encourage *co-operation in comparative research* in the European context conceived in the broadest geographical terms.

b) The Society will stimulate the *development of research and the dissemination of research results* in all areas of adult and continuing education.

c) The Society will undertake activities to *encourage the training of young researchers and the continuing professional development of researchers*.

d) The Society will seek to establish *positive working relationships with other European organizations and with the appropriate national organizations*.

(ESREA 2002: no page, our emphasis)

Whilst the initial earlier news article (Anon, in Faulstick-Wieland et al. 1992: 112) had emphasised ESREA's aim in the development of 'an interdisciplinary forum for the development of different research approaches as these applied to the education of adults' and in 'bringing together different research initiatives', these 2002 Statutes nuance these earlier statements. They emphasise the advancement of high quality research, a focus on co-operation in comparative research, the development of research and its dissemination, the training and professional development of researchers and the establishment of relations with national and European organisations. Whether or not there was an earlier iteration of these Statutes for ESREA is not clear from the records.

ESREA as articulated in the Statutes of 2002 was to be managed by a governing body made up of:

- the paid-up members of the Society;
- the steering committee;
- the executive committee;
- sub-committees
- Secretariat and secretary.

(ESREA 2002: no page)

### **2.2.13 A system to fund and support PhD students**

There was a system of bursaries for PhD students attending network meetings in place and at the steering committee meeting of 2005 (SC 2005b) this system was adjusted. The network convenors were in the future to make submissions rather than the candidates themselves. Names would be put forward to the Steering Committee by the network convenors for consideration in gaining funding.

A series of PhD summer schools appear in the records of ESREA during this phase. A first and second International PhD Summer-school were held in Roskilde in 1999 and 2000 under the auspices of the Graduate School in Lifelong Learning at Roskilde University and the Danish Research Academy (ESREA 1997). The site identifies the Graduate School at Roskilde as participating in ESREA as an international research network.

### **2.2.13 Election of a vice- Chair (2005)**

In 2005 (SC 2005a), Henning Salling Olesen was re-elected as Chair of the Steering Committee for the period 2005-2008 and Ewa Kurantowicz was elected as vice-Chair. Newly re-elected and elected members of the Steering Committee were listed in 2005 as: Michal Bron (Sweden), Antonio Fragoso (Portugal), Paula Guimaraes (Portugal); Larissa Jogi (Estonia), Ewa Kurantowicz (Poland), Barbara Merrill (United Kingdom), Henning Salling Olesen (Denmark), Rudolph Tippelt (Germany), Risto Rinne (Finland), Linden West (United Kingdom), Barry Hake (Netherlands), Edmee Ollagnier (Switzerland). Discussions were held at this time for invitations from the Steering Committee to other possible candidates - the Statutes of 2002 indicated that the Steering Committee would appoint four ad hoc members from countries not already represented within the committee.

### **2.2.14 Planning a new location for the Secretariat (2007)**

ESREA tendered for a new Secretariat to begin work from the end of 2001. The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) disseminated a tender document on behalf of ESREA at this time: 'Since the establishment of ESREA in December 1991, the ESREA Secretariat has been based on Leiden University. The steering committee of ESREA has decided to invite tenders from any ESREA member and their institution for the ESREA Secretariat function, with effect from 1 November 2001. Leiden University is also invited to submit a tender' (EAEA 2001: no page).

It appears from a Notice of Change to Secretariat document that Leiden retained the Secretariat for 6 further years (ESREA 2007). ESREA outlines the hosting of the Secretariat by Leiden University and serving of Barry Hake as Secretary over the period from the

founding of ESREA in 1991 and inviting declarations of interest to be made to the Chair of ESREA, Henning Salling Olesen:

The ESREA Steering Committee now invites declarations of interest from potential new host institutions as well as individual researchers who have an interest in taking on the responsibility of the ESREA Secretariat. The ESREA Steering Committee has established a search sub-committee which seeks to identify such potential institutional and individual hosts for the ESREA Secretariat and to hold clarifying negotiations with them. Declarations of interest by potential host institutions should be submitted to the Chair of ESREA, Professor Dr Henning Salling Olesen...'

(ESREA 2007: no page)

A new procedure was adopted in the search for a new location for the Secretariat, from 1st January 2007, at the second steering committee meeting of 2006 (SC 2006b). The Chair reported two tenders submitted to the ESREA Chairperson: Universities of Tampere (Finland) and Linköping (Sweden).

### 2.2.15 ESREA's future direction

There was discussion within the steering committee meetings regarding the status of ESREA in relation to European Union (EU) programmes. Information was requested over the current status of ESREA in terms of EU programmes 'such as Socrates (Grundtvig), etc.' (SC 2005a: no page). There was clarification made that ESREA did not have non-governmental organisation status as an international organisation, and that processes for gaining this were lengthy. At the time ESREA was subjected to Dutch law: 'and can participate in EU programmes as a Dutch university-based organization. It is possible to submit a Grundtvig project with ESREA as one of the partners but with a Dutch institutional code' (SC 2005a: no page). This discussion seemed to indicate difficulty for ESREA as a body in accessing such funding.

The future direction of ESREA was debated by the Steering Committee during this phase (SC, 2005b). It discussed the rise of commercial research organizations that were challenging the research traditions of university-based research. The Steering Committee raised a question over the compromises confronting ESREA regarding economic issues, and the social purpose of ESREA. It was agreed at this 2005 (SC 2005b) meeting to take the discussion forward with a notion of a round-table discussion to be suggested to the scientific committee of the 2007 5<sup>th</sup> Triennial conference in Seville, and further consideration of a web forum by the Steering Committee. There was reference in the minutes to a 2001 closing statement by the Chair in the Conference on the 'Wider benefits of Adult Learning' at the earlier triennial conference over 'ESREA as an organization: Continuity and change'. The role of ESREA in speaking about the study of adult education in relation to EU economies was mentioned and previous success of the earlier State of the Art study in contributing to world-wide UNESCO publications. There was reference to a clarification needed of the relations for ESREA between practice and the research domain. This appears to have led to conversation in the meeting over whether the Steering Committee needed a 'specific project' (SC 2005b: no page) in mind into the future, and about a wider tension in the study of adult education across European universities.

### 2.3 A THIRD EVOLUTIONARY PHASE: 2007 – 2012

A summary record of ESREA's events and activities is laid out below in historical sequence for a third phase: a new Secretariat and Steering Committee (2007); new activities and aspirations (2007-2008); administrative change; publishing and dissemination strategy; network activity (2008-2012); triennial conferences (2007-2012); publications (2007-

2012); Publications (2007-2012) publishing and membership; international and European relations; support for the mobility of members; a question over the role of research; a research journal; election of a vice-Chair (2001-2013).

### **2.3.1 A new Secretariat and Secretary (2007)**

Andreas Fejes appears as Secretary in the minutes of the steering committee in 2007 (SC 2007a). There were new legalities to consider. At the meeting (SC 2007a) the new Secretary clarified ESREA's new legal position as a non-profit organization under Swedish law. Steering Committee upcoming elections were discussed (SC 2007a), and it was agreed that steering committee members should be drawn from a wide and full representation of membership nations, with a circulation to the members in preparation for voting.

### **2.3.2 New activities and aspirations (2007-2008)**

Relocation of the Secretariat to Linköping from 2007 with Andreas Fejes as new Secretary and a relatively new and renewed Steering Committee was again a time for clarification of an agenda to take forward for ESREA. In 2007 there began steps to clarify an 'outreach' strategy (2007b), so as to align this closely with ESREA's aims for the future, through the development of a policy document. In 2008 at a Dresden meeting of the Steering Committee, there was new discussion over ESREA's activities. ESREA's activities of 'participation in policy making and ESREA as project manager for EU projects' were discussed (SC 2008a: no page). A draft an action plan projecting activities was approved by the Steering Committee in 2009 (SC 2010b). An aspiration for ESREA was in the further promotion and dissemination of its research.

There were some further administrative changes. From 2007 annual meetings of a General Assembly were recorded and the new mechanism for planning instituted through the Steering Committee. At the 2009 meeting of the Steering Committee in Milan (SC 2009a), there was a draft action plan 2009-10 in place. This was identified as a starting point for discussing the role of ESREA into the future. At the next meeting of 2009, in Thessaloniki, there was a questionnaire planned for systematic capture of information from members about their ESREA activities. There was aspiration to begin a European research journal and the launch was planned.

### **2.3.3 Administrative change**

From 2010, there were clear attempts to delineate the remit of ESREA as sponsoring events only with international research as focus: Sponsored events 'should be research oriented ... and be directed to an international audience' (SC 2010a: no page). ESREA would participate in other events as researchers. Where events were sponsored, a member of ESREA should be a member of the 'scientific committee' and ESREA, where promoted formally at the conferences, would deal with international research topics and impact at a national level. This appeared then as further delineation of activities to be supported by and on behalf of ESREA, focusing ESREA's activities, clarifying its mission and the conditions of its operation (SC 2012a).

### **2.3.4 ESREA's publishing and dissemination strategy**

By 2009 (SC 2009a) ESREA was developing a publishing policy. The number of ESREA's networks was increasing and the number of books published could be anticipated to increase in the future. ESREA was working towards greater dissemination of its research through greater book sales but also was considering dissemination through an ESREA journal (SC 2009a). From 2009 ESREA's strategy was to achieve greater dissemination of its publication through electronic open access publication as well in print text form. In 2010 (SC 2010b), there was aspiration from the steering committee to set up a repository for ESREA conference papers at Roskilde.

During this period a member of the Steering Committee became member of the editorial board on the *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education* (SC 2009a). By 2013 (SC 2013a), ESREA has plans for a new platform for the ESREA website.

#### 2.3.4 Network activity (2008-2012)

In the Steering Committee minutes for this time-period (2007-2012), the following networks were reported.

- a. 'Life history and biographical research':  
This research network reported a seminar in Milan, Italy 2009 (SC 2009a), a meeting in 2010, Vazjo, Sweden (SC 2009b, SC 2010a) and planned meetings in Geneva, 2011 (SC 2010a), Odense, 2012 (2011b) and Canterbury, 2013 (SC 2013a).
- b. 'Active democratic citizenship':  
This network reported a conference in Braga, 2008 (SC 2008a) and in Stockholm in 2009 (2009a), it held a joint meeting 2011 in Budapest (SC 2011b) and planned a conference in Wroclaw in 2012 (SC 2012a).
- c. 'Migration, racism and xenophobia':  
This research network was reported as 'sleeping' (SC 2008a). It was newly constituted as 'Migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia' (SC 2008b), with a first meeting in Sheffield 2009 (SC 2009b) and planned a meeting in Graz 2012 (2011b) and in 2014, in Wroclaw (2012a).
- d. 'Adult education and labour market':  
No activities were recorded.
- e. 'Cross-cultural influences in the history of European adult education social movements':  
By 2008 (SC 2008b) there were proposals to revive this research network as 'History of adult education and training in Europe'. The network held a joint conference in Budapest, 2011 (SC 2011b).
- f. 'Access, learning careers and identities':  
This network reported a conference in 2008, a seminar in Seville 2009 and 2010 (SC 2009a), a network meeting in Portugal 2011 (SC 2010a; ESREA 2013m), a conference in 2011 in Averio, and a planned conference in 2013 in Linkoping (SC 2011b; SC 2012a).
- g. 'Adult educator, trainer and professional development':  
This network reported a first conference in 2008 (SC 2008a) and one in Thessaloniki, 2010 (SC 2010a). It planned a joint conference in Tallinn 2011 (SC 2011a) and a collaborative conference with ASEM in 2013 (SC 2013a).
- h. 'Older learners':  
This network was reported as 'sleeping' in 2008 (SC 2008a). A re-launch was discussed (SC 2008b) and the network re-established as 'Education and learning activities of older learners' (SC, 2009a) thematic network, with a first conference held in 2010 in Munich (SC 2010b), one in Braga 2012 (SC 2011b), a further planned in Ljubljana, 2012 (SC 2011b) and in Vilnius, 2013 (SC 2013a).
- i. 'Gender and adult learning network':  
This research network held a conference in Olsztyn, 2008 (SC 2008a), and there was a meeting in Hull 2009 (SC 2009b). In 2011, it held a conference in Montpellier (SC 2010a; ESREA 2013f) and planned one in 2013, at the University of Coimbra, Portugal (ESREA 2013f).

- j. 'Between global and local: Adult learning and development':  
This network reported conferences in Magdeburg, 2009 (SC 2009a,b), Seville, in 2010, and Istanbul, in 2011 (SC 2010a). The convenor, A. Fragoso, stepped down and was followed by convenor R Evans. The next conference was planned for Ghent 2013 (SC 2011b).
- k. 'Policy studies in adult education'  
A research network proposal was accepted under this name (SC 2008b). It held a first conference in 2012 in Nottingham (2011a) and had plans for a further in Aalborg, 2014 (SC 2013a).
- l. 'Working life and learning'  
This network was not active for a time (SC 2009b; SC 2010a; SC 2010b). It was accepted for re-launch (ESREA 2010b) with new convenors: A Wallo, (Linköping University); U Haake (Umeå University); C H-Jorgensen/ B S. Nielsen (Roskilde University). The re-launched network held a first conference in Linköping in 2011 (SC 2011a) and planned further conferences in 2013 (SC 2012a) and 2014 (SC 2013a) (Osnabrück).

#### 2.5.5 Triennial conferences (2007-2012)

Triennial conferences (ESREA 2013b) held during this period were:

- 6th ESREA triennial conference (2010) – 'Adult learning in Europe – understanding diverse meanings and contexts'
- 7th ESREA triennial conference (2013) – 'Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times'.

The previous focus on lifelong learning is lost in this phase of the triennial research conferences, with the emphasis on adult learning and then a return to the theme of adult education.

#### 2.5.6 Publications (2007-2013)

Publications from this period are listed on the current website (ESREA 2013b; ESREA 2013m) as below.

Non-series publications:

1. Evans, R. (ed.) (2009). *Local development, community and adult learning: Learning landscapes between the mainstream and the margins*. Duisburg: Nisaba Verlag.
2. Evans, R. (ed.) (2010). *Local development, community and adult learning: Learning landscapes between the mainstream and the margins, 2*. Duisburg: Nisaba Verlag.
3. Fragoso, A., Kurantowicz, E & Lucio-Villegas, E. (eds) (2008). *Local in global: Adult learning and community development*. Wrocław: Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa
4. Merrill, B. & Monteagudo, J.G. (eds) (2010). *Educational journeys and changing lives: Adult student experiences, 1*. Seville: Edición Digital@Tres.
5. Merrill, B. & Monteagudo, J.G. (eds) (2010). *Educational journeys and changing lives: Adult student experiences, 2*. Seville: Edición Digital@Tres.
6. Merrill, B. (eds) (2013) *Transitions and Identity in Learning Life*, Aveiro, University of Warwick & University of Aveiro.
7. Ostroch-Kamińska, J., Fontanini, Ch. & Gaynard, S. (eds) (2012). *Considering gender in academia: (in)visible act*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej.

European studies in lifelong learning and adult learning research series:

1. Bron, Jr. M., Guimarães, P. & Vieira de Castron, R. (eds) (2009). *The state, civil society and the citizen: Exploring relationships in the field of adult education in Europe*. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang.
2. Fragoso A., Kurantowicz, E. & Lucio-Villegas, E. (eds) (2011). *Between global and local: Adult learning and development*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
3. Hake, B. & Laot, F (eds) (2009). *The social question and adult education: European perspectives in the 19th and 20th centuries*. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang.
4. Merrill, B. (ed.) (2009). *Learning to change? The role of identity and learning careers in adult education*. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang.
5. Ostrouch, J. & Ollagnier, E. (eds) (2008). *Researching gender in adult learning*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
6. West, L., Alheit, P., Siig Andersen A., Merrill, B. (eds) (2005). *Using biographical and life history approaches in the stud of adults and lifelong learning: European perspectives*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
7. Wildemeersch, D., Stroobants, V., Bron Jr., M. (eds) (2005). *Active Citizenship and Multiple identities: a learning outlook*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang

### 2.3.8 Publishing and membership

There was clear aspiration from ESREA to increase ESREA's international profile and as a society engaged in research on the education of adults. Discussions were held, in the first 2007 meeting of the Steering Committee (SC 2007a) about how best to increase dissemination of knowledge of ESREA and advertise more widely its publications with Peter Lang. A decision was made that Steering Committee members would become engaged in distributing information about ESREA at conferences attended worldwide. It was agreed also that membership should be open to individuals and organisations worldwide. This was a significant change in orienting ESREA as an international research organisation.

ESREA developed a strategy to enable greater access to its research through open access publication. Although there was the publication of five books with Peter Lang during this phase, here was later agreement for an ESREA book series to be published with open access with Sense Publishers, where ESREA would subsidise a number of books each year, and terminating the contract with Peter Lang (SC 2011b).

Records indicate registered members of ESREA over the period 2007 – 2012 had increased from 108 to 187 (individuals, institutions and PhD students). PhD studentships had increased as an overall percentage and individual and institutional memberships also increasing.

### 2.3.9 International and European relations

ESREA was being invited to represent its research within Europe and internationally. As internal response ESREA clarified its policy through the Steering Committee (SC 2007a). This policy clarified that it could represent itself as organisation and respond to invitations to provide expertise to other continents, through delegations made by the Steering Committee. It would not participate as an entity in the conduct of projects (2009a). Delegations to Israel, Estonia (2007a) and Cyprus were made in 2008, and to South Korea, where ESREA co-sponsored a conference (SC 2008b).

### 2.3.10 Support for the mobility of members

Bilateral agreements between universities' of the Steering Committee members and Socrates- Erasmus were proposed as a way to strengthen cooperation and mobility for members (SC 2009a).

### 2.3.11 A question on the role of research

A question over the role of ESREA's research in relation to practices, policy-making and the general public was taken up by ESREA in this phase. The Steering Committee had returned to the question of ESREA as an organization and discussion of strategy at the beginning of 2011 (SC 2011a). There were plans for wider discussion of strategies related to its role for 2011-13, and an event for discussion by members, and potentially more widely (policy-makers, practitioners and researchers), over this question of role of adult education research.

A strategy discussion (2011-2013) had been held and draft plan for action discussed for finalization by the second half of 2011 (SC 2011b). The strategy for 2011-13 was discussed in Seville in 2012. There was to be clarification of the mission and context of ESREA, of 'outreach and recruitment activities; the main operational *modi* of ESREA, such as research networks and conferences; publishing activities; engaging in the training of young researchers and research capacity building; participation in policy formation, lobbying, and liaising with other organisations.' (SC 2012a). A version was agreed (SC 2012a) and was to be 'discussed widely among members of ESREA, namely among network convenors' (SC 2012a: no page). In 2013 there were plans for a new Steering Committee to be convened for 2014-16.

### 2.3.11 A research journal

As part of the strategy to increase the profile of ESREA's research internationally, in early 2008 the Steering Committee agreed that ESREA would support a scientific journal for adult education research (SC 2008a). Decisions were made that the journal would be sponsored by ESREA, take a European focus, and be open to international submissions, and the submission of papers for review in a variety of languages (SC 2008b). It was in 2010 that the first issue of an open access refereed research journal, entitled the *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* [RELA] was published on behalf of ESREA (ESREA 2010). The journal aimed to create a forum for the publication of critical research on adult education and learning. It publicises itself as focused on the important issues for adult education and learning in Europe 'as these emerge in connection with wider international and transnational dynamics and trends.' The journal argues language as a barrier to the communication of research carried out locally or regionally, in masking 'the richness of research knowledge, responses and trends from diverse traditions and foci.' The aim was for linguistic and open access to international and transnational debate in the field.

ESREA had aspiration to build a forum for the wider dissemination of European research on adult education from the early days. The first issue of the *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* (RELA) was published in 2010 (RELA 2010). Here the question of concern for the Steering Committee over the role of adult education research and its desire to stimulate debate on this topic was supported through the first edition, entitled 'Envisioning future research on the education and learning of adults'. The Editorial (Fejes & Salling Olesen 2010) introduces this theme. Author's argued that a new journal was justified as part of 'the emergence of a scientific community, very deeply embedded in societal practices at the same time as it is reconstructing intellectually these practices and their context as scientific objects' (Fejes & Salling Olesen 2010: 7), and as providing an arena for reflexive debate and discussion of these interrelationships for the emergence of that community. They advocated the forum as a reflexive space to discuss the direction and social purpose of research on the education and learning of adults for the future.

