

European Society *for* Research *on the* Education of Adults

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1. Looking back at 15 years of engagement in ESREA

Andreas Fejes, Chair of the ESREA presidium

Linköping University , Sweden

In 2006, Linköping university, through my colleague professor Staffan Larsson, wanted once again to connect stronger to the work of ESREA (previously professor Kjell Rubenson, during his time as professor at Linköping university, had been the first chair of ESREA). Professor Larsson put in a tender to host the secretariat of ESREA, suggesting me as secretary. Between 2007-2012 I served in such capacity working close to Henning Salling Olesen who then was the chair of ESREA. During the period 2013-2018 the secretariat stayed in Linköping with my colleagues Sofia Nyström, Fredrik Sandberg and Robert Aman serving in the capacity as secretary for different periods. In 2014 I joined the steering committee of ESREA and in 2020 in the capacity as its chair.

One of the first tasks I engaged in as secretary, was to take up one of the questions that had been raised before my time, but not realized – the need to create a peer-reviewed journal. A core publication output for an academic society. The idea was positively taken up by the Steering committee and after a couple of years work - RELA – the European journal for research on the education and learning of adults – saw the day of light in 2010. A key point when RELA was launched, was the idea that the journal should be published open access. Thus, making the content free to anyone to download and read. Such ambition was further taken up in the work with the ESREA book series. First, when I entered ESREA in 2007, the series was published by Peter Lang, and the books were quite expensive for people to buy. By work of members in the Steering committee, ESREA moved the publication of the book series to Sense, and in connection to this, making the books open access, freely downloadable. With RELA and the book series, ESREA became one of the pioneers in the adult education research field by making the content of such publication outlets freely available. The publication outputs further strengthened ESREAs position as an academic society promoting high quality research.

During the last 15 years, I have also witnessed a generational shift within ESREA. Most of those who were members in the steering committee, when I entered in 2007, have been replaced by other colleagues. New networks have emerged, while some have disappeared – but there are now more active networks than it was in 2007. Membership has also changed. The membership numbers increased during the period 2007-2012, as well as we could see an increase of membership of colleagues from some underrepresented countries, for example Germany. However, a constant challenge for ESREA has been, and still is, to attract colleagues from countries that are not well represented in ESREA – this to broadening the academic conversation as well as to become a “truly” European society.

Today ESREA is a thriving society with a strong base of the secretariat with DIE in Germany, a good number of members who are active in organizing the many research networks and its activities, and well-established publications outputs through RELA and the book series. Even through the pandemic, several of our networks have done impressive work to keep the academic discussions ongoing. With the pandemic seemingly fading out, my hope is that we once again can meet, present our research, and engage in academic discussions.



2. ESREA – a journey from an outsider to a member

Katarina Popovic

University of Belgrade, Serbia

Remembering personal career development parallel with the development of an organisation is always tricky - as we remember and reconstruct the history, we inevitably 'reconstruct' our biography and add a very personal 'touch' to the whole. At the same time, personal impressions and our perception of an organisation are an important driver in our connecting and networking efforts, sometimes with long-term outcomes.

When ESREA was established, in December 1991, I was at the event in Leiden, fully unaware of the fact that an important part of European adult education history had just begun. In the next two years, for me as a young researcher (two years ago just entered academia) with the German PhD scholarship in Aachen, I was fascinated by the 'big names' I could meet: Barry Hake, Bastiaan van Gent, Licinio Lima, Agnieszka Bron, Kjell Rubenson, Walter Leirman... Some of the names I knew only from literature! Soon my enthralment grew: when I participated in some of the conferences of single networks (such as History of Adult Education and Training in Europe, which was my research topic at that time) and when I saw the ESREA book series with Peter Lang. When I came back to my university in Belgrade, in late 1993, that immediately became compulsory reading for my students at the Department of Andragogy! The whole stay in Germany was a truly transformative learning experience, and meeting ESREA was an important part of it.

My vision of ESREA as the strong network of the best researchers and well-known figures in adult education in Europe was established, but the reality didn't allow any institutional connection. Namely, after the war in former Yugoslavia and fragile peace concluded in 1995, Serbia remained in isolation and under the sanctions of the international community: extreme harsh restrictions to travel, no membership in any European or global associations, no book exchange... Enthusiasm for the European integration process didn't reach us, and our active or European citizenship approaches crashed on the European borders because of the colour of our passports. So, the second half of the 1990s we spent on the streets, practising active citizenship in public spaces, marching and protesting against the regime... Individual contacts with colleagues, many of them from ESREA, were the only source of information about what was going on in the world of adult education research and policy.

