

## Note from the chair

# EASA: A new era has begun!!!



Dear EASA members

Our organisation has entered a new era: for the first time in EASA's existence there will not be an EASA conference in January. However, we are looking forward to a joint conference with other

educational research organisations in January 2013 (See the SAERA report in this newsletter). The theme of the conference will be something that is of generic interest to all researchers in South Africa, and the conference programme will include the opportunity for us to hold our AGM as well as a function to honour our research medal winners.

We continue to be active members of WERA (See the WERA report in this newsletter), and to benefit as members from opportunities to network, using WERA-facilitated symposia and other channels. Prof Liesel Ebersöhn, who is our WERA representative, accepted a request from the WERA President to co-chair a WERA-task force on 'Poverty and Opportunities to Learn'. Well done, Liesel!!!

The association's journal, SAJE, goes from strength to strength (See the SAJE report in this newsletter). The Journal was formally launched at the University of Pretoria with Prof Liesel Ebersöhn as editor and Prof Linda Theron as associate editor. Indeed a new era for SAJE has begun.

In line with the new era that we embarked on, a new EASA logo and identity is envisaged by the EXCO.

Perhaps it is time for us as an organisation to talk and deliberate on our individual roles in this new era. To embark on this new journey we each need to ask ourselves what role we can play as individuals to contribute to EASA as an organisation.

I challenge us all to reflect, critically, on our own role in building EASA as THE education organisation in South Africa.

I urge you all to meet me at the SAERA conference in January 2013 to envision our path forward.

*Eldrie Gouws - EASA Chair: 2012*

## Tribute to Philip van der Westhuizen

Prof Philip van der Westhuizen was honoured recently at a luncheon hosted by the EASA executive committee for his invaluable contribution as editor of the South African Journal of Education (SAJE). EASA Chairperson, Prof Eldrie Gouws, presented Philip with a commemorative plaque, inscribed with the words "In recognition of unparalleled scholarly service to EASA. SAJE editor." Under Philip's leadership spanning the ten years from 2002 until 2012, the journal went from strength to strength. In 2006 it was listed on the IBSS and in 2008 included in the prestigious Thompsons Reuters Social Science Citations index. It is now ranked 95th out of

177 educational journals on the ISI index, having risen from 142nd place in 2002. In 2010 its impact factor was .635 and it is expected to be even higher when it is calculated again this year. We once again thank Philip for his service to the journal and wish him well in his next ventures.



Back (L,R): Prof Phillip van der Westhuizen and Prof Eldrie Gouws  
Front (L,R): Prof Lesley Wood and Dr Esmarie Strydom



## 2012 EASA Conference success!

The EASA/OVSA Conference, hosted by the NMMU Faculty of Education, was held at the Mpekweni Beach Resort from the 17-20 January 2012. Attended by approximately 120 delegates from across the higher education institutions in South Africa ensured a wide range of interesting and inspiring papers being presented on the conference theme 'Criticality, creativity and connections: In Pursuit of Educational innovations'.

The conference commenced with a welcome cocktail function and book launch, affording the delegates an opportunity to socialise in a relaxing and welcoming environment. The function was presided over by the convenor of the conference, Prof Naydene de Lange, and NMMU colleagues professors Lesley Wood and Alette Delpoit.

A wide range of papers covering a selection of topical and relevant issues pertaining to the conference theme were presented over the following two days, with programme curriculum review meetings taking place after the presentations.

The three keynote speakers were each a highlight; being exceptionally well received by all present. Prof Catherine Odora Hoppers presented an extremely insightful paper entitled *The Scholar, the Citizen and Critic: Towards Ethical Reasoning*, whilst Professor Piet Naude (NMMU DVC: Academic) presented a paper entitled *Criticality, creativity and re-connections: In Pursuit of Educational Excellence* and Dr Salim Vally presented his paper entitled *Critical Pedagogies in South Africa: Lessons from the past, intervening in the present and preparing for the future*. The papers enabled the delegates to ponder over key issues and concerns affecting education at this juncture in our country's history.



