



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

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Dear ESREA Members and Associates,

we are still feeling the excitement from the inspiring **11th ESREA Triennial**, held 24–27 September at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, with around 230 participants. About a quarter were PhD students, who also had the chance to discuss their work with peers and mentors in a pre-conference session – an encouraging highlight for ESREA’s commitment to supporting emerging researchers. The event was excellently organized, with a rich programme of stimulating presentations and plenty of opportunities to connect during breaks and the social dinner. A huge thanks to **Martin Kopecký** and his team at Charles University, and to all who contributed as members of the Scientific Committee, presenters, or in other ways to make the Triennial a success! We hope to share a more detailed report in a later issue.

In this newsletter, you’ll find a report on the **TEAE Network’s Research Retreat** in Malta in June, based on participant feedback and photos kindly shared by the organisers – many thanks again for that.

Over the past months, several other ESREA events, conferences, and retreats have also taken place. We would love to cover these in future newsletters, so a friendly reminder to all event organizers and network coordinators: **please write to us about your activities!** Newsletter reports are a wonderful way to share information across networks, learn from each other, and even spark new collaborations, which have become increasingly common and well-received in recent times. Such reports also help preserve ESREA’s collective memory – a maybe small but very valuable contribution. The format is flexible: longer or shorter texts, more or fewer images, photos, or drawings; narrative, analytical, reflective, or even poetic, as we’ve seen in previous issues – or a mix of all the above. We want networks to have the freedom to present themselves and their work in the way that suits them best.

Turning to this issue: A highlight surely is the introduction of **candidates for the new ESREA Presidium (2026–2028)**, to be elected at the General Assembly in early November. All candidates are presented in detail from *page 8* onward. The candidate list offers an almost equal mix of experienced board members and newcomers – a promising combination that should ensure both continuity and stability, as well as innovation and fresh energy, to guide ESREA through challenging times, strengthen its work, and build a solid foundation for the future. We warmly encourage all ESREA members not only to cast their votes but also join us online for the **General Assembly on 3 November** at 2 p.m.!

We wish you an enjoyable and inspiring read

Best wishes!

Susanne

ESREA Presidium

Presidium Meeting, 23–24 September 2025 in Prague

The ESREA Presidium met in Prague, Czech Republic, on 23–24 September 2025, just ahead of the Triennial Conference. This gathering marked the final meeting of the current Presidium, whose term will conclude on 31 December. Accordingly, no major new policy decisions were taken; instead, the focus was on reflection, evaluation, and a look back at the achievements of the past three years.

The current Presidium leaves its successors, who will take office on 1 January, with a well-prepared foundation for future work. ESREA's financial position remains strong, providing the incoming Presidium with room to initiate new activities and projects. The outgoing team itself launched several important innovations during its term, including the appointment of a Social Media Editor and the initiation of an ESREA Archive project. These initiatives, along with the ongoing support for ESREA Networks through funding for Open Access publications and travel bursaries for PhD students, will remain key areas of focus in the years ahead.

Seven members of the current Presidium will not stand for re-election in the upcoming elections: long-serving members **Laura Formenti** and **Barbara Merrill**, as well as **Steffi Robak** (current Treasurer), **Martin Kopecký** (chair of the Prague Triennial organizing team), **Per Andersson**, **Päivi Siivonen**, and **Joanna Ostrouch-Kamińska**.

ESREA sincerely thanks all outgoing Presidium members for their dedicated and valuable contributions to the development of the Society. Their commitment and ideas have significantly shaped ESREA's work and its collaborative spirit over the past years.

ESREA extends its heartfelt thanks to all outgoing members for their dedicated service and valuable contributions, and equally to those members who will stand again for their continued commitment to the Society's work and mission. Their commitment and ideas have significantly shaped ESREA's work and its collaborative spirit over the past years.



The ESREA Presidium Members 2022–2025 and Secretary from left to right: Marcella Milana, Rosanna Barros (front row), Päivi Siivonen, Steffi Robak, Fergal Finnegan; Joanna Ostrouch-Kamińska, Maja Maksimović, Laura Formenti, Susanne Lattke, Maria Gravani (middle row); Per Andersson, Martin Kopecký (background); not shown: Barbara Merrill.

Picture provided by Päivi Siivonen

People in ESREA

ESREA Network on Transformative and Emancipatory Adult Education (TEAE): Changes in the Convenor-Team

The ESREA Network Transformative and Emancipatory Adult Education (TEAE) experienced some important transitions over the past few months. At the end of June 2025, **Saskia Eschenbacher**, **Alessandra Romano** and **Dina Soeiro**, stepped down from their roles as convenors, each for personal reasons. Their departure came just after the network's inspiring Research Retreat in Malta (see the report in this newsletter).



Saskia Eschenbacher



Alessandra Romano



Dina Isabel Mendes Soeiro

Alongside **George Koulaouzides**, Saskia, Alessandra and Dina had relaunched the TEAE Network in early 2022, giving it fresh energy and direction. Their commitment and creativity have been central to the network's development since then.

We are now very happy to welcome **Chad Hoggan** and **Effie Kostara** as new members of the TEAE-Convenor Team. Their appointments were approved by the ESREA Presidium at the end of August 2025. Together with George, they will continue to guide and strengthen the TEAE Network.

Chad Hoggan is Professor of Adult & Lifelong Education, Department of Educational Leadership, Policy and Human Development at the NC State University (NC State), College of Education in Raleigh, located in North Carolina, United States. His research interests are transformative learning, adult civic learning, learning during major life transitions esp. regarding migrants, historically underserved college students, and military veterans. Chad also won the Global Engagement Award in 2023 and has actively engaged e. g. in democracy education with tight connections to European countries, such as Ukraine, Germany, and Italy.



Effrosyni Kostara is a lecturer at the Hellenic Open University in Patras, Greece, where she manages the Postgraduate Program in Adult Education. Her special interests in adult education revolve around transformative learning, dialogic approaches, and fostering critical thinking and inclusivity among adult learners. She has participated in European projects and conferences that examine the role of transformative dialogue, the development of critical reflection through art, cultural and literary texts, and the enhancement of citizenship and intercultural competences. She has engaged in evaluating and designing educational programs that promote diversity, inclusion, and the professionalization of adult educators.

We warmly thank Saskia, Alessandra and Dina for their dedicated work and contributions to the network. At the same time, we wish George, Chad, and Effie much success and enjoyment in their collaboration and in leading the network forward.

RELA Editorial Team: Farewell to Ewa Kurantowicz

Ewa Kurantowicz has stepped down from the RELA Editorial Team as of 1 October 2025. A longstanding member of the team and one of RELA's pioneers, Ewa has contributed greatly to the journal's development.

Since 2006, she has also served as Co-Convenor of the ESREA Network *Between Global and Local – Adult Learning and Communities*, and she will continue in this role. We warmly thank Ewa for her dedication to RELA and wish her continued success in all her work.



