

CONFERENCE REPORT

ANGEL CONFERENCE 2019
9&10 MAY, LONDON, UK

Reflections
Feedback
Analysis
Comment



Project partners:



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ANGEL CONFERENCE 2019: REPORT

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Second Conference of the Academic Network for Global Education Researchers was held on 9th and 10th of May 2019 at Goodenough College in London. It was organised by the Development Education Research Centre (UCL Institute of Education) with support from Global Education Network Europe.

In total 171 attended the event over the 2 days (a 51% increase from the previous conference in 2017), and we saw presenters from 15 different countries. We believe that this makes ANGEL 2019 the largest ever academic conference solely focusing on global education. Considering this, the conference marks a very significant turning point not only for the Network but also global education in general.

Overall the feedback from participants is very positive about the event. The venue and the catering were deemed to be excellent. All of the keynotes were well received, with the input from the young people from the 'Youth Strike 4 Climate' campaign perhaps having the biggest impact, with a standing ovation from all participants. Reassuringly, we received several comments from attendees who had been present at our 2017 launch event, all of which explicitly described an increase in quality or an exceeding of their expectations.

The opportunities for learning from each other varied from session to session and there was only one substantial space for table based discussion groups. This, however, worked well. Feedback suggested a real appetite for more opportunities for participation and reflection. The Conference was deliberately organised in the way that many academic conferences are, with a series of short papers in parallel sessions. Whilst this on the whole worked well, the feedback suggests that in some sessions there were too many speakers and there could have been better allocation of papers into common themes. Participants valued the opportunities for networking and the relatively lengthy lunch breaks were welcomed, and some called for more structured activities to facilitate networking.

The online feedback section that was only for attendees who were ANGEL members showed a great enthusiasm for the project, and an appetite for more events and information. Unsurprisingly, requests for more regional events and support for non-English speakers were frequent, but also for online resources and online opportunities for interaction.

Discussions on what ANGEL should consider undertaking, in both the business session and final plenary, identified some areas for further consideration - including a recognition that the Network needs to see itself clearly as a global network. The role and relationship of the network to other networks for policy-makers and practitioners is also an area for further consideration. It was perhaps disappointing that there were very few policy-makers present.

The comments and feedback from participants suggest that the vast majority found it an inspiring and rewarding event. It raised the profile of the Network and GENE. It demonstrated the value of having conferences where a Network itself can meet and share their ideas and research.

2. REFLECTIONS

Here we make some summarising reflections of different aspects of the event. There were several points where participants were given opportunities to contribute ideas and comments, and we have tried our best to summarise these.

2.1. Plenary Sessions

There were four plenary sessions at the conference. Following welcoming messages from staff at Goodenough College, Liam Wegimont on behalf of GENE and Alison Fuller from IOE, Massimiliano Tarozzi then summarised the aims of the Conference.

This was followed by a [keynote by Professor William Gaudelli](#). This was very well received as can be seen from the table in Section 3.

On the second day there was a keynote from Elina Lehtomaki which was also very received. The conference then had a series of shorter inputs including a summary of the work of TeesNet and an outstanding contribution from Lotte on behalf of the Climate Change campaign in the UK.

2.2. Table Discussions

Following the keynote on the first day, there were table based discussions at which participants were asked to consider the following themes:

- 1) *Given the challenges and opportunities for global education that exist around the world, what are the key themes and concepts that we need to identify in order to engage broader groupings of educationalists, policy-makers and academics?*

Themes to emerge from the table-based discussions included the following:

- Great opportunity-using case studies, anecdotes, experiences, requirement to move on SDGs- responses to globalization e.g. nationalism, integration, education
- Need to address conversation gap between academics and practitioners.
- Opportunities and challenges presented by difference in policy contexts and histories
- Ignorance/absence of discussion about colonialism and its effects on environment, economics, culture
- Pedagogical and dialectical research- interdisciplinary research