From left: Dr Carien Lubbe-De Beer (Emerging Researcher), Prof Naydene de Lange (Medal of Honour) and Prof Raj Mestry (Research Medal).

At the EASA award ceremony Dr Lynn Webb (NMMU) mesmerised the audience with her riveting presentation on the use of creative approaches to address the language impasse in South Africa. Recipients of EASA awards included Dr Carien Lubber De Beer (University of Pretoria) for emerging researcher, Professor Raj Mestry (University of

Johannesburg) for the research medal award and Professor Naydene de Lange (NMMU) for the medal of honour.

Prof Lesley Wood was voted as the new incoming EASA Chair for 2012!

All delegates congratulated Prof Naydene de Lange and her team from the NMMU for an exceptionally well-co-ordinated and well managed conference which provided much food for thought. "We did such a good job that I think whoever follows after us will have a tough time matching our standard!" remarked NMMU's Dr Sindi Mbokodi.



## Update on SAERA

Eldrie Gouws & Aslam Fataar

Discussions about the formation of a national education research association (SAERA) have been proceeding very productively during the first half of 2012. Representatives from various Education Associations have been meeting (mostly via video conferencing) and a steering committee, under the chairpersonship of Prof Eldrie Gouws has been established. The steering committee hosted a successful workshop with a number of organisations on 22 February 2012 at Unisa. The main outcomes were as follows:

Organisations represented at the workshop committed to continuing discussions on the formation of SAERA. The following advantages of a collaborative structure were mentioned:

- Improved rigour, increased capacity-building, sense of bigger picture, possibility for large-scale inter-disciplinary research, building on the expertise of different member associations, collaborative research in which member associations' expertise is acknowledged, opportunity to get academics and management/systems people together.
- Different models of collaboration were proposed, with the 'federalist' model being favoured at this stage.

- A joint conference will be held in Gauteng in January 2013 with all those research organisations who wish to participate in such a conference.
- The theme of the conference will be something that is of generic interest to all researchers in South Africa.
- The conference programme will include space for individual organisations to hold their own session/AGM to deal with their particular organisational and strategic issues.
- The conference programme will also include space for further deliberations and proposals on the best organisational model for SAERA.

In the light of the above, there will be no EASA in 2013. However, we will have an AGM and a function to present our awards at the SAERA conference. The first announcement and call for papers will reach you before the 20th of June. Please attend the SAERA conference in January 2013.

*Eldrie Gouws*  
Chairperson: SAERA steering committee

**-SAERA CONFERENCE-  
2013**

See back page for first announcement

# WERA report

Liesel Ebersöhn

The April 2012 WERA Council meeting was aligned with the American Education Research Association annual meeting in Vancouver, Canada. The WERA website will be transformed and built to host more interactive engagement amongst international scholars from WERA member associations. One International Research Network (WERA-IRN) proposal was accepted and will be launched at a WERA focal meeting later in 2012. Three WERA Task Forces have been established and are being implemented. These WERA Task Forces are: Poverty and Opportunity to Learn (Co-chaired by Carol D. Lee, Northwestern University; Liesel Ebersöhn, University of Pretoria; and Michael Nettles, Chair of the Salzburg Global Seminar on 'Closing the educational and social mobility gaps worldwide'); International Issues in Education Research Ethics and Conduct (co-chaired by Felice Levine, WERA Secretary-General; Ingrid Gogolin, WERA Past President; Melissa Anderson, University of Minnesota); and Challenges and Transformations of Higher Education Worldwide (co-chaired by Sari Lindblom-Ylänne, WERA Incoming President-elect; Yin Cheong Cheng, WERA President-elect; Martin Carnoy,

Stanford University).

Calls for applications to present at the WERA Focal meeting aligned with the AARE/APERA meeting in Sydney, December 2012, will be forwarded to EASA members and posted on the EASA website.

The WERA website will be transformed and built to host more interactive engagement amongst international scholars from WERA member associations. Nodes will be created for WERA member associations to post individualised content. Links with social networks such as Twitter/Facebook will be established to connect with, especially, graduate students and emerging scholars to facilitate network-building and capacity development.