ESREA partnerships: Enhancing links and dialogue between research and practice

UIL and SMILE: ESREA Chair connects globally

ESREA Chair Marcella Milana was invited by the *UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)* to participate as speaker and discussant in the international workshop “Teachers and Educators as Lifelong Learners and as Facilitators of Lifelong Learning”, organised jointly with Shanghai Normal University from 30 June to 2 July 2025. This provided a great opportunity to highlight ESREA’s role in research and practice in adult learning and education, and to strengthen ties with key international partners. Coverage of the workshop by China Daily can be found here:

→ <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202507/02/WS6864e0fea31000e9a5739c42.html>

During the visit, Marcella also had the opportunity to meet with Prof. Li Jiacheng, Executive Vice President of the *Shanghai Municipal Institute for Lifelong Education (SMILE)* on 2 July 2025, further exploring opportunities for collaboration and exchange. SMILE has published a brief report on the visit here:

→ <https://smileenglish.ecnu.edu.cn/ce/7a/c47270a708218/page.htm>

CASAE and SCUTREA/UALL – Joint Workshops and Ongoing Dialogue

Barbara Merrill and Maria N. Gravani, members of the ESREA Presidium and of the Committee for the collaboration with other scientific organisations, as part of their task in the committee, have worked towards forming strategic partnerships with other international organisations in Adult Education; in particular, *Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE)* and *Standing Committee on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA)/Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL)*.

In collaboration with Bonnie Slade and Nic Dickson (Scutrea/UALL) and Wellington Sousa and Jude Walker (CASAE), a two-hour workshop was organised, as part of the pre-conference of the Annual CASAE-ACEEA Conference 2025, at the University of Toronto, Canada, 3–5 June. The workshop involved a large group of educators, scholars and practitioners and explored the complexities and challenges which adult educators and learners face today as well as possibilities for collaboration amongst adult education associations. Nic Dickson visually captured the discussions. The integration of graphic notetaking enriched the discussions, providing a tangible, visual output for sharing insights.

Supported by this international group, the conversation continued at the UALL/SCUTREA Conference 2025, 16–18 June, in Liverpool, UK, where attendees from SCUTREA, ESREA, and CASAE reflected on the current climate, challenges, and potential for future collaboration. This dialogue was then deepened during the September 11th webinar that SCUTREA organised on-line, which brought together an international audience of SCUTREA members and associates. The webinar enabled a broader reach and a more in-depth exploration of the issues raised.

Additionally, these important topics will also be further explored in an upcoming workshop planned for the 11th ESREA Triennial Research Conference, 24–27 September 2025, Charles University, Prague. UALL/SCUTREA, CASAE & ESREA are doing a great job together: building networks, collaborating meaningfully, and producing clear, tangible outputs with agreed steps forward to strengthen our collective work.

Report by Barbara Merrill and Maria C. Gravani, as of 16 September 2025

ESREA Presidium Elections 2025

GENERAL INFORMATION

ESREA members are invited to use this ballot paper to cast their votes for the new ESREA Presidium, which will take office on 1 January 2026. The Presidium consists of 8 to 12 members elected every three years by the ESREA General Assembly. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected.

Each member may vote for up to twelve candidates from the list provided. The candidates are presented in alphabetical order. If fewer than twelve candidates stand for election, members may vote for as many of them as they wish.

Institutional members have only one vote, which must be cast by the person designated as the main contact for the institution with ESREA. If no main contact has been designated, the institution must agree on who will exercise this right.

Voting will take place by email between 31 October and 3 November 2025 (2:30 pm CET). Completed ballot papers must be sent to the ESREA Secretariat: → mailto:esrea_sec@die-bonn.de

The election results will be announced by the ESREA Secretary in an email communication.

CANDIDATES (in alphabetical order)

1. Rosanna **Barros**, Portugal
2. Maria **Brown**, Malta
3. Fergal **Finnegan**, Ireland
4. Maria N. **Gravani**, Cyprus
5. Vilhelmiina **Harju**, Finland
6. Filiz **Keser Aschenberger**, Austria
7. Maria **Kondratjuk**, Germany
8. George A. **Koulaouzides**, Greece
9. Katrin **Kraus**, Switzerland
10. Maja **Maksimović**, Serbia
11. Marcella **Milana**, Italy
12. Erik **Nylander**, Sweden

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Barros



ROSANNA BARROS

Affiliation: University of Algarve, Portugal

Academic Position: Associate Professor with habilitation

Who am I?

Being an academic means, for me, the need to permanently apply research in teaching, while expanding education as an 'ethnographic encounter' between human alterities. For that reason, I am a hardworking and committed person. I am also very curious, sensitive, and truly passionate about the lifelong process of collaborative knowledge-building (in ways that could address real-world issues and community problems, producing social improvements around us).

What ESREA means to me

First, I see that ESREA implies high quality research and excellence in scientific publications, both providing credibility and increasing global visibility for the field of education and learning of adults in Europe. As a scientific organization, its role to support the advancement of national research and international co-operation among researchers is crucial (mainly to less developed European countries).

Personally, ESREA has been a place of training (since I joined, as a PhD student, at the 2005 International Summer School hosted in Roskilde University), dissemination of results and continuing professional development as I have actively participated in all the 6 PSAE network conferences¹, also in six other ESREA networks conferences², in addition to the triennial conferences³.

Finally, to me ESREA means significant cross-national friendships developed over 2 decades.

Why I candidate

As a past Steering Committee Member (2014–2016 & 2022–2025) I have familiarised myself with the ESREA ethos and kind of management work. During those mandates it was possible, for example, to create ESREA relationships with national organizations and research centres. As a Convenor (since 2017) I have also been involved, on a regular basis, in 'co-organizing' the biannual PSAE Network Meetings.

To be back in next the Presidium will enhance my abilities to keep developing organisational multilevel bridges and actively contribute to positive social change in these turbulent times. Therefore, I am running in the belief that it is fundamental to disseminate the multiple results coming from critical research in adult education, build alliances able to lobbying and expand reflexive adult education policies, and (re)imagine new types of lifelong learning ecosystems.

Finally, I want to engage the ESREA presidium further because more activities are needed to avoid a retrial of democratic values in Europe and ALE is crucial to stimulate low skilled adults and powerless communities to be involved in public actions and participate in important current global issues that affect everyone.

Why you should vote for me

I will put my energy, background, and experience into managing things effectively, to expand the potentialities of the role of ESREA, and identify problems in the organizations, policies, and practices of ALE, thinking of ways to solve them democratically. Thanks.

¹ Nottingham (2012); Aalborg (2014); Verona (2017); Czech Republic (2019), Series of Webinars (2021) and Funchal (2024). This last one has been organised by me.

² Algarve (2006); Braga (2007); Aveiro (2011); Genève (2011); Istanbul (2011) and Lisbon (2014).

³ 2010 (Linköping); 2013 (Berlin); 2016 (Maynooth), 2019 (Belgrade) and Mila (2022).

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Brown



MARIA BROWN

Affiliation: University of Malta

Academic Position: Senior Lecturer

Who am I?

I lecture in adult and community-based education and community development, research methods and social impact assessment within the **Faculty of Education of the University of Malta**.

My Ph.D. in Education, conferred to me by the University of Malta in 2015, focused on non-formal **adult and community-based critical and emancipatory pedagogies**.

Today, I still research this area, with special interest in what added value can be brought when using the **intersectional perspective** and fostering **synergies between formal and formal lifelong education through participatory action research and social impact assessments**.

The more **'activist'** side of my profile is dedicated to translating the above research findings into evidence and advocacy for **formal recognition** of the **professional status of adult educators and trainers**.

