

**ESREA – European Society for Research on the Education of Adults
Life History and Biography Network**

**An Ecology of Life and Learning: Discourses, dialogue and diversity
in biographical research**

**The Annual Conference in 2021 will be held in
Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa/ University of Lower Silesia
Wrocław, Poland**

Thursday 4th to Sunday 7th March

Second Call for Papers

Since its first meeting in Geneva, ESREA's Life History and Biography Network (LHBN) has been a forum for a wide range of researchers, including doctoral students, drawing on different disciplinary backgrounds, and coming from every corner of Europe, and beyond. The Network has been meeting for 28 years, with annual conferences centred on the role of biographical narratives, storytelling, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, as well as memory, in researching human lives and experiences of learning. Thematic and methodological interests, as well as dissatisfaction with dominant research methods and epistemologies, have drawn diverse researchers together, from different contexts, language communities and varying preoccupations. Our conferences are based on the recognition and celebration of the diversity of methods, approaches and epistemologies in researching adult education and learning. Our aim is to create spaces for dialogue, reflexivity and discovery, in order to sustain trustful collaboration, publications and collaborative research projects.

The 2021 conference will draw its inspiration from the forthcoming book *'An Ecology of Life: Discourses, dialogue and diversity in biographical research'* which forms part of the ESREA book series - *'Research on the education and learning of adults'*. As we did with the book, we want to weave together a variety of contributions and voices on biographical struggles to define and live sustainable lives, located within families, communities, cultures and our relationships to the natural world. We aim to illuminate what amounts to an ecology of life and human flourishing, no less, in a tortured, fractious, and fragmented world.

The conference seeks to interconnect many themes that have been present in our recent work, at least since 2013, to do with how narratives are deeply embodied, and engage heart, maybe soul, as well as mind, as viewed from varying perspectives. Moreover, biographical research is no isolated individual, solipsistic endeavour but is shaped by larger ecological interactions – in families, schools, universities, communities, societies, and landscapes – that can sustain or destroy hope. Sustainability is often to do with creating sufficient hope in individuals and communities by building meaningful dialogue and experience of togetherness, across difference. We have become more aware, in our research meetings, that telling life stories or listening to them celebrates the complexity, messiness, ecological challenge, but also rich potential of living learning lives. By doing biographical research, we became more concerned about the rapid disruption of sustainable ecologies, not only ‘natural’, physical and biological, but also psychological, economic, relational, political, educational, cultural and ethical. We live in a frightening, liquid world and believe that our kind of research can not only chronicle this but also illuminate how resources of hope are created in deeper, aesthetically satisfying ways. Biographical research offers insights, and even signposts, to understand and transcend the darkness of the human condition.

Moreover, note is made of the fact that the Life History and Biography Network is set within a changing conceptual field of adult/lifelong education and learning. Our work is framed (and constrained) by local, national, European and global influences. Particularly, the changing nature of network membership and preoccupations, in the face of neo-liberalism, including in universities and education; and of declining trust in politics, institutions and even the future in Europe and beyond. Rightist populism and fascism are on the march once again. So, our reflection on and reflexivity towards the evolution of our community, and our dilemmas as researchers and adult learners in present times, points to a considered and positive interplay with these wider forces. Our rationale is to generate insight into people’s fears and anxieties but also their capacity to keep on keeping on and to challenge forces that would diminish our humanity. We, as researchers, teachers and citizens, are embedded in a liquid, runaway, fractious, anxiety ridden world but have responsibilities to struggle towards something better, grounded in social justice.

In order to make a proposal, and bring your contribution to the conference, you may wish to consider:

- The emergent philosophical and theoretical themes that inform different perspectives on stories, and a panoply of methodological stances.
- The interactions between research, practice, and policy, by presenting pieces of research that have been influenced by a need and/or are aimed at shaping policy and practice – or any mix of these.
- The multiplicity of philosophical, political, theoretical and methodological stances in biographical research, alongside values, assumptions and practices.

We are particularly interested in the role of research as a response to adult lifelong learning opportunities and experiences, alongside the difference that our work can make.

We also hope the conference will integrate the community of researchers of life history and biography after such difficult experiences of social isolation and provide a space that will allow us to reflect on the consequences for human flourishing.

Scientific Committee

Alan Bainbridge, Laura Formenti (conveners of the Network)

Michel Alhadeff-Jones, Herve Breton, Agnieszka Bron, Freema Elbaz-Luwisch, Rob Evans, Fergal Finnegan, Marcin Gołębnik, Ewa Kurantowicz, Silvia Luraschi, José Gonzalez Monteagudo, Marianne Høyen, Barbara Merrill, Laura Mazzoli Smith, Paweł Rudnicki, Linden West and Hazel Wright.

Members of the Scientific Committee will come from Italy, Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom; all are committed to facilitate communication across the different languages, to create a learning inclusive community and to offer good critical space for early as well as expert researchers.

The location of the Conference

The University of Lower Silesia [ULS; orig.: DSW] is a non-public university that promotes an innovative approach to learning and builds research networks at the national and international levels. Apart from the excellence in teaching, research and academic publications, DSW actively works for the local community, in particular through its educational programs, research and development projects and cooperation with educational institutions, culture and civil organizations.

University of Lower Silesia is based not far from the very centre of Wrocław and is well connected with various essential destination points, such as the airport, Wrocław Mikołajów railway station, the coach station and the city's highway.

Outline Conference schedule

The formal conference starts late afternoon Thursday 4th ends at noon Sunday 7th March.

Details will be provided when confirmed. We hope to include a morning visit to an educational/cultural place in Wrocław, and also a conference dinner and other attractions.

Abstract submission

Abstracts can be for individual papers or group symposia/workshops.

You will submit two documents:

1) Abstract

This should include the title and no more than 500 words of text.

The title of the abstract should be clear and be linked to an aspect of the call.

Use font Times New Roman, 12 points and single-spaced.

There should be no references.

There should be 4 to 6 keywords.

2) Title page

This will include the title, your name, institutional affiliation, and email.

Submit your abstract and title page to Anna Andrejów-Kubów at anna.andrejow-kubow@dsw.edu.pl

Schedule:

Deadline for submission of abstracts:

30th October 2020

Notification of acceptance of proposals for papers, symposia, workshops, or posters after a double blind review: **mid November 2020.**

Deadline for Final papers (3000 – 5000 words) should be submitted by **29th January 2021.**

Detailed guidelines for submission, conference arrangements and the conference programme will be made available on the conference website

More details will be sent in the second Call for Papers (around September 2020)

In the meantime, if you have any questions please contact the Wrocław's organizing team at: <https://lhbn2021.dsw.edu.pl/> or

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Laura Formenti at laura.formenti@unimib.it