

# Call for Applications for the ESREA Seasonal School

## The Klagenfurt Research Retreat Research on Adult Education and Transformation: Mapping Possibilities and Embracing Complexity



©Gert Steinthaler

**May, 16–20, 2022**

**Universität Klagenfurt, Department for Educational Science, Austria**

### **Organising committee:**

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**The Klagenfurt Research Retreat**  
**Research on Adult Education and Transformation: Mapping Possibilities and Embracing Complexity**

**An invitation to a research retreat**

The spring school on *Adult Education and Transformation* is planned as a research retreat. This comprises moments of intensive scholarly exchange, discussion and reflection on one's own research and places of retreat to write and contemplate, and it provides opportunities for networking and conversation. Universität Klagenfurt is a green, sustainable campus in leafy surroundings, in close proximity to the lake *Wörthersee*, parks and promenades.

The spring school is organized in cooperation with ESREA, the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. The Research Retreat which takes place for the first time in May 2022 in Klagenfurt (Kärnten/Carinthia), Austria.

The Klagenfurt Research Retreat (KRR) is a transnational co-operation between

- The European Society for Research on the Education of Adults – ESREA
- Maynooth University, National University of Ireland, Department of Adult and Community Education
- FernUniversität in Hagen, Institut für Bildungswissenschaft und Medienforschung, Lehrgebiet Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung und Hochschuldidaktik
- L'Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca, Dipartimento di Scienze Umane per la Formazione
- Universität Klagenfurt, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft und Bildungsforschung, Arbeitsbereich Erwachsenenbildung und berufliche Bildung

**Adult Education and Transformation**

We are experiencing unprecedented disruption in our lives at the moment. It is worth bearing in mind in this period of flux that Adult Education was constituted by and as a response to complex and often highly disruptive social modernisation processes. Changes in the life course, shifts in employment and career paths, alterations in family structures and intimate relationships, the democratisation of everyday life, the corrosion of traditional patterns of community interaction and political struggles for equality have been crucial to the formation of a complex and varied field of Adult Education as we know it. As a result, transformation on varying levels and scales has long been a defining theme for both researchers and practitioners with a particularly strong emphasis on empowerment and emancipation. It covers learning and educational processes of adults in the fields of general, political and cultural education, as well as vocational education and training, work-based learning, and job-related further education, or professional development, and university continuing education. Adult Education and Learning is both organised in institutions and takes place as informal learning (planned educational work and *free* learning related to life-world, workplace and social contexts). Adult Education itself is subject to transformation processes while aiming to initiate or support individual and collective processes of change/transformation.

The Klagenfurt Research Retreat wishes to take this theme to explore how adult education can actively and collectively shape the future towards a more sustainable society and just society. In this way the retreat will seek to create a reflective space which is strongly rooted in the adult education research field and to take time for doctoral students to discuss issues which have been a mainstay of ESREA's various network conferences and Triennial events.

The doctoral forum which is designed for using diverse methodologies and theoretical perspectives is interested in critical reflection on the theme of transformation as it relates to adult education and learning. We invite researchers to approach this in an open way and welcome submissions which take up this broad theme to explore transformation and adult education in relation to work, economic change, digitisation, politics, human rights, gender, social inequalities, migration, and of course the relationship between humans and the environment.

We have formulated three overarching questions that can help in looking at research projects collectively:

- How can these interrelations and educational, social, demographic, political, environmental etc. transformations be studied?
- Which (learning) theories, epistemological/ontological perspectives or sociology of knowledge, and which research methodologies and methods, which forms of knowledge production support the reading/interpreting/analysing and systematising of transformations?
- How does (the) research relate to educational practice and society? How can results be disseminated in both scientifically and socially adequate ways *and* in new, future-oriented ways?

However, the scope of the Klagenfurt Research Retreat depends on the submissions and contributions of all participants and will be dealt with collectively during the event. This is also the basis for jointly identifying relevant topics or gaps for the years to come.

### **Aims and Concept**

The Klagenfurt Research Retreat is conceptualized as a meeting of a scientific community on Adult Education and Transformation. It intends to offer a retreat from the usual and habitual environment and seeks to foster holistic learning processes. It enables researchers to meet in a pleasant and stimulating location, where workshops, debate and collective learning, working on own research projects (writing labs), combined with social activities.

We will jointly explore the landscapes of adult education and learning in reference to the national/regional educational systems of adult education and learning of participants sharing information on the genesis, traditions and current trends of these various systems in relation to transformative possibilities and challenges. The Retreat will also seek to create space for debating concepts and approaches to transformation. This intends to bring to the fore the diversity and differences in transformation theories.

Our primary aim is to prioritize the participants' research interests (doctoral theses and research projects) and create an arena for exchange, reflection, theorizing and exploring ideas in order to amend the respective research projects, and finally, to foster networking and establish a basis for a community of research in the research field on Adult Education and Transformation.

### **What we offer participating doctoral students:**

The purpose of ESREA Seasonal Schools is to support doctoral and early career researchers by enhancing collaboration and networking among the more experienced ones and beginners. The Klagenfurt Research Retreat aims to create a convivial space for deep dialogue, reflection and discussion on the transformative character (in *statu nascendi*, in progress and/or as result) of being, living, working and learning of adults in interaction with society, environment and politics over the lifespan, and it enables the participation in and the contribution to the international debate and provides possibilities for networking.

### **What the organising committee intends to achieve:**

As this is the initial event, we intend to create communicative spaces for lively debate in a participatory way. In the closing session of the Klagenfurt Research Retreat 2022 we intend to identify relevant topics or gaps for the years to come.