### 2.3.12 Election of a vice-Chair 2001-2013

Paua Guimaraes was elected as vice-Chair of ESREA in 2011 for a period 2011-2013.

### **3. THE TRIENNIAL CONFERENCES: AN EVOLUTION OF INTELLECTUAL AGENDA 1995-2013**

The pattern of research themes for ESREA triennial conferences in part traces ESREA's research interests and intellectual direction over the period from 1995 to the current time. Conference agendas tackle and frame the issues of interest for ESREAs members, in resonance with and contributing to wider agendas and debates of the field and in the context of an emerging policy emphasis in Europe on adult education and lifelong learning.

#### **3.1 ADULT LEARNING AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION 1995**

The first of ESREA's triennial European research conferences took place on 18-22 September 1995. It was held in Strobl, Austria at the Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung with financial support from the Adult Education section of the Ministry of Education and Arts, Vienna. The conference theme was 'Adult learning and social participation', and included working groups on: active citizenship; teaching and learning; the relationship between education and work; and educational participation. These working groups were reflective of thematic network research. In 1998, selected papers from this first ESREA triennial conference on adult learning and social participation were published (Bisovsky et al. 1995), and later also with Verband Wiener Volksbildung (Bisovsky et al. 1998).

#### **3.2 LEARNING TO LIVE IN THE LEARNING SOCIETY 1998**

A Learning Society for Europe had been a theme of the European Commission in 1996 (EC 1996). The second of ESREA's triennial European conference took up this theme in its name of 'Learning to Live in the Learning Society: Challenges and contradictions in adult learning'. The conference took place in 1998 at the Bruxelles campus of Université Louvain-le-Neuve, Belgium, and was organised by Etienne Bourgeois.

The conference was advertised on the CONFINTEA V, Con-nexus On line 03 Website (CONFINTEA V 1998), giving the themes for the conference as:

- 1) learning for work: employability, qualifications and the labour market;
- 2) learning in civil society: sociability and active citizenship;
- 3) learning in organizations: flexibility and competencies;
- 4) learning in the life course: access, learning careers and biography.

It was ESREA's first bi-lingual conference; many French-speakers attended and presented papers but there was no publication of papers (ESREA Secretary 1999). This second triennial conference was attended by more than 120 participants.

There have been now seven triennial conferences; five further: in Lisbon 2001 (3<sup>rd</sup>), Wroclaw 2004 (4<sup>th</sup>), Seville 2007 (5<sup>th</sup>), Linköping 2010 (6<sup>th</sup>) (ESREA/Humbolt University 2013), and the seventh in Berlin, 2013. The 2013 conference was co-funded by DFG (Deutsche Forschungs-gemeinschaft).

### **3.3 WIDER BENEFITS OF LEARNING: UNDERSTANDING AND MONITORING CONSEQUENCES OF ADULT LEARNING 2001**

A focus on understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning was taken forward at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Triennial ESREA research conference of 2001, in Lisbon. This conference was called: 'Wider Benefits of Learning: Understanding and Monitoring the Consequences of Adult Learning' (ESREA 2001).

Plenary presentation topics at this conference were 'Adult education and globalisation' (Torres, CA), 'Challenging academia' (Olesen HS), 'Recent Reforms in the Portuguese public policy for adult Learning: new demands for research' (Melo, A), 'Research on adult learning in Spain' (Fernandez FS), 'Research on adult learning in Brazil' (Weber S), 'Some comments on research paradigms and forms of validation' (Carre P), 'Comments to selection process and conference' (Antunes MH).

The workshop themes of this conference were: Enhancing access to learning throughout the lifespan; Health, psychological and social well-being among youngster and older adults; Personal development, relationships, gender and biographical competencies; Partnerships, families, neighbourhoods, communities and social movements; Work, employment opportunities, employability and labour market positions; Citizenship and active engagement in civil society; Generating social capital and cultural participation. These appear as aligned with the research interests of the thematic networks of the time.

### **3.4 OLD AND NEW WORLDS OF ADULT LEARNING 2004**

The ESREA 4<sup>th</sup> triennial conference proceedings were published in the edited text: 'Between 'old' and 'new' worlds of adult learning' (Bron et al. 2005a). The context for the research is represented in terms of old and new worlds of adult learning but also on adult education research in these terms. The old and new worlds as social settings were presented as requiring from researchers an openness of thinking and openness to research paradigms in exploring a new complexity:

A large number of the contributions in this book reveal and illuminate how 'worlds of adult learning both reflect contemporary changing societies but also individuals and their response to this; or, in other words, the subjects of learning and learning contexts. Every 'world of learning' is constructed in terms of both elements – the individual and social dimensions. They are constructed from the point of view of individuals and of society, of the play of history and of the possibilities offered to individuals by the distribution of knowledge in particular lives. The seemingly dualistic distinction between 'old' and 'new' worlds of adult learners requires some comment. Rigid and conclusive divisions are no longer valid, either in the sphere of learning or for that matter in research devoted to illuminating it. To understand the contemporary world, one needs 'openness of thinking' and paradigms that we – researchers, scholars, and participants of social life – can introduce and employ creatively in interrogating the complexity of our individual and social being. Learning is a process that is present in both old and newly established social settings. The 'new' worlds of learning do not simply replace the 'old' ones, or dominate them; rather they coexist, appear suddenly, often unexpectedly and sometimes prove temporary. This feature of a shifting scene of adult learning is not only a new challenge for research into learning, it is also an opportunity that gives scholars the possibility of conceptual reconstruction, methodological enrichment and the creation of new discursive possibilities.

(Bron et al. 2005b).

Change and the complexities of a new social world or order for learning and research (with the old and new lying alongside each other) were brought to the fore in this conference (4<sup>th</sup> Conference) in 2004. The challenge for research was represented as one full of possibility for enrichment – conceptually and methodologically.

### **3.5 ADULT LEARNING AND THE CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY 2007**

A theme in recognition of diversity was taken forward in both fifth and sixth triennial conferences. The first was held in 2007 and called 'Adult Learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity: Diverse lives, cultures'. The proceedings were edited by Lucio-Villegas & del Carmen Martinez and published in 2007: Lucio-Villegas, E. & del Carmen Martinez, M. (Eds.) (2007) Proceedings of the 5th ESREA European Research Conference. Adult Learning and the Challenges of Social and Cultural Diversity: Diverse Lives, Cultures, Learnings and Literacies. Vol. 1. Seville: Diálogos.

### **3.6 ADULT LEARNING IN EUROPE - UNDERSTANDING DIVERSE MEANINGS AND CONTEXTS 2010**

The 6<sup>th</sup> ESREA European Research Conference 2010 directly explored the question of adult education, lifelong learning or adult learning. Diversity was the focus in the research framing of concepts and differing contexts, emphasising situated research understandings – diversity, but also a necessity of understanding this made object for study.

Adult education or lifelong learning or adult learning? Debates about choice of words announce differences in what we conceive of as our research field. Not only do the concepts vary, but also the contexts which we think are proper study objects: it can be learning at work, civic education, formal adult education, higher education or folkbildning (popular/liberal adult education) or informal learning among adults. Behind these labels are practices, which have been shaped into local versions. We need to explore this diversity in order to better understand each other's research. By making differences understood we might be clearer about what we have in common.

(ESREA 2013j)

An emphasis on diverse situated versions and understandings of adult education learning contexts and research emerges through this sixth ESREA conference.

### **3.7 CHANGING CONFIGURATIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN TRANSITIONAL TIMES 2013**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Triennial ESREA European conference of Berlin in 2013 took the theme of 'Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times'.

The conference theme wants to stimulate critical research-focused discussions about the developments of adult education on national and European levels. How do we perceive scientifically these developments and their wider meaning? Where do we come from and where do we go with adult education? Which mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion can be observed? Why are we moving into these directions? What are the gains and losses? Which role does research presently play and what should be researchers' contributions? How can transitions and changing configurations be analyzed?

(ESREA 2013n: 1)

Keynote addresses at this conference were from Danny Wildermeersh, Katholieke Universiteit Lueven, Peter Mayo, University of Malta and Katarina Popovic, University of Belgrade. Wildermeersh identified the work of Ranciere as offering potential for the future directions of research in adult education:

the French philosopher Jacques Rancière has developed challenging answers to this question, while creating new perspectives on the meaning of emancipation. In his view, emancipation is not something to be achieved at the end of the educational process, but an assumption to depart from in various educational and arts practices. The inspiration that Rancière has brought also helps to redefine the meaning of commitment in the future of adult education

(ESREA 2013n: 6)

Mayo, in his address focused on a 'politics of indignation', highlighting alternative 'measures' for adult learning emerging from protest movements emerging from around the world in contemporary times (ESREA 2013n: 6). Popovic, in her keynote address argued that the science of adult education had given up asking the important questions of goal, meaning and values in transitions from the postmodernism to post-postmodernism, and no longer is able to support policy creation or contribute to the solutions to wider global issues. She asked whether adult education had lost its identity and purpose (ESREA 2013n: 6).

### 3.8 SUMMARY REFLECTION

The topics and sequence of triennial conferences (1995-2013) are telling in tracing the intellectual resources of ESREA's research conferences over a time of great change for adult education research in Europe and more widely. These intellectual resources are visible in the focus of these triennial conferences as forums for critical deliberation and engagement in relation to wider contexts and relationships and through its research aligned through the selected conference themes. Conferences have addressed issues related to adult learning and change in the learning and education environment as this became influenced through European policy action and wider social change.

Some identification of this environment from the mid-1990s has been important to these reflections. The wider context has been identified from key documents from the European policy domain, from contributions of authors to the Mauch Report (Mauch 1999) and various academic works from researchers close to ESREA (those presenting keynote addresses at its conferences or writing descriptions of or from research conferences). Emerging from this reflection is the suggestion of conferences creating distinctive intellectual resources as these have changed and transformed in relation to wider contexts and relationships.

#### **Summary reflection on ESREA's European triennial conferences (1995-2013):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> ESREA triennial conference (1995) – 'Adult learning and social participation'
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ESREA triennial conference (1998) – 'Learning to live in the learning society'
- 3<sup>rd</sup> ESREA triennial conference (2001) – 'Wider benefits of learning: understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning'
- 4<sup>th</sup> ESREA triennial conference (2004) – 'Between 'old' and 'new' worlds of adult learning'
- 5<sup>th</sup> ESREA triennial conference (2007) – 'Adult Learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity: diverse lives, cultures'
- 6<sup>th</sup> ESREA triennial conference (2010) – 'Adult learning in Europe – understanding diverse meanings and contexts'
- 7<sup>th</sup> ESREA triennial conference (2013) – 'Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times'

The first of ESREA's triennial conferences, in 1995, was concerned with regarding issues of learning for social participation. Called 'Adult learning and social participation', working groups presented and discussed research through this topic. The emphasis on adult learning rather than education in the title of this conference is perhaps significant as the name of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults might be taken to imply a focus on research on the education of adults. This emphasis on adult learning research in 1995 and for the next fifteen years of triennial conferences, then contributed to a wider turn to consider learning in the adult education research environment. The Commission of European Communities had emphasised learning for Europe a year earlier, through the idea of lifelong learning in 1994 (CEC 1994). This was a turn away from an earlier emphasis on adult education. Social participation came strongly on the political agenda only from 1997. This was through the UNESCO Hamburg Declaration (CONFINTEA V), which had gathered the support of Member States through regional meetings and participants from around the world (specialists from governments, NGOs, IGOs, UN bodies, research centres and universities and others) to draft and endorse an agenda document at the 7th International Conference on Adult Education. This Declaration focussed on learning and positioned education as a condition for full social participation. The emphasis on social participation for this first of ESREA's conferences thus positioned ESREA in debates ongoing in the wider political arena. The UIE was to follow up from this conference through policy and planning support to governments, support to regional and international thematic networks and consolidation of support (UIE 1997).

The second ESREA conference in 1998, turned again to the policy arena and changes being wrought in the field through the then agenda for a learning society in Europe. It had been in 1996 that lifelong learning emerged strongly within intra-national European and national policy vocabularies. The European Commission had declared 1996 the European Year of Lifelong Learning and argued for the learning society (EC 1996). It aimed to create awareness and debate over how education and training systems needed to change for the 21st century. Policy from the European Commission became focused from that year on building a learning society for Europe. The UNESCO Delors' Report, also in 1996 (Delors 1996), was seen as a 'landmark' by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in promoting a framework for lifelong learning (UIL 2009: 8). Thus, through this conference in 1998 ESREA took forward this topic for the focus of research presentation and critical discussion against a backdrop of wider activities for a learning society.

Those at the second conference considered 'learning to live' in the learning society in learning and research terms – a position allowing ambiguity of response by participants. Alheit offered a critical approach to the learning society in a keynote address. The learning society was to make necessary a continuation of research debate on the civil sector through a research programme for civil publics, akin to the work of popular education engaged in already by ESREA. This was proposed to focus on the learner through in-depth biographies and a matching of informal skills with the formal expectations. 'Future workshops' (Alheit 1999: 11-12) would draw from everyday life and the scientific community. Alheit's address, against the conference theme of 'Learning to live in the learning society' thus created a future intellectual direction for ESREA, responding to the new policy and wider changing environment. Pointing to research in popular education, civic engagement, biography, labour market research etc. as significant, Alheit suggested a critical reorientation for adult learning research. This was to draw from areas of ESREA's research expertise finding potential for future research within the learning society. The research papers presented at this conference were grouped in the subthemes: learning in work, civil society, organisations and the life course (CONFINTIA V 1998). Research through these research themes articulated responses to living with the learning society.

The third ESREA triennial conference was also responsive to the policy arena and changes through adult learning in the learning society. Held in 2001 and called 'Wider benefits of learning: understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning' the conference took up a theme of monitoring that had emerged as significant from the time

of the Hamburg Declaration on adult learning in 1997. The Declaration had endorsed a leading role for UNESCO in monitoring the implementation of its policy recommendations (UIL 1997: 31-30). By 1999 there had growing challenges to the research field. Duke reported a growing tension between adult education and university-based research (Duke, in Mauch 1999), through the increasing pull from policy towards applied and away from academic research. Thus, both a new policy environment of monitoring and a tension between adult education and university-based research were the wider context for this conference in 2001. The plenary sessions engaged critically with this context: 'Challenging academia', 'Recent reforms' and 'Some comments on research paradigms and forms of validation'. The research papers presented engaged with aspects of the wider benefits and consequences of learning in this context. Specifically they were to explore understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning. The research foci for presentation at the conference were: enhancing access to learning through the lifespan; health, psychological and social wellbeing; personal development, gender, relationships and biographical competencies; partnerships, families, neighbourhoods, communities and social movement; work, employment opportunities, employability and labour market positions; citizenship and active engagement in civil society, and; in generating social and cultural capital. Thus, encompassed presentations from ESREA's research networks in contributing research and supporting critical debate and discussion on the consequences of learning and monitoring this.

The fourth ESREA triennial conference in 2004, turned away from this focus on the learning society agenda for Europe to consider individual and social dimensions of change. 'Between 'old' and 'new' worlds of adult learning' was a call for research responding to new and complex times (Bron et al. 2005b). The new and old worlds were those of changing social settings and individuals and their responses to learning. Such worlds were identified as coexisting in sometimes unexpected and temporary ways, creating times of change and an invitation to research for: 'conceptual reconstruction, methodological enrichment and the creation of new discursive possibilities' (Bron et al. 2005b: no page). Change for this conference was thus positioned away from any policy related agenda. It was complicating the worlds of adult learning, the processes of learning involved and requiring both learners and researchers to reject previous conclusive divisions of thought. Past divisions were coexisting alongside new possibilities for learning, requiring a new openness of research thinking and paradigms. Research papers from this conference were provisionally gathered under the headings: learning and identity; adult learning and biographies, and; learning worlds and their (re)(de) constructions. These headings then indicative of emerging intellectual themes for ESREA and the wider adult education research field for research debate and analysis in more complex and provisional times. The 2004 conference research was positioned strongly in contributing to and responding to research for these new times.

The fifth and sixth triennial conferences in 2007 and 2010 were distinctive in a focus on socio-cultural diversity for adult learners and for research. They took diversity as theme in differing ways – first, social and cultural diversity (the 5th ESREA triennial conference was called 'Adult Learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity: diverse lives, cultures') and, second, diversity of meanings and contexts of adult learning (the 6<sup>th</sup> conference was called 'Adult learning in Europe – understanding diverse meanings and contexts'). The first conference considered the challenges of diversity for adult learning from a socio-cultural point of view and the second with a view to wider research debates about different conceptions emerging in the field between adult education, lifelong learning and adult learning. This emphasis on diversity in both cases clearly disrupted any interpretation of unity for adult learning or research. In these two ESREA conferences (2007 and 2010) understandings of adult learning and intellectual resources as diverse were emphasised, elaborated and disseminated. They were clearly distinctive in their engagement. Taken together they acted systematically to review the diversity of adult learning across cultures and lives and consider critically the diverse conceptions through which this learning was understood and the research field conceived. This latter through

the research themes and practices through which learning was being locally considered and supported (ESREA 2013j).

Themes of diversity and equality had been endorsed for adult learning by the Hamburg Declaration (1997). Garcia had in 1999 argued for the recognition of difference and equality for and through research. This was in his contribution to the UNESCO Institute Report of that year (Garcia, in Mauch 1999: 16). He proposed a communicative adult education research to counter a growing ethnocentrism and relativism of comparative research in recognition of difference and equality. An academic isolation of adult education research was detrimental, and to counter this greater research communication across contexts was needed. Almost a decade later then, the fifth and sixth triennial conferences of 2007 and 2010 focussed on generating research and debate through the theme of diversity in learning and research in adult learning against a wider history of debate of the need for this.

The seventh ESREA triennial conference, held in 2013, focused directly on adult education and the changing field. Called 'Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times', the conference was expressly intended to stimulate critical discussion about the development of adult education both nationally and at the European level (ESREA 2013n). It was concerned with the role of research and researchers. Emphasis was firmly placed on adult education rather than learning in its naming. This was the first time in ESREA's history that this triennial conference emphasis on research on education had been made. The conference was oriented to question of the European lifelong learning agenda. Its shaping of the field through new hybrid goals, actors, institutions and concepts raised questions of the appropriate scientific response from research and researchers. The keynote addresses took forward this question and issue for adult education. Wildemeersch's (ESREA 2013n) keynote address argued new theoretical avenues for research as resources for social emancipation and meaning for research into the future. Mayo (ESREA 2013n) argued a politics of indignation for adult education and research in relation to social movements today. Popovic (ESREA 2013n) presented a provocation that the science of education was powerless in addressing issues of policy creation and global problems and argued that adult education research had given up purpose, values and meaning. These were clear engagements with current and potential roles for research and researchers. Implied in these keynote presentations were close relations to the public through practice and research, research avenues for emancipatory and political engagement, and action on issues of current public and global concern. More than half the research presented at this conference took a focus on adult education.

A complex picture and history emerges. The first conference in 1995 took a theme of social participation and adult learning. This was prior to the writing of the Hamburg Declaration with its emphasis on social participation. The second and third conferences (1998, 2001), engaged in issues of the learning society and the wider benefits of learning and in understanding and monitoring the consequences of learning. This allowed critical engagement with issues emerging through the learning society agenda. This close and critical engagement from ESREA with wider changes being wrought through the European agenda was then primarily during the second half of the 1990s to the early 2000s. Subsequent triennial conferences were oriented quite differently. This was the case with the fourth conference, in 2004, called 'Between 'old' and 'new' worlds of adult learning' and the fifth and sixth conferences in 2007 and 2010 that took diversity as their theme in differing ways. These conferences were quite distinct from those earlier in their focus away from the policy and wider European lifelong learning arena. The fourth conference, focusing specifically for the first time directly on issues of changing 'worlds' of adult learning as change in societies and learners. The focus conference addressed issues, processes of learning and learning in contexts of social change - in the shifts between old and new worlds. Research generated from this conference was subsequently and provisionally grouped as research on identity, biography and structure. In the next two conferences the emphasis was on the challenges of social and cultural diversity in learning

and research. The fifth and sixth conferences focus on the socio-cultural and research. This acted in counter to any wider elision of diversity in the field of practice and research. The trajectory of these two conferences generated research valuing diversity and equity and pluralising understandings of adult education and research for the field. The last triennial research conference, in 2013, took stock of changing configurations of adult education research and practices in transitional times, specifically considering the role of research and researcher. This again was a distinctive and reflexive position, pointing to the influence of the European agenda in lifelong learning but refusing to engage with this through an emphasis on education and education research. This positioning participants to consider the influence of the European agenda on its own research and the role of research the researcher going forward.