- A need to look at access to education and how that links to GL
- How to get a wedge to open the door to policy makers to engage with GE themes and address inequality which may not support their own economic agenda
- Significance of context- ongoing tension between pressing for a global vision but being sensitive to local/national different contexts
- Tensions within academia between fields/faculties on understanding of ideas like social justice and GCE (big differences in understanding of relationships between the two)
- On definition of GE – maybe values and concepts are more important than definition- adaptability to local culture within a framework- maybe more questions of common aim.
- Lobbying sensitizing educators- educators need to be less passive
- Dynamic learning
- Importance of environment focus
- Social emotional education

2) *Are there particular themes and topics that could form the basis of international collaborative research projects?*

- Migration and diversity- integration – power
- Interconnectedness
- How to engage with preconceptions/profound idea of key concepts e.g. human rights
- SDGs have been very helpful in different international contexts to bringing to GCE
- Discussion of promised land of education – Finland
- Importance of rooting all learning from good educational theory and philosophy
- Challenges and opportunities of using social media for/in GE
- What is the counter narrative including marginal perspectives
- For research beyond school – GE not just in school also lifelong learning
- Discussion how key concepts changed over years – idea of interconnectedness
- Climate change and related SDGs – big data, surveillance
- Embedded bias in AI
- Challenge – imposing world views
- Need to increase awareness and teaching of systematic change – how do we teach this?

3) *What resources (e.g. funders, existing research partnerships, other networks) are you aware of that could be drawn upon to support new international collaborative research projects?*

- Cannot and don't have to leave to politics to government
- Need to use new-liberal terminology- e.g. innovation, social responsibility to move -GE forward with politicians – avoid terms such as social justice
- Teacher education
- There are national and EC funds but academics aren't always sure how to access them
- Projects often rely on the passion of individuals, although often we feel we are operating in isolation
- Research into practice
- Collaborative research
- Supporting teachers
- Creating space for research in university
- Collaboration can sometimes be difficult incd NGOs and HEIs don't understand how one another works

4) *As a Network, what role could ANGEL play in taking forward these suggestions?*

- Need to engage cross agency support in governments
- Connecting people – experts linking is great giving strength to global education

- Updates through the networks
 - ANGEL can provide projects, a project database, strategies for collaboration to achieve critical mass
- Bring funders into conversations with academics and practitioners

2.3. Parallel Sessions & Workshops

Over the 2 days, the event involved 14 sessions of either research presentations, or workshops / symposia. There were 56 separate presentations, which were split across 4 parallel sessions. This complex structure was hard to manage, and we struggled to corral presentations into coherent themed blocks due to the diversity of what was submitted. The full programme, complete with hyperlinked navigation, [can be viewed on the event webpage](#). We received a fair amount of comment from participants that shows that we may be better off reducing the number of presentations at future events. You can view these comments in full in Section 5.

2.4. ANGEL Business Meeting

An informal discussion took place during the lunch period of the second day and it was attended by over 60% of the participants. Participants raised a series of questions and issues regarding taking forward the activities of ANGEL. These included the following:

- Who is ANGEL for?
- Value of opportunities to meet and network
- Consideration of regional meetings
- Best ways to engage policy-makers

There was also an outline of a proposed funding proposal from COST budget line to develop the work of the Network. There was clearly support and interest in this.

2.5. Journal Meetings and Discussions

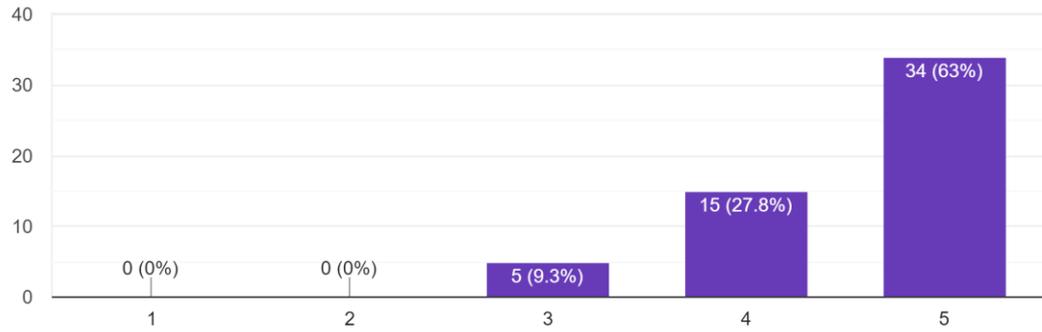
Supported by funding from GENE, editors of 'International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning', 'Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review', 'Sinergias: Educational Dialogue for Social Change' and 'ZEP: Journal of International Research and Development Education' met during the conference to discuss greater collaboration. After updating each other on current and future plans for the individual journals, we discussed a range of ways in which the journals could work more closely together. We also proposed including a session in the next ANGEL conference to raise the profiles of the journals with participants, facilitate feedback on journal content and discuss how the journals can best support the work of global educators.