In line with the concept of a research retreat, following andragogical principles, and fostering a high level of involvement of doctoral students, the Klagenfurt Research Retreat will be based on:

- **Dialogical forums:** This plenary format intends to promote collective discourse and exchange and co-creation of knowledge. The **first dialogical forum** provides an overview of topics, theoretical frameworks and research fields and research questions based on the applications. The **second dialogical forum** is dedicated to an exchange on the various landscapes of Adult Education and Learning as represented by the participants: reflecting on national educational systems for adult education and learning (ALE), and vocational education and training (VET), traditions and genesis, frames of reference, and explaining the respective research focus and question related to these considerations. The **third dialogical forum** opens up debate on concepts and approaches to *transformation* as represented in the doctoral theses and research projects. This intends to bring to the fore the variety of ideas of transformation and related theories and current state of research in the respective fields of research. Invited speakers contribute to all three dialogical forums by responding to issues and initiating deep dialogue by questioning, problem-posing, and critical reflection.
- **Plenary meet-ups (each morning):** This format seeks to summarize the previous day (processes/results, open questions, status quo) and enable the participating PhD students to speak up.
- **Parallel workshops:** In this format small groups collaborate that have been grouped in advance, e.g. by topic or research method. In the workshops, research approaches and designs of participants' thesis are dealt with, and methodological considerations are provided by experienced scholars.
- **Parallel peer-mentoring sessions:** In this format, peer-mentoring activities on either data collection (e.g., interview questions or questionnaire, observation protocols) or data analysis take place. Participants share brief information on their data, and questions or dilemmas they bring along, and provide instruments or selected data. These small work sessions are based on questions concerning data collection or collective interpretation/analysis of data among peers. These sessions are facilitated by teams of pre-doc and post-doc researchers.
- **Gallery walk:** In this format, participants are asked to look back and reflect on the outcomes of their participation: *To what extent and how have debates, inputs, feedback and comments influenced the current individual work process? Where do they feel reassured, puzzled, stimulated, influenced, transformed or the like?* This learning process is to be expressed: e.g. in the form of a poster, a photo, a drawing, a poem, a statement or the like.
- **Closing session (plenary debate):** In this format, a plenary discussion takes place, based on the processes and results of each session in order to identify relevant topics or gaps for the years to come (next KRR).
- **Writing lab:** This format is an optional offer where writing counselling is offered by trained writing tutors.

## Schedule 16 to 20 May 2022

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday			
09:00 – 09:30		Plenary meet-up /Coffee	Plenary meet-up/ Coffee	Plenary meet-up/Coffee	Plenary meet-up/Coffee			
09:30 – 10:00		Second dialogical forum	Third dialogical forum	Parallel workshops	Gallery walk			
10:00 – 10:30								
10:30 – 11:00								
11:00 – 11:30				Coffee break	Coffee break			
11:30 – 12:00		Break	Break	Parallel peer-mentoring sessions	Closing session (plenary debate)			
12:00 – 12:30								
12:30 – 13:00				Meeting Doctoral Programme (scholars)				
13:00 – 13:30		Parallel workshops	Parallel workshops	Break	Break			
13:30 – 14:00								
14:00 – 14:30	Registration/Coffee							
14:30 – 15:00	Opening session							
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break					Coffee break	Writing lab With tutors	
15:30 – 16:00	Parallel peer-mentoring sessions					Parallel peer-mentoring sessions		
16:00 – 16:30	First dialogical forum							Writing Lab (self-organised) until 18:30
16:30 – 17:00								
17:00 – 17:30								
17:30 – 18:00						Writing lab (optional) With tutors		
18:00 – 18:30								
18:30 – 19:00								
from 19:00	Social dinner (boat trip)	Writing lab (self-organised) until 21:00		Evening event (social gathering)				

### Application Procedure

Who can apply: We invite PhD students as well as research project staff. The number of participants is limited to 25.

Applicants are asked to submit the following information no later than **31<sup>st</sup> of January 2022**:

- **Brief biographical information** including your name and (if applicable) your institutional affiliation, e-mail address and postal address, phone number as well as your current area of studies, research or professional activity.
- A **brief outline (300-500 words)** on your motivation and questions you wish to explore at the Klagenfurt Research Retreat: Explain how the topics outlined in this call are of interest to you and how they relate to your research question; what are the issues, questions and challenges you are currently facing; and what would be your expectations when meeting this scientific community?
- Please indicate if you would **require a bursary** (for those with no institutional affiliations or no other funding possibilities);

Please submit your application in **one single PDF-document**, using first name and surname for file naming purposes. Send your document to the following e-mail address [KRR@aau.at](mailto:KRR@aau.at) by **31<sup>st</sup> of January 2022** at the latest.

**Timeline:**

- ✓ Deadline for submitting applications: 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2022
- ✓ Notification of acceptance: 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2022
- ✓ Deadline for submitting an abstract, providing the working title, field of research, research questions(s), theoretical frame, literature review, and methodological approach and research methods for the doctoral thesis or the research project (7 pages max.): 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2022
- ✓ Notification of the final programme: 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2022

**Additional information on ECTS and the pandemic**

Participation will be confirmed. Participants can acquire 5 ECTS credits. For achieving this, a reflection paper with a length of 5 pages has to be submitted after the event as well as participating in the school. Further information will be provided at the event.

**The KRR 2022 is intended to take place in Klagenfurt. We keep participants updated if the COVID-circumstances require an online/distance format.**

Participants will be provided with information about the conference venue (travel, accommodation, maps etc.) prior to the event.

**Costs (participation fee)**

The participation fee will be 200 Euros (this covers all coffee breaks and two social events, as indicated in the schedule).

**Bursaries**

Bursaries shall cover individual travel and accommodation costs as well as the participation fee.

**Contact information:**

Please get in touch with the local organising committee if questions occur: [KRR@aau.at](mailto:KRR@aau.at)  
Visit our [website](#) for further information.