The work of ESREA through these conferences has been one where it has constructed a research agenda variously in the light of a changing social and political environment throughout its history. In this it has found specific forms of engagement. Changes for the learner, learning, education, and research in relation to those of the wider policy and socio-cultural arenas have been researched, discussed and debated, critiqued or countered. There appear four distinct intellectual resources generated through this. First, with a close alignment and engagement with the policy arena is found direct and critical engagement within the wider European agenda for the learning society. This offered potential for contribution in shaping that agenda and close response. However, research then becomes influenced by hybrid concepts and concerns. Second, with focus on wider social and individual change, this resource offered intellectual focus and trajectory for the conceptual reconstruction, methodological enrichment and creation of new possibilities for research in response to wider change. A third positioning and resource was found where the focus was on socio-cultural diversity in learning and research. This was to value equity and diversity and focus on the plurality and pluralisation of research and its objects and understanding. This generated a trajectory supporting communication across research objects, cultures and paradigms. It pointed to the positioning of research as intellectual resources to counter influences from the wider policy reducing understandings of learning and resources available to research and researchers. A fourth resource and position was found in a turn to focus reflexively on the influence of the European learning agenda, refusing to take up the concept of learning from that agenda and considering the possibilities of and for adult education research in the field. This allowed consideration of the future of research and the researcher in relation to intellectual resources specific to adult education and wider issues of current and future public and global concern.

#### 4. AN EVOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THEMATIC RESEARCH NETWORKS 1991-2013

The focus of research networks on particular themes has reflected the interests of those individuals who proposed the networks, gave support for them, and the endorsement by the Steering Committee of the time. The 2004 website notes that 'Members of ESREA may at any time propose the establishment a new network to the ESREA Steering Committee'. Networks are now proposed through a document, including indication of support for them and a provisional work programme. These research network themes are thus notable in the timing of their emergence, their focus and transformations. They are summarized below in this section in order of their recorded emergence. They were, in outline:

1. 'Cross-cultural influences in the history of European adult education' (1991- ) initiated by Friedenthal-Haase, Marriot and Hake and convened by Hake. This network changed its name to 'The history of adult education and training in Europe' (2008 - ) and is now convened by Laot and Ahonen.
2. 'Active democratic citizenship and adult learning' appears to have been informally in existence from before 1991 but held its first formal conference in 1994 in Wroclaw, Poland (ESREA 1997). Convenors were listed in 1998 as Bron, Malewski and Field, and the network is now convened by Bron, Guimaraes and Aberg.
3. 'Social movements and the history of the education of adults', chaired from 1991 by Field, Hake and Taylor. There are no details recorded on this early network.
4. 'Residential adult education and popular movements' (1992-3), convened by Schuller and Toumisto.
5. 'Life history and biographical research' (1992- ), convened by Alheit, Bron and Dominicé, current convenors West and Formenti.
6. 'Adult education and the labour market' (1992- ), convened initially by Lenz and Lima and in 2007 by Salling Olesen. This network focused on the labour-market was reconvened as the 'Working life and learning' network (appearing in 2004) convened by Forrester, and, currently, Bohlinger, Haake, Helms Jørgensen, Toiviainen and Wallo.
7. 'Migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia', convened by Apitzsch. This network met in 1992 and fell due to retirement of the convenor (ESREA 2004). It now exists under the same name (2012- ) convened by Morrice, Warren, Sprung, Ortega and Ligus.
8. 'Continuing professional education' (1994-1997), convened by Chivers, was renamed 'Adult educators, trainers and their professional development' (2009- ) convened now by Zarifis, Jogi and Juette.
9. 'Access, equity, participation and organizational change' (1996-) was established by Duke, Bourgeois and Merrill, subsequently renamed 'Access for adult students to higher education' (2002-) and 'Access, learning careers and identities' (2006-) convened now by Merrill and Galimberti.

10. 'Gender issues and adult education' (1996 and 1999- ) was convened initially by Klasson (1997) and then Ollagnier (1999- ), then changed name to 'Gender and adult education' now convened by Ostrouch-Kamińska.
11. 'Older learners' (1997- ) was convened by Percy and Withnall. This 'network... held meetings irregularly on three occasions' (ESREA 2004, no page) and was renamed first 'Learning later in life' and then 'Education and learning of older learners' (2009- ) as convened by Schmidt-Hertha, Tikkanen and Hansen.
12. 'Adult basic education, literacy and numeracy', a network theme under this name is recorded (ESREA 1997: no page) as convened by Dr Pierre Freynet CUFCA in 1997.
13. 'Between global and local: adult learning and development' (2006- ) convened now by Lucio-Villegas, Kurantowicz and Evans.
14. 'Policy studies in adult education' (2010- ) convened by Milana, Holford and Spolar.

Whilst some networks were successfully initiated and survived, others failed to be taken forward over the ensuing years. This is significant in signalling the direction of research interest and intellectual evolution. The thematic networks focusing on social and popular movements and called 'Social movements and the history of the education of adults' (1991) and 'Residential adult education and popular movements' (1992) were not in the end carried forward, although may have been subsumed under other networks. A research network 'Adult basic education, literacy and numeracy', listed in 1997 with Freynet as contact was no longer listed from 1999.

#### **4.1 CROSS-CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN ADULT EDUCATION**

A network conducting research into cross-cultural influences in the history of European adult education was initiated in 1991 by Martha Friedenthal-Haase, Tübingen/Leipzig, Stuart Marriot, Leeds, and Barry J. Hake (ESREA 2004). These researchers were identified as interested in University Extension as means for trans-national reform movement throughout Europe. The aim of the network in this first phase was to bring together historians' research in the history of the role of social movements in adult learning in Europe (ESREA 2004). In 2004 the ESREA website (ESREA 2004 no page) describes the work of this network to that time:

Since 1991 this network has brought together historians of adult education with active research interests in the history of the role of social movements in the cross-cultural dissemination and reception of innovations in adult education and adult learning throughout Europe. The major focus of the network's research activities has been upon the historical period 1880-1930, which was an important formative period throughout Europe in establishing the organised responses by the working-class and women's movements to challenge the provision of adult education by bourgeois and philanthropic organisations in the public sphere. Recurring themes have included: university extension, folk high schools, workers' education, women's education, labour camps, Christian Socialism, Social Catholicism, Free Masonry, Anarcho-syndicalism and the Third International, etc. The network is primarily organised in the form of research seminars which enable a maximum of 25 researchers and PhD students to intensively and critically discuss the results of their ongoing historical research. The publication of a series of volumes of selected and edited papers has been a continuing priority for this network.

The early focus was thus directed to the role and history of social movements in cross-cultural innovations, particularly on the period 1880–1930, and specifically focussed on the educational activities of workers' and women's movements. By 1998 (ESREA Secretary 1999), this network had held seminars in Leiden (1991), York (1992), Strobl (1993); Salamanca (1994); Strobl (1996); Frankfurt (1997). It was hoped to hold a 1999 seminar in Gothenberg.

In 2004, it was reported on the ESREA website (ESREA 2004: no page) that there was to be an informal meeting to discuss the future of the research network for the following five years, at the next ESREA European Research Conference at the University of Wroclaw. In 2006 there was a further meeting of the network held in Sorbonne chaired by Hake and Laot. However, after the Sorbonne seminar Hake retired, and in 2006 the network was renamed to reflect a wider focus:

By 2006, the network had organized seven research seminars and published several books founding on these seminars. After the 2006 seminar in Paris, and the retirement of Barry Hake from his position at University of Leiden, Dr. Francoise F. Laot from Paris Descartes, Professor Anja Heikkinen and researcher Kirsi Ahonen from Tampere decided to suggest the revitalization of the network with new conveners and with an updated and more extensive title. The remodelled network is intended to provide wider perspectives for research on the history of adult education and the ways that history impacts today's policies and practices, as well as a forum for scholars examining these topics.

(Ahonen undated: no page)

From 2006-2012 the conveners of this ESREA history research network were Dr. Francoise F. Laot and K. Ahonen (Ahonen undated). Kirsi Ahonen, Department of History and Philosophy, University of Tampere, Finland, described a wider thematic focus for the revised network. The early emphasis on research into the history of cross-cultural influences was lost. The new focus became one of the histories of research approaches from differing cultural locations and their wider interplay.

The network is now described in 2012 as organizing seminars every second year, either alone or in co-operation with national networks and encouraging members to attend other national and international conferences. Historical and cultural factors are seen to be commonly ignored in adult education policies, practices and mainstream research. They are also marginal in politics- and in market-driven research in EU-projects, in university departments and institutes. Therefore, the network supports participants to strengthen historical research on adult education in their home locations and the interplay with historical research and research on current state of adult education in general.

(Ahonen undated: no page)

The network, by 2012, was named 'The history of adult education and training in Europe', reflecting this change of intellectual focus.

Emphasising the significance of international influences in the practice and research of adult education, and highlighting the importance of previous cross-cultural and comparative perspectives, Ahonen described political and economic change, globalization and transnationalisation as the new context for research for this network (Ahonen undated). Emphasising that early research had revealed the extent of the cultural diversity and conceptual differences involved, this diversity and these differences were now to constitute the new focus for the network. The work moved towards diverse research approaches, responding to wider contextual changes from the beginning of the 1990s:

The field of adult education has expanded and the boundaries between different forms of adult learning and adult education provision are blurred today... historical research helps us to understand the diversified field of current adult education which is the outcome of processes containing numerous initiatives, practices and institutions by different kinds of actors. It is necessary to analyze the ways in which different social groups have been, and still are, involved in educational activities as well as which kind of position in society and which kind of aspirations concerning adult education they have had.

(Ahonen undated: no page)

#### 4.2 ACTIVE DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND ADULT LEARNING

Prior to 1991 and the establishment of ESREA, researchers from Europe met at a conference in Wroclaw University, Poland, at a conference on adult education as social movement. This is identified as the informal start to this thematic research network, constituted formally in 1994 through a further meeting in Wroclaw. This network has continued to be active from that time and continues today as the ESREA Network on 'Active democratic citizenship and adult learning'. The text from the ESREA 2004 website described the early network and identified its meetings to that time and the current network description repeats this text with an update on meeting held:

The network has been in existence since the early 1990s, has carried out numerous seminars, and has been recognised as one of the most active and productive networks within ESREA. Prior to the establishment of ESREA in 1991 adult education researchers from Europe met at the conference organised by Wroclaw University in Poland on the theme: Adult Education as a Social Movement. This was effectively the beginning of the ESREA network which held its first meeting 1994 in Wroclaw, Poland. After that, several meetings were held - in 1997 Strobl, Austria, in 1999 Poznan, Poland, in 2001 Bochum Germany, and in 2003 Leuven, Belgium.

(ESREA 2004: no page)

The network then held its first meeting 1994 in Wroclaw, Poland, after which several meetings were held every second year, although its members were identified also as meeting outside these, and as having collaborated in research and in publication. They met in 1997 Strobl, Austria, in 1999 Poznan, Poland, in 2001 Bochum, Germany, and in 2003, in Leuven on the theme: *Connections: Active Citizenship and Multiple Identities* (jointly organised by the ESREA and the Solgace Research Consortium). In 2003, members met in Leuven, Belgium (ESREA 2004) and later, in 2007, in Tallin and Braga.

The early network is described as established 'as a challenge to the breakdown of the East and Central Europe under Soviet influence' (ESREA 2004: no page). The convenor of the early network was listed on the ESREA website as Dr Agnieszka Bron, Department of Education, Stockholm University between 1997 to 2006 (ESREA 1997 & 2004).

In stating its aims and themes in 2004, text from the research network's 1998 second edited research collection is drawn on:

Adult education and active citizenship have a long history of interaction and cross-fertilisation. Europe's recent past provides a myriad of examples of a mutually sustaining partnership between the practices and institutions of adult learning, on the one hand, and of active civic engagement, on the other hand. Think of the coffee shops of eighteenth century London and Rotterdam, the struggle for a free press, or the creation of public libraries and museums,

as well as the founding of many local and voluntary associations for bourgeois, popular or working-class enlightenment. Yet if we move from past to present, the relationship becomes much less certain. Is this one more example of a modernist project, now losing its relevance and purpose in a more individualistic and fragmented society? On the contrary: European research into active citizenship and adult learning is flourishing, partly in least because the questions that it addresses are as lively and as challenging as ever.

(Bron et al. 1998, ESREA 2004, no page)

By 2007, the network convenor was convened by Michal Bron Jr, Södertörn Univ. College, Stockholm. This network continues, now convened by Dr Michal Bron Jr, Paula Guimarães, University of Minho, Portugal, and Pelle Åberg, Ersta Sköndal Univ. College, Stockholm (ESREA 2013).

#### **4.3 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS**

A social movements and history of the education of adults research network was set up in ESREA's first year (1992), chaired by John Field (Warwick), Barry Have (Leiden) and Dick Taylor (Leeds). This network is listed in an article offering news of the founding of ESREA in December 1992 (Anon, in Faulstick-Wieland et al. 1992).

#### **4.4 RESIDENTIAL ADULT EDUCATION AND POPULAR MOVEMENTS**

A research network on 'Residential adult education and popular movements was initially chaired (1992) by Tom Schuller (Edinburgh) and Jukka Toumisto (Tampere) (Anon, in Faulstick-Wieland et al. 1992: 112). A network seminar was held in 1993, with the Folk High School Valla and University of Linköping, Sweden. It explored the theme of the mobilization of social participation through popular education: 'Popular education and the mobilization of social participation in Europe'.

#### **4.5 LIFE-HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH**

The aim of activities for a life-history and biographical research network, established in the early 1990s (ESREA 2004) was to bring scholars with a range of disciplinary backgrounds and diverse approaches together. The early convenors of the network were Alheit, Bron and Dominicé.

A statement of the history of this network itemizes the first and second meetings held and indicates annual conferences between 1994 and 2004 (ESREA 2004). Network seminars were thus from 1993 - Geneva (1993), Vienna (1994), Geneva (1995), Rome (1996) and Geneva (1997). A 1998 seminar at Verona was cancelled and the next seminar planned for late 1999/early 2000.

The first and second meetings of the network were held ... with over 100 adult education researchers from all over Europe. Peter Alheit and Pierre Dominicé were leading players in establishing the network and have played a prominent role throughout its history.

(ESREA 2004: no page)

By 2004, collaborative research on this theme had been productive and had: 'led to a number of collaborative research projects, some of which have been financed by the European Union' (ESREA 2004: no page). In 2004, a meeting was held jointly with the Biography and Society section of the International Sociological Association and involvement of some members in a life history research project at Roskilde. As an

outcome of annual research conference network meetings, members were in 'regular contact with each other at other times with relation to publications and research projects' (ESREA 2004: no page).

Two publications related to network activities were listed on the 2004 ESREA website as Alheit et al. (1995) and a West et al. (forthcoming) (ESREA 2004). The second of these texts, published in 2007, provides detail of the intellectual work of the network: 'It contributed to the 'development of life-history and biographical methods in different European countries as well as providing examples of current research and debate surrounding differing methodological and theoretical paradigms in the field' (West et al. 2007: 12).

The research of the edited collection was aimed at experienced researchers in education and the social science widely and to support research and research students in a focus of research on the learner experience:

... aimed at a experienced researchers in education and the social sciences more widely', was to support people in developing their understanding of biographical and life-history research, and in particular students in PhD and Masters programmes. Its purpose was to support the stimulation of learning cultures across professional communities, including education, guidance and health care and a range of other professional settings' (West et al. 2007: 12) It aimed also at further understanding of learning through a focus on learner experience 'to enhance ... understanding of the nature of adult and lifelong learning by focusing on experience as seen through the eyes of learners', both for professionals and policy makers.

(West et al. 2007: 12)

The intellectual resources developed through this network were positioned as distinctive in tackling questions of the experience of learning, in promoting learning cultures across professional contexts, and with regard to learning 'in developing understanding of its 'nature'' (West et al. 2007: 12). Thus, the focus was on research into the experience of learning, in understanding learning cultures and learning.

There is mention from this network of its strong influence in the development of biographical and life story approaches to research in adult education and more widely in contribution to a 'biographical turn' in the human sciences and adult education (West et al. 2007). This turn is expressed as a reaction against other forms of research and theories, lacking exploration of the agency and meaning making of participants:

... partly to be understood as a reaction against forms of research which marginalised the perspectives of subjects themselves or reduced subjective processes, including learning, to overly abstract entities. It is also a reaction against theories of learning and other forms of social behaviour perceived as largely determined processes in which notions of agency and meaning making were dismissed as inconsequential.

(West et al. 2007: 12).

This turn is positioned as having been supported by a growing influence of American symbolic interactionism and postmodern epistemological perspectives (West et al. 2007), as contributing to and supporting a move towards biographical approaches in adult education; promoting and engaging with the investigation of agency and meaning in learning through the experience of learners as subjects.

The Place and Social Capital and Learning International Observatory (PASCAL) website (PASCAL 2009) records the theme of the 2009 conference for this network as of 'Wisdom and knowledge in researching and learning lives: diversity, difference and commonalities'.

Here the difference and diversity of research approaches, along with commonalities are a new theme:

... 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.... 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.

(PASCAL 2009: no page)

By 2013, the network had explored in its conferences (Milano, Vaxjö, Geneva, Odense and Canterbury) learner experience as a focus of adult education and learning that had been previously under-examined: 'areas of research and practice in life history and biography/ autobiography/ auto/ biography' that were understood as neglected (ESREA 2013d: no page). The convenors and organizer of the 2014 conference describe life history and biography research as a field or fields 'very much characterised by schools of practice, by national boundaries' (ESREA 2013d: no page). They invite network participants for 2014 to cross boundaries of country-specific cultures in research and linguistic barriers.

#### **4.6 ADULT EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET**

This network was convened by Werner Lenz (Grz) and Licino Lima (Braga) in 1992. Seminars for the 'Adult education and labour market network' had been held in Ljubljana (1993), Strobl (1995), Leeds (1997). The researchers focused on learning and education specifically on work or in terms of a wider societal and labour market relations (ESREA 2004, no page) and were politically engaged: 'Participants in the network have typically been politically engaged researchers who were interested in the practical perspectives of their research'.

By 1997, the convenor of this early network appears as Salling Olesen, Adult Education Research Group, Roskilde University Centre. In 1998, a seminar was held at Dubrovnik, and in 1999 again in Dubrovnik. There were sixth and seventh conferences (2000, 2002) held in Sevilla and Roskilde (ESREA Secretary 1999).

At the seminar in Dubrovnik, in 1999, the theme for this network appears to have been renewed as part of a process to engage with an expanding area of adult education, offering a new domain for research:

This thematic outline has been the framework of 4 seminars. At the 4th seminar it was decided to rewrite it - and to let the discussion of the thematic renewal be an important part of the 5th seminar in Dubrovnik, May 10-14, 1999.

In spite of the very different traditions and structures of adult and continuing education in the European countries, it seems to be a common tendency that

the relation between adult education with some direct relation to work and labour market is becoming very important. Continuing education with a direct aim of work qualification, career and labour market effects is in many countries the fastest growing area of adult education. Companies, public employers and labour market organizations play an increasing role in defining and organizing adult education in several countries. And in liberal and general adult education, the reference to labour market and work seems to play an increasing role. This is also true in countries, where these sectors have been strong and have had their own life separated from work life, referring much more to cultural and private spheres.

New groups of learners are becoming active in adult and continuing education. Along with new aims and new institutions it means a vast expansion in the possible and desirable study area of adult education research. Furthermore these developments do reshape the whole material and conceptual framework of adult and continuing education. So not only do they add new fields of study and interest, to the well-known ones; they also present a challenging need to rethink the purposes, the societal functions and the basic concepts of adult and continuing education.

In ESREA there is an identified interest in forming a network within this field - partly in order to connect and learn from the each other in relation to the development in the practical adult and continuing education, partly in order to start a "cultivating process" for a new and expanding area of research.

(ESREA 2001: no page, in ESREA 1997<sup>6</sup>)

This new domain for research in adult and continuing education was identified through a series of sub-headings for seminar discussion: 1 Qualification and work process research; 2 Labour market policy, (un) employment and adult education; 3 Instruction methods, concepts of teaching and teacher qualification; 4 Professionalism and career studies; trade unions and trade union education, and; Working class culture and workers' enlightenment.

