ISCHE 42 and ISCHE 2.0

Our lives have changed dramatically these past few weeks and we sincerely hope that you and your loved ones are well. The ISCHE Executive Committee and the Local Organizing Committee of ISCHE 42 had to take a difficult decision in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and agreed to postpone ISCHE 42 to next year. This means that ISCHE 42 will take place in Örebro, Sweden, during the second half of August in 2021, when we will hopefully be able to meet again. Our prime concern in taking this decision was ensuring the safety, health, and wellbeing of our international members. We had long and intensive conversations and finally agreed that there was no other option than postponing ISCHE 42, considering the extent of the current crisis, as well as international travel restrictions and economic constraints. Postponing ISCHE 42 to 2021 is also a way of respecting and acknowledging the tremendous efforts already made by our Swedish partners at the University of Örebro, and by our colleagues who have committed to ISCHE 42 by sending us their proposals and reviews. We believe that our conference theme “Looking from above and below: Rethinking the social in the history of education” will be a fresh and novel topic also next year. The Local Organizing Committee has received outstanding proposals, and we are confident that all those whose contributions were accepted will continue their research, update their papers, present them next year, and help to make ISCHE 42 a superb and outstanding conference in 2021. In addition, we hope that many of our members will participate at next year’s ISCHE conference.

This is a decision we have not taken lightly. We are aware of what it means to cancel an ISCHE conference. Our conferences have always been reliable annual events and places where we meet, exchange ideas, share discussions, acknowledge our work, and celebrate our achievements and friendships. ISCHE conferences are also places where young researchers make their first personal connections with fellow historians of education and establish lifelong networks. In addition, ISCHE conferences are places where we experience different local cultures in real time and real space, including museums, music, and foods. We are confident that this will continue to be the case in the years to come.

The current global crisis is encouraging us to think about change. Certainly, we should take better care of the planet and our wellbeing. On a much smaller scale, we can think about virtual alternatives which may enrich future ISCHE conferences. After a careful analysis of our budget, the ISCHE Executive Committee will explore opportunities of launching ISCHE 2.0, which hopefully will be implemented this year as a subdomain of our website. At this moment we are discussing ISCHE 2.0 as a permanent and growing digital platform showcasing ISCHE’s scholarship, but we need to thoroughly consider and collectively discuss issues of sustainability and the effects this might have on our intellectual community.

Another concern we would like to share at this time is that, according to our constitution, the ISCHE General Assembly is the place where we make joint decisions together with our members and where elections and budget approvals take place. Because of the pandemic, it will not be possible to organize a General Assembly in 2020, and the ISCHE Executive Committee is currently discussing alternatives. We will soon contact our members to inform them about how we will handle pending EC terms of office and the approval of the 2019 budget with a special consideration about how to align these decisions with the legal framework in Germany.
These are hard decisions, taken in exceptional times, and we hope you understand. Let me conclude by reaffirming our commitment to guiding ISCHE through this difficult time and ensuring the wellbeing of our members.

We hope we will all stay safe and well in the weeks and months ahead.
Warm regards,

Karin Priem
President of ISCHE