

**Advancing Knowledge and Driving Change:
What Epistemologies and Methodologies for Engaged
Research in the SE Field
in Times of Multidimensional Crises**

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

29th June – 2nd July 2026

Louvain-la-Neuve, UCLouvain & ULiège, Belgium

Co-organised by



Sponsored by



RATIONALE

In recent decades, the rise of the SE field¹ has brought to the forefront new ways of organising economic activities around values of cooperation, democracy, sustainability, and inclusion. These initiatives—whether cooperatives, community enterprises, social start-ups, or hybrid organisations—seek not only to address unmet social needs but also to reimagine the very purpose and functioning of the economy.

For researchers, this growing field represents a fertile terrain for exploring alternative forms of value creation and governance, as well as the tensions and complementarities between social mission and economic viability. Yet it also calls for renewed reflection on the role of research(ers) in social change and on the nature of the relationship between researchers and field actors in that regard.

When studying organisations and movements that aim to transform society, scholars often find themselves navigating complex boundaries between observation, intervention, and engagement. Many researchers are directly involved with the actors and communities they study—as volunteers, activists, or co-creators of knowledge. Is this position a source of insight or does it inevitably lead to biased research? This question raises important issues about power dynamics, positionality, legitimacy, knowledge holders and the ethics of co-production. How can one contribute to collective empowerment while maintaining analytical clarity and critical distance? How can researchers ensure that their engagement strengthens rather than instrumentalises the communities with which they work?

Engaged, participatory, and activist forms of research are increasingly recognised as meaningful approaches to studying social innovation and solidarity-based economies. Action research, participatory ethnography, and collaborative inquiry, among others, have demonstrated their potential to generate socially relevant knowledge and to support transformative practices. However, such approaches also challenge conventional academic norms regarding objectivity, neutrality, and evaluation. They invite us to reconsider what counts as valid knowledge, who is entitled to produce it, and for whom research is ultimately conducted. In doing so, engaged research highlights the political dimensions of knowledge production and the responsibility of scholars to reflect on the impact of their work beyond academia. From this perspective, this training school will explore various epistemological and methodological approaches that could support and

¹ The “SE field” refers to the wide domain of social enterprise, social economy, solidarity economy, social entrepreneurship and social innovation.

strengthen engaged research. We will, among other things, look at the following questions: How do North–South relations affect research, and what forms of decolonial research are possible? How can intersectionality be taken into account in research, and what place is there for feminist research? How can we go beyond research extractivism? Ultimately, it is epistemic justice that seems to be at stake.

The 10th EMES International Training School takes these tensions and opportunities as its starting point. It aims to provide a space for collective exploration and critical discussion about what it means to “engage” as a researcher in the SE field. By bringing together doctoral candidates and early-career researchers (ECR) from different disciplinary and geographical contexts, the 10th EMES International Training School seeks to foster dialogue about methodological innovation, ethical reflexivity, and the multiple ways in which research can contribute—directly or indirectly—to social transformation.

EMES TRAINING SCHOOLS

The 10th EMES International Training School (#10EMESrainingschool) aims to investigate and discuss epistemologies and methodologies for engaged research in the SE Field, which is especially important in a multiple crises context. There have been nine successful editions of the EMES Training Schools so far held at the University of Corsica (France) in 2008; Roskilde University (Denmark) in 2010, the University of Trento (Italy) in 2012; West University of Timișoara (Romania) in 2014; Glasgow Caledonian University in Glasgow (UK) in 2016; Aix-Marseille University in Marseille (France) in 2018; in a blended learning format led by University College Cork (Ireland) online in 2020 and face-to-face in Teruel in 2021; Seville (Spain) in 2022; and Trento (Italy) in 2024. The tenth edition will be held at the Louvain-la-Neuve by UCLouvain and ULiège (Belgium) in June-July 2026.

Some 350 PhD candidates and early career researchers (ERC) from over 45 countries have so far participated in these unique learning events. PhDs and ERC constitute a central part of EMES as shown by the special membership category for PhD students, the seat reserved for PhD students in the EMES Board of Directors, and various dedicated concrete activities.

