

PREFACE

Beyond the Pandemics and the Wars: SLERD Reload

This special issue N.52 of IxD&A journal announces “Beyond the Pandemics & Wars: SLERD Reload” in the context of an endemic COVID-19 situation and with two European countries at war and many other countries indirectly involved.

Once again, an unpredictable moment with no ending announced with peace desire on the horizon and human rights at stake. All is appropriate to highlight the “SLERD Reload” as a theme - this Smart Learning Ecosystems and Regional Developments Reload, besides being an Engine of “new normality”, it must urgently build on a “sustainable peace agenda” for all countries and people’s well-being and happiness.

This special issue invited researchers and practitioners involved in the development of Smart Learning Ecosystems and Smart Education from all over the world. These engines of social innovation and territorial development submitted their work and lessons learned on how it is possible re-configure this new normality. The selected scientific papers integrate the learning ecosystems’ smartness as a process that needs long-term visions, multidisciplinary competencies, attitude to understand people and contexts as well as to mediate points of view, dynamic resilience to keep on track and achieve, step-by-step the foreseen goals. In a nutshell, a design literacy from which projects and processes emerge capable of reifying them, all aimed at achieving people-centered smart education, social innovation, and territorial development.

The first three papers report work during or after the COVID-19 pandemic, with lessons learned in place and tested in real-time educational contexts. Two additional papers in learning ecosystems propose a real-time emotional recognition technology for secondary school students and another a hybrid model for design-based Learning, contributions that align with this special issue’s “SLERD Reload” theme. The last two papers are transdisciplinary in the SLERD context, with a proposal of an ontology for psychomotor strength development, and a collaborative learning infrastructure to build capacity for urban transformations. We do believe as editors that this constitutes a set of knowledge that can be pertinent for academia, students, teachers, and policy-makers, as well as an enjoyable reading and learning experience.

We would like to thank the authors for their resilience and time spent preparing the submitted papers for this issue of the IxD&A journal. A special acknowledgment to all reviewers for their help and enlightenment on the complexity and details to foster more excellence in the above-mentioned and reported work. In times of trouble and uncertainty, thank you all involved in this issue, for your precious help, at all levels of the publishing process.

Mihai Dascalu¹, Tania Di Mascio², Oscar Mealha³

¹University Politehnica of Bucharest, Romania

²Università de L’Aquila, Italy

³University of Aveiro, Portugal