The ship of ESREA: Departing from a new port

Dear ESREA Associates,

The current year marks a turning point in the history of ESREA. The Society moved its location after eleven years from Linköping University in Sweden to DIE – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning in Bonn in Germany. This is not the first change of its kind and will definitely not be the last. ESREA was founded in December 1991, its first location being Leiden University in the Netherlands. For almost sixteen years Barry Hake, first and long-standing Secretary of ESREA, together with Kjell Rubenson (1991-1998) and then Henning Salling Olesen (1998-2007) as Chair, successfully navigated the rough waters of the Society’s formative years. In 2007-2012, Andreas Fejes as Secretary, and Henning Salling Olesen as Chair, strengthened its position by setting it up as a non-profit organisation under Swedish law, and by launching RELA as an open access research journal on adult education in 2010. More recently, Robert Aman as Secretary and Laura Formenti as Chair safely led ESREA to its new port: the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning.
It is the first time that ESREA is located in an extra-mural institute, and this might seem perplexing to some members. But those who are familiar both with the history of ESREA and the history of DIE know there are in fact many parallels. The two organisations obviously share a commitment to excellence in adult education research and policy. Furthermore, they were both built from the bottom up, at the initiative of academics (in the case of ESREA) or practitioners (in the case of DIE). Not surprisingly, the aspiration of ESREA ‘to establish an interdisciplinary forum for the development of research approaches as they apply to the education of adults’ was welcomed in an early DIE Journal Report from 1992.

Of the two DIE has a longer history, having evolved from an association of adult education centres founded in 1957. Over the last twenty years DIE has shifted its focus more towards research and research-based infrastructures to pursue its mission: to enhance personal development, social participation and workers’ skills through adult education and lifelong learning.

At DIE more than fifty research associates from various disciplines carry out research addressing all aspects that are relevant for the teaching and learning of adults: the financial, political, institutional and legal framework of adult learning systems at macro level, planning of programmes and management of adult education organisations at meso level, requirements for learning, teaching and counseling of adults at micro level.

ESREA is now entering a new phase as a registered non-profit association under German law with a new statute and a new Secretary. The Steering Committee guarantees continuity in meeting the Society’s goals and pursuing its values.

This first Newsletter in 2019 was put together in Bonn by a new editorial team. It seemed to me an excellent opportunity to reflect on the organisational changes in the history of ESREA, and how they correspond to the identity of ESREA. In doing so, I could not help drawing on a myth from my native Greece, about Theseus, the legendary king of Athens. The people of Athens honoured his memory by preserving his ship in the port of Pireaus. This ‘ship of Theseus’ remained moored for hundreds of years. As time went on, some of the wooden planks started to rot away. To preserve the ship, the rotting planks were replaced with new ones made of the same material. The key question, raised by Plutarch in the late 1st century, was this: If you eventually replace all of the ship’s planks, will this still be the Theseus’s original ship?

Can things keep their essence even as they change? At what point do they become different? Is it their form that must be preserved? Or the material they are made of? Or their function?

Change can sometimes be disruptive, but it is always a prerequisite of survival. And that was true for Theseus’s ship, or for the evolution of species, as is true now for organizations and even persons. The key is to remain faithful to one’s mission, even as one embraces change.

Having been associated with both ESREA and DIE for a number of years now, I am proud to be the Society’s new Secretary, and I see it as my role to make the current change as seamless and as successful as possible.

Dr. Alexandra Ioannidou
Secretary of ESREA
Dear ESREA Associates,

On behalf of the Steering Committee, I am very pleased to welcome Alexandra Ioannidou as our new Secretary. We are collaborating almost on a daily base in order to sustain a passage, which has brought challenges of all kinds, not least for the different regulations among EU Countries. Notwithstanding the difficulties, and thanks to her full commitment and competence, we were able to guarantee, in the last months, the continuation of our activities.