The year 2000 was a turning point and another transformative moment - we overthrew the dictator and started the new, democratic development. Previous contacts helped us not to start from the scratch, but to successfully continue our long-term tradition of andragogy research in Yugoslavia, now Serbia, and to expand them further. I knew that one of the most important steps would be to 'come back' to our European family and to join ESREA. Although there was an impression that recovering from the most troubled decade in the recent history of my country had other priorities, for Serbian adult educators ESREA was THE link and the way back to the research community.

Institutional membership of our Institute, my first visit at the Linköping University, meeting Andreas Fejes and the Secretariat, participation at the conferences, exchange with ESREA colleagues from Europe and later USA – all steps towards repositioning our University at the European adult education

map, among other things, because of the important role ESREA played in ensuring diversity of research topics and research cultures, geographical coverage and non-negotiable quality criteria.

When I was invited to be one of the key-note speakers at the Triennial conference in Berlin, I was so excited! There is no other speech that I have prepared for so long and changed so many times.

Between Global and Local, Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professionalisation, Gender and Adult Learning... The variety and diversity of networks fitted the broad spectrum of research topics and methodological approaches we cultivate at our department. We were more and more involved, and the next step was there – we organized our first conference in Belgrade: Gender and adult learning network, in 2015. The feeling that we now fully belong to the best „research family“ in Europe was there. And our decision to apply for the 9th Triennial conference! We are also very proud to be the first non-EU country to organise it, and in the quite troubled political situation. Huge amount of work, but also the incredible pride to host the top of the adult education research family and to contribute to the abundance of topics, theories, paradigms, and methods, exploring the challenges of the neoliberal times and various crises we live in.

Another channel of cooperation opened up when I became Secretary General of ICAE (International Council for Adult Education) in 2014. It gave me an incredible opportunity to take part in the policy-making processes at the highest level and to satisfy my ‚research thirst‘ for getting information from the first hand and observe adult education policy from very close, through the research lenses. But there is also frustration: Evidence-based policy that I was hoping to contribute to is absent, so exchange with my ESREA colleagues is refreshing: speaking the language of science, reflecting, critically examining the policy – it is so much needed in the post-truth, evidence-ignoring and science-denial world. For the human right framework of education, that ICAE works in, ESREA is a treasure of thoughts, explorations and studies, a relationship in which socially engaged scholars support adult education activism in the most meaningful way. And that’s what we did, represented and stood for together at the 2021 AEGT conference in Vancouver!

We witness the trend in international policy making: lifelong learning is overriding adult education and learning, in a harmful way for many reasons – which was noted and opposed by ICAE, observed and analysed by ESREA. Different aspects of the COVID-19 crises will contribute to this trend, and cooperation will be a way to provide a strong ‚front‘ consisting of research, professionalisation, civil society activism and participation in policy making. I can’t think of a better partnership for that task than the one of ESREA (and its members, including the Department for Andragogy at the Belgrade University) and ICAE, connected by the most important thing: strong commitment to adult learning and education.



3. Latest news from European research

The European Research Area (ERA), which was initiated twenty years ago, is entering a new phase with the [Communication on the new European Research Area \(ERA\)](#). In the context of the reorientation of the ERA, the research ministers of the EU Member States adopted for the first time a "Pact for Research and Innovation" and a new political agenda for the years 2022 to 2024. They have agreed on common values and principles, defined fields of action for joint activities, spoken out in favour of national reforms and more investment in research and innovation - on a voluntary basis, of course - and seek to develop a process for evaluating progress that is as simple as possible in the coming year.

The Member States have decided on twenty fields of action for joint activities - also on a voluntary basis - in cooperation with the European Commission and the associated countries. The twenty areas for action include, for example, new legislative or non-legislative measures to adapt the current EU legal framework for copyright and research data; or improving gender equality through the Gender Equality Plan required in Horizon Europe projects from January 2022; or the Competence Framework for Research Careers. These three examples show that universities and research organisations will be important actors in the implementation of the ERA policy agenda.

To support researchers' careers the European Commission announced that it will provide a "toolbox" by the end of 2024. The Commission will develop the toolbox together with the Member States and scientific institutions, including, for example, a competence framework for scientists. This will identify a set of key competences that scientists need for a successful research career, both within and outside academia. While most PhD students in the EU plan to stay in academia, the number of academic research positions is limited. According to the Commission's ERA Communication, PhD students are not always aware of the alternative career options and the added value they can bring to research positions outside academic institutions. The competence framework is intended to create a model that all actors in the field of research can refer to. It should be noted that the competence framework is not intended to be a normative instrument for scientific institutions, rather an instrument to increase the visibility and awareness of the transferable skills of researchers. In addition to the competence framework, the Commission intends to set up a monitoring centre for the careers of researchers (doctoral and post-doc researchers). The observatory will collect data and information on mobility, qualifications, careers and working conditions.