At the University of Malta, I **coordinate** the **programmes of study** leading to the **Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) Degree in Adult Education, Training and Development**, and the **Master of Arts Degree in Adult Education**.

I also coordinate **micro-credential and outreach initiatives** targeting professional development and competence acquisition of persons working with adults, or intergenerational contexts, as part of state and civil society entities in Malta.

Additionally, I contribute to the design and delivery of professional development of academic staff of the University of Malta, including on matters concerning equality, diversity and inclusion (**EDI**) and to the **Quality Assurance Work Programme** of the same University. I am also an elected member of the Executive Council of the University of Malta Academic Staff Association (**UMASA**).

At European/international level, I co-lead the **SEA-EU 2.0 Alliance** Task 2.5: SEA-EU becoming a diversified lifelong learning hub; and I participate in European Cooperation for Science and Technology (**COST**) Actions and Networks.

Currently I am also Malta's Ambassador for the European Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (**EPALE**); and candidate for the **UNESCO** Co-Chair in **Global Adult Education** for the term 2026–2029.

Recently, the Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning (3CL) appointed me Chief Editor to steer the **editorial team** of its new peer-reviewed, open access **Journal of Disruptive Technologies, Education, and Communications (JDTEC)**; and I am also Book Reviews Editor of **Convergence: An International Journal of Adult Education**.

Publications and further information

Google Scholar: → <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=xI8ZlAcAAAAJ&hl=en>

Academic profile: → <https://www.um.edu.mt/profile/mariabrown>

ORCID: → <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9817-6447>

E-Mail: → maria.brown@um.edu.mt

What ESREA means to me

I have been collaborating with persons from ESREA and participating in its events since 2018.

Since then, ESREA is my mentoring, supportive, thought-provoking academic home, where I can grow as a researcher in adult education within a community of practice that is reflexively and critically engaged with walking the talk in adult and community education and related research; whilst practicing and innovating values and work ethics that are rooted in sustainable development and democracy.

ESREA has been offering me genuine and non-hierarchical opportunities to connect and collaborate with peers and experienced scholars across **Europe and beyond**, building networks that lead to **shared projects and publications**.

ESREA's connections to policy, practice, and other associations guide and support me with ensuring **research has social impact beyond academia**

Why I candidate

I am deeply **committed to strengthening research** in adult education. Being a member of the presidium will give me an opportunity to **do this with a broader reach across and beyond Europe**.

I wish to contribute to ESREA's legacy of **inclusive and dialogic** networks that **connect early-career and experienced scholars**. I trust my research and academic work with **intersectionality and social impact** can further enrich this aspect of ESREA's work.

Additionally, I trust my **networks** within **academic, research and practitioner** entities such as **EPALE, COST** and **UNESCO** can help sustain and further develop the Association's mission.

I candidate myself also because I know within the Presidium **I will learn a lot** through **mentoring** from and **collaboration** with other Presidium members and the broader ESREA family; and this will help me **become better at what I do in research and practice**; and become a **better and more effective advocate for** formal recognition of the professional status of adult educators and trainers.

Above all, I am motivated by a strong sense of **gratitude and responsibility to give back** to the community that has supported my own growth as a researcher, and I am eager to play an active role in bolstering ESREA's future.

Why you should vote for me

I stand for asset-based dialogue and action rooted in emancipation.

I am deeply **committed** and **passionate** about adult education; and **experienced** with working in international and diverse research networks.

My experience, enthusiasm and networks within academic, research and practitioner entities such as EPALE, COST and UNESCO can help sustain and further develop the Association's conferences, network meetings and activities, publications, professional development and training initiatives.

Being born and bred in Malta, I trust my contributions will further enrich the Presidium's insights and outlook with **nuanced intersectional diversity** - that is informed by, but critically and reflexively grapples with **European / post-colonial island/small state perspective**.

Thank you for your consideration.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Finnegan



FERGAL FINNEGAN

Affiliation: The Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University, National University of Ireland

Academic Position: Senior Lecturer, course director of the Higher Diploma of Further Education and coordinator of the PhD programme

Who am I?

I am Senior Lecturer at the Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth, National University of Ireland and is a co-director of the Doctorate in Higher and Adult Education and the PhD in Adult and Community Education programmes.

Before becoming an academic I was a community adult educator and literacy worker for a decade, and these experiences have strongly shaped me. I am critical researcher, and my key interests are critical pedagogy, biographical methods, social class, access and equality in higher education, popular education and social movements as well as critical realism and Pierre Bourdieu. I have had fifty chapters and articles published. I have co-authored a book *Access and Widening Participation in Irish Higher Education* for Palgrave Macmillan as well as edited a book for Policy Press *Funding, Power and Community Development* and one for Routledge based on a comparative study of non-traditional students across Europe entitled *Student Voices on Inequalities: Challenges for Theory, Policy and Practice in a Time of Change*.

I have a longstanding interest in transformative education and I have served as one of the editors of the *Journal of Transformative Education* for the past nine years and co-edited volume entitled *European Perspectives on Transformation Theory* in 2017. In the past two years I have edited four special issues on adult education in relation to popular education, social class, sustainability and transformative education in Europe and the United States. I am currently working on an international popular education initiative which has included the development of extensive open access resources for civil society, besides this I do a lot of 'engaged research' in adult education and community contexts in Ireland including policy advocacy work.

What ESREA means to me

I have been an active member of the European Society Research on Education of Adults (ESREA) for fourteen years. I first attended an ESREA conference as a doctoral student and the ethos, atmosphere and the quality of the dialogue at these events impressed me a great deal. I participated in various network conferences after this and ESREA became a vital space for me as a researcher, it has provided a type of 'home' for me as a researcher which is international, pluralist, critical and open. As a result, I have done my best to contribute to sustaining and developing ESREA. I led the organization of the 2016 ESREA Triennial held in Maynooth University. I became a member of the presidium nine years ago and have served three terms, serving as vice chair for six of those years.

I am currently a co-convenor of the network on *Active Democratic Citizenship and Adult Learning*. We have revived this network and have held two conferences and seminars in the past three years. We are committed to critically exploring the politics of adult education and equally committed to bringing an adult education pedagogical imagination to conferences and events to ensure that there are the time and space for meaningful exchange. Besides this I have edited two books for the ESREA book series and am one of the editors of the RELA. One of my main concerns and interests is supporting doctoral students and early career researchers and this is a consistent focus in my work on the presidium. As part of this I have also co-organised two ESREA doctoral schools. I am leading a working group on behalf of the presidium to develop an ESREA archive to ensure that the work of ESREA is recorded and that we maintain institutional memory and hopefully create resources for future research.

Why I candidate

I would like the opportunity to continue working on the presidium because I think ESREA is a crucial organization in the field of adult education in terms of creating space for critical research. I want to support meaningful adult education research and help foster international scholarly exchange. ESREA does this and I think putting myself forward is the most direct and effective way I can contribute to ESREA.

Why you should vote for me

I have worked hard on behalf of ESREA in general and as a member of the presidium for nine years. I think I bring energy and a sincere commitment to open dialogue to organizational work and will maintain this approach if I am elected for another term. I believe I am good at orientating our work so in way that effectively supports doctoral and early career researchers. As an experienced editor I bring skills and knowledge which are central to key activities of our organization. I also am interested in further exploring ways of linking the research to the needs of social movement and adult education practitioners and organisations and that my experience and interests will facilitate this.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Gravani



MARIA N. GRAVANI

Affiliation: Open University of Cyprus

Academic Position: Associate Professor

Who am I?