The network appears renamed, by 2004, as the research network on 'Working life and learning'. Keith Forrester had joined Salling Olesen as convenor. Under this new network title the convenors tied together as they explained the old and new research aims through the shift in title: 'The research network on Adult Education and the Labour Market is based on a double commitment of developing a new interdisciplinary research field and involving in political and practical collaboration and discussion. This commitment ties together a plurality of topics as well as theoretical and methodological approaches.' (ESREA 2004, no page)<sup>7</sup> Social exclusion, learning experience and social practice, workplace democracy self-regulation and trade unions and civil society, and socialization by work are at this time identified as a thematic framework for the research of the network going forward. There is noted a shift over the years between 1993 and 2004 from the early political engagement to 'a more theoretical and methodological interest in the development of the research area as such' (ESREA 2004).

In 2004, 2005 and 2007, it held research network conferences under this new name in the UK, Poland, and again the UK respectively (ESREA 2013c). This thematic network title

---

<sup>6</sup> This text is available at the 'Adult education and the labour market' network description, June 2001, accessed in ESREA 1997 through a link entitled 'Thematic review of the network'.

<sup>7</sup> This text is found under the link 'Networks' (ESREA 2004).

appears in the minutes of the ESREA Steering Committee meetings from 2005. In 2008 (SC 2008: 2) the network was again to be undergoing change:

The convenors are working on a book for Peter Lang based on previous conferences. Keith Forrester, one of the convenors, will be retired soon, and some of the others in the core group. Therefore, the network will face some changes in the future. Next conference will take place in relation to the Researching work and leaning conference June 28-July 1 2009.

(SC 2008a: 2-3)

The 'Working life and learning' network appears to have been later re-launched at a seminar in 2011 (Ibero-American Research Network on Educational Policies (RIAIPE 2014). The convenors in 2011 to the present appear as Sandra Bohlinger, Germany, Ulrika Haake, Sweden, Christian Helms Jørgensen, Denmark, Hanna Toiviainen, Finland, Andreas Wallo, Sweden.

The ambition of this research network is now to a diversity of interdisciplinary perspectives and traditions, theoretical and methodological approaches and emerging and growing areas of research focus regarding working life and learning:

The blend of new and old research network on Working Life and Learning has an ambition to gather researchers from different perspectives and research traditions in relation to its topics. The field of Working Life and Learning is both interdisciplinary and complex and opens up for a plurality of topics as well as theoretical and methodological approaches. It is the intention to address traditional areas of working life as well as emerging and growing areas like welfare professions and business service.

(ESREA 2013c: no page)

A second international conference from the re-launched network on 'Working life and learning' was to be held in University of Osnabrück, Germany in 2014. This conference was to discuss 'workplace learning and development in times of globalization and uncertainty' (RIAIPE 2014: no page), emphasising flexible and individual learning and work, lifelong learning, professional and skills development and new global objectives of activity, ethics and learning. The focus was to be on adult and lifelong learning as well as vocational education and training.

#### **4.7 MIGRATION, ETHNICITY, RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA**

The ESREA network on Migration, Ethnicity, Racism and Xenophobia was intended to address issues for adult learning that arise from the significant consequences of patterns of world-wide migration to European societies and between the member states in the enlarged European Union. This network met on an irregular basis during the 1990s while a restart with 2002 was unsuccessful due to the unexpected early retirement of the new convenor.

(ESREA 2004: no page)

The early focus of the network had thus been on issues for adult learning arising from patterns of migration. The convenor of this early network was Apitzsch. Seminars of the network were held in Strobl (1994), Frankfurt (1995) and Rome (1996), and in 1998 a seminar was held in Vienna, 27-29 November (ESREA Secretary 1999). However the Migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia network was restarted in 2002 and then ceased because of the retirement of its convenor. By 2004, ESREA was actively searching for new convenors for this network.

The network has been now newly convened. It held a conference in 2012, convened by Linda Morrice, University of Sussex, Simon Warren, The University of Sheffield and Annette Sprung, Universität Graz, Karl-Franzens-University Graz and Rozalia Ligus, University of Lower Silesia in Wroclaw (ESREA 2013e).

This thematic network is now specifically reoriented to research resources for the construction of solidarity:

The network aims to create a space to explore the articulation of adult education with the themes of migration, ethnicity and xenophobia. In the process we hope to encourage democratic and critical dialogue between socially committed adult education scholars seeking to develop theoretical and methodological resources that can contribute to the formation of a 'solidarity from below' in the rapidly changing context of Europe and adult education.

(ESREA 2013e: no page)

This shift in emphasis appears significant in return to an early focus for ESREA on social change through the development of research resources to this purpose.

#### **4.8 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

An ESREA 'Continuing professional education network' (CDP) is documented during the mid/late-1990s. There are references to this network in records in 2002 and early 2003 (ESREA 2004). The convenor was identified as Geoff Chivers (Sheffield University, UK) (ESREA Secretary: 1999). The network held meetings in London (1994); Leiden (1995); Bruxelles (1996) and Vienna (1997). The 1999 meeting was to take place at Tampere.

There is now a renewed ESREA research network on 'Adult educators, trainers and their professional development' continuing the older theme (ESREA/ReNADET undated). It has a focus for research on the improvement of conditions for the development of adult educators, thereby to improve the attractiveness and quality of the profession: 'input on how to improve the conditions needed for the personal and professional development of adult educators and trainers, enhancing the attractiveness of their profession and therefore strengthening the idea of quality in adult education in Europe' (ESREA/ReNADET undated, no page). The network has three aims related to this focus. These are:

To bring forward the experience from all around Europe, on issues pertaining to the multiple roles, practices and settings in which adult educators and related staff act and grow, to report on current European projects and stimulate research in this area, to explore the ways in which policies develop and analyse their possible impact.

(ESREA/ReNADET undated: no page).

The convenors are in 2013 going forward were identified as Geogios Zarifis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, Larissa Jogi, Tallinn University, Estonia, and Wolfgang Juette University of Bielefeld in Germany.

#### **4.9 ACCESS, EQUITY, PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

A network on 'Access research' was established in 1996 by Chris Duke, Etienne Bourgeois and Barbara Merrill. The first network conference was held at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom, in 1996. The network was convened by Barbara Merrill (UK), and by 1998 had held meetings in Leeds (1997) and Barcelona (1998) (ESREA Secretary, 1999).

The early thematic research focus on access, participation and higher education changed after the first three conferences (Merrill 2011). It appears that this focus was subsequently widened to consider access across a range of adult learning contexts:

Initially the network focused on issues relating to the access of adults to higher education. The second and subsequent conferences broadened the basis to a wider notion of access and the network now looks at access issues in adult and community education, vocational education, further and higher education within a European context. Access is also interpreted to take into account both access to and experiences within educational institutions. The network provides a forum for adult educators to discuss and debate access in relation to theory, policy and practice.

(ESREA 2004: no page)

Since the Secretariat 1998 Report (ESREA Secretary 1999) a further network conference took place at the University of Barcelona, two in Spain (1998 and 2000), one at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland (2003), one at Louvain University, Belgium (December 2006), and one at the University of Seville Spain (December, 2008). The convenors appear now as Dr Barbara Merrill, University of Warwick, UK, Andrea Galimberti, Milano Bicocca University, Italy, with a renamed network from 2006: 'Access, learning careers and identities'.

The new research focus continues that of the 2002 network – where access incorporates both access to and experiences in a range of educational settings. However, this is now reconfigured as a focus oriented towards learning careers and identities, differing conceptual approaches to understanding these and issues of structure and agency in understanding the socio-economic positions of learners (ESREA 2013b).

#### **4.10 GENDER ISSUES AND ADULT EDUCATION**

ESREA envisaged establishing a gender research network from the beginning of its activities in 1991, but it was in 1996 that it became founded and established:

... it was only in 1996, during an international conference on education in Sweden, that Agnieszka Bron, Stockholm University, Barbara Merrill, Warwick University, and Edmée Ollagnier, Geneva University took the initiative to activate the ESREA gender network during a friendly lunch in a Viking village. During the ESREA European Research Conference in Brussels in September 1998, concrete decisions were made and future activities planned.

(ESREA 2013f: no page)

The first conference of the gender network was in 1999 (University of Coimbra: 2012). Ollagnier (CH) was the convenor of this research network in 1998 (ESREA Secretary 1999). The first conferences were held in Bochum 1999, Geneva 2001 and Wroclaw 2004 (as a post ESREA conference). There were meetings in Geneva (2005), Olsztyn (2007) and Hull (2009) as a result of which three books are reported as published (ESREA 2013k): Dyybroe Betina, Ollagnier Edmée (ed.) (2003) *Challenging gender in lifelong learning: European Perspectives*, Copenhagen, Roskilde University Press, Oustrouch Joanna and Ollagnier Edmee (ed.) (2008) *Researching Gender in Adult Education*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang and Oustrouch Kaminsk-Joanna, Fontanini Christine and Gaynard Sheila (ed.) (2012) *Considering Gender in Academia: (In)visible Act*, Wroclaw, Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSW. The last conference listed was held in Montpellier 2011 (Coimbra 2012).

The network sets its aim for research by contrast to work on gender issues in the wider educational sciences. Rather than focus on the gender dimension of formal education and the socialization of children, as in the educational sciences, this network, by 2012, focused specifically on gender in adult education in Europe and on 'theoretical aspects such as gendered learning, gender in higher education, gendered biographies, masculinities-femininities, gender in adult training, but also in terms of their methodological dimensions' (University of Coimbra, 2012: no page; ESREA 2013f: no page).

#### **4.11 OLDER LEARNERS**

The convenors of a research network on 'Older learners' were identified as Keith Percy (Lancaster University, Department of Adult and Continuing Education) and Alexandra Withnall, UK (ESREA 1997), although Withnall is also listed to be with the School of Postgraduate Medicine, Keele University. Seminars had been held at Strobl (1996) and then in 1998 in Budapest. A name change in 1997, from 'Older Learners' to 'Learning in later life' appeared in the records (ESREA 1997). Granada (ESP) was identified as the potential location for the research network in 1999.

Two ESREA European research networks have enjoyed a less stable pattern of development although they are concerned with key developments in European learning societies. The ESREA network on Older Learners is intended to address issues associated with the learning activities of older learners, their active participation in civil society and the threat of social exclusion, which are increasingly important issues in ageing European societies. This network has held meetings irregularly on three occasions.

(ESREA 2004: no page)

In 2005 (SC 2005a) the network had been without a convenor, and, by 2009, a new network proposal had been worked out by Bernard Schmidt-Hertha (Munich), Tarja Tikkanen (Stavanger) and Leif Emil Hansen (Roskilde). This network, in 2009, again took up the theme of older learners with a name change to 'Education and learning of older adults' (ESREA 2013g: no page).

A first conference called 'Demographic change and the education of older adults', was identified in the 2010 issue of the ESREA/ReNADET newsletter (Zarifis 2010). Demographic change was identified as positioning older learners as an increasingly significant population for research for adult education for the future. The network was positioned to support research to identify and respond to a broad shift in demographics by forging a new focus for adult education research in this area. This network was active from 2010 with conferences in 2010 (Munich), 2011 (Braga), 2012 (Ljubljana) and plans for a conference in 2013 in Lithuania.

The emphasis for the research of this network, in 2013, was oriented through the problem of aging populations:

According to an international comparative study by the German Institute for Old-Age Planning (DIA, 2005), the aging of society, at least for Japan, US and European countries, presents a similar problem in these nations, but with differing rates of progression. While these developments take a very moderate form in the US, they are leading to a massive increase in the section of population over 60 years of age in that country. Currently, people over 60 make up 17% of the population in the US, 27% in Japan, and 25% in Germany (United Nations, 2005).

(ESREA 2013g: no page)

The ESREA network emphasised two ways to stimulate adult education for such populations: adult education to support the increasing number of older workers and support more widely for continuing health and independence (ESREA 2013g). The aims of the network 'Education and learning of older adults,' indicated in 1913 from the website, were to bring together experience on this topic, to report on projects, stimulate research, generate new European projects, inform policymakers and foster cross-disciplinary dialogue.

#### **4.12 BETWEEN GLOBAL AND LOCAL: ADULT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

There was a first meeting, held in 2006, and of a new research network called 'Between global and local: adult learning and development', which now meets annually. It is currently convened by Emilio Lucio-Villegas, University of Seville, Spain, Ewa Kurantowicz, University of Lower Silesia, Poland and Rob Evans, University of Magdeburg, Germany.

This network aims to bring together researchers with a focus on research into the relationships between development and learning at different scales – global and local. The network aim is to encourage research on development and the role of adult learning as central to this:

In our perspective different scales of development should be analysed together, clearly identifying the global and regional/ local dimensions of it. It involves educational processes and opportunities for social change, focusing people's autonomy and emancipation. We hope therefore to create a network capable of encouraging research on development in globalization context, territorial/ micro-scale approaches, urban and rural studies, regenerating communities, learning places and spaces, regional development and planning. Above all, we would like that all these themes could show the central role of adult learning in the processes of development.

(ESREA 2013h: no page)

This network has been active since its founding in 2006, with a first meeting in that year in Faro, Portugal, and further meetings in 2008 (Wroclaw), 2009 (Magdeburg), 2010 (Seville) and 2013 (Ghent).

#### **4.13 POLICY STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION**

A new policy network called ESREA network on 'Policy studies in adult education' was approved in 2009 (SC 2009a). It aims to develop a forum of research experts committed to communication and development of research regarding the development and impact of policies on adult education and the research of policy for adult education (ESREA 2013h). This group of researchers aim to discuss the state of research and policy from different perspectives, so as to encourage systematic and comparative criticism of policies in adult education, to develop research both for and of policy, and the methodological and epistemological development for this work. They aim to develop strategy to advance research on policy issues related to adult learning and education and of the European Union's role in policy in this area. They intend to identify specific research foci for the advancement of these aims and to prepare grant proposals for empirical research projects.

The context for this research theme is described as a transnationalisation of education and pressure for policy relevant research having led to that for economically useful information (ESREA 2013h). The importance of resisting such pressure thus positions the research of this network. A danger is expressed in that relevant policy research might be defined in this way, politicising science and limiting it. A growing tension between policy, practitioners and researchers in adult education is noted as evident in this field, in

particular in that research is ‘deeply fragmented and weakly institutionalized’ (ESREA 2013h: no page). Although information on impact and evaluation arising from lifelong learning policies in the early 1990s had offered an information base of the impact of adult education and the success or otherwise of policies, this is noted within the network description as underdeveloped, and lacking in the consistency necessary for making judgements. The network description thus calls for ‘repeated research’ (ESREA 2013l: no page) and argues for further consideration of the relation between research for and of policy:

Governments are looking to increase the production of relevant research in ministries, but they are also looking to the academic research community, and in some cases adding pressure on academia, particularly in countries where higher education is centrally controlled and financed. Within this context, it is useful to consider more closely the distinction between research for policy and research of policy, and how these two approaches relate to each other.

(ESREA 2013l: no page)

The convenors of the network are Marcella Milana, Aarhus University, Denmark, John Holford, University of Nottingham, UK, and Vida Mohorcic Spolar, Slovenian Institute of Adult Education, Slovenia.

#### **4.13 SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION**

The network research themes identify the areas of adult education research that have generated membership interest as foci at various times. The focus and the naming of these networks have moved and shifted as interests have changed or become modified, or as this has been seen important in the light of wider changing contexts and issues emerging for new research. The themes, their changes and reconfigurations thus tell something of the evolution and transformation of ESREA’s intellectual agenda over the years between 1991 and 2013.

The research theme descriptions indicate the agenda of their proposers and convenors as ESREA members and indicate support from the Steering Committee for their institution. However, documents indicate that the Steering Committee was active at various times in encouraging members to take up roles in convening networks. Although the agreement of ESREA’s Steering Committee is needed for a new network to be constituted, ‘members of ESREA may at any time propose the establishment a new network to the ESREA Steering Committee’ (ESREA 2004: no page). The following summary discussion and reflection draws from ESREA’s documents describing the research of specific networks at a general level, including ESREA’s websites and some published ESREA texts drawn on as data.

##### **An evolution and transformation of intellectual agenda**

An early strong inflection of intellectual agenda for ESREA’s research was towards research either on or for adult education for social change, particularly through a concern for research on the relationship between adult education and social movements, and civic, practical and political engagement. The early networks (1991-2) where this was indicated were those related to: ‘Cross-cultural influences in the history of adult education’ (1991); ‘Active democratic citizenship and adult learning’ (1991); ‘Social movements and the history of the education of adults’ (1992); ‘Residential adult education and popular movements’ (1992-3), and; ‘Adult education and the labour market’ (1992). Taking each of these research emphases and networks in turn, the network for research of ‘Cross-cultural influences in the history of adult education’ (1991) identified interest in the history of the

role of social movements in innovation in adult education and learning as a means for transnational reform. The 'Active democratic citizenship and adult learning' (1991/1994) research network emphasised civic engagement through adult learning as a challenge to the breakdown of the East and Central Europe under Soviet influence. The 'Social movements and the history of the education of adults' (1992) research network, indicated research on rather than for social movements. The network on 'Residential adult education and popular movements' (1992-3) had an interest in the mobilization of social participation through popular movements. The early focus for the 'Adult education and the labour market' (1992) research was political and practical engagement in relation to education at work and wider societal and labour market relations. Taken as a whole, the intellectual emphasis for ESREA in the early years was towards research supporting social change and civic, political and practical engagement.

This early intellectual inflection or emphasis for ESREA's research changed quite quickly from these early years (between 1991 and 1994), with two of these early networks falling away - the 'Residential adult education and popular movement research' network by 1993, and 'Social movements and the history of the education of adults' at some early undocumented time. There was a continuation of the emphasis on social change through the 1990s in the research of the remaining three networks.

This social change agenda was taken forward through the 1990s in the research from members of three key networks. The first regarding history of the role of social movements in innovation in adult education and transnational reform. This was the theme of the early 'Cross-cultural influences in the history of adult education' (1991-2006) network. Active from 1991 with yearly seminars to 1997 or 1999 the network was established by researchers with an interest in popular adult education. Papers presented by 1997 were on cross-cultural influence through: university extension and settlements, popular universities, folk high schools, workers' education and popular educational movements. A second network where members were engaged in social action was through the 'Active democratic citizenship and adult learning' (1991/4) network. Action was through the relationship between practices and institutions of adult education in East and Central Europe. This focus on democracy and citizenship had emerged from the early years of liberal adult education of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in some countries (Bron & Schemmann 2001), where from the 1980s citizenship become more important in the social and political sciences. This network supported the development of the citizenship agenda for adult education research in Europe from its first formal activities from 1994. It was active and supported in this work by the Research in Adult Education and Citizenship centre (CRAC) in Bochum, with its own goal of researching the relationship between adult education and active citizenship (Bron & Schemmann 2001). This network continues to the present day with similar questions but differing focus. A third focus for social change research appeared to have been through the early 'Adult education and the labour market' network (1992) (ESREA 2004). Active political and practical engagement was a main focus for research on learning and work or wider societal and labour market relations in its early years. Research through networks where they were methodologically open also had potential focus on social change approaches to research. However, through the 'Life history and biographical research' (1992) network on individual agency and meaning making for learners this potential was specifically identified (Alheit 1993).

New research networks emerging from the mid- to second half of the 1990s considerably transforming the early research focus. In 1994 a network on 'Continuing professional education' (1994) was formally set up. In 1996 there began an 'Access research' network and a network on 'Gender issues and adult education' research, originally envisaged in 1991, was formally set up as a research theme. A year later, in 1997, a network theme of research on 'Older learners' began. At the same time in 1997 the 'Continuing professional education' network fell away – it held its last seminar in 1997 although was still evident in ESREAs records until the early 2000s. New networks and research themes widened the meaning of adult education research ESREA through this second half decade. These

emphasised issues of social inclusion and learning within the professions and vocations. The network on 'Continuing professional education', active from 1994 until 1997, oriented through research in vocational education it was influenced by support from the European Union and its Commission and initiatives for the development of this field at this time (Cheetham & Chivers 2005). The early access network, instituted by 1996, focused on higher education, but quickly widened the scope of its research through the next years to include a broader notion of access and include also adult, community, vocational and further education. The gender network research was concerned in 1999 with gender and knowledge, adult learning and education, the construction of masculinities and femininities, life histories and roles and stereotypes. The early 'Older learners' network research explored issues, experience and possibilities for older people in 1996. Multidisciplinary perspectives for research in 1997, and the outcomes of current research in 1998. The orientation of network activities thus broadened during the mid- and second half of the 1990s, through these inclusions and members' activities related to them.