3. FEEDBACK: DATA

We received feedback from 54 (32%) attendees via an anonymous online form. Below are the key questions asking for simple ratings. Data from the more discursive questions follows later in the report.

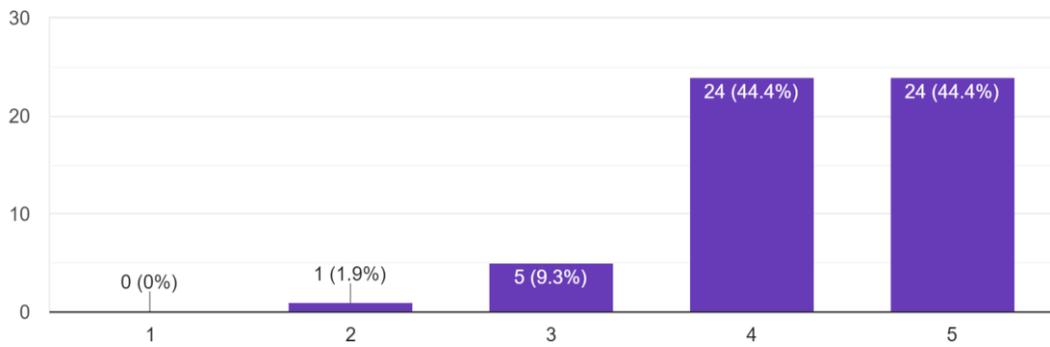
Please rate the event as a whole.

54 responses



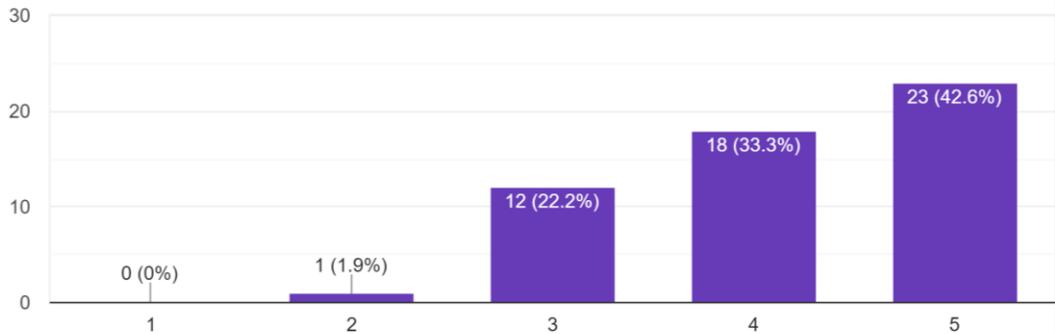
Please rate the quality of William Gaudelli's keynote speech