I am Associate Professor in Adult and Continuing Education in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Open University of Cyprus (OUC); Director of the MA in “Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning” at the OUC; Co-editor of the Journal of Adult & Continuing Education (JACE); and Co-convenor of the ESREA, Research Network on Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professional Development. I’m currently member of the ESREA Presidium. My research interests include the teaching and learning of adults, across a variety of contexts (distance education, higher education, second chance education, education for migrants), as a means of individual empowerment and social change; adult educators and their professionalisation; comparative European research; women in adult education in academia.

In the above areas, I have done research, supervised PhD students and mentored early career researchers. Before moving to Cyprus, seventeen years ago, I studied and served adult education for more than a decade from different posts (lecturer, tutor, researcher, postdoctoral fellow, adult educator, programme coordinator) in three countries (United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and Greece). These experiences have strongly shaped my academic identity and vision for adult education.

What ESREA means to me

ESREA has been a family to me and has created a space to grow up personally and professionally, especially since I joined it, as a female early career academic. I’ve been an active member of ESREA since 2009, when I participated in the inaugural conference of the Network for Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professionalization (ReNADET), as a presenter and member of the scientific committee.

Following this, I’ve participated in several other ESREA Network conferences, including Triennial conferences and summer schools (Como) and served in the Advisory Editorial Board of the European Journal of Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA), as a reviewer. I’ve organized in the Open University of Cyprus two of the ESREA ReNADET network conferences, in 2015 and 2021, and co-edited two books “The role of higher education in the professionalization of adult educators” (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020) and “Adult Educators in the Face of Crises in Europe” (ESREA book series, open access) (to be published in 2025). I serve as a co-convenor of the ESREA’s ReNADET network, since January 2020, and an elected member of the ESREA Presidium since 2017. I’m also member of the ESREA’s committee for the Cooperation with other scientific organisations.

Why I candidate and why you should vote for me

For me ESREA has been the most important organization, network of active researchers and vehicle to promote high quality adult education research in Europe and above, based on a democratic spirit and open dialogue. I consider it as the best space and forum that one can join to be able to serve and offer to the field of adult education.

If I have the opportunity to be re-elected as a member of the ESREA Presidium, I will continue to promote ESREA to Southern East Europe, bring doctoral students and early career researchers from the Greek speaking countries closer to the research work of the ESREA networks and its members, and work for supporting adult education community, especially in the challenging times we are currently experiencing. Thank you for considering my candidateship.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Harju



VILHELMIINA HARJU

Affiliation: Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland

Academic Position: University Lecturer

Who am I?

I am a university lecturer (PhD (Ed.)) and work at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki. My main research interests include digital learning environments and their possibility to support open and continuous learning, teachers' professional development, and the role of generative AI in supporting students' creative work in higher education. I mainly teach open university courses. In addition, I am responsible for the working life practice studies in the general education study program.

I am a member of the board of The Finnish Society for Research on Adult Education. The society brings together researchers, professionals, and students interested in the development of adult education and related fields of research and disseminates and promotes research through publications and scientific events. The society participates in research and discussions on educational policy. I am also a member of the editorial board in the Finnish peer-reviewed academic journal *Aikuiskasvatus* (*Adult education* in English), online publication *Koulutuksesta* (*About Education* in English) and *Teacher Development*.

What ESREA means to me and why I candidate

I consider ESREA to be important and essential because it brings together European actors to collaborate and promote research and adult education in Europe. I want to be part of the community, participate in and develop this work, and network with experts in the field.

Why you should vote for me

I am enthusiastic and motivated to work within the community towards ESREA's goals. I believe that my work in the Finnish context (The Finnish Society for Research on Adult Education and editorial work) can also benefit the broader European work and provide opportunities for meaningful collaboration.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Keser Aschenberger



FILIZ KESER ASCHENBERGER

Affiliation: University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria

Academic Position: Assistant Prof. Dr.

Who am I?

I am Dr. Filiz Keser Aschenberger and work as an Assistant Professor at the University for Continuing Education Krems in the Department of Continuing Education Research and Educational Technologies, Austria. I hold a MA in Adult Education, and a PhD in Educational Administration and Planning. As former Fulbright Scholar, I conducted research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA. My work focuses on adult and continuing education, social inclusion, and learning environments. My research addresses the transformative role of education in fostering equity and access, particularly for marginalized and migrant communities.

I have been actively involved in numerous international and national research projects, tackling issues such as educational access, participatory practices, and inclusive policies. With a wealth of teaching experience in higher education and continuing education, I am dedicated to empowering learners and promoting social justice through innovative and interdisciplinary approaches. My interdisciplinary work reflects my commitment to using education as a transformative tool for equity, belonging, and societal change.

What ESREA means to me

For me, ESREA represents a unique scholarly community that brings together diverse traditions of adult education research in Europe while maintaining strong connections globally. ESREA provides a platform for critical dialogue, collaborative inquiry, and mutual support and empowerment among researchers at different career stages. I deeply value ESREA's commitment to democratic, inclusive and socially engaged scholarship, and I see it as a place where academic knowledge and societal challenges are meaningfully connected. Being part of ESREA has helped me situate my research within a broader European discourse, and to contribute to the visibility and recognition of adult education as a key field of research and practice.

Why I candidate

I am standing for election to the Presidium because I believe in the role of ESREA as a collective voice that both safeguards and advances adult education research in Europe. With my experience in international project work, network building and interdisciplinary research, I aim to actively contribute to shaping ESREA's agenda for the coming years. I would like to strengthen ESREA's engagement with cross-cutting issues such as migration, sustainability and wellbeing, while ensuring that early career researchers and underrepresented voices are included in our scholarly conversations. In addition to these, ESREA has played an important role in my own academic growth as an emerging researcher, and now I see it as my turn to give back by contributing actively and wholeheartedly to the community's future development.

Why you should vote for me

Because I bring a combination of international experience, interdisciplinary expertise and a strong commitment to adult education as a transformative force. I have demonstrated leadership in coordinating collaborative projects, bridging academia and practice, supporting inclusive participation in research communities. As a Presidium member, I will work to strengthen ESREA's role as a platform for critical scholarship, to foster dialogue across thematic networks, and to build partnerships that enhance the visibility and societal relevance of our field. I am committed to contributing actively, reliably, and collegially to the collective work of the Presidium. Thanks a lot for considering me.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Kondratjuk



MARIA KONDRATJUK

Affiliation: Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany

Academic Position: Professor

Who am I?

I am a passionate, committed and curious adult education scientist. I'm interested in processes of socio-ecological transformation, critical perspectives on education for sustainable development (ESD) and conditions, contexts and frameworks of lifelong learning as well as organisational development in adult education institutions and professional action in this field. I have a special expertise in qualitative research methodologies, and transdisciplinarity as an epistemological principle. I enjoy interacting with colleagues across disciplines and national borders and value learning from others.

What ESREA means to me

- ...a place of scientific socialisation in European adult education research (I'm member since I'm a student, almost 20 years!);
- ...a place for respectful and supportive exchange within the scientific community (I have always found the exchange to be appreciative);
- ...a place where the current state of research on adult education is presented and discussed (I have often encountered many new and exciting research projects);
- ...the place where I have met, am meeting and will meet many colleagues from around the globe (this has sometimes led to long-lasting friendships).

