

ESEE 2017

Transformative learning: new directions in agricultural extension and education

Call for paper proposals for the

23rd European Seminar on Extension (and) Education

ESEE 2015, Chania, Greece

Conference dates: July 4 – 7, 2017

*Conference Theme: **Transformative learning: new directions in agricultural extension and education***

The 23rd European Seminar on Extension (and) Education (ESEE) will be held in the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, and hosted by the Lab. of Agricultural Extension, Rural Systems & Rural Sociology, Dept. of Agricultural Economics & Rural Development, Agricultural University of Athens.

The conference will provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences among university staff and researchers, professional personnel and others who are involved in Extension and Education. We would like to exchange thoughts about the development of our field and also to look forward towards the future.

Themes

In our times, based on a wide range of theoretical views on learning and change, new extension, education/ training and development approaches rooted in systems thinking and social learning perspectives have emerged; moreover, innovation is nowadays understood as a social as well as a technical process, as a nonlinear process, and as a process of interactive learning. Learning groups and networks have been shown as powerful means for engaging and empowering people, creating spaces for communication, knowledge exchanges, negotiation, experimentation and the development of skills and competencies. In parallel, the transition towards more sustainable forms of agriculture requires the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in networks allowing for and promoting social learning and the co-generation, adaptation, appropriation and use of innovations; in the same vein, participatory approaches and discovery and experiential learning vis-à-vis farm- and site-specific management approaches have been stressed.

The dominant Transfer-of-Technology model, despite its long history of innovations and increased effectiveness in food production, fails to respond to complex challenges and rapidly changing contexts - such as the increasingly complex and diverse modern agricultural systems as well as the shift to sustainable development implying trade-offs between environmental, social and economic sustainability. Therefore the conceptual evolution from the TOT model to network and systems approaches such as the agricultural knowledge and information systems (AKIS) and, more recently, to the agricultural innovation system (AIS) approach, embracing the totality of actors (and their interactions) involved in innovation. In this respect, 'transforming' extension, as an integral part of AKIS/AIS, involves a focus on co-designing rather than disseminating innovations implying, in turn, the building of networks, the articulation of the multiple dimensions of innovation and the ability to manage complexity, conflict and unpredictability.

Innovation studies increasingly focus on learning, with emphasis on facilitation and the processes of human interaction from which learning emerges; currently, growing attention is given to various types of (process) ‘intermediaries/ facilitators/ brokers’. However, conventional extensionists/ advisors encounter difficulties in taking over new roles. Therefore, further research addressing the improvement of the effectiveness of extension, including extension strategies and methods, extensionists’ key competencies and education/ training as well as institutional settings/ governance structures (including financing mechanisms) is needed. Similar issues pertain the case of farmers’ (especially of young farmers’) education and training since the transmissive/ ‘instructive’ model still predominates over the transformative/ ‘constructive and participative’ one and disciplinary knowledge over transdisciplinarity.

In order to address such questions and deepen our understanding of current transformations in agricultural education and extension and the ways they promote transformative learning, esp. in the context of systems change towards sustainability, we welcome a diversity of theoretical perspectives and case studies/ practice examples which will constructively contribute to debates on a number of topics such as the following.

1. Transition for sustainability and the role of agricultural extension and agricultural education
2. Pluralistic agricultural extension in a rapidly changing world: diversification, sustainability and marginality
3. New roles, capacities and methods for extension in emergent innovation and entrepreneurship models
4. Rural communication and the Big Data revolution
5. Agricultural education in a rapidly changing world: competence assessment and strengthening, transdisciplinarity and internationalisation
6. Upgrading and upskilling extension systems: transformation or new wine in old bottles?
7. Monitoring and evaluation of advisory services: old challenges and new frameworks

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC STEERING COMMITTEE ESEE 2017

- Cerf, Marianne (INRA, France)
- Coutts, Jeff (Coutts J&R; University of Southern Queensland, Australia)
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- Özçatalbas, Orhan (Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey)
- Van de Fliert, Elske (The University of Queensland, Australia)
- Wielinga, Eelke (LINK Consult, Wageningen Academy, Netherlands)

Instructions for submitting paper proposals

We invite prospective participants to submit proposals in a Word document (Times Roman 12; line spacing 1; no paragraph spacing). The paper should not exceed more than 500 words in length (excluding references).

Proposals on **empirical research** can be formatted according to the following (or comparable) headings:

- Purpose (50 words)
- Context description; problem domain; conceptual framework (50)
- Research questions and design; project approach (50 words)
- Data collection and analysis; evidence (100 words)
- Results (150 words)
- Conclusion (100 words)

Proposals for **conceptual papers** can be formatted according to the following (or comparable) headings:

- Problem domain (50 words)
- Questions, Purpose (100 words)
- Development of the argument (200 words)
- Conclusion (150 words)

Proposals for **case studies** can be formatted according to the following (or comparable) headings:

- Practical and theoretical background (50 words)
- Questions, Purpose (50 words)
- Case description (200 words)
- Analysis (50 words)
- Conclusion (150 words)

The proposal should indicate what type of presentation it is meant for:

1. Paper presentation, or
2. Poster presentation

All papers must clearly indicate the theme under which they fall.

Additionally, **round table** proposals should consist of an introductory cover proposal of maximum 250 words (including the title, the questions/purpose and the names of the participants). Participants should not exceed 4 persons. The proposal should indicate the type of presentation (i.e. round table)

For further information on the themes: www.esee2017.gr

Kindly submit your proposal by email at: esee2017@aua.gr

Important dates

Proposal submission open: October 1, 2016

Deadline of proposal submissions: December 15, 2016

Decision of acceptance/rejection: January 31, 2017

Deadline of full paper submissions: May 15, 2017

Early bird registration closes: April 1, 2017

Registration closes: June 15, 2017

Conference Venue

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (www.maich.gr)

Conference chair: Professor Alex Koutsouris

For more information visit the conference site: www.esee2017.gr (will be open on September 30, 2016)

Email: confer@maich.gr