Introduction

The Sociology of Education Research Network aims to enhance co-operation among sociologists of education worldwide in the face of on-going changes in the functioning of educational systems, most particularly due to the recent restrictions due to the Covid 19 pandemic, which has been found to emphasise existing inequalities, both in society, in general and in education, in particular. Examining these inequalities and attempting to redress them to increase social cohesion and stability was a key challenge during this period and one of the most important tasks of current educational sociology. 

RN10 provides a forum for a variety of educational research, ranging from broad comparative research to everyday practices and processes in school, at all levels of formal education, including such key themes as:

1. Theoretical developments in Sociology of Education
2. Comparisons of educational systems
3. Education and citizenship
4. Expansion and transformation of Higher Education
5. (Higher) education and the labour market
6. Changes in education
7. Education and transition in Europe
8. Social justice, democracy and equality in education
9. Making differences and bridging differences
10. Educational attainment and family relations
11. Social divisions (ethnicity, class, gender) and inequality

Coordinating Board in the reported period (2019-2021)

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Activities in the reported period

1. Organisation of 2-day midterm conference ‘Inclusive Education and Society in a Time of Change: Theories, Policies and Practices’, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, August 20-21, 2020. The Call for Papers was as follows:

Inclusive education addresses and responds to the diversity of needs of learners and involves removing barriers so that each learner will be enabled to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her education and training in a primary, secondary or tertiary education context. Important progress has been made by schools, curriculum developers, educational leaders and governments to develop inclusive educational systems, policies and practices addressing the needs of learners from different cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds and those with learning disabilities. However, countries differ in their levels of inclusivity and there are also important within-country differences regarding individual groups and learners in society. In addition, the current Brexit deliberations also challenge inclusivity and access to education and funding opportunities. Inclusive curricula and educational approaches are likely to lead to a sense of community and belonging amongst children/students/adults, and foster participation and active engagement which in turn can enhance educational attainment. This conference aims to explore all issues related to inclusive education in the broadest sense including education for migrant and refugee children/students/adults, as well as education for children/students/adults with disabilities. Contributions focus on all education phases (pre-school/ primary/secondary/higher education).

Topics covered include:

1. Gender and Teacher Education
2. Migration, Education and Belonging
3. Inclusive Practices in Higher Education

Keynote speeches were delivered by Professor João Sebastião (University Institute of Lisbon) and Professor Louise Archer (University College London).

Full conference programme available: https://www.tcd.ie/triss/assets/PDFs/ESA.pdf
Recordings of these two sessions at: https://youtu.be/4G3MXcgOuD8 and: https://youtu.be/uoeYiBBltvo

The call for papers for the midterm conference of the ESA Research Network 10 was distributed broadly, mainly electronically. The conference lasted two days (online) and included 2 keynote on both days. There were 161 participants. There was much interest in the papers and the discussion that followed with the online attendees was lively and very informative. Participants joined online from many different countries in the world and attendance was higher than at any previous mid-term conference. Participants felt that the online medium was successful and the greater attendance gave an added value to the conference. Members of the coordinating board were active in helping with the overall organization of the conference in every aspect, from planning to abstract reviewing and session chairing. Additionally, information was given at the end about RN10 and participants were encouraged to consider participating in the ESA 15th conference in Barcelona in 2021. RN10 are grateful for the organisational help received from Trinity Research in Social Sciences Centre (TRISS) and for the financial support received from the ESA which made the organization of the conference possible.
2. Sociology of Education RN10 at the ESA 15th Conference ‘Sociological Knowledges for Alternative Futures’ in Barcelona, Spain, Aug/Sep 2021. The theme was as follows:

A thriving education sector is acknowledged as an essential element of human society. Existing inequalities and restrictions in education have been exacerbated by the advent of the global Covid-19 pandemic from late 2019 onwards. The enormous toll which these restrictions have taken, (personally, politically, economically and socially) requires a re-imagining of the future of human endeavour in all its forms. For sociologists of education, the restrictions have meant enormous changes in our understanding of the role and future of education within society. We invite abstracts (250 words max) which consider the state of education in these changed circumstances and seek to construct alternative means of engaging with and understanding education. Submissions may consider the relationship between the current global uncertainties and changes and educational research and practice in some of the following fields:

1. Aspiration, Choice and Selection,
2. Contextual factors in Education,
3. Social Resources and Supports in Education,
4. ICT in Education,
5. Vocational Education and Training,
6. Gender and Education,
7. Grade Retention and Drop-out,
8. Segregation Choice and Enrolment,
9. Teacher Turn-over, Life-long Learning, Education and Migration,
10. Curriculum Design and Development,
11. Perceptions, Beliefs and Constructions of Vulnerability,
12. Social Inequality, Inclusion, Participation and Internationalisation.

The RN Sociology of Education had 12 themed sessions covering all the time slots in the conference programme with 160 papers presented. Members of the Coordinating Board issued the call for papers and made the abstract selection, using a double review method. Members of CB chaired numerous sessions during the conference. The overall assessment was that though online, ESA15 was a fruitful meeting facilitating further contacts among junior and senior researchers and faculty members.

In addition, RN10 co-organised 2 Joint Sessions with RN09 Economic Sociology under the title: ‘Consequences of school lockdown on education during the COVID-19 pandemic’. These sessions was chaired by Dr. Nicola Pensiero (RN09) and Dr. Bernadette Brereton (RN10)

Communication Information on the activities of the RN
Communication is widely distributed via Facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/1411403725748094/ and through our mailing list. Currently (February 2022), the Facebook group of our network counts 1.5K members. The group is mainly used to spread information on upcoming events and conferences, to share calls for papers, and publications of the members of the RN.
Publications related to activity of RN 10
We have a strong tradition of publications arising out of RN10 activities. In January 2021, the RN 10 Co-ordinator Dr. Bernadette Brereton gave a key-note speech at the ‘Education and the challenges of the multicultural world - an interdisciplinary perspective’, International Conference chaired by Professor Anna Odrowaz-Coates, Vice-Rector for Development, Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw, Poland, now a member of RN10 Co-ordinating Board 2021-2023. A book arising from this conference has recently been published under the UNESCO Chair Book Series and is available at http://www.aps.edu.pl/media/3579463/edukation-and-the-challenge_202-12-15.pdf

Action to be taken to improve participation of PhD students and early career researchers
PhD-students and early career researchers are encouraged to take part in ESA conferences, which provide a great opportunity for younger scholars to present their work and establish links and partnerships for international co-operation. At RN10 midterm conferences, places are reserved for PhD-students with none or limited funds, who are exempted from the conference fee.

Actions to be taken to expand membership, especially from countries with overall weaker ESA membership, also attracting members from outside Europe
Facebook membership has increased from c.600 in 2019 to 1.5K in 2022, which widens the reach and influence of RN10. During the last midterm conferences, as well as in the ESA15, there were several presentations given by colleagues outside Europe. For the up-coming mid-term conference ‘International Week of Education’ in University of Lausanne, Switzerland in September 2022, RN10 are collaborating with 2 national sociological associations in France and Switzerland, providing opportunities for international collaboration.

Collaboration within ESA with other RNs
ESA15 saw the first formal collaborations with other RNs, namely RN09. This was a highly fruitful partnership and gave rise to 2 excellent joint sessions. Informal contacts between members of different RN coordinating boards also exist. In addition, members of the coordinating board present their work during conferences in other RNs.

Plans for further activities of RN10
1. to keep the Facebook group up-to-date by regularly sharing interesting information
2. to organise a midterm conference in Switzerland in September 2022
3. to seek opportunities for collaboration with other scientific organizations
4. to organise the sessions of the RN during the next ESA Conference in Porto in 2023/2024.