Why I candidate

- ...because ESREA is important to me as a place for networking in the field of adult education research;
- ...because I want to contribute and to co-create;
- ...because I would like to give back some of what I have received;
- ...because I want to network more at European level and at the same time strengthen networking.

Why you should vote for me

- ...because I take this task very seriously and would like to get involved;
- ...because I would like to contribute my experience from four years on the board of the adult education section of the German Educational Research Association (GERA) and long-term activities from the German Association for University Continuing and Distance Education;
- ...because I'm open to new things;
- ...because I want to support (early career) scientists in their qualification phases;
- ...because you can also enjoy a cup of coffee, a soft drink or a beer with me and talk about anything and everything.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Koulaouzides



GEORGE A. KOULAOUZIDES

Affiliation: Hellenic Open University, Greece

Academic Position: Associate Professor

Who am I?

I was born in the United States but grew up in Thessaloniki, Greece, which I consider my true home. I first studied Mathematics at Aristotle University, but soon my path turned toward adult education – a field that has shaped my life ever since. I earned a Master’s in Continuing Education and Training at the University of Surrey under Peter Jarvis, another Master’s in Adult Education at the Hellenic Open University, and later a PhD at the University of Crete, where I employed biographical research to explore how adult educators make sense of their professional role.

Today, I serve as an Associate Professor at the Hellenic Open University, where I direct the Master’s program in Adult Education, the Center for Training and Lifelong Learning, and the Laboratory of Biographical Learning and Transformative Adult Education. Before academia, I taught Mathematics at the American Farm School (vocational training school) and worked with rural communities, while also serving 15 years in local government in senior executive roles.

I have served as Vice President of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) and as a long-time member of the board of the Hellenic Adult Education Association. In 2019, I was deeply honoured to become the first Greek inducted into the International Hall of Fame of Adult and Continuing Education.

What ESREA means to me

I truly feel that ESREA is my professional home and, in many ways, my refuge. Being a member gives me pride – not only because of the organization’s respected status in the field of adult education, but also because of the diversity it embraces. Within ESREA, I have the chance to connect with colleagues from different backgrounds, cultures, and research traditions, and this richness of perspectives constantly inspires me. For me, ESREA is not just an association – it is a community where I feel I belong.

Why I candidate

In 2021, I took the initiative to revive the TEAE Network in ESREA, which had ceased operating in the aftermath of COVID-19. Together with colleagues, I have worked hard to keep the network active, and we have already organized two very successful events. Through this experience, I learned a great deal about ESREA and its operational standards, and I have witnessed how much the association has grown in recent years, showing a remarkable level of openness and extroversion. My candidacy for the presidium is not driven by ambition or self-promotion. Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to serve in both academic and administrative positions of responsibility, and I have always exercised leadership with care and respect for colleagues and co-workers.

I am motivated by a genuine wish to contribute to the further development of ESREA – not only in advancing its research goals, but also in nurturing a vibrant community, one that is caring and built on a true spirit of camaraderie.

Why you should vote for me

I believe my experience, character, and commitment make me a strong candidate for the ESREA presidium. Over the years, I have gained substantial leadership experience in international organizations, including serving as Vice President of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) and as a board member of the International Hall of Fame of Adult and Continuing Education. These roles have given me an international outlook and an appreciation for diversity, which I see as one of ESREA’s greatest strengths.

At the same time, I approach leadership with an open mind, a collaborative spirit, and yes – even a sense of humour (Greek) that helps keep us grounded and connected as colleagues. Most of all, I am deeply committed to ESREA's growth and to nurturing it as a true community. I want to foster not only research excellence, but also the camaraderie, care, and human connection that make ESREA feel like a professional home for so many of us.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Kraus



KATRIN KRAUS

Affiliation: University of Zurich, Switzerland

Academic Position: Professor for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education

Who am I?

I'm a curious person, favouring both theoretical considerations and empirical research in the nexus of society, work, and learning. I primarily work with approaches that make the complex connection between social structures and individual, subjective actions accessible. That is why I am interested in social space theory approaches as well as in situations, transitions, social practices and processes of subjectivation. I am interested in social contexts and interactions as well as materiality, which plays an essential role in this context. For me, everyday life is an important gateway to adult education and learning. Here, I follow theories that describe everyday life as a place where the complexity of life, with all its possibilities and contradictions, becomes tangibly apparent. I am interested in understanding how learning processes and the process of participating in continuing education occur in this context.

What ESREA means to me

ESREA is a space where all aspects of adult education and learning have a place and come to fruition. I myself work primarily in relation to work, which is an integral part of everyday life and self-concept for adults. That's why I enjoy encountering all the other facets of adult learning within the framework of ESREA. It is an important place for me, where I regularly meet other researchers involved in adult education and where I can meet many interesting people and have stimulating discussions. Here, I find inspiration for my own academic work. This is particularly important to me, as adult education research has only a weak academic tradition in Switzerland.

Why I candidate

I wish to support ESREA through my role on the Presidium because I believe ESREA's work is highly important. It provides an excellent platform for young researchers, especially, to engage in international contexts – just as I did over 20 years ago when I became a member of ESREA. I also value international working relationships, which consistently offer insights into how education and learning are institutionalised in other countries, how they are conceptualised, and what academic traditions are linked to them. Additionally, I appreciate working in a collegial committee where everyone volunteers their time for a cause that matters to them.

Why you should vote for me

Because ESREA is important to me and I want to support ESREA and its goals. I also have a lot of experience in voluntary academic committees. For example, over the last four years, as a guest from neighbouring Switzerland, I have been a member of the board of the Adult Education Section of the German Society for Educational Science, where I served as co-chair from 2023 to 2025.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Maksimović



MAJA MAKSIMOVIĆ

Affiliation: Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Academic Position: Associate Professor

Who am I?

My name is Maja Maksimović, and I am an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. My research practice is dedicated to exploring the entanglement of the epistemological, educational, activist, and artistic, with a particular focus on bringing the critical, embodied, spatial, and imaginative into educational action. I am inspired by continuous engagement with adult learners and by collaborations with artists, self-organized groups, and activist organizations, as well as by exploring and shaping public spaces as participatory sites of learning.

I served as a member of the executive board of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), where I worked to advance equal representation of Southeastern European countries in European educational spaces, promote cooperation sensitive to political and cultural differences, and strengthen connections between research, practice, and policy. More recently, I joined the editorial team of the European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA). In 2025, I published my book *Landscape of Learning: Relations between Place, Knowledge, and Artistic Practices*.

My academic work is closely intertwined with activism. I have been actively involved in the student movement in Serbia, and together with colleagues from anthropology and art history, I have organized art-education activities for students and citizens, creating spaces for reflection, hope, and togetherness. My upcoming project explores learning with and through the liminality of pain, in collaboration with a dancer and performer. In this work, we seek to understand how fragility and vulnerability can become sources of movement, knowledge, and creative practice.

I remain deeply committed to transdisciplinary research, where epistemological boundaries can be crossed and where education becomes a transformative practice of imagination, solidarity, and critical inquiry.

