



# SIG 19 Religions and Worldviews in Education Newsletter

Issue 2/2023

**Dear SIG 19 Members and Friends,**

The EARLI SIG 19 coordinator team has undergone some renewals, and we begin this newsletter by introducing the expectations, experiences, and aspirations of both new and continuing members of the team in relation to SIG 19 coordination.

The newsletter also brings you insights and memories from the warm atmosphere of the EARLI 2023 conference in Thessaloniki, including the minutes of the SIG 19 business meeting.

Following this, it's time to look back and receive greetings from Prof. Theo Van Der Zee in the Netherlands, one of the first SIG 19 coordinators.

Keep your calendar up to date and note down upcoming conferences and other important dates towards the end of the newsletter.

We are thinking of all our fellow researches who are living in a difficult context and are going through challenging times. Our thoughts are with you.

## COORDINATORS

**Alexander Unser**  
TU Dortmund

**Inkeri Rissanen**  
Tampere University

**Sarah Delling**  
University of Siegen  
(JURE)

## NEWSLETTER EDITORS

**Petra Juen**  
University of Innsbruck

**Sanna Väisänen**  
University of Eastern Finland

**NUMBER OF SIG19**

**MEMBERS 36**

We wish you a calm winter break and happy holidays!

Inkeri, Alexander and Sarah

*We warmly welcome the latest member of the coordinator team Inkeri Rissanen! Thanks for your engagement. We wish you a happy and generous time as SIG 19 coordinator.*

**Inkeri Rissanen, Tampere University, Finland**

***What do you expect about being a coordinator?***

EARLI SIG 19 has been an important community to me especially in the very early stages of my research career. It provided an encouraging and inspiring environment to present research and connect with colleagues who share similar interests. I gave my first international scientific presentation at the SIG 19 conference in Malta in 2010, and soon after started as a newsletter co-editor. In my role as a coordinator, I want to do my share in maintaining and developing this community.

***How would you like to develop the SIG Group?***

I hope SIG 19 can evolve as a network that attracts researchers who are diverse in terms of their scientific disciplines, methodological approaches, as well as cultural and worldview backgrounds.



*SIG coordinator*

**Alexander Unser, TU Dortmund University, Germany**



*SIG coordinator*

***What did you like about being a SIG coordinator during the past two years and why are you continuing?***

I really loved working together with colleagues from different countries and contexts on what interests me the most: How can we develop religious and worldviews education further within the next decade? I also liked the collaboration with Sarah and Martin in the coordinators' team which was amazing. My regular period ends in 2025, so there was not a real option (and need) to drop out at this point.

***How would you like to develop the SIG Group?***

I would like to include more people from countries that are not very well represented in our SIG at the moment. There are so many interesting places in Eastern Europe, the Baltic states, Norway etc. where we need to be more present in the future.



*JURE coordinator*

***What did you like about being a SIG coordinator during the last period and why you proposed to continue for another period?***

One highlight of my time as JURE coordinator was certainly organizing the JURE SIG 19 meeting together with Frederike Gabelt at TU Dortmund University in 2022. I enjoyed creating a platform where JURE researchers could engage in an honest exchange of experiences and expand their international networks. Such a meeting was also possible because the SIG 19 coordinators Alexander Unser and Martin Ubani had the interests of JURE researchers in mind and supported them and I appreciated being part of this productive and welcoming team of coordinators.

I proposed to continue for another period as JURE coordinator, as I would like to gain further experience in the international research field myself and it is important to me to initiate further collaborations, such as those that have already grown out of the JURE meeting in Dortmund.

***How would you like to develop the SIG Group?***

I wouldn't call it a JURE SIG 19 Group, but rather a loose network. One development perspective could be to continue to grow and strengthen this network. In addition, I think it would be great to focus more on the research topics of JURE researchers, alongside opportunities to exchange ideas about challenges in the everyday life of junior researchers. JURE Conference 2024 in Sevilla would certainly be a great platform for this. But perhaps there will also be other professional exchange formats in the context of the next SIG 19 conferences or even before.

*(Texts and Pictures were provided by the coordinators.)*

### Insights into the JURE 2023 Pre-Conference in Thessaloniki

Guided by the theme "*Education as a Hope in Uncertain Times*", the 27th JURE 2023 Pre-Conference of this year's EARLI Biennial Conference took place on August 20 and 21 at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki (Greece). In addition to a variety of exciting presentations on general educational questions and topics, the conference also provided some didactic insights into current research projects in the field of RE. The conference dinner on the Aegean Sea furthermore offered junior researchers the opportunity for interdisciplinary exchange in a relaxed and varied culinary atmosphere. After the pre-conference, the JURE members of SIG 19 continued with the main conference of EARLI 2023, where the lively scientific exchange was further deepened.