Figure 1: SciELO SA usage by region (May 2012)

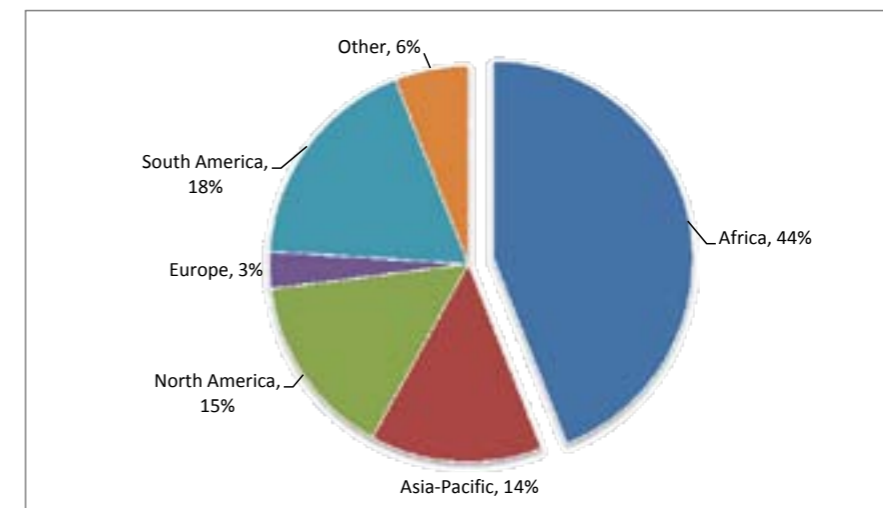


Table 1: Top 10 countries and cities (visits in May 2012)

No:	Countries that visited SciELO SA the most during May 2012	Cities outside South Africa that visited SciELO SA the most during May 2012
1	South Africa	London
2	United States	New Delhi
3	United Kingdom	Sydney
4	India	Melbourne
5	Australia	Bangalore
6	Brazil	Kuala Lumpur
7	Germany	New York
8	Canada	Brisbane
9	Malaysia	Tehran
10	China	Jakarta

Sources: Google Analytics & the SciELO South Africa site, 2012

Table 2: The SciELO SA usage statistics for May 2012

SciELO SA	May 2012	April 2012	May 2011
Visits	49 984	51 500	29 544
Visits per day	1 612	1 717	953
Countries	182	177	172
Cities	4 269	4 395	3 154
Articles on SciELO SA	3 621	3 335	2 439
Issues on SciELO SA	219	207	146