What ESREA means to me

I have been an ESREA member since 2010, becoming more actively involved after attending the conference in Coimbra in 2013. Two years later, the Conference of the ESREA Network on Gender and Adult Learning was held in Belgrade, and in 2019, I participated in organizing the ESREA Triennial at the Faculty of Philosophy.

Almost six years ago, I became a member of the ESREA Presidium and one of the co-conveners of the Network on Active Democratic Citizenship and Adult Learning (ADCAL). During the pandemic, the network organized a series of online dialogues titled *The Pulse of Freedom: Learning from Experiments in Democracy*, fostering horizontal exchange and genuine conversations among participants. Through these experiences, I witnessed the Society's values in action and recognized ESREA as a unique European platform crucial for advancing adult education research and practice.

In 2023, the ADCAL Network Conference, *Movements for Democracy, Critical Learning, and the Limits of What We Know*, took place in Belgrade, followed a year later by another network conference in Faro, Portugal. Inspired by the student movement in Serbia, we also organized online talks for ESREA members, engaging in interdisciplinary discussions on movement and learning, with particular emphasis on practices of care within activism.

I see ESREA as a platform where ideas and practices can be shared, created, and implemented, connecting communities, fostering collaboration, and enhancing opportunities for research exchange. It provides a space to develop innovative and interdisciplinary approaches that advance both research and practice in adult education.

Why I candidate

I am standing as a candidate for the presidium because I am deeply committed to advancing the mission and values of ESREA, and I bring extensive experience in fostering collaboration between research, practice, and activism in adult education. Over the past decade, I have actively contributed to ESREA through participation in conferences, network activities, and organizational initiatives, including co-convening the ADCAL Network and organizing both in-person and online dialogues that connect researchers, practitioners, and learners across Europe.

I see the presidium as a platform to help strengthen the Society's role as a hub for interdisciplinary exchange, innovation, and inclusion, particularly for underrepresented regions and voices. My experience in coordinating research, educational projects, and activist initiatives equips me to support activities that promote equity, participation, and the practical application of adult learning research. I see great potential in continuing to create spaces where the ESREA networks can share their experiences and explore opportunities for closer collaboration. In recent years, I have been working on building strong links with EAEA, and I am convinced of the importance of fostering partnerships that connect research and practice.

I am motivated by the opportunity to contribute strategically to ESREA's development, to facilitate meaningful connections between members, and to ensure that the Society continues to foster creativity, collaboration, and critical reflection in adult education. I believe that through thoughtful governance and active engagement, we can enhance ESREA's impact on research, policy, and practice across Europe.

Why you should vote for me

Considering the context that I am coming from and previous experience in ESREA, I would particularly focus on the following:

- Continue supporting communication among ESREA Presidium and ESREA networks and creating space for cooperation among ESREA networks;
- Establishing stronger links with other relevant actors on European for the purpose of knowledge production, dissemination of research results and advocacy for AE;
- Supporting development of early researchers and PhD students by creating more opportunities having in mind unequal chances across Europe;
- Strengthening engagement of AE researchers from Non-EU countries, enabling greater visibility of their specific working conditions, as well as promoting work of ESREA in Southeastern Europe;
- Supporting the development of research/learning events/spaces that are driven by horizontal collaboration and democratic participation and multiple ways of knowing.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Milana



MARCELLA MILANA

Affiliation: University of Verona, Italy

Academic Position: Associate Professor

Who am I?

I am an Associate Professor at the University of Verona, Italy, and have a longstanding affiliation with the University of Nottingham, School of Education, UK, as an Honorary Professor of Adult Education. I am also editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Lifelong Education* (Taylor & Francis) and co-editor of the book series *Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning* (Palgrave Macmillan/Springer). I am a passionate researcher of different aspects of adult education and learning in adulthood but primarily devoted to research on education policy and governance, from local, national and international perspectives.

What ESREA means to me

I first learn about ESREA when, as a postgraduate fellow, I joined one of its network conferences. That day, I found a community of dedicated scholars who welcomed me, and from whom I have learned a lot ever since. In return, I have served the society in different capacities on a voluntary basis: as co-convenor of the Research Network on Policy Studies on Adult Education (since 2011), as a member of the ESREA Presidium (since 2014), Vice Chair (2020–2022), and Chair (2023–2025). I also served as a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the ESREA Book Series (2012–2013) and co-Editor (2014–2020), and as Consulting Editor of the RELA journal (since 2018). In short, ESREA has become my academic family, a family that acknowledges and respects the plurality of cultural traditions that Europe entails, which welcomes and nurtures the curiosity and capacities of new scholars while preserving, advancing and innovating critical research on all aspects of adult education and learning to make this field of research grow through debates and collaboration among its junior and senior members, and beyond.

Why I candidate

In a research field whose relevance for the good of society is everlasting, but that has been shrinking in many countries (e.g. with the closing of academic chairs or limited funding), I believe of utmost importance that ESREA keeps playing its active role and grows as a safe space for researchers to share, debate, and advance quality research on all aspects of adult education and learning in adulthood.

Why you should vote for me

Through my long-lasting affiliation with ESREA, and having served in different capacities, I am rather knowledgeable about its strengths, but also about its underexplored potentials, which its Presidium, in close collaboration with the network's convenors, and book and journal editors, could make further bloom. May I have the opportunity to continue my service in its Presidium, I will be committed to:

- Secure that ESREA's historical and future contribution to the field is well documented and preserved;
- Increase knowledge of, and attention to, ESREA, its activity, and the research its members produce, among scholarly and practice communities, as well as policy makers;
- Strengthen the links and active collaboration ESREA has with other academic and non-academic communities;
- Improve the quality of research on adult education and learning in adulthood, find appropriate ways to disseminate research results, and promote research-informed debates and discussions.

CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET – Nylander



ERIK NYLANDER

Affiliation: Linköping University, Sweden

Academic Position: Senior associate Professor in Adult Education

Who am I?

I am a researcher and teacher in adult education at Linköping University, Sweden. My scholarship has long focused on Swedish popular, vocational, and adult education, while my academic career has also included a fellowship at Nanyang Technological University and the National Institute of Education, (Singapore) and shorter exchanges with the Institute for Adult Learning (Singapore) and University College London (Institute of Education, UK).

My research centres on lifelong learning and the education of adults in Sweden, with a particular interest in mapping knowledge in the field through bibliometric methods. At present, I lead a project on the institutional diffusion and programme content of Swedish folk high schools over 150 years, supported by a Consolidator Grant from the Swedish Research Council. Recently, I had the privilege of co-authoring a chapter on the Swedish adult education system with Kjell Rubenson, one of ESREA's founding members.

What ESREA means to me

For me, ESREA is an arena for connecting scholars across Europe and beyond, fostering exchange and advancing adult education research. Its decentralized network structure has provided continuity, inspiration, feedback, and dialogue across generations of researchers.

Over the years, I have engaged with ESREA in many ways: from pre-conferences as a postgraduate student in Linköping (2010), to supporting new generations through the summer school in Como (2019), to attending network conferences such as the policy meeting in Madeira (2024), as well as all of the large triennial conferences (Berlin 2013, Maynooth 2016, Belgrade 2019, Milano 2022).

To me, ESREA is above all a network of networks – a community that evolves and adapts, enabling scholars to exchange ideas across countries and academic traditions. Just as the landscape of adult learning varies between nations, ESREA's open structure embodies diversity and plurality. Being part of the Presidium would mean contributing to the sustaining and cherishing of these developments with curiosity and commitment.