By 1999 the increasing European emphasis on work and the labour market was influencing the wider field of liberal and general adult education. The field was increasingly oriented to work and the labour market and this was 'reshaping the whole material and conceptual framework of adult and continuing education' (ESREA 2001: no page, in ESREA 1997). The work and labour market research network instigated strategy and efforts to refashion this wider agenda by cultivating a new interdisciplinary arena for research from 1999. The network for 'Adult education and the labour market' (1992-2007) research had begun in 1992. By 1999 the commitment was to engage with both 'development in ...practical adult and continuing education' (ESREA 2001: no page, in ESREA 1997) and the cultivation of a new, expanding and interdisciplinary research arena. There was evidence that research from the work and the labour market network took up methodological resources from elsewhere. For example, where resources from psycho-analytic and biographical research approaches and those from critical theory were combined in considering work for doctors (Merrill & West 2009).

Research synergy between networks was strong at the turn of the century between gender research and life history (Bron and Schemmann 2002) and access research and life history approaches. At two meetings of the 'Gender in adult education' research network, in Bochum 1999 and Genva 2001, half the research contributed mentioned life history even though this theme had not been the focus (Bron and Schemmann 2002). Synergy between the 'Access in higher education' research and life history approaches had been found through in 2002 and 2006 where the network had been refocused. Access research from 2002 came to include access as experiences, as well as access as a participation in learning. From 2006 access research became oriented to learning careers, learner transitions and identity. These synergies for networks were in the potential from life history approaches for the consideration of learner agency in research. This then also brought an emancipatory potential to research (Merrill 2011). Wider intellectual trends to study identity in the social sciences and wider feminist and postmodernist writings had supported the turn to focus on identity and agency for the access network (Merrill 2011). However, the influence of American symbolic interactionism and postmodern epistemological perspectives also supported this turn in adult education and the wider social sciences to focus on individual meaning-making and agency (West et al. 2007). Thus local research synergies between the networks appear to have been significant in ESREA's history from early on and supporting strong research contribution in the field.

During this period mid- to end of the 1990s and through the 2000s there were wide changes for the research field. These were changes from the direction of policy, epistemology, the social sciences and society. The emphasis on adult education research for work and the labour market in the European policy was reconfiguring the research field. The wider loss of certainty in the modernist project of adult education and a turn to postmodern epistemological perspectives had undermined ideas of democracy and adult education from the Enlightenment tradition of adult education institutions (Schemmann, in

Bron & Schemmann 2002). An emphasis on identity in the social sciences and experiences of increasing social risk and uncertainty for individuals supported research for the gender and access and biography and life history. Policy, social and epistemological challenges supported the focus on learner experiences, identity and transitions. Research from the life-history and biography research network was influential in a wider turn to biographical approaches in the field of adult education and more widely in the social sciences.

The commitment of the earlier 'Adult education and the labour market' network to refashion research for the field was taken forward again from 2006 as now a 'double commitment' for the development of practice and the fashioning of a new interdisciplinary field (ESREA 2004). The network was renamed from 2006 as engaged in 'Working life and learning' research, as it is to the present.

There was also a new emphasis on difference or diversity from 2006. This from a renamed 'Cross-cultural influences in the history of European adult education' research theme. This network was reorganized from 2006 to focus away from cross-cultural influences and towards research in the history of adult education in specific cultural locations with focus on the histories of research approaches from differing cultural locations and their wider interplay.

By the middle and through to the end of the first decade of the 2000s a further research network orientation to emancipation emerged. The research network on access to learning, as previously mentioned had this focus as its potential. But a central role for adult learning in processes of global and local development was taken forward with a new research network 'Between global and local network: adult learning and development' (2006). This was focussed on research on development, autonomy and emancipation for regeneration and development in contexts of globalisation. The network expressly indicates research supporting individual autonomy and emancipation (ESREA 2013h). This was a new research network focus into the processes and relationships between social development and the role of adult learning

There was new engagement with social and personal purpose for adult educators, trainers and their professional development from 2009. The early 'Continuing professional education' research network had begun before 1994 and continued strongly through the 1990s to at least 1999. This wide focus on professional education was later taken forward by new network for research into the professional education of adult educators. This through the work of a network established in 2009, on 'Adult educators, trainers and their professional development.' The expressed aim for this later research network to improve conditions for personal and professional development and the attractiveness of the profession for adult educators, thereby strengthening understandings of quality in adult education. The network aims also to explore policy development and impact and generally to stimulate research in this new area. This focus created a distinctive new arena for ESREA's research and influence across the wider domain of research into professional development and policy. Where the early network furthered research into continuing professional education generally and without express social purpose, the current network expresses research purposes that focus on conditions, personal and profession, in support of adult educators professional development.

The 'Older learner' research network was renamed 'Learning in later life' very early in its establishment years. Later it became as 'Education and the learning of older adults' in 2009. The early research on older learners (1997- ) had focused on social participation and inclusion. This was now positioned as response to a wide demographic shift, in the generation of a new focus for adult education aimed to support the health and independence of the ageing population. This then was shift from research exploring issues of social participation and inclusion to social and individual concerns for health and welfare.

In 2009 a further new theme of research of and for education policy began. The thematic

network 'Policy studies in adult education' identified focus on specific forms of repeated policy research and the relation between research for and of policy in adult education. This network was to develop research approaches for this as critical work and strategy advancing such research. It engaged with the move of research funding towards research earmarked as policy relevant, through the generation of critical comparative approaches.

Contributing further to the renewal of networks focused solely on emancipatory research, from 2012 the 'Migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia' network has now emphasis on the formation of solidarity from below. This thematic network had focussed early on research into the consequences of patterns of migration to and within Europe as issues of learning for migrating adults. Migration research for this network is now concerned with migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia, with expressed aims in the development of theoretical and methodological resources encouraging solidarity from below.

There is also a new and current focus on methodology for research from the gender network. Gender research continues with similar sub-themes to those initially identified. In 2013 the emphases is on gender and learning, higher education, biographies, masculinities and femininities, adult training and their methodological dimensions and a current focus on methodology.

The 'Older learner' research network is newly focused by 2013 on health and welfare. It was renamed 'Learning in later life' very early in its establishment years and later as 'Education and the learning of older adults' in 2009. The early research on older learners (1997- ) focused on social participation and inclusion and is now positioned as response to a wide demographic shift and in the generation of a new focus for adult education aimed to support the health and independence of the ageing population. This then is shift from research exploring issues of social participation and inclusion to social and individual concerns for health and welfare by 2013.

ESREA's history of evolution and transformation of intellectual agenda has been of course been more complex than this summary outlines. There has been evidence of a focus on the learning of adults over this history, both responding to and shaping the wider intellectual environment. New directions and engagements were found through relations within wider socio-political, intellectual and demographic trends, and through the synergies of research through the networks. In one sense, ESREA's intellectual history might be characterized through these attempts to forge new directions and domains for the research field.

## 5. INTERVIEWS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of our research, we conducted semi-structured interviews with five ESREA members who have played an important role in the establishment of ESREA and/or in its later administration, and who, given their involvement in ESREA and in the field more widely would be able to provide us with some substantial understandings of ESREA and its intellectual evolution, influence and transformation over time in terms of the field of adult education in Europe. We provided the interviewees with full transcripts of the interviews and with an earlier version of the text of this section. One interviewee decided to withdraw at this stage, so this section is based on the data from the remaining four interviews we conducted. The remaining interviewees have agreed to be identified here, in that it would have been otherwise difficult to offer sufficient detail from their interviews. They were Barry Hake (formerly University of Leiden, the Netherlands), ESREA Secretary from its inception until 2007; Henning Salling Olesen (Roskilde University, Denmark), ESREA Chair from 1998 to the present and member of the ESREA Steering Committee from 1997 onwards; John Field (University of Stirling, UK), chair of one of the earliest ESREA networks ('Social movements and the history of the education of adults') provisionally set up in ESREA's first year (1992), chaired by John Field (Warwick), Barry Hake (Leiden) and Dick Taylor (Leeds)<sup>8</sup>; and Andreas Fejes (Linköping University, Sweden), ESREA Secretary from 2007 until 2012. The interviews were conducted in the late spring and early summer of 2013, were fully transcribed, and analysed thematically. We provided the interviewees with the following set of questions and topics for the interview:

- [1] Some factual information about your involvement in ESREA, both at the level of the organisation as a whole and within particular networks or other initiatives.
- [2] Your perceptions of ESREA as an organisation, its importance, its influence (on research, on policy, on practice), and your perceptions of how ESREA has developed over time and how perhaps its influence has developed/changed over time.
- [3] Your perceptions about the intellectual development of ESREA, that is: what have been/are major themes/issues/topics, major theoretical references, major methodological approaches, and again how this has developed and perhaps changed over time.
- [4] Your perceptions of the field of adult education in Europe (and perhaps internationally) more generally, including: how has the field developed (intellectually, methodologically, and strategically); what do you see as the most important continuities and the most important changes; how do you value these developments from your perspective as an active researcher in the field.
- [5] The relationships between ESREA and its environment. What are your perceptions about these relationships (including your understanding of relevant environments, i.e., is this policy, other research fields, practice, other players)? To what extent has ESREA been pro-active and to what extent re-active?
- [6] Any views you have about where ESREA is currently going and where you think it should be going or hope it will go.
- [7] Any other issues that might be relevant for our project.

In this section we discuss findings from our analysis under the following four headings: (1) generations and generational shifts; (2) the research-policy-practice triangle; (3) the

---

<sup>8</sup> Listed in a news article about the founding of ESREA in December 1992 ([http://www.die-frankfurt.de/espid/dokumente/doc-1992/faulstich-wieland92\\_pdf](http://www.die-frankfurt.de/espid/dokumente/doc-1992/faulstich-wieland92_pdf) (111-13)).

European dimension, the question of language, and the centre of gravity; (4) shifting agenda's? Intellectual shifts? Methodological shifts?

## 5.2. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

### 5.2.1 Generations and generational shifts

One thing that emerges from the interviews is that those who took the initiative of establishing ESREA towards the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, wanted to make an intervention in the European field of adult education research. If we characterise them as 'generation 1,' we could say that they were responding to a 'generation 0' of established researchers in adult education in (mostly Western, Northern and Southern – but not Eastern) Europe. As Hake puts it, those taking the initiative for ESREA wanted “an open, non-hierarchical, democratic organisation involving as many people as possible with preferably no prima donnas”. This suggests that ESREA emerged out of a degree of dissatisfaction with the field of adult education research in Europe at the time, perhaps more with regard to its politics than with regard to its intellectual agenda, although the latter did play a role as well (see below). The establishment of ESREA thus inevitably created some tensions in the field, particularly in relation to those who were considered to be or considered themselves to be the 'established' generation. As Field recalls, the advice ESREA was given was to “tread carefully because there were sitting tenants”. While some of the researchers of 'generation 0' were therefore less enthusiastic about the initiative of ESREA, Field recalls that others felt that it was time for a new generation of researchers to 'take over.' He describes their attitude as follows: “look a new generation of scholars is coming along; we're going to be retiring soon [so] we've got to let them have their heads.”

Notwithstanding this, the need for some kind of new initiative appeared to be widely shared. Hake recalls that a letter he drafted some time in 1989 “asking people if they would support the idea of an organisation which would focus more specifically on research in the area of adult education, community education, community development (...), human resource development, [and learning in organisations” received a strong positive response, so that “in the summer of 91 (...) I had 80 letters of commitment from Heads of Department, from Chairs, others from different universities, [and] different countries.” All this resulted in a meeting of a small group of people for 3 days in December 1991 in the Netherlands where the basic structure of ESREA was hammered out, leading to elections and the establishment of the first Steering Committee in 1992. It was also in 1992 that ESREA organised a first meeting of researchers (in Linköping, Sweden). The meeting was organised “like a Scandinavian study circle” (Hake) which, according to Hake, “also says something about the way we were looking at how it should be organised.” Salling Olesen lists three 'cornerstones' of the “philosophy or strategical self-understanding” of ESREA, which were: firstly “the bottom up organisation principle that meant that we should establish a framework of collaboration based on members' interests and ongoing activities;” secondly “to establish a membership based organisation and not on institutional affiliation but on civic membership; and thirdly “to have a low budget organisation which was not depending on big income.” ESREA did establish both individual and institutional membership.

The latter hints at a further distinction between 'generation 0' and 'generation 1' in that those involved in establishing ESREA felt that as a result of initiatives and interventions from the European Union, research was, as Salling Olesen put it, “drowning in policy and practice”, which made it difficult “to have a critical, an analytical stance.” Unlike what Salling Olesen felt that some think about ESREA, he argues that ESREA was not meant to be an “agent in policies and processes” but rather had the intention “to establish a research community in its own right.”

A third aspect of the generational shift of which the establishment of ESREA was part, was the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening up of Eastern Europe. This is a point particularly emphasised by Field when he refers to initiatives “in response to the sort of changes in central Eastern Europe.” He joined a group of people “who were developing work with Polish universities in particular Agnieszka Bron and ... Michael Bron, but a range of other people including my head of department Chris Duke.” Field recounts that they drove to Poland in 1990 or 1991 to take part “in a seminar [on] active democratic citizenship which later became a research network on active democratic citizenship.” A “range of people from different universities, and a lot of Polish colleagues [were involved,] and it was a very early joint activity for colleagues in Poland” which included “some late night discussion about the need for some sort of European research forum.” The fact that, from 1993 onwards, ESREA had a regional network for countries in transition also attests to the importance of these dynamics for the establishment of ESREA in the early 1990s.

While one aspect of the generational dynamics of ESREA has to do with how ESREA sought to make a generational shift within the European field of adult education research, the other aspect has to do with the question whether further generational shifts took place once ESREA established itself. Information from the interviewees does indeed provide evidence for the emergence of what we might term ‘generation 2,’ though it is interesting that the precise identity of this generation points in at least two different directions (albeit that they can be seen as connected – see below). Salling Olesen characterises the first generation of ESREA as consisting to a large extent of individuals who had been working or were working in adult education practice. He sees this clearly reflected in three of the ‘early’ ESREA networks. The first was the network on “civil education or civic participation [which] was really maybe the core network because it represented the tradition of liberal adult education and citizenship engagement.” The second was “another very central type of network, a little bit more local but also coming from the practice field” and this was “in the first place called ‘access’ so it was focussing [on] all the questions around access to learning and access to education and this was very British in its foundation, coming from the role of access activities and extra mural activities of universities.” The people working in this area “were not all necessarily all education people; they were history, language and so on, but were engaged in adult education provision.” The third one is the “biography network which you could say is not so ... much defined by adult education activities and experienced but very much linked with the ethos of adult education in the sense of some kind of existential or humanistic engagement in individuals’ development and in this sense you could say it’s [the] European version of the transformative action learning paradigm.” Yet this generation of adult educators, as Salling Olesen put it, is “dying out,” not only because the particular individuals are getting older and coming to the end of their academic career, but also because of institutional changes such as the disappearance of adult education departments at many universities. Field, for example, mentions that adult education research in the Netherlands, done by a group of scholars who were “particularly interested in what you might call theories of reflective modernisation [...] virtually disappeared over night.”

While on the one hand there is, therefore, evidence that what characterised ‘generation 1’ – both intellectually and in terms of their location (that is, the field of adult education policy and practice) – waned over time, this did not mean that ESREA itself became smaller and less active. On the contrary. According to Fejes, membership doubled during his tenure as secretary (2007-2012). The interesting question this raises is to what extent the people who joined ESREA over time had a similar background as those who were already part of the organisation, or whether people with different backgrounds, experiences and expectations joined. According to Salling Olesen “the people who came from practice and started doing research in order to reflect [upon] their own practice and out of curiosity and intellectual development – they are dying literally around now and the next 10 years.” What he sees emerging instead is a generation of younger scholars “who did not start as adult educator but started by an academic education and coincidentally for employment reasons or because they became interested, started to do research into

adult learning of some sort.” Salling Olesen connects this to the rise of what he terms “academic professionalism” within the field, that is, a focus on research rather than on activism. Once again, institutional aspects are important here as well, since he acknowledges that the context in which such research work is conducted puts very specific demands – in terms of scientific output and production – on researchers and in this sense ‘pulls’ them in a very different direction from where the work from the first generation was located.

This perception is confirmed by Fejes who, in a sense, looks at the generational dynamics from the other ‘side,’ that is, as someone who sees his work more clearly located in the second generation of ESREA. He clearly perceives an older generation of adult education researchers who emerged from the practice field of adult education and who had a much more political orientation to the research. As he puts it: “The generation before me was ... saying that ... it’s much more political in some vocations at least, so this is about politics. (...) There is an agenda of promoting something, of promoting the practice, promoting adult education, which is very strong in some instances with some people.” Fejes, however, sees himself differently positioned, that is, with a primary focus on research. “Even though I would like to promote adult education, it’s more a position of trying to understand what is happening.” This is not only how Fejes sees the priorities for his own work. He also states that it has been his ‘agenda’ as a Secretary to promote and support “high quality research” and establish an academic journal. This journal, *Research on the Learning and Education of Adults (RELA)*, is explicitly meant to support this dimension of work within ESREA. While Fejes thus confirms the shift from a generation 1 which was more strongly focused on the practice of adult education to a generation 2 which was much more strongly focused on research than on educational and political activism, this does not mean that the whole of ESREA made this shift. While several of our interviewees do confirm that from the mid-2000s onwards the older generation of adult educators began to disappear and a newer generation of professional researchers began to emerge, other individuals and groups joined ESREA as well, leading, for example, to the rise of ‘best-practice’ studies, as Fejes calls them, which for him are actually “not research.”

In this sense we might say, therefore, that although there is evidence of a shift from a generation 1 to a generation 2, there are at least two different ‘streams’ within generation 2, one that is strongly focused on academic research and another that is much more strongly focused on policy and practice, but not in the way in which generation 1 was focused on it. Whether ESREA will, as a result, become more focused on and identified with academic research – and thus more influenced by the performative logic that characterises academic research in many countries – or whether it will become more focused on practices in contemporary adult education and lifelong learning, remains to be seen. At stake here is not only the question how ESREA will exist in the years to come, but even whether ESREA will still exist in 20 years from now – a question raised by Salling Olesen in relation to his observation that the field has become “very, very diverse.”

### 5.2.2 The research-policy-practice triangle

The discussion about the different generations within and around ESREA is also connected to a second major theme emerging from the interviews, which has to do with ESREA’s relation with the fields of research, policy and practice and with prevailing ideas, conceptions and preferences regarding the relationship between the three. We have already seen that ESREA sought to develop itself as an organisation with a focus on research. It partly did this in order to promote research in the field of adult education and do this in a more open, networked and – according to some – ‘bottom up’ way. Field actually raises some questions about the extent to which ESREA did indeed develop in a bottom up way, highlighting that work that led to or took part within networks often came out of existing projects, and thus often relied on “those who have access to the funds and [who have] the time to do hard intellectual work on an international basis” – which suggests that the field in which ESREA operated was less of a free or level playing field

than the bottom up metaphor may suggest. This highlights that not any existing idea or interest would have, in itself, enough 'power' to develop. Yet one motivation for establishing ESREA had to do with the intention to keep research away from too much influence from policy makers, particularly at European level. The shift from the first to the second generation seems to be related to a similar intention to position ESREA first and foremost as an organisation interested in the promotion of research – partly, as we have seen from Fejes, this was conceived as an intentional 'agenda,' and partly, as we have seen from some of the other interviewees, this reflects changes in the field of adult education (and lifelong learning – see below) research more generally.

To highlight that ESREA's focus is on research does not, in itself, preclude that such research can be beneficial for a range of different communities and constituencies, and in this regard we may make a distinction between research for the sake of research – where we might say that the first intended 'audience' is the academic community itself – and research for the benefit of policy and practice. Fejes expresses a clear preference for the first, that is, for an orientation within adult education research that first of all takes the community of researchers as its intended audience and frame of reference – not in order to deny linkages with policy and practice, but also not in order to let policy and practice determine research agendas. Hake not only expresses a clear preference for research that is more closely in interaction with policy makers, but has also, through a number of his own activities, tried to promote this particular approach within ESREA. He says that this "has been sort of an issue from the start," with some advocating a closer connection to policy and others arguing for more distance. Particularly with regard to European policy and the funding available in relation to it, there have been ongoing discussions about whether becoming involved in such research – for example in the form of policy evaluation – would be a case of "selling your soul to the devil" or whether it is not only a useful but also meaningful way to conduct practice- and policy-relevant research.