54 responses



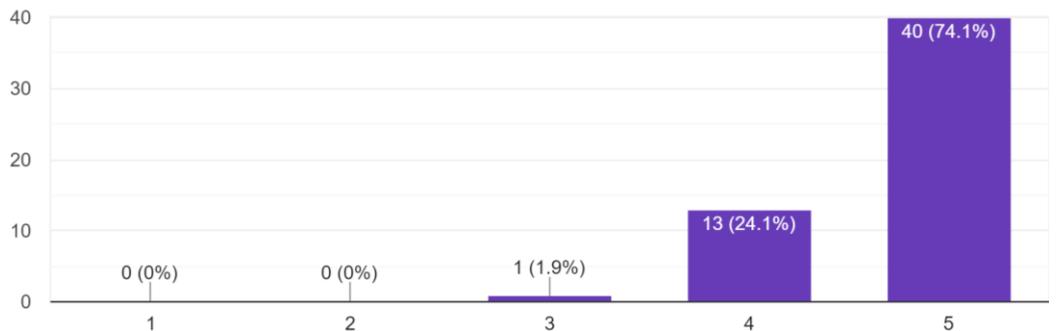
Please rate the quality of Elina Lehtomäki's keynote speech

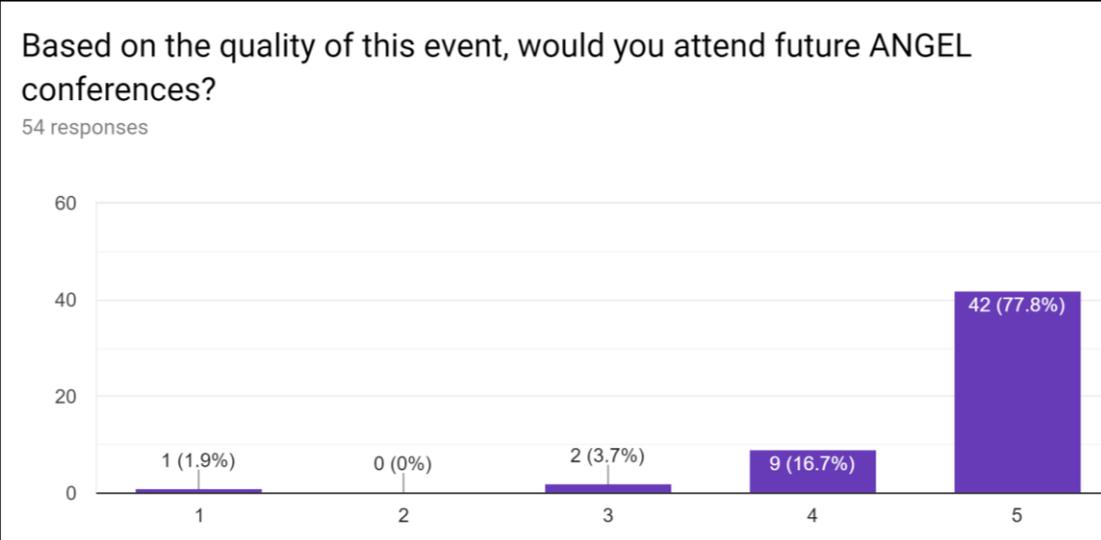
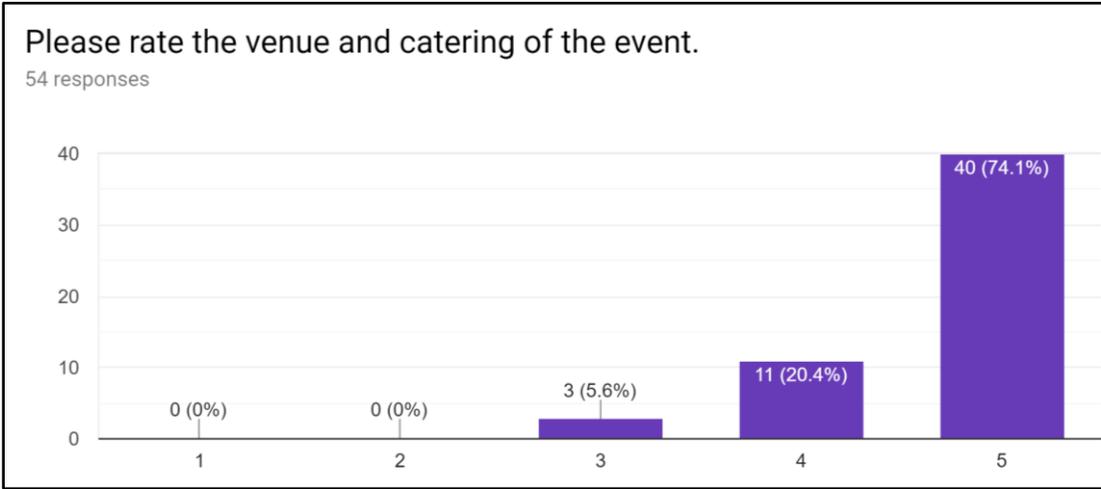
54 responses



Please rate the organisation of the event.