Why I candidate

While I want to emphasize that much of ESREA's strength lies in its open network structure, I also wish to contribute to further strengthening its role in facilitating collaboration. Exchanges across institutional and geographical borders are, in my view, vital for advancing research and for highlighting the importance of both lifelong learning and adult education. I also see the Presidium as an important arena for dialogue at a time when the autonomy of universities and the funding of adult education are increasingly under pressure. This challenge comes alongside the need for European universities themselves to "raise their game" in tailoring educational opportunities for adults and so-called "non-traditional" students.

The strong institutional and collegial ties I have built with scholars in Europe and beyond owe much to the long-standing links that Linköping University has maintained with ESREA and its various platforms, events, and subnetworks. I want to cherish and "pay forward" these connections. I also hope that Linköping University can continue to serve as a central node in the European adult education research community for decades to come, supporting the maturation and ongoing renewal of the field.

Why you should vote for me

A vote for me is a vote for balancing continuation with change. If elected, I look forward to maintaining the cooperative spirit that characterizes ESREA while also contributing to the development of its future activities. In my research, I often build alliances with scholars trained in different traditions and seek collaborations beyond national borders, academia and beyond adult education in a narrow sense. With this background and mindset, I believe I can be an asset to ESREA's Presidium, helping to ensure continuity, creativity, and change in the years to come.

ESREA Events

Conference Reports

TEAE – ESREA Research Retreat in Explores Work-Life Balance and Emancipatory Research. University of Malta, 18–20 June 2025.



The Transformative and Emancipatory Adult Education (TEAE) Network held its 2025 Research Retreat Symposium in Malta, focusing on work-life balance and emancipatory research. The retreat brought together 20 scholars and practitioners to explore the blurred lines between personal and professional life in transformative adult education. All participants engaged in dialogues about the emotional labour of research and the role of adult education in personal and social transformation. – Below, we let the participants speak for themselves. These brief reflections offer a vivid glimpse into the retreat, its atmosphere, and the insights it generated.

Greetings by Emeritus Prof. Alexis Kokkos

Feedback from participants

The research retreat in Malta created a new space for thinking in the field of adult education, as the sharing of the presentations opened another dimension of personal and collective reflection. This enrichment of dialogue shaped a kind of spirituality, within which each of us – with our own personal touch – reached unseen aspects of those processes of the mind that cannot be easily categorized. I am grateful for this experience.

Konstantinos Mantzanas, Greece

The research retreat challenged me intellectually and pushed me to test my ideas on a new level. I formed connections with several members of the broader research community, which I believe will be valuable in my continued work. The shared dedication to the human capacity – and will – to learn and grow throughout life was reflected throughout the entire conference. It was not only directed outward toward others, but



A message from Alessandra

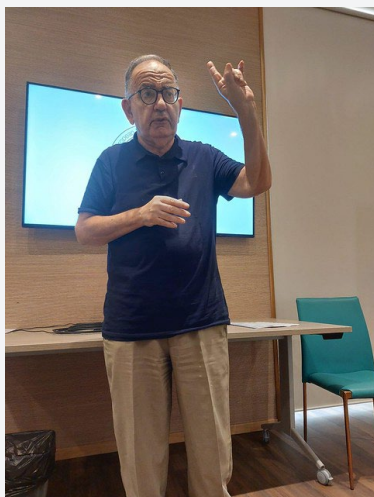
also turned inward, as a compelling call to us. I'm grateful for the opportunity to take part in this event. *Gustav Fridolin, Sweden*



Experiential session

The TEAE Research Retreat Symposium in Malta was much more than a conference. It was a moment of connection and discovery with people from all over the world, a space for genuine and meaningful exchange, and an opportunity for shared growth and collective learning. This was made possible also thanks to the format of the Symposium, which carefully balanced moments of dialogue with time for rest and reflection, and informal interactions with experiential sessions. Simply, a rare stimulating and enriching experience.

Giovanni Gottardo, Italy



Address by Peter Mayo

I was deeply grateful for the opportunity to attend and present at the TEAE retreat for several meaningful reasons. First, the theme of life-work balance – rarely addressed in academic settings – was both timely and profoundly relevant. How can we produce thoughtful, reflective scholarship when we are rarely given the time or space to think or reflect? Secondly, the retreat’s format was intentionally aligned with its theme. Built-in space for rest, connection, and unhurried conversation supported not just our well-being but also our intellectual engagement. It was re-



Informal meeting

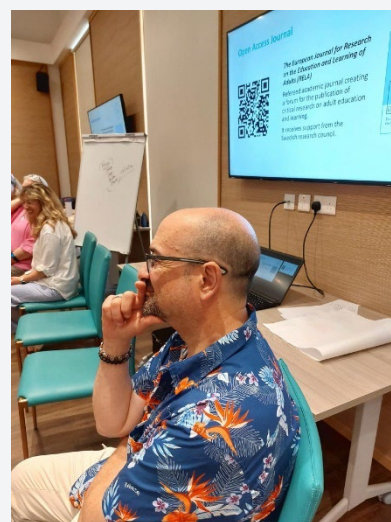
The TEAE Research Retreat Symposium in Malta was a rich and immersive experience that offered opportunities for authentic interactions and meaningful reflections on the timeless – yet especially relevant today – theme of ‘Transforming Work-Life Balances’. The welcoming environment, the well-organized conference program, and the atmosphere of open dialogue, genuine exchange of ideas, active listening, and mutual respect during the group sessions all contributed to the positive impact of the experience. This, in turn, reflects the spirit and practice of adult education and lifelong learning. We look forward to more meaningful experiences in the future". *Athina Charissi, Greece*

This was my first gathering with the TEAE and ESREA community and it won’t be the last. I found the topics relevant to my own work, the people genuine and committed, and the sessions very human. Educators all, it was clear to me that, for those who were retiring soon, just beginning their careers, or in the middle with deep questions about the world and their work, here was a group of people honestly struggling heroically with their fields but very passionate

I enthusiastically participated in the TEAE Research Retreat Symposium held in Malta in June 2025. The symposium's structure enabled us to present our various proposals and express our creative concerns related to Transformation Theory, adult education, and Emancipatory Education within its broadest context. I had the opportunity to share educational experiences with colleagues, engage in open discussions about the educational techniques we have applied, and, in some instances, put reflection into practice. The small working groups facilitated a deeper exploration of the issues we addressed and provided space for further contemplation after the symposium concluded. Overall, I felt like part of a larger community that, despite its diverse academic backgrounds, shares common interests in emancipatory education in today's world, particularly regarding the role of Transformation Theory in contemporary education.

Georgia Mega, Greece

It was refreshing to experience a conference that prioritized renewal alongside rigorous dialogue. Finally, the sessions that emphasized dialogue and collaborative input helped foster deeper relationships, shape future research, and ease the pressure often associated with presenting. Too often, academic conferences focus exclusively on cognitive output, offering little room to pause, discuss, or dwell on key questions. Presentations can feel one-sided, and Q&A sessions may resemble interrogations more than constructive conversations. In contrast, this retreat broke that mold. It offered a space where we could genuinely engage, exchange ideas, and embody the very principles of balanced, sustainable academic life that we so often aspire to but rarely get to practice.