Hake says that while on the one hand "a lot of ESREA members are still doing their research within the national context," many are actually involved in projects funded with European money. The point here is that they do this as individuals, and one of the questions Hake raises – and again one of the lines he has actively promoted through his own activities – is whether ESREA *as an organisation* should in some way be involved in such research. The 'state of the art' study that was conducted in the mid-1990s (initiated in 1992, with final reports in 1994) was one of the examples where ESREA did act at a more organisational level in the conduct of research. This study, initiated by Hake and Kjell Rubenson, aimed to identify "who's doing what in the field in terms of research, (...) what's being researched, who is doing it, how they are doing it, how it's being financed, is it just in universities or is it in para-university institutes, what's government subsidised and what's not, who are the research councils, so we asked members ... if they would do national studies for us." They finished up with "about 12 country studies" and what was interesting about this initiative is that the integral report Hake produced "was picked up by UNESCO and UNESCO published it," albeit only in 1999. Hake together with Zoran Yelenc from the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education conducted further country studies on new member states. Hake mentions some further examples of such kind of initiatives, also ones where ESREA was actually approached by European policy makers as a contact point for identifying researchers and expertise.

For Hake the question of whether or not ESREA as an organisation should be involved in research for policy also has to do with the visibility of ESREA as an organisation from the side of policy makers. Hake mentions that "ESREA is on the official list of the [European] Commission's recognised stakeholders in the area of adult learning" and is thus seen as one relevant organisation with regard to the Commission's own policy and research activities. Hake's impression is that this dimension of ESREA has "gradually decreased" over the years and that activities that profile ESREA within the community of researchers may have increased – in the context of which he mentions, for example, RELA. The question of the 'profile' of ESREA vis-à-vis research, policy and practice is also connected

to the question of whether or not ESREA should or should not be 'activist' in its orientation, that is, to act in more political ways in the interest of adult education and adult education research. Here again Hake makes visible that there are different opinions and preferences within ESREA, and these have also fluctuated over time. He positions himself more on the activist end of the spectrum but is aware that he "was always accused of being too activist." A final point emerging from our conversation with Hake is his observation that some of these developments are 'cyclical' in that at some points in time there seems to be a closer connection to the field of practice, at other moments to the field of policy, and at others to the field of research. Hake mentions the work of Kjell Rubenson as an example of someone who "came from a background in Scandinavia [that was involved] very heavily [in] policy related research."

Salling Olesen differs in his views about the relationship between research and policy and practice. He clearly sees dangers in research being too close to practice, saying that "it's in [ESREA's] DNA that we wanted to be relatively independent of the political processes." Yet he also says that times have changed and that "learning and education and training [have] become more of a political issue [so that it] feels more relevant to engage in this." Yet he highlights that he is "quite careful" because "I think it's very hard to be on a very practical level – it's hard to be [an] active researcher [engaging] directly in policy processes [as there is the danger that] you get instrumentalised." That is why Salling Olesen prefers the connection of "what you call academic professionalism with some kind of political engagement in the wide sense." This would entail connecting "the old generation which was mostly shaped out of social movements, community engagement, and mostly that, but to some extent also general enlightenment ambitions" and to bring this "into a discussion with the criteria for academic professionalism or academic quality." Salling Olesen sees this as an important but nonetheless difficult challenge for ESREA, also because the academic field is "more or less influenced by [a] formal and bureaucratic regulation of research, so that it's ... not unthinkable that the new researchers in the field have their primary engagement in academic competition and academic evaluation criteria" – something which indeed we have also seen in relation to the shift from generation 1 to generation 2. Salling Olesen sees these developments as important and influential, but also as "contradictory" for ESREA, as it provides a pull in two opposite directions, one that has to do with the practical and political relevance of research and one that connects research more strongly – and in some cases even exclusively – to supposed standards and criteria of academic productivity. In relation to the latter he mentions the starting up of RELA which "is just like pursuing the discipline building rationale and this is for me [a] kind of balancing of some partly opposite dimensions and directions which need to be balanced."

His own conception of research reflects these concerns, particularly through his idea that research is not only there to reflect on what is already manifest, but also needs to have what he calls an "anticipatory" quality, which has to do with "something like ... collecting experiences and shaping understanding of them which can anticipate some developments that are sort of say just about to happen or maybe on the way and may transcend some of the ... ways of understanding which are involved in social practices in present everyday life." For Salling Olesen the "legitimacy of academic work" therefore lies in the ability "to transcend or to extract something which is not already conscious in agencies and practice that shape or influence research." This is one important reason why, for Salling Olesen, there needs to be a distance between research on the one hand and the fields of policy and practice on the other – yet he acknowledges that for an organisation such as ESREA this is a difficult balancing act, also because ESREA has the ambition to be an open space rather than an organisation with a clear agenda. For Salling Olesen these developments are also related to another important shift – both at the level of research and practice – from a discourse of education to a discourse of learning, something to which we will return below.

The concerns raised by Salling Olesen connect well with Fejes's views about the role of research and the relationship between research, policy and practice. Fejes expresses more explicitly the characteristics of one line within 'generation 1,' where research – or with the phrase he uses: "high quality research" – should be the first concern of ESREA and where engagement with policy and practice should follow from that, if it is to follow at all. In this sense he sees the establishment of RELA less as a matter of tension or contradiction, and more clearly as a signpost of the focus on the quality of research in the field of adult education and, increasingly, lifelong learning.

The impact of the arrival of new members who come from different fields of practice and who have different professional and research interests, is also something highlighted by Field. He repeatedly refers to the fact that both the field of research and the field of practice are changing, and wonders how ESREA responds or should respond "to the changing nature of the field of practice and the changing nature of the field of research." He clearly identifies a tension between the ways in which ESREA serves the older generation – which he assumes ESREA is doing relatively well – and what it has to offer for a newer generation in terms of strengthening and building "capacity for the future," particularly given that the newer generation of researchers is working and will increasingly have to work according to quite different standards of academic work. But Field also points to another important change within the field of research and practice, which has to do with the fact that of the "huge amount of research" on adult learning "much of it [is] increasingly ... undertaken by non third-level actors, non university actors." He observes that "some of the major work in the UK is done by private institutions, third sector institutions." And although he indicates that there is "absolutely nothing wrong with that," it does have a potential impact at the very least on the membership base of ESREA.

Field's views about ESREA's relationship with policy bring him closer to Hake's. While he acknowledges that "ESREA is never going to be the most powerful ... force in Europe," he would have liked to have seen a more active involvement at the level of ESREA as an organisation, rather than through activities of individual members, in discussions about policy. In relation to this he raises the question how ESREA might "foster an understanding of those kind of issues among its membership [so that they] become a little bit more politically astute and politically effective." For Field this both has to do with policy formation in fields of adult education and lifelong learning itself, as with discussions about "the way in which research quality is assessed" – something which is not easy given that a relatively small area like adult education research is most often seen as "a boundary discipline" that works in the shadow of more established disciplinary fields. With regard to all this, Field does suggest that "[we] sometimes miss ESREA's voice – we miss ESREA's voice in some of these discussions," including the discussion between "adult education researchers and other social sciences."

With regard to the relationship between research, policy and practice and the question where ESREA's priorities should lie, there is perhaps less of a shift from one dominant view to another, but more an ongoing discussion about what should have priority within ESREA, what kind of relationships ESREA, as a research-focused organisation, should establish with policy and practice – which includes questions about how much distance ESREA should keep with regard to policy and practice - and to what extent ESREA as an organisation should itself be an 'actor' in this field. Different views about this are partly related to the particular ideas of individuals within the organisation although such views are not without effect, particularly not for those individuals who sought to promote particular activities within ESREA or particular directions for ESREA. This all, of course, only to the extent to which the ESREA membership responded to such initiatives and also only to the extent to which the wider fields within which ESREA operates makes particular directions possible. Given that the generational shifts we have identified to a large extent had to do with issues of research, policy and practice, it is not surprising to see these shifts reflected in discussions about the interrelationships between the three, both with regard to the focus on research and with regard to the impact of changes in the wider field of

adult education, including the shift from a focus on adult education to that on lifelong learning. We return, as said, to the latter shift below.

### 5.2.3 The European dimension, the question of language, and centre of gravity

As ESREA is explicitly a European organisation, there are a number of interesting reflections on the extent to which ESREA has managed to be truly European. While ESREA emerged out of existing research and teaching networks within Europe, it is clear that the inception of ESREA was more connected to individuals working in the West and North of Europe than in the South or the East. The meeting in Leiden in December 1991, for example was attended by researchers from the Netherlands, Germany, the UK, Sweden, Belgium, Finland and Switzerland. As we have seen, there were also early contacts with scholars in Poland, which, amongst other things, led to the organisation by colleagues in Poland of a meeting of the network on Active Democratic Citizenship in 1994. Other countries that were involved in ESREA at an early stage were, for example, Slovenia (through the Institute of Adult Education), Austria (where ESREA held a number of events sponsored by the Ministry), and also Portugal and Spain. Over time scholars from many other countries in Europe have joined ESREA, so that it can be said that over time the centre of gravity of ESREA has shifted from the North and West of Europe towards the East and South.

As Field makes clear, “one obvious [change] is that [ESREA] has become much less British based.” Whereas “in the early days ... Brits were a significant and quite disproportionate part of the membership, that has changed and that is, I think, a great testimony to its effectiveness and to the needs ... that ESREA has met.” While he does indicate that the centre of gravity “shifts constantly,” he also indicates that ESREA has contributed significantly to “strengthening the position of researchers in the Mediterranean states and especially in Spain and Portugal it seems to me, and in central European countries like Slovenia, Poland, the Baltics and so on – countries where adult education has historically had a status [and where ESREA] has clearly bolstered that and helped them maintain their position within their institutions and so on.” Field also believes that the existence of ESREA “has contributed to the development of much stronger European networks among the research communities than would otherwise have been the case.” Evaluating the impact of ESREA Field believes that “the field is, has become much less parochial ... and that’s really a good thing I think.” This has not only to do with “the obvious geographical point but also just conceptually in terms of thinking about different educational positions, different ways of thinking about education [and] about learning.” Salling Olesen nonetheless emphasises that academic work is (still) predominantly “based on national communities, even if we write our application in English [and] write articles in international journals.” In this regard he sees the European dimension of ESREA more in terms of offering “some people a space which they won’t find in their national communities” and this, he suggests, “has been very typical of ESREA’s history.” This may “to some extent connect national research communities which may lead to some kind of let’s say speeding up of communication and development and it may bring some input into national communities.”

While over the years many more countries therefore have become part of ESREA and have become present and visible in its activities, there are also countries that are visibly absent from ESREA, such as, for example, Romania and Bulgaria, as is the relative absence of French speaking scholars and, more specifically, scholars from France. That it is more an absence of France than French speaking scholars is important because of the role of one notable exception, namely Pierre Dominicé (from Geneva) who not only was one of the group who met in 1991 but has also played an important role in one of the most constant networks within ESREA, namely the one on biographical approaches to adult education and lifelong learning. Hake recounts that Dominicé was actually “hurt” by the fact that ESREA was not able to connect to scholars in France, although it was something he did predict, saying that “you never get into France, you will never get into the French speaking

community.” Perhaps an exception to this was the 1998 conference in Brussels, which was explicitly bi-lingual – English and French – and which, as Hake indicates, attracted “a lot of French people [from] Belgium Switzerland, maybe even a couple from Luxembourg [and] France itself.” Yet unfortunately the “conference split into two [as] the French speakers went to the French speakers and the English speakers went to the English speakers,” a pattern that repeated itself in the more informal and social parts of the conference as well. Hake sees this as an issue that still requires attention, and Field even concludes that “we have never cracked the Francophone issue.”

The question of language also has to do with another aspect of the European dimension of ESREA, which is the question of ESREA’s own language policy, which has been a recurrent theme in the Steering Committee, particularly with regard to the question whether ESREA should work in English or should adopt other languages as well. One important decision that was made was to have ESREA’s website in a number of different languages, and not only English.

A final aspect of the European dimension of ESREA that was mentioned by several of the interviewees has to do with the extent to which the development of ESREA is also connected to, and to some extent dependent upon, national dynamics. We have already seen, for example, Field’s observations about the disappearance of adult education research from universities in the Netherlands (which does not mean that no research at all was conducted, but it was no longer part of the ‘academic infrastructure’ of Dutch higher education). Salling Olesen makes a similar observation about the UK where the closure of many extramural departments of adult education at universities had a clear impact on the institutional base and eventually also the intellectual shape of the research field with people from such departments either moving into “school teacher education departments” or departments of “organisation studies or management schools” which, taking the latter as an example, runs the risk of subordinating them “to the thinking which comes from business managers which is basically instrumental.” Salling Olesen is “much more hopeful [about] the German situation, that ... new generations develop what is mostly called ‘Weiterbildung,’ which is further education or continuing education and taking in those types of learning and education which are related to personal training and labour markets.” More generally, then, Salling Olesen sees “a different institutional environment [having] significant influence on the ways in which research can [function], the role it can take.”

With regard to the European dimension, the interviews thus show important developments and shifts over time, which can perhaps be captured best by saying that the coverage of ESREA has over time expanded and the centre of gravity has moved away from the West and North of Europe. This is only partially reflected in the languages used within ESREA. That French, and more specifically scholarship from France remains largely absent according to our interviewees, indicates something about the particular research networks within Europe, and this is perhaps not only a matter for the field of adult education but is reflected in educational research and scholarship more generally.

#### **5.2.4 Shifting agenda’s? Intellectual shifts? Methodological shifts?**

Most of the interviewees mention one crucial shift that has taken place over the years of ESREA’s existence, namely that from a discourse and practice of adult education to a discourse and policy (perhaps more than practice) of lifelong learning. This is an important transformation within the field in relation to which ESREA has always sought to be active, and is connected to the generational shifts mentioned above, at least to the extent to which the first generation within ESREA consisted for a large degree of scholars who had first-hand experience with adult education practices, coming out of a more political tradition of adult education as being orientated towards the empowerment and emancipation of adults. This identity of the field is reflected in some of the earlier networks – for example the themes of citizenship, access and participation, adult

education, trade unions and the world of work, and biographical approaches. Such themes are clearly connected to traditions of adult education – and it is important to emphasise the word education here – whereas the shift towards lifelong learning is, as Salling Olesen puts it “very much based on scepticism to formal education.” What he sees as happening in the shift from adult education to lifelong learning is that “people in politics and business managers realise that learning has become crucial and they are not quite sure that the education system can deliver. (...) You could say that in the early discussion they would say ‘Well, we need to have workplace learning instead of education,’ and then in the second phase the more broad idea about providing many types of learning [emerges].” The difference is one between “two cultures or two logics around learning – one which is the new one which is the policy driven one called lifelong learning, and another one which is basically building on the virtues of traditional schooling and [the] educational value of traditional subjects and so on.”

While at one level all interviewees agree that the lifelong learning discourse has become very prominent in policy and practice and has thus brought in a new research focus – remember Field’s reference to the ‘huge amount of research’ going on with regard to adult learning – several of the interviewees emphasise that the question of the relationship(s) between adult education and lifelong learning is more complex than that the latter discourse has only/just replaced the former one. Salling Olesen sees the issue as “a main theme [that] ESREA [has] all the time had to deal with.” Hake also emphasises that it would be historically mistaken to assume that in the past there was only adult education and that now there is only lifelong learning. He refers, for example, to the Faure report (*Learning to Be*) and the fact that Faure was actually “a damn right liberal” rather than a defender of a politically-inspired emancipatory approach to adult education. Nonetheless – and we have also seen this in relation to generational shifts – adult education as a field of practice has clearly diminished in many European countries, not only in its institutional base but also with regard to a targeted research effort. In this respect we can say that there has been a shift in agenda – it is, for example, interesting to see how the word ‘learning’ emerges in the title of the 2001 ESREA conference. This shift first and foremost taking place in the fields that form the focus of research by ESREA members, rather than having been a deliberate shift within ESREA to change focus or perspective.

Salling Olesen highlights how this shift brought new members to ESREA, coming from different backgrounds than those of members of the first generation. We have already elaborated on views of this shift and its impact on ESREA. The interesting question this raises for Salling Olesen is what this means for the identity of ESREA. On the one hand he indicates that ESREA, as an open network, in a sense should follow where the field is going or how the field is transforming. Yet, on the other hand he raises the question “Why do this in an organisation for adult education research?” – and for him this really creates a predicament with regard to the identity and even the possible future of ESREA.

The interviewees say less about intellectual shifts, which perhaps indicates that these have not been prominent, or that they have not really been important for the interviewees and their work. Nonetheless there are a number of interesting observations. Hake mentions that early on in his career there was a strong influence if not dominance of Marxist theory. As he puts it “When I went to the Netherlands in the 1970s [and] when I first started to apply for jobs at German and Dutch universities in 1977/1978, one of the qualification to get the job was [that] you had to have good knowledge of Marxist theory.” He adds to this that he would find it difficult now to identify people who are “basing their work on explicit analysis of Marxist social theory.” Hake also points to the difference between “the psychological approach to learning compared to what Kjell Rubenson would say [is] the more sociological approach,” but he sees this more as two traditions within the field of research than in terms of a clear shift from the one to the other. According to the interviewees a significant part of more recent research seems to be more instrumental in its orientation, partly because it is (much) more closely linked to policy and its evaluation

or because it is connected (much) more closely to fields of practice. With regard to the influence of particular theories or theoretical traditions beyond Marxist and neo-Marxist frameworks there is little to find in the interviews. Hake makes mention of the impact of sociological theory (for example Bourdieu – although he laments cases where such work was only used in a ‘second hand’ way rather than based on knowledge of the original scholarship) and some evidence of postmodern theory, mainly the work of Foucault. Field also acknowledges that this influence has been visible at conferences. But from the interviews little else emerges with regard to shifts or fashions in the intellectual resources of the research.

With regard to the methodological dimensions of the research represented in ESREA, the interviews also provide only a few insights. Field makes two observations. One is that questions of methodology have traditionally been quite central in biographical approaches, so that researchers involved in this work “have always fostered methodological discussion alongside, in and through any of their network meetings.” If this is a noticeable presence of methodological awareness, Field also mentions that he has “really struggled to remember a single paper that has made significant use of advanced quantitative methods, let alone any discussion of those advanced quantitative methods.” His observations thus suggest a relative absence of this kind of method/methodology within ESREA. Hake goes one step further by highlighting that methodology has rarely been discussed at ESREA meetings. He recounts one exception which happened at the conference in Lisbon where “there were three or four activists who brought up this issue.” “They did an analysis during the conference ... of the conference papers” and showed that there was very little discussion of even the basics of the research design. So whereas Field’s observations suggest that the majority of research within ESREA has been of a qualitative nature, Hake adds to this that even within such work there has been very little explicit attention to methods and methodologies.

### **5.3 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

Although this section has only been based on interviews with 4 ESREA members, it identifies a number of interesting issues and developments in ESREA’s history. The interviews indicate generational shifts within ESREA, both with regard to the way in which the establishment of ESREA itself can be seen as a deliberate attempt to bring about a generational shift in the field of adult education research in Europe, and with regard to a generational shift within the development of ESREA which has to do with new researchers with new research interests joining the organisation. The latter shift can be understood against the background of wider transformations in the field of adult education, and perhaps most significantly a shift from adult education towards lifelong learning. With regard to the academic context in which many members of ESREA conduct their work, we can discern the impact of changing academic cultures, moving more strongly towards performance and performativity. At the same time the research field has also opened up much more to research conducted in other settings, including non-university based organisation and commercial researchers. All of this has clearly moved ESREA way from its roots in the practice of adult education and perhaps – but this is only to a certain degree visible in the interviews – away from a more political-emancipatory approach to one that has clear instrumental dimensions.

In this regard the general shift is closely connected to what has emerged as a main and ongoing topic of discussion that has to do with the relationships between research, policy and practice and the relationship of ESREA to these fields. While all interviewees underscore the fact that ESREA is first and foremost a research organisation, they have different views about what this means in practice – i.e., whether ESREA should therefore only focus on research, should also be involved in research for policy, or should make research-informed contributions to policy. This discussion has been ongoing and is clearly not resolved, although shifts in the field or fields to which ESREA is connected do have an

impact on what is possible and even desirable in relation to this. Interestingly, the concerns of the interviewees seem to be more with regard to the research-policy interface than with regard to the research-practice interface, which seems to suggest that the main concern has to do with the influence and impact of policy on research. This has emerged from some of the interviews as an 'old' theme for ESREA, since one of the reasons identified for establishing ESREA was precisely to create a space for research within a field that was increasingly being influenced by policy, particularly at European level.

