

ESREA RESEARCH NETWORK

“Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Development”

Conference Announcement and Second Call for Papers

III European Seminar:

Local development, community and adult learning: learning landscapes between the mainstream and the margins

Magdeburg, Germany, 28 - 30 May 2009

Otto-von-Guericke University – [www.ovgu.de](http://www.ovgu.de)

European Society for Research on the Education of Adults – [www.esrea.org](http://www.esrea.org)

Organisation: Rob Evans [esrea09@ovgu.de](mailto:esrea09@ovgu.de)

Conference website: [www.esrea.ovgu.de](http://www.esrea.ovgu.de)

## Local development, community and adult learning: learning landscapes between the mainstream and the margins

The III Seminar of this network is organized by the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) and the University of Magdeburg (Germany). At the first meeting (Faro 2006) the participants focused on human development in different contexts: economic, educational, global and local, on formal adult education and learning and non-formal and incidental or biographical learning of citizens in the contemporary world. The second seminar (Wroclaw 2008) focused on *locality in globality*, discussing the locality of identity and socially created locality as a result of learning processes. Questions were asked about the role of active participation and meaning creation in every day activities (of regions, cities, villages as well as internet, social movements, NGOs' activities, etc).

In Magdeburg the seminar will focus on 'landscapes' of adult learning and development caught up in the tension of change. Magdeburg as the venue of this III European Seminar after Faro and Wroclaw brings the work of the network closer to the physical centre of Europe and at the same time to a region experiencing many of the problems of marginality. This city and region, with historically rich patterns of identity and a social memory embodied in past and present social movements for local development, education and democracy, provide the stage for the questions we wish to pose.

The divide between the mainstream in adult education and community development and experiences and discourses of learning at the margins – or better, in the *many marginal spaces* - of individual and community learning today, takes many forms. This divide can be:

- visible and officialized in policy, formulated in mainstream discourses of learning (LLL etc) and enacted at different levels of society, at local, regional and national, as well as supra-national levels in the present EU27;
- politically and economically transacted, expressed in forms of power and influence, in which powerful lobbies and interest groups play local and national interests against each other;
- it can be lived as personal or group experience, whereby the lived experience of the local caught up in the currents of global forces can be a highly ambivalent experience in the new Europe of changing borders and cross-national realities;
- it may find expression in local programmes of protest seeking to defend educational initiatives affecting vulnerable communities;
- it may find expression in language and local/regional difference and diversity which promote an own voice in community development movements aiming to defend (traditions of) local solidarity based on ethnic, professional or class identities which may be threatened by national or supra-national forces;
- can be an expression of historical developments in politically, economically or geographically marginalised areas and communities in which alternatives to mainstream policies and practices may represent resistance or rejection of change (e.g. the experience of the 'new states' of East Germany, neo-nationalism, new political parties of social protest)
- it may be only felt, embodied and remain unreflected, finding expression in unorthodox ways, i.e. in initially separate initiatives (environmental protection, political activism on global or human rights issues) which connect up with issues of adult education and community development further down the road

We wish to encourage participants to investigate the demarcation lines in local lives, experiences, experience of community programmes, in narratives of learning and change, how the tensions in everyday life in the EU 27 and beyond are crystallized into forms of formal institutional and informal forms of learning, funding, recognition of community, i.e. in different kinds of learning chances in changing educational landscapes. We wish, too, to turn our attention to the other landscapes of exclusion and dis-recognition, in which individuals and communities are silenced or remain unheard. The local and the 'near' levels of community can indeed be a space for social movements and local initiatives to unfold forms of active participation, civil action, solidarity, defence of the environment

and concern for long-term development in human and natural terms - sustainable and powerfully educative and liberating experiences. The experience of the local can be negative, however, for some. Spaces at the physical margins of larger communities/regions/nations can represent pockets of exclusion and deprivation, in which negative visions and practices of the local and the community can arise. Such negative learning spaces need not be, indeed very frequently are not, at the physical peripheries of states but deep within each country, each region, each city. The old diaspora of historic waves of migration, for example, are replaced or revived by new learning ghettos, "black holes" within the fabric of communities and regions. Here, alternative discourses of development can flourish which may be the backdrop for negative utopias, for the strengthening of discourses of disempowerment and identity which lay the foundations for individualist, antidemocratic and sexist models of community and learning.

If we choose to speak of "learning landscapes", it is in order to encourage a wide discussion that takes in the shifting nature of learning and development, the physical landscapes of place in time, and the notional landscapes that are still unfolding. Learning landscapes as local experiences and social movements, such as those which in the last 20 years have confronted the waves of change that accompanied the collapse of communism and the re-formation of civil society in large parts of Europe, to name just experiences 'closest to home'. Learning landscapes, too, unfolding within the open-ended expansion of the European Union and in the new forms of migration it engenders at its margins and at its core. We wish to examine the spaces available for community action and learning, which represent critical landscapes of learning and action as answers to new models of consumption, education and work and the new hierarchies of power (and marginalisation) which are taking shape now and tomorrow.