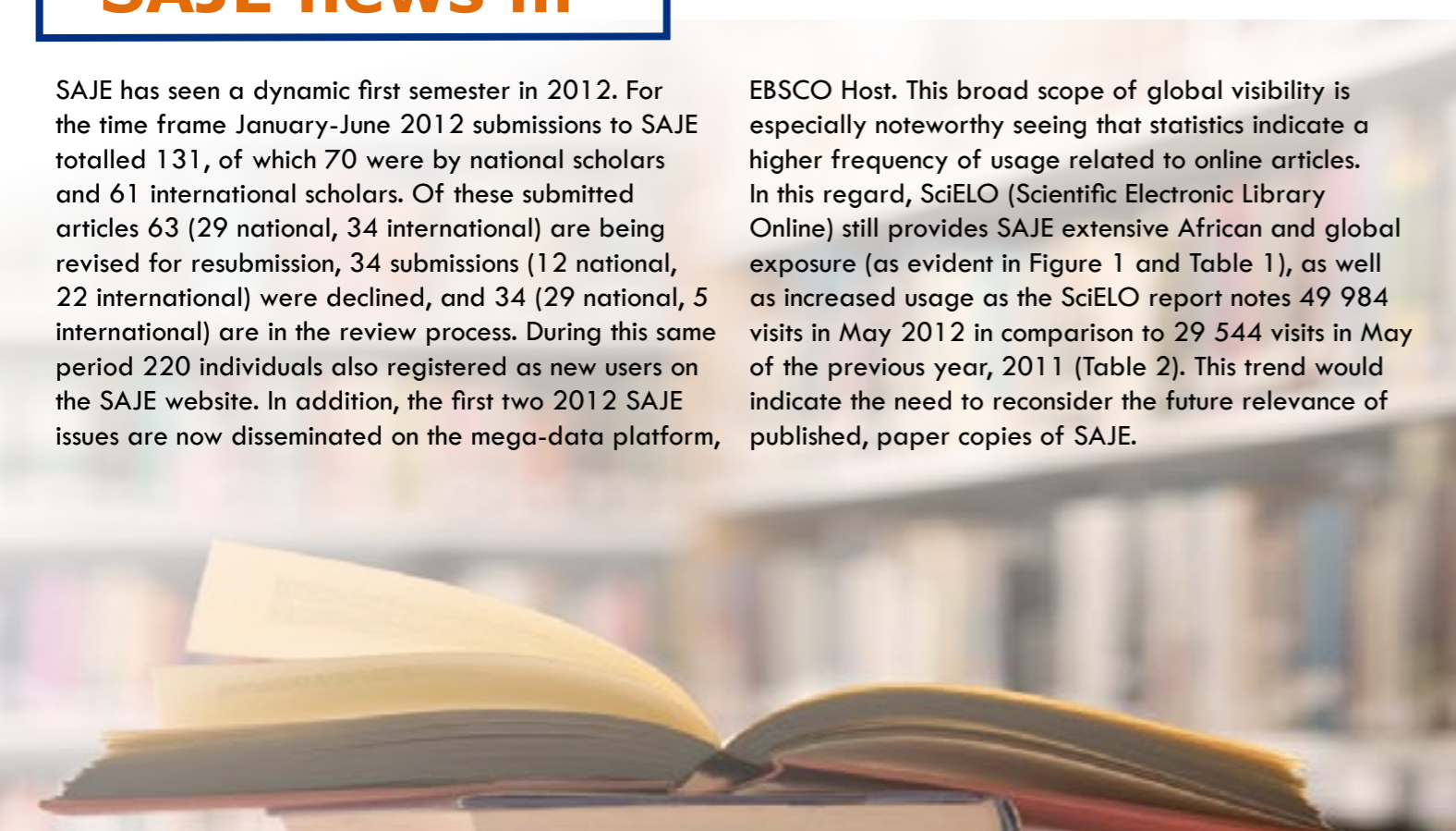
Sources: Google Analytics & the SciELO South Africa site, 2012

# SAJE news ...

Liesel Ebersöhn, Editor

SAJE has seen a dynamic first semester in 2012. For the time frame January-June 2012 submissions to SAJE totalled 131, of which 70 were by national scholars and 61 international scholars. Of these submitted articles 63 (29 national, 34 international) are being revised for resubmission, 34 submissions (12 national, 22 international) were declined, and 34 (29 national, 5 international) are in the review process. During this same period 220 individuals also registered as new users on the SAJE website. In addition, the first two 2012 SAJE issues are now disseminated on the mega-data platform,

EBSCO Host. This broad scope of global visibility is especially noteworthy seeing that statistics indicate a higher frequency of usage related to online articles. In this regard, SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) still provides SAJE extensive African and global exposure (as evident in Figure 1 and Table 1), as well as increased usage as the SciELO report notes 49 984 visits in May 2012 in comparison to 29 544 visits in May of the previous year, 2011 (Table 2). This trend would indicate the need to reconsider the future relevance of published, paper copies of SAJE.



# SAERA

SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

## FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

On behalf of the organizing committee, we would like to invite you to the founding **SAERA 2013** conference hosted by the College of Education (UNISA).

### Conference Theme

**The state of play in educational research in South Africa:  
practices and perspectives**

**Date:** 28 - 30 January 2013

**Venue:** ATKV Klein Kariba

UNISA   
college of  
education