This also has to do with the question of the European 'identity' of ESREA and an observed shift of ESREA's centre of gravity, away from the West and North, towards the East and South. One interesting question this raises, is whether this shift mainly has to do with the social organisation of ESREA, or whether it also displays changes in the intellectual centre of gravity.

The European dimension also relates to questions of language. From what the interviewees mention, this has always been a topic of attention, although they give an impression that the younger generation of researchers within ESREA seems more at ease with using English as the main language of communication. The absence of France and the French language appears to remain an issue for those interviewed, which raises a question about the 'coverage' of ESREA but, also says something about the wider dynamics of academic research in Europe.

The interviews also provide some insight in changes in research agendas, and intellectual and methodological shifts. One important shift that emerges from the interviews is that from adult education to lifelong learning. That this seems to be such a prevalent and 'easy' way to describe what has been going on in the field, should perhaps be ground for some suspicion (a point made by Hake when this is viewed within the wider historical development of the field). The interviewees give the impression that the research within ESREA has been methodologically on the narrow end of the spectrum with little explicit methodological discussion.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this report we have sought to bring together in a systematic manner materials and information that shed a light on the emergence and development of ESREA, the European Association for Research on the Education of Adults. Our efforts have not only been limited by the time and resources available, but also by the incomplete nature of the documentation about ESREA's activities, events and decision making processes. Nonetheless we have managed to create a fairly comprehensive overview of ESREA's development since its inception, partly based on available documents and sources, partly based on existing accounts of aspects of ESREA's history and development, and partly informed by interviews with a small number of ESREA members. While we feel that this is only the beginning of the construction of a history of ESREA, we nonetheless believe that bringing the available information together in this report in the way we have done, is an important step towards the construction of such a history.

As mentioned, our work has been guided by the following three questions:

1. What have been ESREA's events and activities, and their wider contexts and relationships (meetings, conferences, groups, issues, aspirations, interruptions, 'outputs' (publications), people, networks, rules and structures, impact etc.), and what do they reveal about evolution and transformation of ESREA's intellectual and organisational agenda?
2. What have been ESREA's key intellectual resources, their continuities, changes and transformations and wider contexts and relationships?
3. What is the intellectual history of ESREA as a 'case' in the intellectual evolution of the field and in terms of a wider socio-political, institutional and intellectual history?

Most of the answer to the first question can be found in section 2 of our report, where the account of ESREA's activities and events begins to shed light not only on what the particular focus – or better foci – of ESREA over time has been, but also what some of the key factors in its development have been. Even such a descriptive account of developments which, from a historical perspective, have taken place over a relatively short period of time, already reveals interesting trends and shifts, with regard to the activities themselves, their substantive foci, and the individuals, groups and networks that have been involved.

This information already begins to shape the answer to the second question, which we have further tried to deepen through the information provided in sections 3 and 4 where the themes of the triennial conferences and the rise, evolution, transformation and, in some cases, demise of thematic networks reveals what have been foci of attention and activity of its research in the evolution of ESREA. Our thematic presentation of data from the interviews adds further depth to understanding the history of ESREA, not in the least because we were able to focus on particular areas and aspects of ESREA's history on the basis of our initial analysis of documents and existing accounts. Our thematic analysis of the interviews has in a sense allowed us to add a level of interpretation to the more descriptive accounts of the other sections. It is by bringing all this together that we have been able to say something about generational shifts and patterns in ESREA's history; about the particular relationships between research, policy and practice and the changes over time both in the actual relationships and in the views about what relationships have been and are considered to be desirable; about the European dimension of ESREA's activities; and about shifts in intellectual agendas and methods and methodologies. These

are views particularly significant in that they are those of individuals who have been significant in the shaping of ESREA at different times historically.

These insights are, in turn, beginning to shape an answer to our third question, the question over what the history of ESREA is a 'case' of – that is, how it can be understood when viewed from a wider perspective. We take the 'case of' question as one over whether what we found about ESREA is also significant for discussions 'beyond' ESREA – contributing to a wider historiography of educational and social research.

One thing that is clearly visible is that ESREA is part of a field that itself has moved, changed, shifted and transformed and the developments within ESREA reflect and contribute to such shifts – for example with regard to particular research themes and topics, changing constituencies, changing policy priorities, and a rise of a discourse of lifelong learning. This, at least according to some, and there is some evidence for this, has contributed to a decline in more traditional processes and practices of adult education. The history of ESREA also coincides with important changes within Europe itself. It is significant that already early on ESREA actively developed networks in eastern European countries just as, over time, the contributions from researchers in southern European countries have become more prominent. The move to focus on southern and central countries as a 'regional' focus for the encouragement of membership also appears to have been successful in this sense – research from southern and central countries have become more prominent.

A second way in which this history of ESREA sheds light on some wider issues in the field has to do with the relationship between research, policy and practice. Most of the discussions that we have been able to trace concern the relationship between research and policy, where some have practices and argued for a close relationship between the two, whereas others have emphasised the 'R' in ESREA's acronym, that is, the fact that ESREA may first and foremost see itself as a society for research. To what extent these observations are specific for the 'case' of the history of ESREA, or would be similar for the development of similar organisations during the same period, is a question that lies beyond the scope of what we are able to conclude from our data and findings. It is, nonetheless, an interesting and important question, not only for ESREA's self-understanding but also for the wider historiography of educational and social research around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A third way in which this history of ESREA sheds light, is in the meanings implicit to 'adult education' through its research. Some of ESREA's network themes have been attachments to specific theoretical orientations, and these we would suggest are related to wider meanings and purposes of adult education and research (for example, emancipation from below). Other thematic networks are open to diverse approaches - theoretically and methodologically - but oriented through the theme itself to a particular purpose (adult education for older learners, or understanding learner experiences, for example).

This finally brings us to the question over what ESREA as an organisation might understand from the account of its history and development that we have sought to present in this report. We wish to conclude with five observations in regard to this question – observations that indicate themes for further reflection and discussion, not only in order to refine and deepen the understanding of ESREA's history provided in these pages, but also in order to ask how a better sense of ESREA's history might help to give direction to the next phase of ESREA's development.

One theme concerns a question over the extent to which ESREA has been and is leading or following 'the field.' Our material indicates that the answer to this question is not black and white – there are moments where ESREA, through its activities and the activities of its members clearly has given direction to wider research whereas at other moments ESREA's activities seem to be much more reflecting what was going on in other circles (policy,

practice, and also research itself). Although there is partly the important question over the extent to which an organisation such as ESREA actually has levers to lead the field – plus the additional question of how ‘the field’ is to be conceived in the first place – it is nonetheless important towards the future to ask what ESREA’s ambitions should be, that is, whether it should mainly be a platform for researchers to meet and share their work or whether it should, as is already apparent, within this to set and seek opportunities for setting, research agendas, undertaking research, and, through this, perhaps have an impact on policy and practice. These aspirations are all already evident in ESREAs’ activities and further discussion and exploration of thematic practices, modes of operation, levers and their influences could inform ESREA further.

A second issue that emerges from our work has to do with the question of what it actually means for ESREA to focus on research. The history as presented in this report shows that research has been a constant factor in the history of ESREA, but the shape and form of this research has changed and evolved over time, also – but not exclusively – because the opportunities for research and the contexts within which research can be conducted have changed and evolved. It is, in our view, therefore not enough just to say that ESREA should focus on high quality research, as depending on one’s definition ESREA has been doing this throughout its history. Ongoing discussion about the focus of themes as ‘areas’ of adult education, modes and forms of research, their interests and effects, and their significant for the field and areas of research ESREA seeks to serve will deepen understanding. The meanings given to the term ‘adult education’ have changed over time and emerge from differing traditions. Meanings signify differently in different locations and amongst ESREA members. However, what these are and whether research in adult education is understood as a part of a wider field in research in the education of adults or representative of that wider field will be significant going forward. When considering the thematic research areas of focus for ESREA’s activities and emerging from the interests and concerns of researchers proposing these into the future, the Steering Committee currently seeks evidence of a body of researchers who are keen. But it does have the power of acceptance or veto over such proposals. Some exploration of how the Steering Committee steers in this regard and the consequences of this on ESREA’s body of research and the meanings represented through its selections then seem important.

This then leads to the third issue, which has to do with the relationships between ESREA and the field of policy. Our work has not only showed that this relationship has been conceived differently over time, but also that this has been one of the recurrent themes in ESREA’s own discussions about its own ‘mission.’ This is, in our view, another important question for the future of ESREA – again not a question that can be answered in terms of a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’, but that does suggest understandings of the evolution of policy itself and how ESREA as an organisation does and can take up a position.

The fourth issue to mention concerns the theoretical resources of the work brought together in ESREA. It has been more difficult to identify trends and patterns here – most of the trends and patterns that are visible have to do with the topics and content of research. This first of all raises the question of to what extent an explicit attention to theoretical resources is necessary for the conduct of research. In our view such a discussion is of crucial importance, as the intellectual resources one brings to research shape the work, not just in terms of its findings and outcomes, but also with regard to methods and methodologies and, not least, with regard to the implications for policy and practice. For the future of ESREA this could therefore be another important theme to put on the agenda.

The fifth and final point concerns the tension between adult education and lifelong learning. While it would be too simple to say that the latter has simply replaced the former, the notions of adult education and lifelong learning do partly stand for significantly different traditions of research, policy and practice and it remains important for an organisation such as ESREA – which at least in its name is explicitly devoted to

research on the education of adults – to ponder further on the way in which this field itself may be in transition, not so much to simply embrace or condemn it, but in that the ‘object’ of its research efforts is itself to a large extent shaped through wider political and societal processes.

There is undoubtedly more that can be concluded from the work presented in this report, just as there is more that can be learned from it, and more that can be said about how the information brought together in this report might inform discussions about a desirable future for ESREA. The five observations we have offered are hopefully a useful starting point for such a discussion.

## 7. REFERENCES

- Ahonen, K. (undated). ESREA Network, History of adult education and training in Europe. History network description, University of Tampere: ESREA. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:ijGsD-PWENSJ:https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-Ek> [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> August 13]
- Alheit P. (1993) The 'biographical question' as a challenge to adult education. In Belanger, P. and Gelpi, E. (eds) *Lifelong education. A book series of the International Review of Education*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp283-298.
- Alheit, P. (1999). On a contradictory way to the 'learning society': A critical approach. Modified version of a keynote speech given to the 2nd ESREA Research Conference, 'Learning to Live in a Learning Society', Brussels, September 1998, p1-14. Accessed at: Page 1 of 14 EBSCOhost 04-10-2007 [http://web.ebscohost.com ... moodle.fct.unl.pt/pluginfile.php/32501/mod.../Alheit\\_P\\_1999.pdf](http://web.ebscohost.com...moodle.fct.unl.pt/pluginfile.php/32501/mod.../Alheit_P_1999.pdf). [26 March 2014]
- Alheit, P., Bron, A., Brugger, E. & Dominicé, P. (eds) (1995). *The biographical approach in European adult education*. Wein: Verband Wiener Volksbildung.
- Anon (1992) European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. In H. Faulstich-Wieland, E Nuißl, H. Siebert & J Weinberg (eds). *Report 30: Literatur- und Forschungsreport Weiterbildung*, 30, 111-13. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.die-frankfurt.de/esprid/dokumente/doc-1992/faulstich-wieland92\\_01.pdf](http://www.die-frankfurt.de/esprid/dokumente/doc-1992/faulstich-wieland92_01.pdf) [Accessed 09 July 13].
- Biesta, G. (2007). Why 'what works' won't work. Evidence-based practice and the democratic deficit of educational research. *Educational Theory*, 57(1), 1-22.
- Bisovsky, G., Bourgois, E., Bron, M., Chivers, G. & Larsson S. (eds) (1995). *Adult learning and social participation*. Papers presented in the working groups at the first European conference of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA), 18 to 22 September 1995 in the Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung Strobl/Austria.
- Bisovsky, G., Bourgois, E., Bron, M., Chivers, G. & Larsson S. (eds) (1998). *Adult learning and social participation*. Vienna: Verband Wiener Volksbildung.
- Borg, C. & Mayo P. (2008). Globalisation, southern Europe and European adult education policy. *Policy Futures in Education*, 6(6), 701-717.
- Bron, A., Field, J. & Kurantowicz, E. (eds) (1998). *Adult education and democratic citizenship, II*. Karkow: Impuls.
- Bron, A., Kurantowicz, E., Salling Olesen, H. & West, L. (eds) (2005a). Between "old" and "new" worlds of adult learning. Proceedings of the 4th ESREA European Research Conference, 16-19 September 2004, Wrocław, Poland. 5-6. Uniwersytet Wrocławski. Wrocław: MarMar.
- Bron, A., Kurantowicz, E., Salling Olesen, H. & West, L. (eds) (2005b) 'Old' and 'New' Worlds of Adult Learning. Advertisement leaflet. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97802/OldandNewworlds.pdf> [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> August 13]
- Bron, A. & Schemmann, M. (eds) (2001) *Civil society, citizenship and learning*, Bochum Studies in International Education 2, Munster: Deutsche Bibliothek, 7-14.

- Bron, A. & Schemmann, M. (2002) *Social science theories in adult education research*, Munster: LIT/Bocum Studies in International Adult Education.
- Bron Jr, M. & Malewski, M. (eds) (1995). *Adult education and democratic citizenship I*. Published for ESREA by Tourun, Wroclaw: Wroclaw University.
- Bron, M. Jr., Guimarães, P. & Vieira de Castron, R. (eds.) (2009). *The State, Civil Society and the Citizen: Exploring Relationships in the Field of Adult Education in Europe*. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang.
- Bron, M. & Field, J. (eds) (2001). *Adult education and democratic citizenship III*, Wroclaw: Lower Silesian University College of Education.
- Bron, M. & Malewski, M. (eds) (1995). *Adult education and democratic citizenship I*, Wroclaw: Wroclaw University. [ONLINE] Available at:
- Buiskool, B.J., Lakerfeld, J. van & Broek, S. (2009). Educators at work in two sectors of adult and vocational education: an overview of two European research projects. *European Journal of Education*, 44(2), 145-162.
- Commission of the European Communities (1994) *Competitiveness, Employment, Growth* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications).
- Charles, R. & Becker, H. (1992). *What is a case? Exploring the foundations of social inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cheetham, & Chivers G. E. (2005). *International issues in professional development. Professions, competence and informal learning*. Massachusetts: Edward Elgar.
- CONFINTEA V (1998). The electronic CONFINTEA follow-up bulletin. Con-nexus On line 03 Website, 3<sup>rd</sup> Issue, 12 June. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea/connexus03.html> [Accessed 04 March, 2014]
- Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the twenty-first century*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Duke, C. (1999). Research in adult education – current trends and future agenda. In Mauch W. (ed.), *World trends in adult education research*. Report on the International Seminar on World Trends in Adult Education Research, Montréal, Canada, September 06-09, 1994 . Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, 7-11.
- EAEA (European Association for the Education of Adults) (2001). EAEA News, May, ESREA Secretariat: Invitation to tender. Tender Doc. Helsinki: EAEA Office for Information and Documentation. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.sivistystyo.fi/eaea/news/esrtend.html> [Accessed 20 January, 2014]
- EAEA (European Association for the Education of Adults) (2006). *Adult education trends and issues in Europe*. Commissioned report led by the European Association for the Education of Adults. Restricted tender number EAC/43/05. Brussels: European Commission. [ONLINE] Available at: [ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc268\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc268_en.pdf) [Accessed 28 March, 2011]
- EAEA (European Association for the Education of Adults) (2013). EAEA News, September 2010. ESREA launches new academic journal, *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA)*. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.eaea.org/news.php?aid=17655&hakustr=esrea#a\\_17655](http://www.eaea.org/news.php?aid=17655&hakustr=esrea#a_17655) [Accessed 09 January, 2014].
- EC (European Commission) (1993). *Growth, competitiveness, employment: The challenges and ways forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, White Paper. Bruxelles: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

- EC (European Commission) (1996). *Teaching and learning: towards a learning society*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- ESREA (1997). European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. Website. Internet archive waybackmachine, Jan. 1997- May 2000. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://web.archive.org/web/20000528184123/http://www.helsinki.fi/jari/esrea/index.html> [Accessed 06 March, 2014]
- ESREA (2001) Wider benefits of learning: Understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning. European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) *Wider Benefits of Learning: Understanding and Monitoring the Consequences of Adult Learning*, Lisbon, Portugal: University of Lusofana [ONLINE] Available at: Lusofana University: Xçativa. [www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97774/Widerbenefitsoflearning.doc](http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97774/Widerbenefitsoflearning.doc) [Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013]
- ESREA (2002). Constitution of ESREA. [Word document] Leiden: ESREA.
- ESREA (2004). European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. ESREA website. Internet archive waybackmachine, Feb, 2002 - Jun. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://wayback.archive.org/web/20051218180945/http://www.esrea.org/> [Accessed 18th January 2013]
- ESREA (2007). Notice of change to Secretariat, 2007.
- ESREA (2010). European Society for Research on the Education of Adults, ESREA newsletter No.4 September. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC0QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sharpnetwork.eu%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2FNewsletter%25204%2520September%25202010\\_0.pdf&ei=nSXdUofmGemo0wWrqIHACA&usg=AFQjCNEVvMWRrRcwlGQuFcenOxXEnjG7Zg](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC0QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sharpnetwork.eu%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2FNewsletter%25204%2520September%25202010_0.pdf&ei=nSXdUofmGemo0wWrqIHACA&usg=AFQjCNEVvMWRrRcwlGQuFcenOxXEnjG7Zg) [Accessed 18th January 2013]
- ESREA (2013a) ESREA. Network on active democratic citizenship and adult learning, [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/gender\\_network?!=en](http://www.esrea.org/gender_network?!=en) [Accessed 12 December, 2013]
- ESREA (2013b). ESREA. European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. Website. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.esrea.org/?l=en> [Accessed 12 December, 2013]
- ESREA (2013c) ESREA. Research network on working life and learning, Network description. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/working\\_life\\_network?!=en](http://www.esrea.org/working_life_network?!=en) . [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- ESREA (2013d). ESREA – European Society for Research on the Education of Adults, life history and biographical research network. Call for papers. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/esrea\\_news/1.484840/First\\_Call-2013.pdf](http://www.esrea.org/esrea_news/1.484840/First_Call-2013.pdf) . [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- ESREA (2013e). ESREA. Network on migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia, updated 2012. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/migrant\\_network?!=en](http://www.esrea.org/migrant_network?!=en) [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- ESREA (2013f). ESREA. Network on gender and adult learning. ESREA website. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/gender\\_network?!=en](http://www.esrea.org/gender_network?!=en) [Accessed 12 December, 2013]
- ESREA (2013g). Education and learning of older adults. ESREA website. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/older\\_learner\\_network?!=en](http://www.esrea.org/older_learner_network?!=en) . [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- ESREA (2013h) ESREA. Network on between global and local: Adult learning and development. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/global\\_network?!=en](http://www.esrea.org/global_network?!=en) [Accessed 12 April, 2014]

- ESREA (2013i) ESREA. Network on the history of adult education and training in Europe, [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/cross\\_cultural\\_network?l=en](http://www.esrea.org/cross_cultural_network?l=en) [Accessed 12 April, 2014]
- ESREA (2013j). Adult learning in Europe – understanding diverse meanings and contexts, ESREA. Website. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.liu.se/esrea2010?l=en>. [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- ESREA (2013k). Call for papers, European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA). Network on gender and adult learning. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.358473/FIRSTCALL\\_Gender\\_2013.pdf](http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.358473/FIRSTCALL_Gender_2013.pdf) . [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- ESREA (2013l). ESREA. Network on policy studies in adult education. Updated 2010. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/policy\\_studies?l=en](http://www.esrea.org/policy_studies?l=en) . [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- ESREA (2013m). ESREA. Network on access, learning careers and identities. Updated 2010. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/policy\\_studies?l=en](http://www.esrea.org/policy_studies?l=en) . [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- ESREA (2013n). Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times, ESREA European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. The 7th European research conference, September 4-7 2013. Conference brochure. Berlin: ESREA and the Department of Adult Education and Continuing Education, Humboldt-University Berlin. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://ebwb.hu-berlin.de/aktuelles/esrea/conference-programme/esrea-programme-update-29th-august> [Accessed 12 December, 2013]
- ESREA Secretary (1999). ESREA annual report 1998. European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. Website. Internet archive waybackmachine, Jan. 1997- May 2000. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://web.archive.org/web/19991011204730/http://www.helsinki.fi/jari/esrea/ar98.html> [Accessed 22 July, 2013]
- ESREA/Humboldt University (2013). The 7th European Research Conference, Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times. Conference brochure. ESREA/Humboldt University/ Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.
- ESREA/ReNADET (undated). The official website of the ESREA research network on adult educators, trainers and their professional development, ESREA/ReNADET. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.esrea-renadet.net/> [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- Eurydice (2007). NVAL in Europe, Executive summary of national information on Eurydice. Working document. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0\\_integral/083EN.pdf](http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0_integral/083EN.pdf) . [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- Faulstick-Wieland, H., Nuissl, E., Siebert, H. Weinberg, J. (eds.) (1992) ESREA, European Society for Research on the Education of Adults, in *Report 30 Literature-und forschungsreport weiterbildung, Dezember 1992, Thema: Fortsetzung der theoriendiskussion*, Nachrichten, December, pp.111-13.
- Fejes, A. & Salling Olesen, H. (2010). Envisioning future research on the education and learning of adults'. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 1(1-2), 7-16.
- Field, J. (2001). Lifelong education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20(1/2): 3-15.
- Field, J. (2004). Researching lifelong learning: trends and prospects in the English-speaking world. *Badania nad calozyciowym uczeniem sie doroslych: tendencje i perspektywy w*