In this moment, it is especially important for all of us to be aware of what ESREA means for us, of what we are doing and could do better, and reinforce the feeling of belonging and commitment that will allow to ESREA to cope with this passage and make a further step in strength and quality. The world around us is rapidly changing, so we need to be aware, open, and critical. We need to know better each other, too. Communication among the members, the networks, and the different souls of ESREA is now a priority.

The first months of the year were very demanding for many of us. The first meeting of the Steering Committee was held in Bonn, at DIE, and several on-line meetings and consultations were needed to make all the arrangements that were needed.

We kept on wonderfully, with our activities: a conference of the Life History and Biography Network in Bergen (Norway), February 28 – March 3; and the first ESREA Spring School in April, 1-5, on ‘Lifelong learning and social justice. Dilemmas of complexity in researching contemporary adult education’, co-organized with the Lake Como School of Advanced Studies and Milano Bicocca University (http://llsj.lakecomoschool.org/). We had around 50 participants, all working together for 5 full days: among them, many Network convenors and members - experienced and early researchers, as well as PhD students. I learned a lot from everyone, and I want to thank all the colleagues for their generosity in giving lectures, workshops, supervision, and smart conversations! Hopefully, we started a tradition to be continued.

Four more network conferences are upcoming this year:

- in May: Education and Learning of Older Adults, ELOA, in Ljubljana, Slovenia; and Policy Studies in Adult Education, PSAE, in Prague, Czech Republic
- in June: Between Global and Local, in Pécs, Hungary.
- in November: Access, Learning Careers and Identity, in Coimbra, Portugal.

The locations of these conferences deserve full attention: as you will remember, in our Agenda we decided to make an effort to involve the Eastern EU countries, sometimes underrepresented in the past: well, it seems that our Network Convenors have taken this objective very seriously! This will bring, hopefully, new individual and institutional members to our association.

I do not forget that the Triennial Conference will also be held in the Balkan area: Belgrade, Serbia, September 19-22. Here again, thanks to our colleagues who volunteered to organize it. We will have, there, a good occasion for exchanges, networking, and deep discussions, not least to prepare elections: in November, there will be a call to vote for the new Steering Committee for the next three years. Think about it!
Meanwhile, we keep working for you. Our publications continue to grow in quantity and quality: in February 2019, Volume 10, Issue 1 of the European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA) celebrated 10 years of activity. We have a new editor (Brill) for the ESREA Book Series: volumes 7 and 8 are in preparation. And many other publications are constantly issued from our networks and groups: edited books, papers, conference proceedings, special issues... Partnerships for funded research are also very active, and strong durable links among researchers are built.

So, ESREA’s community is alive and – what I appreciate very much - increasingly representative of our diversity. New challenges are emerging, and they deserve our attention: the precariousness of careers in academia, the push towards functionalism in education and positivism in research, the narrowing definitions of education and learning, the need to develop new relationships between research and practice, academia and the world of policies, as well as the professional world, and moreover the need to explore the contribution of education to an inclusive, democratic, and just society, in times of struggle. These themes are in our agenda, and ESREA has a leading role in reflecting about them; many colleagues from outside Europe recognize this, and participate in our conferences. Our boundaries are far beyond the geography of EU.

United, we count more. Together, we can do better. We need your support, now, to re-state the values and mission of the association, to check the membership list and be sure that we are ready to prepare a new triennium at the end of this year.

Prof. Laura Formenti
Chair of ESREA
10-11 May 2019
The ESREA Network on Education and learning of older Adults (ELOA) will hold a Conference on ‘The pluralisation of transitions to the after-working life phase: Gender capital, silver productivity and mental health’ in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 10-11 May, 2019.
For call for proposals and information go to: https://eloa2019.ff.uni-lj.si/

16-18 May 2019
For call for proposals and information go to: https://sites2.ff.cuni.cz/esrea2019/

13-15 June 2019
The ESREA Network on Between Global and Local – Adult Learning and Communities will hold their 11th Conference on ‘Living and Learning in Diverse Communities’ in Pécs, Hungary on 13-15 June, 2019.
For call for proposals and information go to: http://esrea.ckh.hu/call-for-participation