PhD candidates and ERC coming from different disciplinary backgrounds (such as sociology, management, economics, political sciences, and so on) whose research projects are connected to this field are welcome to apply for this training school. Individual research projects can target different forms of collective action, including social movements, informal grassroots initiatives, and SSE organisations, as well as the context wherein collective initiatives and organisations are embedded (social, political, economic or cultural backgrounds).

EMES, CIRTES at UCLouvain and CES at HEC Liège-ULiège jointly organise the 10th EMES Training School aimed at researchers at early career levels, PhDs or completing Masters programs who are attracted to conduct research in the wide fields of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, social economy and solidarity economy (the SE field). With this training school, EMES, CIRTES at UCLouvain and CES at HEC Liège-ULiège aim to:

- Strengthen the training of PhD students by means of methodological and theoretical lectures, debates, and professional workshops;
- Emphasise the research design, methodology and epistemological grounds involved in any research project, specifically in a doctoral and early-career path;
- For PhD students, provide personalised feedback and support via well-supported small group discussion sessions on participants' research projects, their research questions, approaches and theoretical understandings; more precisely, in addition to various opportunities of informal discussion, at least a full hour will be devoted to every PhD student's research project within group sessions (for presentation by the student, feed-back by professors and their peers, discussion and synthesis of recommendations);
- For ECR, provide a trust-based environment to share future career plans and professional development. Sessions for ECRs will be self-organised with the support of the EMES PhD and ECR networks as a way to cater to their specific needs.
- Provide space for social and intellectual discussion so that doctoral students and ECR will have ample opportunity to establish and expand their own peer networks and benefit from contacts and feedback from established scholars;
- Encourage the engagement of a broad and diverse range of participants, including key actors (e.g., academics, policy makers, practitioners) at the local, national and

EU levels. Exchanges with researchers from different countries, continents, cultures and academic disciplines will support stimulating reflections on research approaches, while discussions with practitioners in the field will expose participants to a first-hand experience that expands their capacity to address real life problems in a context of increased complexity.

FACULTY BODY

The 10th EMES International Training School will include well-known professors from recognised research centres covering a wide spectrum of research themes, and this multi-disciplinary approach will represent a major strength for the participants.

1. **Flor Avelino**, Utrecht University, The Netherlands
2. **Ela Callorda Fossati**, CIRTES, UCLouvain, Belgium
3. **Florence Degavre**, CIRTES, UCLouvain, Belgium
4. **Caroline Demeyere**, CIRTES, UCLouvain, Belgium
5. **Frédéric Dufays**, HEC-University of Liege, Belgium
6. **Philippe Eiselein**, Odisee University of Applied Sciences, Belgium
7. **Giulia Galera**, EURICSE, Italy
8. **Coralie Helleputte**, CIRTES-LIDAM UCLouvain, Belgium
9. **Benjamin Huybrechts**, IESEG, France
10. **Sílvia Ferreira**, CES, University of Coimbra, Portugal
11. **Harri Kostilainen**, Diaconia University, Finland
12. **Andreia Lemaitre**, CIRTES, UCLouvain, Belgium
13. **Luciane Lucas dos Santos**, CES, University of Coimbra, Portugal
14. **Linda Lundgaard Andersen**, Roskilde University, Denmark
15. **Sybille Mertens**, HEC-University of Liege, Belgium
16. **Marina Novikova**, IOER, Germany
17. **Marthe Nyssens**, CIRTES-IRES-LIDAM, UCLouvain, Belgium
18. **Sergio Páramo Ortiz**, Maastricht University, the Netherlands
19. **Anaïs Périlleux**, CIRTES-IRES-LIDAM, UCLouvain, Belgium
20. **Francesca Petrella**, LEST - Aix-Marseille University, France
21. **María José Ruiz Rivera**, CIRTES, UCLouvain, Belgium
22. **Hilde Svrljuga Sætre**, USN, Norway
23. **Fernanda Wanderley**, Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo, Bolivia

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

CIRTES at UCLouvain: Anaïs Périlleux, Marthe Nyssens, Florence Degavre, Andreia Lemaître, Ela Callorda Fossati, Caroline Demeyere, Coralie Helleputte.

