

Minutes from the business meeting, 20 August 2026, Tampere, Finland, 12:15-13:15

About twenty participants attended, amongst those: Kathrin Otrek-Cass (AT), Brianna Kennedy (UK), Roxanne Stoffel (CH), Jan Georgeson (UK), Maria Jarl (SE), Anne Reh (DE), Rene Schroeder (DE), Timo Ehmke (DE), Maiza Trigo (LU), Raphaela Schlicht-Schmälzle (DE), and Marta Krasuska-Betiuk (PL) and others.

1. Network history and leadership: The group revisited the network's history. Network 15 was founded in 1996 by Professor Danielle Zay, who led the network as Link Convenor until 2007. Philippe Masson (France) served as convenor from 2008–2018, followed by Kathrin Otrek-Cass (University of Graz, Austria, previously Aalborg University, Denmark), who held the role since 2018. The group also acknowledged Tamás Kozma (Professor Emeritus, University of Debrecen, and a founding member of EERA in 1992) for his long-standing support of the network. Participation in the network continues to skew toward Northern and Central Europe; language barriers were identified as a possible factor limiting engagement from Southern Europe more broadly., other reasons could include funding

2. Election of the new Link Convenor: After 8 years in the role, Kathrin Otrek-Cass stepped down as Link Convenor. Brianna Kennedy (University of Glasgow, UK) was nominated and voted in unanimously as the new Link Convenor. The co-convenor team remains open to self-nomination; existing co-convenors (Karen Laing, Nataša Lacković, Nathalie Popa, and Raphaela Schlicht-Schmälzle) will be re-confirmed by the incoming convenor.

Following the election a number of colleagues expressed (in writing) the wish to join the team as co-convenors, including: Roxanne Stoffel and Maiza Trigo as ECR representatives. Jan Georgeson, Rene Schroeder would like to join the team of co-convenors. The incoming link convenor Brianna will re-confirm those.

3. Network publications and activities: Members of NW15 contributed to a special issue of EERJ, 'Educational Partnerships in Times of Uncertainty: Navigating Transformation and Building Resilience' (2026), edited by Kathrin Otrek-Cass and Karen Laing, with contributions from Mari-Ana Jones, Erlend Dehlin and Camilla Bergh; Olena Beskorsa; Karen Laing, Ulrike Thomas, Lucy Tiplady and Liz Todd; Lucy Tiplady, Liz Todd, Luke Bramhall, Suzanne Butler, Gwen Dalziel and Cathryn Gathercole; Joanna Leek; Kathrin Otrek-Cass, Iris Mendel, Michael Reicho and Melanie Gürentz; and Désirée Theis, Raphaela Schlicht-Schmälzle, Antje Thiele and Ulrike Hartmann. This illustrates the network's tradition of joint publications, including two earlier bilingual (English/French) edited volumes on partnership in education (2009, 2010) and the 2022 Springer volume on risks in transdisciplinary educational research.

4. Feedback on the 2026 conference in Tampere: ECER 2026 in Tampere drew 3,660 ECER and 580 ERC participants (3,840 in total), a larger turnout than anticipated, which increased the reviewing workload for the network.

5. Reviewing process improvements: The outgoing convenor flagged that there were at times divergent reviews for this year's ECER submissions, sometimes there was poor alignment with network-specific aims (e.g., responsiveness to special calls). The group agreed in principle to develop a structured reviewing rubric to improve consistency, encourage discursive feedback over scores alone, align with the online submission form, and be sensitive to the position of PhD students and non-native English speakers. AI-generated reviews were identified as a problem; the rubric could be made available on the network page and include explicit guidance on AI-use and AI declaration.

6. Ideas for NW15 calls for the 2027 ECER in Debrecen, Hungary: Special calls will continue for the 2027 conference. Two ideas were proposed: (1) evaluation of research practice partnerships, with a methodological focus on how partnership research is evaluated, given that researchers are often also the evaluators (a conflict-of-interest/positionality issue); and (2) a recurring call for Erasmus+ project presentations, which has proven to be a productive fit for Network 15. Members are encouraged to propose further topics; a joint online meeting will be organised to consolidate ideas ahead of the 30 October deadline.

7. Upcoming conference: The 2027 conference will be held in Debrecen, Hungary, hosted by the University of Debrecen. Theme: ‘Learning Communities in Education – Individual Paths and Shared Futures in a Changing World’, which aligns strongly with Network 15’s focus. ERC: 30–31 August 2027; ECER: 31 August – 3 September 2027.

8. Action items:

Kathrin Otrell-Cass (outgoing convenor): draft a first version of the reviewing rubric and pass it to Brianna Kennedy; submit the annual network report and handover documentation to the EERA office and to the incoming convenor by 1 November.

Kathrin Otrell-Cass & Brianna Kennedy: follow up with attendees who signed the circulated sheet expressing interest in reviewing or co-convening.

All members: invited to submit special call proposals to Kathrin Otrell-Cass or Brianna Kennedy ahead of the 30 October deadline.

Convenor team: review and potentially revise the current network aims to reflect evolving research priorities.

9. Early career researchers: ECR participation in the co-convenor team continues to be actively encouraged. The new ERE journal is open to submissions from those who presented at the ERC. The pre-conference ECR event was described as highly supportive and is strongly recommended for early-stage researchers, especially those representing NW15 😊.