Report on EI's 13th RESEARCH NETWORK MEETING

Research – Refine – Resist: Unions on the move!

Wednesday, May 31th – Thursday, June 1st 2017
International Trade Union House (ITUH), Meeting Room B, 1st Floor
5 Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 1210 Brussels

Research –Refine – Resist: Unions on the move!

This report summarises the outcomes and discussions from Education International's 13th Research Network meeting, held in Brussels on 31 May and 1 June 2017. It was attended by over 45 representatives of Education International member organisations and academic institutions, under the banner Research - Refine - Resist: Unions on the move!

This year's meeting focussed on further strengthening the EI's research network and research programmes to foster resistance and reverse misleading education policies, attacks on trade union rights and privatisation trends. There was a firm focus on using research for activism and the skills and practices needed to do this.

Among other matters for discussion the meeting engaged in participatory workshops on opportunities and challenges related to the use of technology in education as well as addressing a number of professional issues such as career pathways, teacher identities and professional standards. Education 2030, inclusive practices, breadth of learning and the development of our research toolkit also featured on the agenda.

In addition, EI launched its latest Research Board study Organising Teaching: Developing the power of the profession, conducted by Nina Bascia and Howard Stevenson.

Wednesday, May 31st

Session 1 & 2: Ongoing and planned research

The meeting offered a platform to share union research projects conducted by EI and its affiliates. The EI research unit gave an overview of published and ongoing EI research and what will happen until the next ResNet meeting. An updated list of published and ongoing research by EI affiliates was shared (those who participated in the survey before the meeting). Affiliates from different countries gave lighting talks in which they shared successful union research stories, brave new ideas and opportunities for collaboration. All EI research is available at Worlds of Education: https://worldsofeducation.org/en/woe_homepage

In the coffee and lunch breaks the participants were invited to provide feedback to EI's research toolkit.
- R1 Include dissemination strategies
- R2 Tools for classroom-based research and action research
- R3 Sampling procedures and protocols
- R4 How to develop partnerships with researchers and universities

Session 3: Education unions on the move!

Sharing is caring: the benefits of open in education, (Lisette Kalshoven, Kennisland)

The workshop discussed the difference between a proprietary/closed system where textbooks are created by a (commercial) publisher and an open education system with open educational resources and more flexibility.

- R1 The meeting discussed that we need a mixture of open and closed approaches to address questions of quality control and standards. It will be important to find out what EI affiliates are already doing in this area and share strategies and best practices.

R2 It was discussed that technology is often imposed as a tool for privatisation (e.g., predatory publishing houses). The group suggested that it would be interesting to talk to publishers and identify those who would be willing to take a more open approach towards the development of educational materials. Several publishers are working on this already.

R3 Concern was raised that teachers and researchers don't have access to educational materials and publications. There is a need to support progressive copyrights reforms that improve exceptions and limitations for copyrighted materials in education.

Rebirth of the Teaching Machine: Digital Reporting, Assessment and the Measurement of Wellbeing in a Digital Age (Phil McRae, ATA)

This workshop explored developments within the world of digital assessment with a particular focus on the negative impact on students' wellbeing.

R1 How to share information with the whole Educational community. Be aware of the scale of the problem (many, especially parents, are not aware) and give advice on how you regulate it (an eg from France was CNIL). Surveys available from [Alberta Teachers Association](#) .

R2 Not knowing enough about the issue. Do a study on this and educate your colleagues with what you learn.

R3 Lack of resources available. Use *We the Educators* to get informed.

Session 4: Professional issues and the politics of change

OECD 2030 (Lars Barteit, OECD)

This workshop explored the development and progress of the OECD curriculum project exploring the competencies needed for students in the run up to 2030.

R1 It will be important to make the framework locally-contextual. 2030 should be considered as a space for ideas that can have an influence on your curriculum.

R2 Is it too western focused? Values and attitudes are different do they need rewriting? Get unions involved in answering this.

R3 The meeting was concerned about assessment. Can we be assured that there will be no assessment on this?

Career pathways (Barbara Tournier, IIEP-UNESCO)

This workshop discussed UNESCO's IIEP research project on the organisation and management of teacher careers and their motivation. The project is carrying out an exploratory study/mapping case studies in – Lithuania, Scotland, Thailand, Ethiopia, South Africa, Mexico, Peru, and Colombia.

R1 It was discussed that a major challenge is to retain good teachers in classrooms. A major challenge for teacher motivation is the organisation of teachers' careers to provide opportunities for teachers within the classroom, allowing for advancement and incentivising improvement.

R2   Beyond a certain point money is not a motivating factor, but there are intrinsic factors such as opportunities for collaboration, professional development, creating a sense of achievement, status and autonomy that are important for motivation.

R3   It was suggested to also look at other sectors and to see how motivation is addressed there.

Teacher identities (Philippa Cordingley, CUREE)

The workshop discussed issues around teacher identities and coaching/training that will be part of EI's Research Institute study conducted by Philippa Cordingley.

R1   The meeting agreed that different types of coaching and conversations with teachers about their professional role (e.g., talking to a neighbour, formal business like chats) can help teachers develop as professionals in different ways.