Reflection

Debbie Kramlich, Thailand



Parallel groups



Experiential Session

deeper layer of reflection emerged, inviting participants to engage not only with knowledge but also with meaning. This dynamic interplay of dialogue and dialectical thinking nurtured a subtle sense of spirituality – a deeply personal journey into the less tangible, often ungraspable, workings of the human mind. Each of us, in our own unique way, touched upon perspectives rarely visible in more structured settings. I carry with me a profound sense of gratitude for this rich and inspiring experience.

Thomaitsa Theodorakopoulou, Greece

about the possibility their work might make better an increasingly fractured world. It was such a joy to be a participant and an honour to be included in the deep and meaningful conversations that took place in Malta. I look forward to continuing friendships and collaboration and will make it a point to return wherever the next conference is held.

José M. Tirado, Iceland

The conference in Malta offered more than just an academic gathering. It opened an intellectual space in the field of adult education. Through the exchange of ideas, a



Experiential Session by Dr. Spain

During the TEAE/ESREA retreat at the University of Malta, I experienced and envisioned the many possibilities within our vibrant and transformative learning community. Coming together from various fields of adult learning, I left feeling encouraged by the numerous opportunities to share our insights on teaching and research through meaningful exchanges and dialogues. I can only hope for more conferences like this one and for further development of our shared commonalities.

Dagmar Spain, Czech Republic

A Little Reflective Poem

Connection

Connectivity

Camaraderie

Commonality

Congruence

Compassion

COMMUNITY

Dagmar Spain



Getting together in Upper Barrakka Gardens





The research retreat's group and friends



Retreat material from sponsor Hellenic Open University

For further information please contact Dr. George A. Koulaouzides, Hellenic Open University (HOU), Patras, Greece:

→ <mailto:gkoulaouzidis@eap.gr>

→ <https://btlearnlab.eap.gr/en/tae-esrea-network/>

© All photographs by the participants.

News from the EU

New App “EU Funding & me” available

The Commission has just launched a new app that simplifies access to EU funding via mobile device.

The free app “EU funding & me” gives both applicants and recipients more efficient and intuitive access to EU funding. It is synchronised with the *EU Funding & Tenders* portal and offers easy access to funding opportunities, programmes, project results, and the latest news and events. Available for Android and iOS.

 → <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/news/30392>

Horizon Europe – Draft work programmes 2026/2027 available for consultation

The Commission is currently preparing the work programme for 2026/2027. For the first time, the Commission is making draft versions of the individual parts of the work programme publicly available. The *EU Liaison Office of the German Research Organisations* (Kooperationsstelle EU der Wissenschaftsorganisationen) or *KoWi* in short, located in Bonn, Germany, and Brussels, Belgium, has compiled the links for all relevant programmes in one place to provide centralised access to the available drafts. KoWi will keep this page updated until the final publication of the work programme which is expected for the end of 2025.

 → <https://www.kowi.de/en/kowi/Horizon-Europe/horizon-europe/tabid-846/HEUe-work-programme-2026-2027.aspx>

Publications

RELA Journal



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

Recently published:

Vol.16 No. 3 (2025): Open Papers

→ <https://rela.ep.liu.se/issue/view/506>

All RELA issues can be found at: → <https://rela.ep.liu.se/>

Open RELA Calls for papers

Topic: **Arts and adult education**

Submission deadline: 31 October 2025

→ <https://rela.ep.liu.se/libraryFiles/downloadPublic/165>

Open papers may be submitted any time, see the call:

→ <https://journal.ep.liu.se/RELA/libraryFiles/downloadPublic/19>

Keep checking: All upcoming calls will be made available at → <https://rela.ep.liu.se/cfp>

ESREA Book Series – Forthcoming Publications

Network “Gender and Adult Learning”



Vieira, C. C., & Ostrouch-Kamińska, J. (Eds.) (2026).

Gender and adult education research in the face of social and cultural changes. (New) Challenges of contemporary times. Brill.

→ <https://brill.com/display/title/73504>

Publication date: 27 November 2025

Network “Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professional Development” (ReNAdeT)



Jögi, L., Zarifis, G. K., Lattke, S. & Gravani, M. N. (Eds.) (2026). *Adult Educators in the Face of Crisis in Europe: Managing Challenges, Shaping Identities and Changing Cultures*. Brill

→ <https://brill.com/display/title/73441>

Publication date: 27 November 2025

Forthcoming Events

ESREA General Assembly 2025

3 November 2025, 2.00–3.30 p.m. CET

Venue: Online. <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85260012135?pwd=ELbCUflXd2FANYl2YnRbypOWb7miNC.1>

All ESREA members are warmly invited to attend!

ESREA Network Events

SAVE THE DATE: 22–24 April 2026

Joint-Conference of the ESREA Networks Education and Learning of Older Adults (ELOA), Life History and Biography, and Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professional Development (ReNADET)

Provisional Title: “Research Diversity in an Ageing Society”

Venue: Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania

13–15 May 2026

Conference of the ESREA Network on Policy Studies in Adult Education (PSAE)

Title: “Adult Learning and Education. Widening the Scope for Action”

Venue: University of Hamburg, Germany

→ [2nd Call for Papers](#), abstract submission deadline: 9 November, notification of acceptance: 20 December 2025

→ [Conference website](#)

ESREA Seasonal Schools

14–18 September 2026

The Klagenfurt Research Retreat (KRR)

Title: “Research on Adult Education and Transformation – Mapping Possibilities and Embracing Complexity.”

Venue: University of Klagenfurt, Austria

→ [KRR Call for Applications](#), application deadline: 18 March 2026

→ [Conference website](#)

How to become a member of ESREA

Membership in ESREA is open to both individual and institutional members. All members get a reduced fee at ESREA activities, information in the field of research on the education of adults through the ESREA mailing list and newsletters. Individual members 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:

Please download the document at → <http://www.esrea.org/about-us/membership/>

Fill in the membership application form and e-mail it to: → esrea_sec@die-bonn.de

Within two weeks at the latest you will receive a confirmation of your membership by e-mail

An invoice for your membership fee will be issued: 50 EUR for individual members, 25 EUR for students and PhD students and 150 EUR 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:

Bank: Sparkasse KoelnBonn

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

About this Newsletter

The ESREA Newsletter is the association's newsletter for ESREA members, published three times a year – in February, June, and October – by the ESREA Secretariat.

It shares news and updates from the ESREA Board and Secretariat, from our networks, and from individual ESREA members – especially when their work has an international angle and might be of interest to others in the community.

We're always looking forward to receiving contributions from ESREA members! These can include (but aren't limited to):

- Events like conferences, doctoral schools, research retreats, or online symposia
- New publications such as edited volumes or special issues
- News about recently completed PhD theses
- Awards and recognition received by members
- Updates on ongoing or recently finished (international) projects

Contributions can be brief or more in-depth, and images are welcome too. We encourage both informative reports and more reflective pieces. Opinion articles on European developments in adult education (research) are also very welcome.

If you would like to contribute, please contact the ESREA Secretariat by e-mail: mailto:esrea_sec@die-bonn.de

Newsletter release schedule

Planned in 2026/2027:
end of February 2026,
end of June 2026
end of October 2026

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Date of Publication: 20 October 2025

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