19-22 September 2019
ESREA 9th Triennial European Research Conference in Belgrade, Serbia. The Conference is called ‘Adult Education research and practice between the welfare state and neoliberalism’ and takes place in Belgrade, Serbia on 19-22 September 2019.
For further information go to: http://www.aes.rs/esrea2019/

16-18 October 2019
The ESREA Network on Adult Educators, Trainers and their professional Development will hold their 6th Conference in Thessaloniki, Greece on 16-18 October, 2019.
For call for proposals and information go to: https://www.academia.edu/38576892/ESREA-ReNADET 6 th_Biennial_meeting

7-9 November 2019
The ESREA Network on Access, Learning Careers and Identities will have their Conference in Coimbra, Portugal on 7-9 November, 2019.

For more information on conferences and call for papers: www.esrea.org
Conferences and seminars

9-11 December 2019

Intensive Programs (for advanced students and early career researchers)

27-28 May 2019
The Summer School ‘Ethnographies, digitized environments and the proliferation of big data’ takes place in Leuven, Belgium on 27-28 May 2019. For further information, please contact Mathias Decuyper (mathias.decuypere@kuleuven.be) or Samira Alirezabeigi (swerner@ife.uzh.ch)

5-16 August 2019
The Summer School ‘Popular adult education and the struggle for democracy’ takes place in Tampere, Finland on 5-16 August 2019. For further information go to: https://www.tuni.fi/en/study-with-us/summer-school/general-information

10-15 November 2019
Winter School on ‘International perspectives on education policy’ (IPEP) hosted by the University of Verona, Italy on 10-15 November 2019. Application deadline: September 13th, 2019

ESREA provides up to four travel bursaries of € 300 for PhD students (or equivalent) who will be attending the IPEP Winter School 2019. More information are available at the IPEP website.

E-mail: winterschool-ipep@ateneo.univr.it
Website: http://sites.hss.univr.it/ipep/
ESREA book series:
The ESREA book series is free available online under the link:
https://brill.com/view/serial/ESRE

New Publication:
Find the latest RELA issue here:
Editorial: RELAs 10-year anniversary: What have we accomplished?
Andreas Fejes, António Fragoso, Wolfgang Jütte, Ewa Kurantowicz, Barbara Merrill, Henning Salling Olesen and Danny Wildemeersch.

Call for papers:
Call for thematic issue ‘The changing landscapes of literacies and adult education’
For further information go to: http://www.rela.ep.liu.se/documents/CFP_Literacies_Final.pdf
Submission deadline: May 17th, 2019

More information on RELA can be found at:
http://www.rela.ep.liu.se/
Membership in ESREA is open to individual and institutional members. As a member you will get a reduced fee at ESREA activities, information in the field of research on the education of adults through the ESREA mailing list and newsletter. As an individual member you have the right to vote at the general assembly that takes place each year (on-line through postal ballot). As an institutional member, all employees at the institution have the right to participate in the ESREA activities to a reduced fee. However, the institutional membership allows only one vote at the general assembly.

If you want to become a member the process is the following:
2. Fill out the membership application form and e-mail it to: ESREAsecretary@die-bonn.de.
3. Within one up to two weeks you will receive a confirmation of your membership by e-mail.
4. At the same time as the membership is confirmed you will be invoiced the membership fee which for 2019 is 50 Euros for individual members (25 Euros for students and PhD students) and 150 Euros for institutional members. **Payment of membership fees can only be made through an international or EU bank transfer.**

ESREA Bank details for membership fee:

**Bank:** Sparkasse KölnBonn  
**Account holder:** European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) e.V.  
**Account number:** 1934820174  
**IBAN:** DE73 3705 0198 1934 8201 74  
**BIC:** COLSDE33XXX
If you want some information included in forthcoming newsletters, here are the deadlines for 2019.

**Number 2 2019**: deadline for inclusion 1 July  
**Number 3 2019**: deadline for inclusion 1 September  
**Number 4 2019**: deadline for inclusion 1 December