R2   The increasing availability of technology in schools has an impact on how teachers spend time with each other and engage in conversations (e.g., more time in front of computers than in conversations). This needs to be further looked in to.

R3   The participants all agreed that it is important to make time for teachers to reflect on their work and teacher identity.

Thursday, June 1st

Session 5: Developing EI's research programme and strategies

Breadth of Learning (Martin Henry, Hesbon Otieno, Christopher Yalukanda)

This workshop discussed EI's partnership work with the Brookings Institution around the breadth of learning and included presentations on the secondary teacher survey development in Kenya and the primary teacher survey development in Zambia.

R1   The meeting discussed the KNUT and ZNUT surveys and the Brookings work to combine both surveys into a universal teacher tool. The combined survey is currently too focussed on the role of Brookings. Ensure the preamble to the survey includes proper acknowledgement of the role played by EI in developing the teacher tools.

R2   The language used in the combined survey is too researcher focused. Simplify the language and rewrite the introduction so that it is more teacher friendly.

R3   The workshop participants felt there was too much complication in the combined survey around navigating the tool. Don't direct the teacher backwards and forwards when filling out the survey and simplify the approach for the teacher.

The rights of teachers and children with disabilities (Nikola Wachter, Rebeca Sevilla)

This workshop discussed EI's work on the rights of children and teachers with disabilities.

R1   The meeting provided feedback to the ongoing literature review *Rethinking Disability* on inclusive education. It was recommended that the research focuses on the implementation

of inclusive policies and the provision of strategies for integrating children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

R2 It is important to take a holistic approach and to advocate for strong public systems (i.e., education, health, infrastructure) that ensure adequate protection and support for people with disabilities and those that might become disabled due to disease or accidents.

R3 Education Unions can scale up their work by including people with disabilities in their organisational structures. Disability issues should also be integrated into collective bargaining and social dialogue.

Teacher Networks/TEN Global pilot – Rationale and Methodology (Jelmer Evers, EI)
TEN Global workshop on international and online networking and professional development by teachers and the role of unions in supporting this new space.

R1 The social space is increasingly being occupied by many commercial operators. Google, Apple, Microsoft for example are everywhere. Not many union-lead alternatives of this scale and calibre. And not many initiatives by unions where teachers were individually organised, or given opportunities to do so, on an international scale.

R2 Many younger teachers are self-organising with new technologies. In some countries they have gone outside the union to organise themselves, sometimes coming into conflict with unions. New technologies clearly provide a challenge for representation and organisation. Interestingly this has also lead to new engagement with unions and new alliances. In most cases it had a positive effect in the end.

R3 It was clear from the workshop that this is still a new field for many unions. Some commented on the older age of their members and that they were not connected and interested in this space. Others said that younger members expect their organisations to communicate and organise on social platforms and that youngers teachers would look to other organisations to provide that for them.

R4 Unions that are active on social-media spaces commented on the cost and energy to maintain a presence and moderation of work and comments by their members. Most people expressed the need for more in-depth research on this topic. Not much has been published yet on this topic.

Session 6: Union strategies to refine and resist

Launch of the EIRI study Organising Teaching: Developing the power of the profession

In this session the EIRI study *Organising Teachers: Developing the Power of the Profession* was launched. Howard Stevenson presented the findings of the study that draws from cases in the USA, Chile, New Zealand, Poland, Scotland and Turkey. Howard Stevenson and Nina Bascia identified seven cross-case challenges for teacher unions:
1) Organise around ideas: Reframe the narrative
2) Connect the industrial and professional
3) Working in, and against …
4) Building at the base
5) Build democratic engagement– develop the formal and the informal
6) Connect the profession – horizontally and vertically

7) Work in, and beyond, the union – create broader alliances

R1 The study was very-well received and affiliates recommended EI to do further workshops on this topic also taking into account regional specificities.

R2 Make the study and/or a summary available in French and Spanish.

Session 7: Action planning – Network neighbourhoods

This session was dedicated to identifying which of the topics discussed were the most important for each region and what the group would recommend for developing this meeting and network in between meetings.

R1 The participants welcomed the interactive and participatory approach to the meeting. The lightning talks worked well and should be continued.
R1 The participants were concerned that no Spanish interpretation was made available.
R2 Provide capacity building at the meeting on research methodology (e.g., action-research, classroom-based research, use of data) and dissemination strategies (e.g., communications and media work).
R2 Ongoing communication with ResNet can be improved (e.g., share ongoing, published and planned research).
R3 Organise calls/webinars when research is published.
R4 Foster language diversity through providing translation for summary reports.
R5 Have researchers present at the meeting.
R6 Consider regional diversity concerning the topics and experts chosen.
R7 For next ResNet affiliates are encouraged to prepare posters of their research for the exhibition area.
R8 Conduct more research together across countries.

Pictures
https://www.flickr.com/photos/educationinternational/albums/72157682303472781

Technicalities
All meeting presentations and additional notes are available in the ResNet participants outlook group. If you don't have access yet or experience difficulties, please contact Ahmad Khalil at Ahmad.Khalil@ei-ie.org. We will use this group for our future ResNet meetings as well.