The European Commission last month published the 2021 edition of "[She Figures - Gender in Research and Innovation](#)". The publication presents data and analysis showing developments in gender equality in the European Research Area; it was first published in 2003 and is updated every three years. The results show that just as many women as men graduate from university, but the gender gap in research-related professions persists. The proportion of female researchers in Europe is only 33 per cent; only one out of four full-time professorships are held by women (26 per cent) .

Based on this recent data and the fact that the EU is now embarking on a new policy agenda for ERA aimed at boosting research and innovation performance, Member States should commit once again to improving gender balance in research. This is set out in the [Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation](#), published on 26 November.

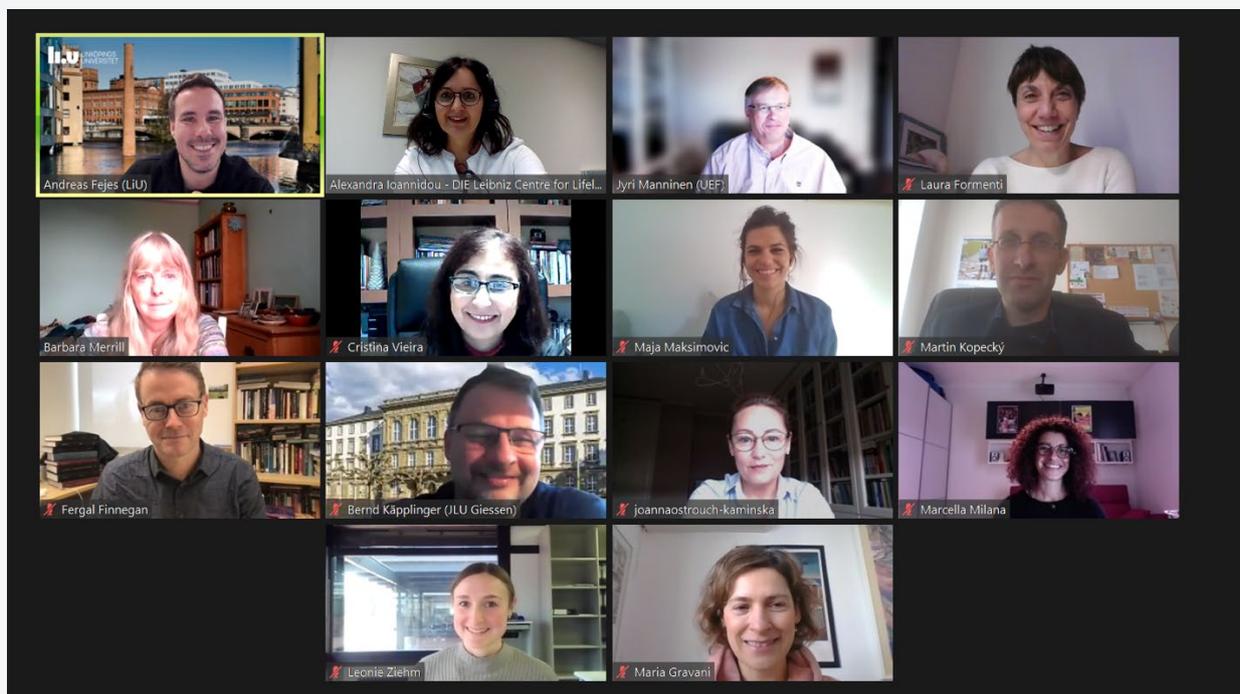
4. Report from the Presidium Meeting and the General Assembly

Presidium Meeting

The third presidium meeting in 2021 took place on November 15th. Amongst other things, the presidium discussed the impact of the pandemic on ESREA activities, planned the anniversary of 30 years ESREA and the triennial conference in 2022 and decided to foster cooperation with other scientific organisations.

General Assembly

The third ordinary General Assembly of ESREA took place - for the first time as a zoom meeting - on Friday, November 19th. The assembly approved the management report for 2021, endorsed the report of the auditor and discharged the board as required by the German civil law.



Presidium Meeting, November 15th, 2021.

5. Announcements – Conferences, Network Meetings and Calls for Papers

ESREA Conferences, Seminars and Seasonal Schools

March 3 – 6, 2022

ESREA Conference of the Network Life History and Biography Network on [‘Encountering the other: biographies, spaces and relationships in adult education’](#)

Poland, Wroclaw

May 16 – 20, 2022

ESREA Spring School for Doctoral Students on [‘Research on Adult Education and Transformation: Mapping Possibilities and Embracing Complexity’](#).