(Text and Pictures were provided by Janine Kuroпка & Frederike Gabelt;  
Junior Researchers at TU Dortmund University)

### *The 20<sup>th</sup> Biennial EARLI Conference*

**Date:** 22-26 August 2023

**Host:** Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (ATh), University of Macedonia, Greece

**Venue:** Thessaloniki

The 20th Biennial EARLI Conference was hosted by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of Macedonia, Greece. There were about 2700 participants not only from European countries but also from Asia, Africa and America. Altogether, there were many researchers who presented their results and ideas on state-of-the-art research in learning and instruction, specifically around the topic "Education as a Hope in Uncertain Times".



SIG 19 organized an invited Symposium with the title "Religions and worldviews in education providing hope of social sustainability". Martin Ubani from University of Eastern Finland was the chair and Vassiliki Mitropoulou from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece was the discussant. The Symposium was a full success. Furthermore, members of SIG 19 were successful in other panels and sessions as presenters or chairs.



## Presentations:

- Theologies, Religion and Literacy: Towards Socially Sustainable Religious Education?  
*Martin Ubani (University of Eastern Finland, Finland).*



- A digital response-tool to grasp students' personal orientations underlying everyday sustainability conflicts  
*Stefan Altmeyer (Faculty of Catholic Theology, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany)*



- Diversity as an Element of Social Cohesion – the Findings of an Empirical Research Based on the Analysis of Church School Students’ Narratives  
*Kodácsy-Simon, Eszter & Seres-Busi, Etelka (Lutheran Theological University, Hungary)*

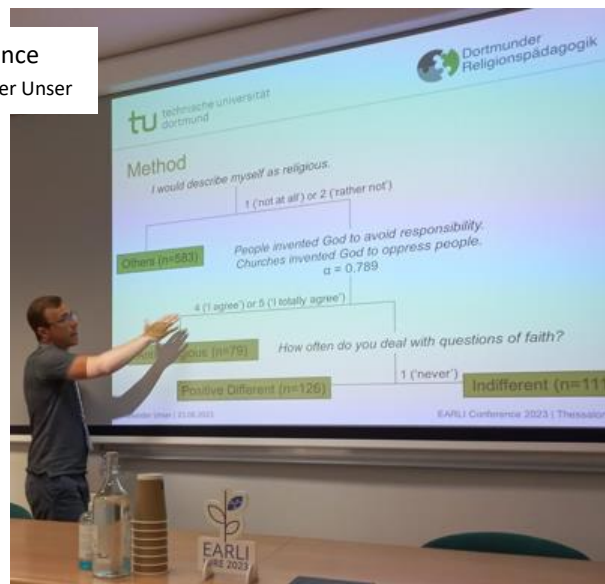


- Existential Resilience and Well-being, Hope and Meaning: Cultivating Existential Sustainability in Worldview Education  
*Arniika Kuusisto (University of Helsinki, Finland & University of Oxford, United Kingdom)*



## Further impressions about the conference

Presentations of SIG 19 members at the conference  
From left to right: Samaneh Khalili, Anuleena Kimanen, Alexander Unser



Dinner after Business Meeting



(Pictures were provided by Alexander Unser and Martin Ubani)

## Minutes Business Meeting – EARLI SIG 19

23<sup>th</sup> August 2023

**Chair:** Martin Ubani & Alexander Unser

**Secretary of the meeting:** Alexander Unser

### 1. Opening and welcome

Martin Ubani & Alexander Unser open the business meeting and welcome all participants. They present the agenda of the meeting and ask if any additional issues are desired. No additional issues are brought forward by the participants.

Alexander Unser agrees to act as secretary of the meeting.

### 2. Greetings from the EARLI Policy Council

Martin Ubani conveys the greetings of the Policy Council. He reports on current developments such as the publication of a code of conduct and a new regulation of membership fees.

### 3. Acknowledgements of SIG 19 activities

Martin Ubani and Alexander Unser report on the SIG 19 activities of the past two years. They refer to new publications in our Waxmann book series 'Research on Religious and Spiritual Education', special issues as outputs of former SIG 19 conferences, and the SIG 19 newsletter. They express their deep gratitude to Petra Juen and Sanna Väisänen who act as newsletter editors of our SIG.

Petra Juen gives an overview of the newsletter and invites SIG 19 members to contribute via interviews, announcements of events or published research.

