

## EERA Network 23 Online Annual Business Meeting 1230-1330 CEST, Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### Welcome

The network convenors welcomed the twenty attendees and wished them well. Peter Kelly thanked Linda Rönnerberg who will be stepping down as a NW23 convenor this autumn. Linda has done much to support the work of the network during her time as convenor. She will, we hope, continue as a reviewer.

### Conference 2022

	Total Submitted	Accepted In-Person/Online	Rejected/ Withdrawn
Symposia	4	2/2	0/1
Papers	89 (including 4 redirected)	40/36	13/13 (9 in-person & 4 online withdrawals )
Panels	1	1/0	0

### Submissions and programme

The lower number of submissions this year were not all down to location, and can partly be attributed to the timing in August. The split between in-person and online made securing coherence in programme planning more difficult, as did the constant trickle of withdrawals. The lower numbers attending were divided between two parts in Yerevan and online. This affected the allocation of experienced chairs in particular. Whilst the network convenors carried the load on chairing online sessions, there were some problems with assigning the last presenting author as a chair for the in-person sessions. Some did not realise that they were chairing, and it was not easy to find out who the chair was from the Whova app, so in many cases, chairs found out on the spot they were supposed to chair the session and were not always up to the task.

### Reviewers

The success of the conference is down, in large part, to the quality of the reviewers and the chairs. We have a strong group of conscientious reviewers who give their time freely and provide clear, helpful and considered feedback on the many submissions. In normal years, a good number also regularly act as chairs. Many thanks to all. This year we had 24 reviewers. Every submission requires two reviewers and a number of people review for more than one network. In total, with 90 submissions we required 180 reviews. Most reviewers looked at 8 or 9 papers including one symposium. Seven of our reviewers retired this year and only one new reviewer joined the team. We wish to increase the reviewing team for next year as numbers of submissions are likely to be up. Anyone wishing to volunteer as a reviewer should contact Peter Kelly.

### **Developments for ECER 2022**

Reviewers are now asked to inform the convenors about proposals that are poorly expressed because of English language difficulties, but otherwise acceptable, so that we can explore the possibility of further support for their authors.

### Conference Review 2022

The conference in Yerevan was well organized, and the Whova app was helpful, though it took some time for people to find out how it worked. It was also great to see more diversity in authors' national contexts. All keynotes were streamlined and accessible via the Whova app. In the online conference, the Zoom platform was very good for ensuring speakers kept to time and that participants could interact in an equitable manner. Both the in-person and online parts provided an important forum for education research, with some excellent symposia and individual papers, but participation was much reduced and a little fragmented, being divided between two events. As a consequence, discussions were more limited than in previous years. Nevertheless, having the in-person conference in Armenia made an important statement about diversity in Europe and widening participation in EERA.

All rooms were equipped with water tanks and participants were given a glass in the conference bag. The indications for rooms were very clear, there were many volunteers who were very helpful. They were thanked one by one at the closing ceremony. The Whova app was considered a good choice not only for communicating about the program, but also for people's socialization. However, there were lots of last-minute changes that had to be accommodated. In Yerevan not all changes were notified via Whova. Perhaps authors did not inform the organizers they were not coming. As a result, a few sessions in NW23 had, for instance, only 2 presenters instead of 3, which chairs discovered only at the start of the session.

Nevertheless, in NW23 we were able to nurture contacts between policy researchers and provide a forum for discussing research and ideas at the forefront of the education policy field. This year there was a higher proportion of papers from Armenia specifically and Central and Eastern Europe more generally as well as a few from Russia. Opportunities for networking and development were, however, more limited than usual because of reduced numbers attending.

### Online Spring Seminar Series 2022

The network's online seminar series was once again one of the academic highlights of the spring. This series brought together leading academics in the field of education policy studies, all of whom have a close relationship with Network 23. Over 150 friends and associates of the network registered to attend the three seminars, reflecting the huge contribution made by each of our speakers to education policy research. Many thanks to Linda Rönnerberg, Xavier Rambla and Benedict Kurz for their help in organising this series.

Date	Title	Speaker
Wednesday 30 March	From Living apart to Moving in: Policy instruments and Institutional perspectives in education reform research	Dr Antoni Verger Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Friday 01 April	The effect of the growing participation of private actors to policies and schemes for widening participation into HE	Professor Agnès van Zanten CNRS, Sciences Po, Paris
Thursday 07 April	Internationalisation in Higher Education: Policy contexts, policy ideas and practices	Professor Nafsika Alexiadou Umeå Universitet

This series provided an opportunity for those within the wider education policy research community to connect with each other. We intend to repeat the online seminar series annually, restricting the series to 2 or 3 seminars each year.

### Changes in the convenors team

We added two new members to the network convenors team in autumn 2021. They are Marcella Milana (University of Verona, Italy) and Sofia Viseu (University of Lisbon, Portugal).

## **Plans for ECER 2023**

Network 23 plans now in place:

- request reviewers inform the conveners about proposals that are poorly expressed because of English language difficulties, but otherwise acceptable, and explore the possibility of further support for their authors

Ongoing developments for Glasgow 2023:

- increase the number of network reviewers and session chairs
- provide clear communications, including a welcome email will be sent to all whose papers have been accepted by Network 23 with advice on how the conference works together with conference and network information
- arrange informal breakfast & lunchtime gatherings and a social event for all
- provide support for those new to Network 23 and/or ECER including emerging researchers
- encourage network members to contact the conveners to share ideas on activities and/or initiatives that will further promote inclusiveness and development of the network

We are pleased with our ongoing work to widen participation, and will continue to prioritise attracting participants from underrepresented countries. We will invite queries from potential authors before submission, and continue to develop support including linking with and contributing to the Emerging Researchers Group (ERG). Xavier Rambla is the network link with the ERG.

## **Final remarks**

Attendees felt strongly that the importance of a wholly in-person conference is recognised and returned to as soon as possible. However, there may be lessons we can learn about making better use of digital platforms and not just return to how things used to be. The facility of having our business meeting online allowed many more to attend, including those not registered for the conference.

There was some debate about the European dimension, with some papers entirely embedded in local/national contexts that are non-European and with no attempt to relate or compare this with Europe. One example was given of an earlier ECER when there were many researchers from Australia and the US presenting. These attracted a lot of attendees, whilst parallel presentations from small European countries were left with almost no audience. One contributor suggested ECER is the platform for European research (a) done in European institutions, or (b) about European issues (the famous dimension) carried out by researchers in any institution in the world, or (c) comparative research, or (d) research about global issues of relevance to European research. The conveners agreed to adopt this list for reviewing in future.

No other issues were raised at the meeting. We look forward to seeing you in Glasgow 2023.

The Conveners of EERA NW23: Peter Kelly (link-convenor), Anne Larson, Marcella Milana, Xavier Rambla, Linda Rönnerberg and Sofia Viseu, 8th September 2022