CES at HEC-ULg: Frédéric Dufays and Sybille Mertens.

EMES Network: Tamara Bilbija and Rocío Nogales-Muriel.

APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION

The 10th EMES Training School offers four registration options, depending on whether the participant is a member of EMES and whether s/he is coming from non-OECD countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America:

Registration fees	EMES Members *	Non-EMES members
Full registration	400€ <input type="checkbox"/>	500€ <input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced registration **	100€ <input type="checkbox"/>	200€ <input type="checkbox"/>

* Participants registering under this fee will need to provide proof of membership (username). If you are not an EMES member and would like to join, you can do so directly on-line [here](#) (please select the “Graduate membership” fee).

** **Reduced registration** is available for applicants coming from universities located in non-OECD countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and for applicants facing funding issues.

The registration fees need to be paid upon communication of the acceptance of the applications to applicants. The registration fee covers registration costs, accommodation and food for registered participants for the duration of the Training School. **Travel costs are not included** in the registration although we are working to secure some grant support available for participants requiring travel and registration aid. You will have to indicate your interest in applying for a scholarship when submitting your application.

Applications to participate in the Training School are accepted until **20th February 2026**. In order to apply, please download and complete the **Application Form** available on [the EMES website](#). The result of the selection process will be communicated to applicants by **20th March 2026 at the latest**.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

Early Career Researcher, 9th EMES Training School

"I am very grateful to have participated in 9th EMES training school. Although I have known the EMES network for years, distance from Europe, the pandemic, and economic challenges in my country had prevented me from attending. Thanks to your support, I was able to participate, share my research, receive valuable feedback, and learn from an inspiring group of ECRs. I truly treasure this opportunity and hope to keep contributing to social enterprise research in Latin America."

PhD student, 9th EMES Training School

"I did not know anyone before and I am very happy to have met so many amazing PhDs, ECRs and faculty members. This training school was crucial for my academic career because I had been really isolated before."

PhD student, 9th EMES Training School

"Great training school! Thank you so much! Congratulations to the PhD and ECR communities as well - that these are such active networks demonstrates just how successful these summer schools are, and the value and importance of networks that bridge geographic and learning divides and bring people together."

CHECK OUT SOME VIDEOS FROM PREVIOUS EDITIONS TOO!



Rana Sukarieh and Anja Umantseva at the 9th EMES Training School, reflecting on its importance for Early Career Researchers. Watch the video [HERE](#).



Marina Novikova and the PhD Committee interview Marthe Nyssens and Rocío Nogales Muriel during the EMES Network's 20th anniversary (2022), reflecting on the role of EMES for PhDs and the future of social enterprise research. Watch the video [HERE](#).

IMPORTANT DATES

~~Launch of the call for applications: 18th December 2025~~

~~Application submission deadline: 20th February 2026~~

Results of the selection process: **20th March 2026**

Opening of registration platform: **25th March 2026**

Registration deadline: **29th May 2026**

Arrival of participants: **29th June 2026**

VENUE AND ACCOMMODATION

All the academic activities of the 10th International Training School will take place at the **UCLouvain** (Catholic University of Louvain) (<https://www.uclouvain.be>), Montesquieu Square, 3 at Louvain-la-Neuve (1348, Belgium).

Participants will be staying at the Gîte Mosaïk (<https://www.gite-mozaik.be>), Rue de la Gare 2, 1348 Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve.

More information on how to reach the Training School venue will soon be published.

Visit www.emes.net for additional information.

Subscribe [here](#) to the EMES news alert to be kept abreast of updates.

Start sharing your news about the event using the hashtag **#10EMESTrainingschool!**

For more information, please contact us at 10EMESTraining@emes.net