### 4. Special issue as an output of the Dortmund conference in 2022

Alexander Unser reports that a special issue with presentations held at the Dortmund conference will be published in the Journal of Empirical Theology in late 2023. Eleven papers were submitted, four are already accepted. Currently, the final round of reviews takes place.

## **5. Next SIG 19 conference**

*Note: Further information coming soon.*

## **6. Election of co-coordinator and JURE coordinator**

Alexander Unser, on behalf of all present, thanks Martin Ubani who has served as EARLI SIG 19 Co-Coordinator for the past four years.

He informed that one application had been received for each of the positions of Co-Coordinator and JURE Assistant Coordinator. Inkeri Rissanen (University of Tampere, Finland) is running as SIG 19 Co-Coordinator (2023-2027) and Sarah Delling (University of Siegen, Germany) as JURE Assistant Coordinator (2023-2025). Both were elected unanimously.

## **6. Discussion about possibilities to develop our EARLI SIG19-community**

Currently, SIG 19 has 36 members. The coordinators plan to further increase the number of members and presented plans to have conferences in countries with a strong community in our field of research which is – at the moment – not sufficiently connected to EARLI. Further ideas were discussed.

## **7. Other issues**

No other issues.

## **8. Closing**

Alexander Unser closes the business meeting and thanks all those present for their commitment to SIG 19.



EARLI's Special Interest Group, SIG 19 - Religious and Spiritual Education (nowadays Religions and Worldviews in Education) was established during the 10th Biennial EARLI Conference in Padova, Italy in 2003. This year the SIG 19 is celebrating its **20th anniversary**. On the occasion of this anniversary, we are doing a mini-series on behalf of founders, coordinators and leader figures of SIG 19 who will tell us about their experiences.



### Professor Theo van der Zee

Professor Theo van der Zee was a coordinator of Earli SIG 19 from 2007 to 2013. At the moment, he is a full Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, Netherlands. His research interests include empirical and practical religious studies, good education, identity, practical wisdom and practice-oriented academic research.



First of all, it's really a pleasure to answer your questions on the history and future of our highly appreciated special interest group on religious and spiritual education. I greatly appreciate your initiative to conduct interviews with some of the former coordinators of the group. I had to think all over again what had happened in the first years of our existence, but I've found some happy memories that I really like to share with you.

***Could you tell us something about the context and the 'hot' topics which were discussed during your coordinator period?***

SIG 19 was still in its infancy when I attended a session of the group at the biennial EARLI conference in Nikosia (Cyprus) in 2005. I encountered a small but very enthusiastic group of researchers in a field with which I felt very connected. I was pleasantly surprised that in the context of educational research people were very committed to religious and spiritual education. I think that Kirsi Tirri, among others, did a really great job to establish the group. It was at the EARLI conference in Budapest in 2007 that I was asked whether I would be one of the two coordinators of the SIG. I felt very much honored and said: "yes!"

I joined not only a group of people who were very much willing to talk about their research, but were also much into exchanging experiences gained in finding respondents, co-workers, and... money to do research. But most of all it was a group of people who enthusiastically joined in for a beer, a glass of wine or something else. Meetings of the group were really festive gatherings.

***How was it to be a Coordinator in the early stages of SIG 19? What were your goals for SIG 19 during your coordinator period?***

In the early years we wanted to speed up the SIG. We had two main goals to strive for. First, we wanted to encourage the mutual connection between researchers in the field of religious and spiritual education. Second, we wanted to enhance the quality of research, presentations and publications in our field. These two goals were closely related: by enhancing opportunities for exchange, we could boost the quality of research, and by enhancing the quality, we could attract more colleagues in our SIG for exchange. The expectation was that by bringing people together not only in the biennial EARLI conference but also in biennial SIG conferences we could make the group stronger, more cohesive and strengthen the profile of our field.

I think that we succeeded to uplift the mutual connection of researchers and the profile of our field. We organized SIG 19 conferences in Canterbury (2008), Malta (2010) and Nijmegen (2012) and published a special issue on religious and spiritual education in Journal of Empirical Theology (2009), started a new book series Research on Religious and Spiritual Education (the 15th volume has been published recently!) and a book in New Perspectives on Religious and Spiritual Education (2012). The activities were not only successful in an academic sense, but also in a social sense. They were really assemblies to look forward to, at least I did.

***What was your vision for the SIG 19? Were there major chances or challenges for SIG 19 in your perspective?***

I have been away for a while because I had other obligations in the educational field. I therefore don't have an accurate view on the current situation of SIG and should therefore be modest in speaking about the future.

