



Action Plan for ESREA 2017 - 2019

Every three years, the ESREA's Steering Committee prepares an Action Plan as a tool to define the priorities, policies and actions for ESREA over the next three years. The Action Plan is circulated among members, published in the website, and discussed with Network Convenors to support cooperation and planning.

Our mission within a changing context

As defined in the statutes, ESREA is dedicated to encouraging and supporting the advancement of high quality research on the education and learning of adults in European countries. Ongoing reflection on the field, its evolution, and ESREA's role in it, is promoted by ESREA in conferences, seminars, and publications (most notably RELA and our book series). A research on the "History of ESREA", published on the website in 2014, was accompanied by an invitation to all members to support this reflexive process through their meetings and activities.

Adult Education and Learning in Europe is in state of flux and a number of challenges and complexities need to be taken into account in planning the activities of ESREA in the forthcoming period. On an international level, Adult Education and Learning has become a political priority within the Lifelong Learning area of the European Union and for the OECD, as recognized in many policy documents. On the other hand, a narrow and economic view of both education and research, along with shrinking resources, may undermine the sort of critical research that ESREA seeks to foster and promote. We also are cognisant, as the 2016 UN Global Report on Adult learning and Education points out, that we face a wide range of global challenges - such as inequality, climate change and changes in work and migration - which call for careful thinking and critical and imaginative research on adult education. Adult Education has a rich history of conducting research, working alongside social movements and civil society, which seeks to address major social challenges and of which can be drawn upon in responding to current changes.

We also want to note that across national contexts the health of adult education is highly varied: in some states adult education remains institutionally strong and well supported while in others adult education has shrunk and even, arguably, been hollowed out. At the same time where and how knowledge is produced is being altered and modes of dissemination, discussion and debate are also rapidly changing through digital technologies. There is a need, then, for both a deep reflection and new strategies, in order to respond effectively to these technological, policy and institutional shifts.

This 2017-2019 Action Plan outlines the objectives and measures that we intend to achieve over the next three years.

Our main goals for this period are to:

1. Continue to promote high quality, critical and reflexive research on adult education which is in keeping with the ethos and values of ESREA.
2. Enlarge and diversify our community.

3. Support early career researchers.
4. Consolidate relationships within ESREA and foster dialogue between Networks and with the Steering Committee.
5. Increase visibility through networking, publications, social media and other initiatives.

Each objective is explained, and the measures/actions to achieve it explored below.

For each topic, one or two members of the SC will be appointed during the first meeting of 2018, in order to monitor the actions that are planned.

Continue to promote high quality, critical and reflexive research on adult education which is in keeping with the ethos and values of ESRE

Supporting high quality research is at the heart of ESREA's work. In the coming period, given major changes in the field of adult education and in research, not least the risk of marketization and commodification of both, we need to ensure that our activities maintain a critical and reflexive stance. This will be achieved primarily through the activities of the networks, RELA and our publications but it is also possible to commission research that would be useful in this regard.

Suggested actions for the forthcoming period:

Commission a piece of research that examines one or several key changes in the field in a substantive manner.

and/or

Commission a piece research to profile ESREA's associates and the kind of research they do and how this contributes to adult education.

The Steering Committee will seek tender(s) for these research projects. The details of this action will be discussed during the first meeting 2018

1. Enlarge and diversify our community

ESREA wishes to increase individual and institutional membership, and to widen the spectrum of its members. In fact, while ESREA is well rooted in some parts of Europe (North/West countries), other parts (South/East countries) are under-represented, or in some cases totally absent. Hence, ESREA is not fully representative of the variety and richness of cultures and languages in Europe. Outreach and recruitment activities need to be specifically aimed to find greater equilibrium between North and South, East and West, as well as different voices and cultures of research.

Suggested actions for the forthcoming period:

A recruitment campaign: The Steering Committee will write a letter to explain why it is important to become a member, send it to all members, insert a permanent call to membership in the Newsletter and ask Convenors to be active in recruitment, by sending out the letter to their lists.

The details of this action will be discussed during the first meeting 2018

Seek out contacts in specific national contexts where membership is low or non-existent. The Steering Committee and ESREA members will be invited to take specific actions and to report on them. During forthcoming SC meetings, these actions will be monitored.

- Conferences and activities need to be organized in all parts of Europe, and - as far as possible

- in countries that are underrepresented in ESREA. Network convenors will be invited by the Secretary to bear this in mind and to review progress on a yearly base. The SC will have this as one of the most important criteria when evaluating the tenders for the Triennial conference 2019.

- The Steering Committee members or the Secretary will commit to participating, when possible, in conferences or other activities that are organized in southern/eastern countries.
- To sustain active participation by individuals who do not have the financial support to travel to a conference, possibilities for ICT presentations will be explored e.g. for the Triennial conference. The Secretary will be responsible for this action.

Bursaries, prizes and summer schools will be made available, as has occurred in the past, to encourage early career researchers to join ESREA.

2. Support early career researchers

ESREA has a strong tradition of providing a space where early-career researchers and doctoral students are able to meet, learn and enhance their research capacities and to build good network relationships with other scholars.

