



In memoriam

Maria Vasenkari (27.11.1964–7.6.2024)

Folklorist and science communication expert Maria Vasenkari passed away in early June, exhausted by a long illness.

Maria had two careers at the University of Turku, first as a junior researcher in Folkloristics and later on as an expert in science communication, research coordination and editing.

In the 1990s, Maria was one of the first researchers to address the issues raised by critical and dialogical anthropology in Finland, especially in regard to Finnish folkloristics and the fieldwork paradigm. Her publications on dialogic methodology and life story interviews set the stage for future researchers using ethnographic methods for in-depth reflection when creating their own sources or using sources created by others.

Working as a research assistant at the Kalevala Institute founded by Professor Lauri Honko offered Maria a privileged view on current international research in Folkloristics, that she could use in her later career as a science communication expert. Maria served as the editorial secretary of the Folklore Fellows Communications series and the FF Network for a couple of decades until 2015. She was professional and versatile in her work, and thanks to her academic background, she knew well the contents of the works she edited and could make suggestions to solve any problems that rose. In addition to FFC, she also did major editorial work for the Donner Institute.

Maria was profoundly learned, thus representing the ideal of humanistic learning. Maria was able to use this understanding in her positions as a science communication specialist in various units of the university. In particular, as the editorial secretary of the Faculty of Humanities online journal *Hiiskuttua*, she set a standard for linking deep understanding of the humanities with editorial professionalism.

Maria was easy to work with. She was determined and goal-oriented, she had visions and also the necessary know-how to get things done.

We all miss an exceptionally gifted colleague.

Pekka Hakamies, Anne Heimo & Matti Kamppinen,
University of Turku



Dr. Maria Vasenkari (1964–2024). Photo via [Hiiskuttua](#).