I would wish the SIG to continuously strive for highly esteemed research and publications in the field of religious and spiritual education. That's nothing new under the sun, I know. I also hope for a good balance of quantitative and qualitative research in our field and interdisciplinary work. Usual stuff, isn't it? But above all, I hope for activities to strengthen the mutual connections between researchers. They represent oases of joy and pleasure in the desert of what working in our field sometimes can be (i.e., boring, tuff and hard work).

To conclude, an invitation and a wish.

I would like to invite you to consider publication in our book series Research on Religious and Spiritual Education ([https://www.waxmann.com/en/waxmann-reihen/waxmannreihe-erziehung/?tx\\_p2waxmann\\_pi2%5Breihe%5D=REI100250&tx\\_p2waxmann\\_pi2%5Baction%5D=show&tx\\_p2waxmann\\_pi2%5Bcontroller%5D=Reihe&cHash=12d752511ffd28d9f44139d18e8cdb64](https://www.waxmann.com/en/waxmann-reihen/waxmannreihe-erziehung/?tx_p2waxmann_pi2%5Breihe%5D=REI100250&tx_p2waxmann_pi2%5Baction%5D=show&tx_p2waxmann_pi2%5Bcontroller%5D=Reihe&cHash=12d752511ffd28d9f44139d18e8cdb64))

Please contact Kirsi Tirri, Ulrich Riegel or me on this.

I wish you much joy and fulfilment in your work and all the best!

Prof Dr Theo van der Zee  
Professor of Education, Ethics and Religion  
at Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands  
E: [theo.vanderzee@ru.nl](mailto:theo.vanderzee@ru.nl).

*(Drawn pictures were taken from pixabay.com  
Picture of Theo van der Zee and text were provided by him)*

ISPED – Islamic Education and Pedagogies in Europe



# ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGIES IN EUROPE

THE CURRENT STATE OF  
AFFAIRS

## ISPED Kick-off Webinar

13 December 2023

### Program

**14:30-14:45**  
Welcome word and introduction of  
ISPED by Dr. Semiha Bekir

**14:45-15:05**  
Keynote talk by Prof. Jenny  
Berglund on Islamic Education in  
Europe

15:05-15:30 Discussion and Q&A

**15:45-16:05**  
Dr. Yonah Matemba on “Multi-faith  
Religious Education: A Teachers’  
Conundrum”

16:05-16:30 Discussion and Q&A

**16:30-16:50**  
Naïma Lafrarchi on “Common  
Ground of Islamic Education and  
Muslim Parenting: Schools as a  
Bridge and Playground to Reach  
Common Islamic Educational Goals

16:50-17:15 Discussion and Q&A

Registration for the free webinar  
and more information:  
**+31626519959**  
**s.y.bekir@uu.nl**  
**<https://ispedresearch.net>**

### Our speakers



**DR. SEMIHA BEKIR**  
Founder of ISPED  
Utrecht University, The Netherlands



**PROF. DR. JENNY BERGLUND**  
Professor of Religious Education,  
Stockholm University, Sweden



**DR. YONAH MATEMBA**  
Senior Lecturer in the School of  
Education and Social Sciences,  
University of West Scotland



**NAÏMA LAFRARCHI**  
PhD Researcher with IRE  
expertise. Author of 'Does religion  
matters? Understanding Islamic  
pedagogy and education' (book)  
University of Ghent, Belgium

## About ISPED

ISPED is an international research network of experts in the field of Islamic pedagogies and Islamic religious education in Muslim-minority contexts including but not limited to Europe and USA. ISPED aims to contribute to the mapping of this emerging scholarly field by bringing together academics, youth professionals and educators working with Muslim youth and families.



Utrecht University

### ***Upcoming Conferences:***

- JURE (Earli): **24 – 28 June 2024** - *Education and the Need for Dynamic Solutions: Shaping the Future of the Field* – University of Sevilla, Spain – ***Submissions are open now!***
- EARLI 2025: **25 – 29 August 2025** – *Realising Potentials through Education: Shaping the Minds and Brains for the Future* – University of Graz, Austria
- JURE 2025: pre-conference to EARLI 2025: **23 – 24 August 2025** – *Realising Potentials through Education: Shaping the Minds and Brains for the Future* – University of Graz, Austria

Further information of the conference will follow.

We look forward to your participation.