- swiecie anglojezyczynym, *Kwartalnik Mysli Spooleczno-Pedagogicznej Terazniejszosc Czlowjek Edukacja*, 21(1) 2003, 63-81.
- Franklin V. (2011). Reflections on history, education, and social theories, *History of Education Quarterly*, 51(2), 264-271.
- Friedenthal-Hasse, M., Hake B.J. & Marriott, S. (eds) (1991). *No 1: British-Dutch-German relationships in adult education 1880-1930: Studies in the theory and history of cross-cultural communication in adult education*. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
- Goodson, I., Biesta, G.J.J., Tedder, M. & Adair, N. (2010). *Narrative learning*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Hake, B. J.(1999a). Adult education research trends in the western European countries. In W. Mauch (ed.) *World trends in adult education research: Report on the international seminar on world trends in adult education research, Montréal, Canada, September 06-09, 1994*, Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, 124-52. [ONLINE] Available at: <<http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/online/468rep.pdf>> [accessed 10 July, 2013].
- Hake, B. J. (1999b). ESREA – European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. In J. Reischmann, M. Bron and Z. Jelenc (Eds.). *Comparative adult education 1998: the contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study*. Ljubljana & Bamberg: Slovene Adult Education Institute & International Society for Comparative Adult Education, 289-300. [ONLINE] Available at: <<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/andragogik/08/andragogik/iscae/ISCAE-Book1999.pdf>>. [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- Hake B. J. & Marriott S. (eds) (1992). *No 2: Adult education between cultures: Encounters and identities in European adult education since 1890*. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
- Hake B. J. & Steele T. (eds) (1997). *No 5: Intellectuals, activists and reformers: Studies of cultural, social and educational reform movements 1890-1930*. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
- Hake B. J., Steele T. & Tiana A. (eds) (1996). *No 4: Masters, missionaries and militants: Studies of social movements and popular adult education 1890-1939*. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
- Hake, B.J., van Gent, B. & Katus, J. (eds) (2004). *Adult education and globalisation: Past and present*. Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on the History of Adult Education, Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag.
- Hill S. & Merrill B. (eds) (1997). *Access, equity, participation and organizational change*. Warwick: Department of Continuing Education.
- Jelenc, Z. (ed.) (1994). *Adult education research in the countries in transition: Trends in former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Baltic region*. Ljubljana: Slovene Adult Education Centre.
- Jelenc. Z (1996). Adult education research in the countries in transition. Adult education research trends in the former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic region. Research project report. Ljubljana: SIAE.
- Jelenc, Z., (1999a). Adult education research trends in central and eastern European countries. In: W. Mauch (Ed.) *World trends in adult education research: Report on the international seminar on world trends in adult education research, Montréal, Canada, September 06-09*, 153-86. [pdf] Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education. [ONLINE] Available at: <<http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/online/468rep.pdf>>[Accessed 10 July 2013].

- Jögi, W. Jütte & G. Zarifis (eds), 2(September/October), 1-31. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.academia.edu/363206/ESREA\\_ReNAdET\\_Newsletter\\_Issue\\_nr.\\_2\\_September\\_October\\_2010](http://www.academia.edu/363206/ESREA_ReNAdET_Newsletter_Issue_nr._2_September_October_2010) [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014].
- Jutte, W., Nicoll, K. & Salling Olesen, H. (2011). Professionalisation – the struggle within, Editorial, *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 2(1), 2011,7-20.
- Larsson, S. (2010). Invisible colleges in the adult education research world. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 1(1-2), 97-112.
- Lucio-Villegas, E. & del Carmen Martinez, M. (eds) (2007). Adult learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity: Diverse lives, cultures, learnings and literacies. Proceedings of the 5th ESREA European Research Conference , No: 1, 2, 3. Seville: Diálogos.
- Malewski, M. (2010). On the incommensurability of adult education researchers' worlds. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 1(2), 53-66.
- Marck, R., Pouget M & Thomas E. (2006). Adults in Higer Education: Learning from Experience in New Europe. Bern: Peter Lang
- Marriott S. & Hake, B.J. (eds) (1994). *Cultural and intercultural experiences in European adult education: Essays on popular and higher education since 1890*. No. 3. Leeds: Leeds Studies in Continuing Education.
- Mauch W. (ed.) (1999). *World trends in adult education research, Report on the international seminar on world trends in adult education research. Montréal, Canada, September 06-09, 1994*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.[pdf] Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/online/468rep.pdf> [Accessed 10 July 2013].
- Merrill, B. & West L. (2009) *Using biographical methods in social research*. London: Sage.
- Merrill, B. (2011) Transitions and identity in learning life, Introduction. In Merrill B (ed.) *Transitions, and identity in learning life*, proceedings of the ESREA conference, november 2011, Aveiro, UNIFOC/ESREA/University of Warwick pp 7-17. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.academia.edu/5094729/Making\\_wishes\\_come\\_true\\_a\\_methodological\\_design\\_in\\_a\\_multicase\\_study\\_with\\_non\\_traditional\\_adult\\_students](http://www.academia.edu/5094729/Making_wishes_come_true_a_methodological_design_in_a_multicase_study_with_non_traditional_adult_students). [Accessed 10 May 2014]
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) (1997). *Lifelong learning for all*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) (2003). *Beyond Rhetoric: Adult Learning policies and practices*, OECD, Paris. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=eMXUnBOOTwUC&oi=fnd&pg=PA8&dq=Beyond+Rhetoric:+Adult+Learning+Policies+and+Practices&ots=UODqJTjdLQ&sig=crMfwlP0dJaSB7TnCcIYqDUV5lc#v=onepage&q&f=false> [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013].
- PASCAL (Place and Social Capital and Learning International Observatory) (2009). ESREA - European Society for Research on the Education of Adults - Wisdom and knowledge in researching and learning lives: diversity, difference and commonalities. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://pascalobservatory.org/pascalnow/pascal-activities/conferences/esrea-european-society-research-education-adults-wisdom-and-> [Accessed 14 August 2013].
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. NY: State of New York University Press.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8 (2): 5-23.
- Reischmann, J., Bron, M. & Jelenc, Z. (eds) (1999). *Comparative adult education 1998: the contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study*. Ljubljana: Slovene Adult Education

- Centre & International Society for Comparative Adult Education. [ONLINE] Available at: <<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/andragogik/08/andragogik/iscae/ISCAE-Book1999.pdf>> [Accessed 12 August, 2013].
- RELA (2010). *European Journal of Research in the Education and Learning of Adults*, Linköping: Linköping University. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.rela.ep.liu.se/> [Accessed 20 January 2014].
- RIAIPE [Ibero-American Research Network on Educational Policies] (2014). Inter-university framework program for equity and social cohesion policies in higher education, Call for papers, 2nd international research conference of ESREA research network, no date. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.riaipe-alfa.eu/index.php/en/news/1794-call-for-papers-2o-conferencia-internacional-da-rede-de-investigacao-esre> [Accessed 30 January 2014].
- Schemmann, M. & Bron, Jr. M. (eds) (2001). *Adult education and democratic citizenship IV*, Krakow: Impuls.
- Sloep, P., Boon, J., Cornu, B., Kleb, M., Lefr, P., Naeve, A., Scott, P. & Tinoca, L. (2008). A European research agenda for lifelong learning. In: European Association of Distance Teaching Universities, Annual Conference 2008, 18 - 19 Sep, Poitiers, France. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://oro.open.ac/25162> [Accessed 25 March, 2014].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2005a). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Rome: March [ONLINE] Available at: 2013:<http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97799/MinutesRomeMarch2005.pdf> [Accessed 14 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2005b). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Munich: March. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97792/MinutesMunishOctober2005.pdf> [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2006b). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Seville, October. [ONLINE] Available at: 2013: <http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97807/ESREAmunutesSeville.pdf> [Accessed 14 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2007a). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Braga. April. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97784/Minutes\\_Braga.pdf](http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97784/Minutes_Braga.pdf) [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2007b). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Seville. November. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97807/ESREAmunutesSeville.pdf> [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2008). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Dresden. November. [ONLINE] Available at: [https://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en&q=ESREA+\(2008\)+%E2%80%98+enGB424](https://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en&q=ESREA+(2008)+%E2%80%98+enGB424). [Accessed 18th January 2013]
- SC (Steering Committee) (2009a). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Milan. March [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.98300/Minutes\\_Milan\\_2009.pdf](http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.98300/Minutes_Milan_2009.pdf) [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2009b). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Thessaloniki. November. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.98301/Minutes\\_Thessaloniki\\_2009.pdf](http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.98301/Minutes_Thessaloniki_2009.pdf). [Accessed 15 August 2013]

- SC (Steering Committee) (2010a). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Tallinn: November. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.193238/MinutesTallinn2010.pdf>. [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2010b). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Linköping: November. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.220634/Minutes\\_Linköping\\_2010.pdf](http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.220634/Minutes_Linköping_2010.pdf). [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2011a). Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA. Rome: March. <http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97799/MinutesRomeMarch2005.pdf>. [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2011b) Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA, Munich: October. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.97792/MinutesMunichOctober2005.pdf>. [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2012a) Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA. Seville: March. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.405557/minutes\\_Seville.pdf](http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.405557/minutes_Seville.pdf). [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- SC (Steering Committee) (2012b) Minutes for the Steering Committee meeting of ESREA. Roskilde: September. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.422029/Minutes\\_Roskilde\\_2012.pdf](http://www.esrea.org/filarkiv/1.422029/Minutes_Roskilde_2012.pdf) [Accessed 15 August 2013].
- Tavistock Institute (2002). *Review of current pedagogic research and practice in the fields of post-compulsory education and lifelong learning*, Economic and Social Research Council Teaching and Learning Research Programme, Exeter: Tavistock. [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2013].
- Tedder, M. & Biesta, G.J.J. (2009). What does it take to learn from one's life? Exploring opportunities for biographical learning in the lifecourse. In B. Merrill (ed), *Learning to Change? The Role of Identity and Learning Careers in Adult Education* (pp.33-48). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Titmus, C. (1999) Comparative Adult Education: Some reflections on the process. In J. Reischmann, M. Bron and Z. Jelenc (eds.) (1999). *Comparative adult education 1998: the contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study*. Ljubljana & Bamberg: Slovene Adult Education Institute & International Society for Comparative Adult Education, 33-50. [ONLINE] Available at: <<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/andragogik/08/andragogik/iscae/ISCAE-Book1999.pdf>>. [Accessed 12 February, 2014].
- Turner B. & Ridden J. (2001). In T Bron, A. & Schemmann, M. (eds) (2001). *Civil society, citizenship and learning*, Bochum Studies in International Education 2, Munster: Deutsche Bibliothek, 29-59.
- UIL [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning] (1997). Hamburg declaration on adult learning, Hamburg: Fifth International meeting UIL. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://bibliotecadigital.conevyt.org.mx/colecciones/documentos/reunion/unesco\\_institute\\_for\\_education.pdf](http://bibliotecadigital.conevyt.org.mx/colecciones/documentos/reunion/unesco_institute_for_education.pdf). [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2013].
- UIL [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning] (2009). *Global report on adult learning and education*. UNESCO/UNESCO, Hamburg: Institute for Lifelong Learning.
- UIL [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning] (2002). Review frame: Summary and guidelines for the midterm review of CONFINTEA, Hamburg: Institute for lifelong learning. [ONLINE] Available at:

[http://bibliotecadigital.conevyt.org.mx/colecciones/documentos/reunion/unesco\\_institute\\_for\\_education.pdf](http://bibliotecadigital.conevyt.org.mx/colecciones/documentos/reunion/unesco_institute_for_education.pdf) [Accessed May 2014].

University of Coimbra (2012). Website [ONLINE]

<http://www.pontemargem.org/agenda.php?id=5254> [Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2013].

von Hippel, A. & Tippelt, R. (2010). The role of adult educators towards (potential) participants and their contribution to increasing participation in adult education – insights into existing research, *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 1(1-2), 33-51.

West, L., Alheit, P., Anderson, A. & Merrill, B. (eds) (2007). *Using biographical and life-history approaches in the study of adult and lifelong learning: Perspectives from across Europe*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.peterlang.com/download/extract/40193/extract\\_56286.pdf](http://www.peterlang.com/download/extract/40193/extract_56286.pdf). [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> August 2013].

Wildemeersch, D., Stroobants, V. & Bron, Jr M. (eds) (2005). *Active citizenship and multiple identities*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.

Wilson, J. (ed.) (1996). *Human resource development: Learning and training for individuals and organizations*. London: KoganPage. [ONLINE] Available at:

<http://books.google.nl/books?id=QQLoNNfa-f=false>. [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> August 2013].

Zarifis G. (ed.) (2010). The official newsletter of the ESREA research network on adult educators, trainers and their professional development. ESREA/ReNAdEt, 2010 Newsletter.

## 7.1 ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Collado Broncano, M., Salling Olesen, H., Puch Cisneros, A. (eds) (2001). *Educación y formación de personas adultas y trabajo. (Adult education and the labour market.) VI*. Xàtiva.

Dyybroe B. & Ollagnier E. (ed.) (2003). *Challenging gender in lifelong learning: European Perspectives*, Copenhagen, Roskilde University Press,

ESREA (2013) Statutes of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) updated 2009. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.esrea.org/statutes?l=en> [Accessed 12 August, 2013]

Europa (2014). *European Year of Lifelong Learning (1996)*, EUROPA archives, Summaries of EU legislation, [ONLINE] Accessed 17/01/2014 At:

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/lifelong\\_learning/c11024\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11024_en.htm)

Hake, B. J. (1998). ALL ESREA EVENTS 91-06 & NOTES.doc. Personal communication.

Field, J (1996). Towards the Europeanisation of continuing education? *Studies in the Education of Adults*, vol. 29. no. 1

Field, J (1997). Continuing education and the European dimension: a survey of British professionals' attitudes. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, vol. 21, no. 1.

Hake, B. J. (1998). ALL ESREA EVENTS 91-06 & NOTES.doc. Personal communication.

Hake, B.J (1992). Remaking the study of adult education: the relevance of recent developments in the Netherlands for the search for disciplinary identity. *Adult Education Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 2.

Hake, B.J (1994). Is there a forum for research on the education of adults in Europe? Some problems and trends. *International Journal of University Adult Education*, vol. XXXIII, no. 1.

- Hake, B.J (1995). Western Europe: aspects of adult education research trends. *Adult Education and Development*, vol. 45.
- Jelenc, Z. (1999b). ESREA – European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. In J. Reischmann, M. Bron and Z. Jelenc (eds) (1999). *Comparative adult education 1998: The contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study*. [pdf] Ljubljana & Bamberg: Slovene Adult Education Institute & International Society for Comparative Adult Education, 224-235. [ONLINE] Available at: <<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/andragogik/08/andragogik/iscae/ISCAE-Book1999.pdf>>. [Accessed 12 August, 2013]
- Jelenc, Z. (2001). Lifelong learning policies in transition countries. In Aspin, D. Chapman, Judith, Hatton, M. Sawano, U. (eds) *International handbook of lifelong learning*, 6, 259-84. Netherlands: Springer.
- Jørgensen H. C. & Warring, N. (eds) (2002a). *Adult education and the labour market VII*, Volume A, Papers from the research project 'Work life, learning environments and democratisation'. Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the ESREA Research Network, Roskilde. Roskilde: Roskilde University Press.
- Jørgensen H. C. & Warring, N. (eds) (2002b). *Adult education and the labour market VII*, Volume B, Papers from the research project "Work life, learning environments and democratisation". Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the ESREA Research Network, Roskilde. Roskilde: Roskilde University Press.
- Klenovsek T.V. & Olesen, S. H. (eds) (1994). *Adult education and the labour market I*. Ljubljana: Slovene Adult Education Centre.
- Knoll, J.H. (1999) Development and fundamental principles of international and comparative adult education research. In J. Reischmann, M. Bron & Z. Jelenc (eds) (1999). *Comparative adult education 1998: the contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study*. Ljubljana & Bamberg: Slovene Adult Education Institute & International Society for Comparative Adult Education, 19-31.[ONLINE] Available at: <<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/andragogik/08/andragogik/iscae/ISCAE-Book1999.pdf>>. [Accessed 12 February, 2014].
- Olesen H.S. (ed.) (1996). *Adult education and labour market II*. Roskilde: Adult education group, Roskilde university press..
- Olesen H.S. (ed.) (1998). *Adult education and labour market IV*. Roskilde: Adult education group, Roskilde university press.
- Olesen H.S. & Forrester K. (eds). (1999) *Adult education and the labour market V*. Roskilde: Roskilde university press.
- Olesen H.S. (ed.) (1997). *Adult education and the labour market III*. Roskilde: Adult education group, Roskilde university press.
- Oustrouch J. & Ollagnier E. (ed.) (2008.) *Researching gender in adult education*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Oustrouch K-J, Fontanini C. & Gaynard S. (ed. (2012). *Considering gender in academia: (In)visible act*, Wrocklaw, Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSW.
- Poell, R. and Chivers, G. (eds) (1999). *Continuing professional development in Europe*. ESREA CPD Network. Sheffield & Loughborough Universities, UK and Nijmegen University, the Netherlands.
- Reischmann, J. (2004). Andragogy. history, meaning, context, function. Version Sept. 9. [Online] Accessed at <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/andragogik/08/andragogik/andragogy/Andragogy-Internet.pdf> [26 March 2014]

- Reischmann, J. (2009). *ISCAE – International Society for Comparative Adult Education* (ONLINE) Available at: <http://www.ISCAE.org> [Accessed 22 February, 2014].
- Reischmann, J. (ed.) (1988). *Beitrage zur empirischen erziehungswissenschaft und fachdidaktik*. Bd. 4, Herausgegeben von Leo Roth.
- Riessman, C.K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage Publications.
- Savicevic D. (1999) Understanding andragogy in Europe and America: Comparing and contrasting. ESREA – European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. In J. Reischmann, M. Bron and Z. Jelenc (Eds.) (1999). *Comparative adult education 1998: The contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study*. Ljubljana & Bamberg: Slovene Adult Education Institute & International Society for Comparative Adult Education (97-119). [ONLINE] Available at: <<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/andragogik/08/andragogik/iscae/ISCAE-Book1999.pdf>> [Accessed 12 February, 2014].

---

<sup>i</sup> ESREA Annual Report 1998 (ESREA Secretary 1999, no page) breakdown of ESREA members by country:

Membership of ESREA

There have been only minor changes in the pattern of membership of ESREA during 1998. The total number of members has remained stable during 1998. A minimal number of withdrawals was more than compensated by new members and in particular the addition of a number of new French-speaking members associated with the ESREA 98 conference in Bruxelles.

There is a trend, however, towards an increase in the number of associated institutional members of ESREA. This should be regarded as a positive development in that university departments, and national associations, recognize the value of ESREA on the basis of the successful participation by their staff members in ESREA activities.

**Table: Number of members by country**

United Kingdom	47
Finland	27
Germany	20
Sweden	20
Austria	11
Belgium	10*
Spain	10
Switzerland	9*
Netherlands	8
Slovenia	.8
Italy	6
Poland	6
Denmark	5
Eire	5
Norway	5
France	4*
Lithuania	4
Portugal	4
Hungary	3
Turkey	3
Czechia	2
Estoni	2
Greece	2
Romania	2

---

Slovakia	2
Bulgaria	1
Latvia	1
Malta	1
Yugoslavia	1
	228