Universities and doctoral programmes can also benefit from their involvement with ESREA, since the logic of networking is becoming more and more important in academia. Adult education and learning can suffer, in some countries, from a lack of resources. The creation of meaningful collaboration in training and education of new researchers is an important goal of our society.

Suggested actions for the forthcoming period:

- Continue the support to existing summer schools that are coherent with ESREA's aims, by publication in a list and bursaries for participants. Information and the conditions that apply to holding a ESREA summer schools are available on the website.
- Sustain the building of stronger collaboration among different institutional members, i.e. in the form of a consortium of institutions that would be able to apply for a EU grant. In the long term, this could lead to a summer school under the auspices of ESREA.

Create opportunities to offer seed funding and/or specific mentoring for early career researchers. The details of this action will be discussed in future SC meetings

4. Consolidate relationships within ESREA and foster dialogue between Research Networks and with the Steering Committee

The twelve research networks are the backbone of ESREA and the SC needs to maintain and deepen close collaboration with them. In order to do so, convenors should develop greater insight into the work of the SC, and also the other way around. Steering Committee members and Network Convenors should be actively promote ESREA within their networks and make sure that ESREA is always properly presented, and discuss the society's aims and role whenever possible, foster individual and institutional membership, invite people to send proposals to other network conferences and to RELA, etc.

Suggested actions for the forthcoming period:

- Guidelines will be sent out to Network Convenors, highlighting the need to share information, effective communication and joint coordination. The Secretary will take care of this action.
- The Action Plan will be sent out to Network Convenors. The Secretary and Chair will take care of this action, actively seek feedback and identify ways for enhancing communication
- Every Network Conference will offer thorough information, on the website and during the Conference, about ESREA, bursaries, encourage membership and active participation of members in publications. The Secretary will send a message to organizers when they announce a Conference and one month before it takes place.
- Profiling associates and the kind of research they do and how their research contributes to adult education. The details of this action will be discussed by SC during 2018
- The Secretary or members of the SC will attend wherever possible network events and conferences. At these events, convenors will be consulted and participants will be informed about the aims and organisation of ESREA.
- After each SC meeting the Chair and the Vice Chair will write a letter to the convenors in order to keep them updated.
- Develop tools (such as web fora) and encourage social media activities which build awareness of ESREA activities across networks. The details of this action will be discussed by SC during 2018
- Specific actions will be related to the **Triennial Conference 2019**, in collaboration with the conference organizers. Some suggestions: a meeting of all the convenors during the conference; workshop or symposia jointly organized by different networks; a roundtable with representatives of different networks discussing a topic drawing on the works and views of the network they represent; network convenors as discussants of keynote presentations. Name badges which specify membership of networks. A table or poster for each network, to present its activities at the conference. These actions will be discussed with the organisers in a meeting with Steering Committee members.

5. Increase visibility through networking, publications, social media and other initiatives.

a) Networking: many academic institutions are members of ESREA and our members are active participants in national and international organisations. All these relationships and collaborations are very important to meeting the objectives of ESREA. Networks Convenors and the Steering Committee will identify a range of organisations (including those of practitioners and policymakers in adult education), and academic societies working in cognate areas of research, on a national and international level, beyond Europe, in order to strengthen alliances, give more visibility to members' work, and plan joint endeavours.

Suggested actions for the forthcoming period:

- The Steering Committee will work on a list of organisations which are important in the field of adult education and learning, and strategic partners for ESREA, in Europe and beyond. Contacts will be made with some of them, in order to explore areas of shared interest and promote research, its value and its visibility. Such network building activities will be decided

by the Steering Committee in each case, by appointing one or more members to liaise with specific contacts, or by doing so collectively.

- Steering Committee members are expected to participate as ESREA representatives when invited to public events organised by other organisations and associations within the area of adult learning and education. If a member cannot participate to an important event, the invitation should be forwarded to the rest of the Steering Committee.
 - Where appropriate, Network Conveners can formally invite representatives of relevant organisations to seminars and conferences, under the auspices of ESREA.
 - The Steering Committee will review these networking activities on an ongoing basis.
- b) Publications** were prioritized in previous action plans, and it was successful with the journal and the book series. It is important now to maintain and encourage network convenors to prepare and submit book proposals as well as to encourage conference participants to submit papers to RELA as a further step in their academic writing.

Suggested actions for the forthcoming period:

- Open a discussion with the research networks about topics of interest for RELA. The RELA editorial board is responsible for this action.
- c) Social media:** the website, recently updated, will become more central to the work of ESREA. The Steering Committee will encourage network convenors to participate in producing material for the website, keeping it updated, and actively use the Twitter and Facebook accounts of ESREA.

Suggested actions for the forthcoming period:

- Complete the revamp website and review it on an ongoing basis.
- Draw up guidelines for use of social media during events and conferences.
- Establish a social media strategy for the 2019 Triennial
- Establish a repository of members work
- The details of these actions will be discussed and elaborated throughout the period covered by the action plan.