***JURE 2024 Conference***

Date: 24 - 28 June 2024

Host: University of Sevilla, Spain

***“Education and the Need for Dynamic Solutions:  
Shaping the Future of the Field.”***

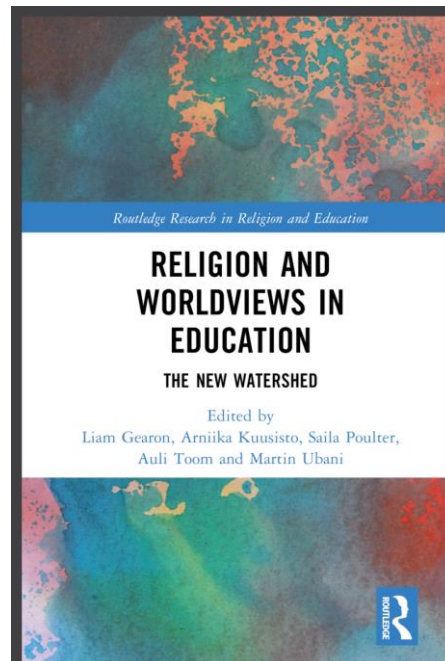
## IMPORTANT DATES

Please consider the following important dates in preparing for the JURE 2024 conference:



Further Information: <https://www.earli.org/events/jure2024>

**JURE Researchers from all over the world are very welcome  
to join the discussion!**



Religion and Worldviews in Education. The new watershed. (Gearon, Kuusisto, Poulter, Toom & Ubani Eds.) Routledge 2023.

The topic 'Religion and Worldviews in Education: The New Watershed' finds its context in the complexities, fluidities and uncertainties of 21<sup>st</sup> century we are currently witnessing and living. This volume wishes to commemorate the life of 60 years and career of Professor Arto Kallioniemi who is the UNESCO Chair of Values, Dialogue and Human Rights. Professor Kallioniemi has also been active in our SIG, especially in the earlier years. In the present volume esteemed scholars show their respect to professor Kallioniemi's work and scope by committing their scholarship to discuss themes that have been in the heart of Professor Kallioniemi's work throughout his career. The publication consists of new research chapters and includes contributions also from our sig community, in addition to the editors from for example Kirsi Tirri, Elina Kuusisto, Inkeri Rissanen and Kaisa Viinikka.

**20% Discount** for your purchase through: [www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com)

Discount Code:  
**EFL03**

**Further Information:** [Religion and Worldviews in Education: The New Watershed - 1st Edition \(routledge.com\)](http://www.routledge.com)

## A REMINDER TO SUBSCRIBE YOUR EARLI & SIG 19 MEMBERSHIP

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*Dear friends of SIG 19,*

As you know, we are one of the smaller SIGs within EARLI and need every year a minimum of 30 members to continue our work. The Religions and Worldviews in Education SIG brings together researchers from various backgrounds, such as theology, religious studies, psychology, pedagogy, educational studies and philosophy. The SIG 19 is advocating empirical and theoretical research that includes cognitive, social and emotional components.

If you have not subscribed yet, please consider [renewing your membership](#) in our SIG for 2024.

**Become a member now!**

## NEW MEMBERS IN EARLI SIG 19

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1. Dr. Elina Wright | Bishop Grosseteste University | England
2. Jennifer Jakob, PhD | University College of Teacher Education Vienna/Krems | Austria

*We are very happy to be able to welcome new members to SIG 19!*

We hope our new members will enjoy being a part of Earli SIG 19.

For any questions, please contact the SIG 19 coordinators or Newsletter editors who will be happy to help you.

We want to encourage a wide participation in SIG 19 and in the Newsletter. If you intend to contribute to the Newsletter, please take into account the following issues. You can make suggestions concerning to content of the SIG 19 and the Newsletter. However, the editors retain the rights to alter and modify the contributions.

**Interviews:**

In each Newsletter we will focus on one or two researchers connected to the SIG 19. One of the covered researchers is preferably a junior researcher. Please do not hesitate to make suggestions concerning the interviewees.

**Reviews:**

In this section the SIG members can review different things, such as, books, articles and conferences, etc. Please do not hesitate to contribute and to present also your own works. A review should not exceed 250 words.

**Special feature:**

This section we feature some interesting and inspirational aspect concerning the SIG 19 areas of interest. The author is invited by the editors with regards to the suggestions by the members. The contributions should not exceed 500 words.

**Announcements:**

If you feel that there is something relevant happening in the interest areas of SIG 19, please use this section. Such things are up-coming conferences and projects. This section can also include propositions for shared projects. The announcements should be 100 words at maximum.

**New members:**

We wish new members warmly welcome to our SIG 19! We will list the new members in this section after we have been informed by them.

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*Religionsunterricht in Deutschland: Ein Kaleidoskop empirischer Forschung* (pp. 107–125). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-39143-0\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-39143-0_6)

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