Austria, University of Klagenfurt

[Call for Applications](#)

June 27 – July 1, 2022

12th research seminar of the ESREA Network History of adult education and training in Europe on ‘Adult education and learning for social change in the 19th-20th centuries: Ideas, movements, and circulation of knowledge’

Austria, St. Wolfgang

[Call for Papers](#)

July 11 – 13, 2022

Conference of the ESREA Network Gender and Adult Education

Conference on: ‘Gender and Adult Education in the era of social and cultural changes: (New) risks and challenges’

Portugal, University of Algarve

[Call for Papers](#)

July 14 – 16, 2022

ESREA Conference of the Network Access, Learning Careers and Identities

Portugal, University of Algarve

[Call for Papers](#)

September 29 – October 2, 2022

ESREA 10th Triennial Conference on ‘New Seeds For a World to Come. Policies, Practices and Lives in Adult education and Learning’

Italy, University of Milano Bicocca

[Conference website](#)

November 03 – 05, 2022

ESREA Conference of the Network on Education and Learning of Older Adults (ELOA) on 'Education and Learning of Older Adults – individual, local and global perspectives'.

Other Conferences, Announcements and Calls

The Journal Studies in Adult Education and Learning published a call for papers on 'Unequal mobility regimes and radical adult education in neoliberal times'. Deadline for submission is January 10th, 2022.

[Call for Papers](#)

The Journal for Research on Adult Education – Zeitschrift für Weiterbildungsforschung (ZfW) published a Call for Papers for a thematic issue on 'Programme and Programme Planning Research - Methods and Results'. Deadline for submission is February 1st, 2022.

[Call for Papers](#)

Tampere University in Finland is organising a hybrid seminar on 'Bildung-Gospel: A salvation to wicked problems?' on February 9th, 2022 (adjacent to the Finnish adult education research conference which is organized 10.-11.2.2022). The hybrid pre-seminar is free of charge and open to all.

[Event Website](#)

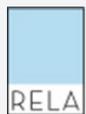
The European Educational Research Association (EERA) is organising a Summer School on 'Research design from scratch: Making sense of the whats, whos and hows of your investigation' on July 11th - 15th, 2022. Deadline for Applications is January 31st, 2022.

[Website and Call for Applications](#)

The International Association of Social Educators is organizing its 20th World congress in Lausanne, Switzerland, from September 6th to 9th, 2022. The theme of the conference is 'Temporality in Educational Action'.

[Registration Website](#)

6. RELA



The **European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA)** is a refereed academic journal creating a forum for the publication of critical research on adult education and learning. RELA is published on behalf of ESREA and can be found at our webpage:

<http://www.esrea.org/publications/rela/>

Current thematic issue of RELA: '[Learning in times of crisis](#)'

See also [Call for papers | European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults \(liu.se\)](#)

7. Publications from ESREA and members

ESREA Book series

Research on the Education and Learning of Adults Series: Bainbridge, Alan; Formenti, Laura; West, Linden (2021): Discourses, Dialogue and Diversity in Biographical Research. An Ecology of Life and Learning. Leiden: Brill Sense (Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 9). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004465916>

The editors of the Brill | Sense ESREA series 'Research on the Education and Learning of Adults' published a Call for Books.

[Call and Proposal Form](#)

Publications from the Networks

Access, Learning Careers and Identities: Merrill, B., Vieira, C., Galimberti, A., Nizinska, A. (2020). Adult education as a resource for resistance and transformation: Voices, learning experiences, identities of student and adult educators. Coimbra: University of Coimbra/ University of Algarve/ ESREA.

[Link to Book](#)

All publications of the ESREA networks can be found at: <http://esrea.org/publications/books-from-the-networks/>

Other Publications

The Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021- 2030 has been released.

[Link to Document](#)

The Journal INSTEAD: Interdisciplinary Studies in Education & Society published a new issue on 'Teraźniejszość - Człowiek – Edukacja' Vol. 23, No. 1(89), 2021.

[Link to Document](#)

The Outlook Report 2030: Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe with recommendations for policy makers on inclusive and flexible lifelong learning pathways.

[Report and Website](#)

8. How to become a member of ESREA e.V.

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 (online through postal ballot). As an institutional member, all employees of your institution are entitled to participate in ESREA activities at a reduced fee. Note that institutional members have only one vote in the general assembly.

If you want to become a member the process is the following:

1. Download the document at: <http://www.esrea.org/about-us/membership/>
2. Fill in the membership application form and e-mail it to: ESREAsecretary@die-bonn.de.
3. Within two weeks at the latest you will receive a confirmation of your membership by e-mail
4. An invoice for your membership fee will be issued: 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. Cheques are not accepted. Any foreign bank fees are to be borne by the applicants.**

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

VAT Number: DE324070933

9. Forthcoming newsletters

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