Research into adult learning and community development needs to confront these tensions within the expanding, changing learning landscapes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our interest is primarily focused on changes and experiences in learning and development which are taking place today in Europe. Researchers from beyond the edges of the present EU 27, however, and those with research experiences to share with us from further afield, where the tensions of the local and the global are being played out perhaps in different ways, are particularly invited to present the results of their work. Our wish is to continue the discussion started in 2006 at Faro and enriched in Wroclaw in 2008.

Some questions can be posed: What kinds of research can access these experiences, what chances for learning and community development are feasible at the physical margins (e.g. East Germany in Germany, the newest EU members in the EU, Turkey, GUS states, the southern rim of the Mediterranean, as well as the western rim of the EU) or the lived margins (the 'mobile' ghettos of modern migration, ethnic minorities, gastarbeiter identities, women confronted by new forms of patriarchy) of contemporary society?

#### Conference sub-themes

- Policy and politics of adult learning and community development
- Exclusion and local development: gender, migration, literacy and adult learning
- Local/regional identities, adult learning and the community and the supra-national
- Marginalisation in learning – diaspora, new diaspora, migration and inner migration
- Discourses of adult learning – local, global, cosmopolitan pathways
- Research methodologies and researchers in local development
- Social movements and their contribution to forms of social learning

Proposals on these and similar themes are welcomed

## Call for Papers

Abstracts should be submitted by **12th December 2008** to the conference organiser at [esrea09@ovgu.de](mailto:esrea09@ovgu.de).

Your paper proposal should have no more than 500 words and should be in Times New Roman, 12 points. Please send on a separate sheet your professional / personal data (name, institutional affiliation, phone and email).

The proposals will be blind reviewed by the scientific committee and acceptance will be confirmed by **16th January 2009**.

Final papers (3000 – 5000 words) should be submitted by email by **27th March 2009**.

Guidelines for submission of papers will be made available at a later date.

## Conference languages: English / French /German

ESREA's language policy is understood as being inclusive. Abstracts must be in English. Papers for the proceedings must be in English or accompanied by a detailed working summary in English, but talks are welcome in French or German as well as English.

For French or German speakers: it is suggested that slides to the talk be in English. At the conference there will not be any form of professional translation, but from experience we know that there are a number of colleagues who are willing and able to help and facilitate dialogue. Tolerance, respect and curiosity will do the rest.

## Ways of working:

- Plenary presentations (Keynote talks/Panels)
- Paper presentations in thematic workshops.

## Duration of Paper Presentations Sessions:

Oral presentations should be up to 25 minutes. There will be 20 minutes for debate, including the discussants' intervention. Discussants will be encouraged to produce a short comment on the paper and to promote the dialogue, posing the first questions.

## Equipment for Presentations:

All rooms will be equipped with overhead projectors and video projectors to allow Power Point presentations. Other equipment should be requested on the conference registration form (to follow)

## Conference Fee:

Participants (ESREA members): €140

Participants (Non-members): €160

PhD Students: €50 (a limited number of bursaries for PhD students will be available)

Conference Dinner: €40

## The conference registration fee includes:

Participation in conference sessions

A printed copy of Conference Proceedings (and other working documents)

Refreshments and lunch during the breaks

(Registration details will be announced in the coming weeks – watch out for the conference website)

## Organising Institutions and Sponsors:

**ESREA (European Society for Research on the Education of Adults) [www.esrea.org](http://www.esrea.org)**

*ESREA promotes and disseminates theoretical and empirical research on the education of adults and adult learning in Europe through research networks, conferences and publications. It was established in 1991 as a scientific society which provides a Europe-wide forum for all researchers' engaged in adult education and learning. Today it has more than 400 members (individual and institutional) throughout Europe. It comprises a series of research networks that hold annual seminars for the exchange and scientific opened debate of research results and to encourage publications.*

**Sprachenzentrum/Language Centre, Magdeburg University  
Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg [www.ovgu.de](http://www.ovgu.de)**

### **Network Convenors:**

**António Fragoso, Universidade do Algarve (Portugal)**

**Ewa Kurantowicz, Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa (Poland)**

**Emilio Lucio-Villegas, Universidad de Sevilla (Spain)**

### **Conference Organiser**

**Rob Evans, Otto-von-Guericke Universität Magdeburg**

**E-mail: [esrea09@ovgu.de](mailto:esrea09@ovgu.de)**

*As indicated above, full details about writing and submitting papers, about fees and PhD bursaries, registration, about the Magdeburg venue and accommodation in Magdeburg will appear soon on the conference website and on ESREA's website ( [www.esrea.org](http://www.esrea.org) ) under 'conferences'.*