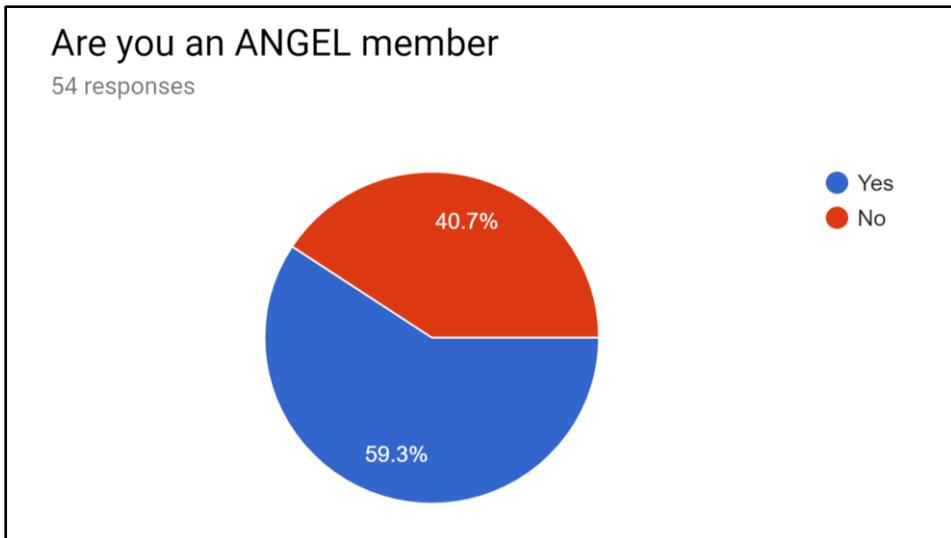
54 responses

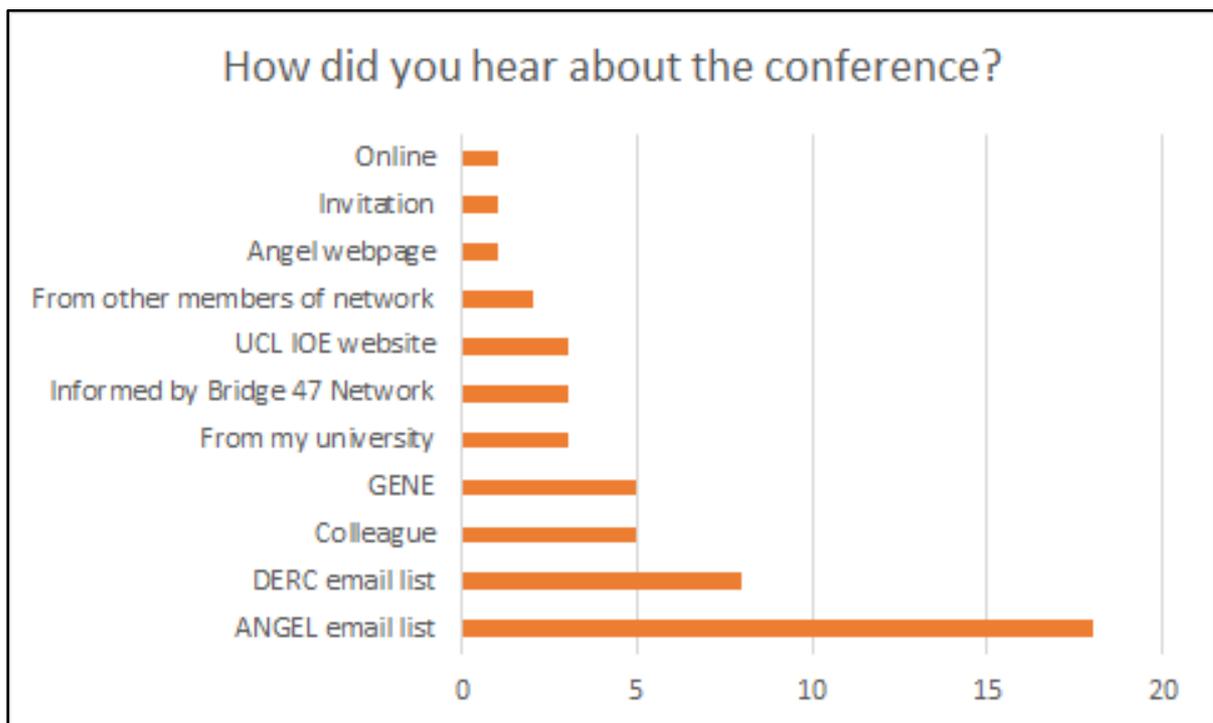
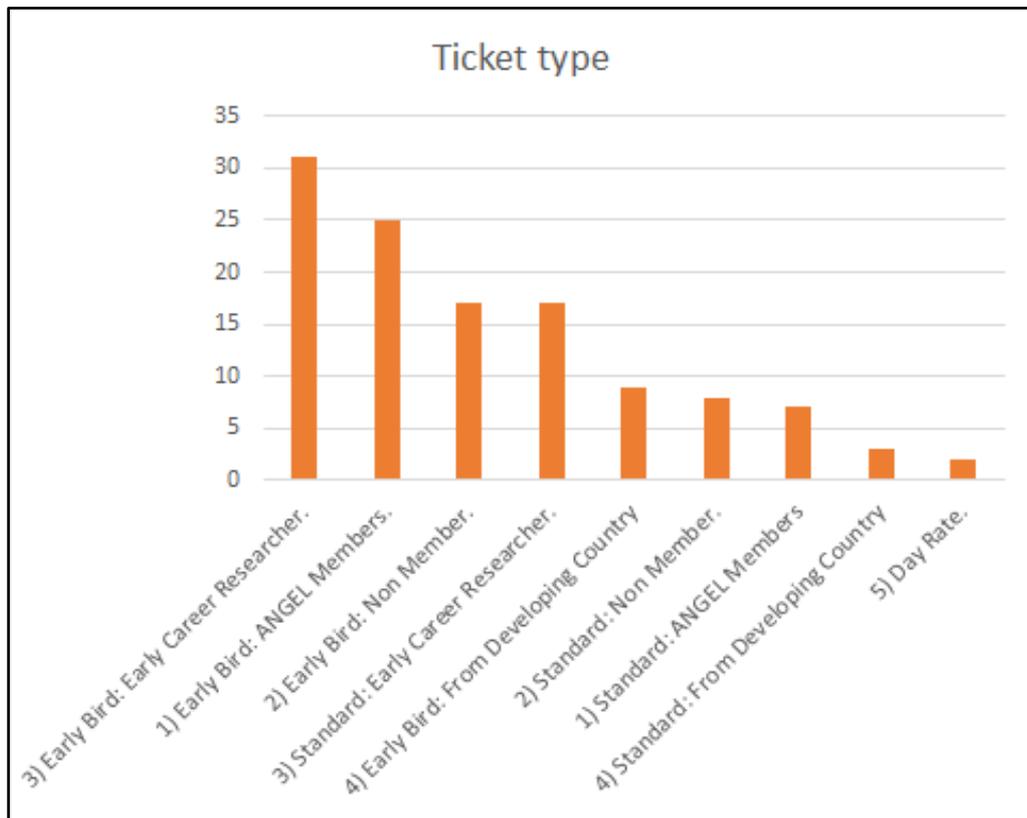




4. ANALYSIS

Who was there? How did they hear about the event? Some key pieces of information about the event.





FINANCES

Total ticket sales income: **£10300**

Total cost of venue: **£26949**

5. COMMENT

We had several questions in the feedback form that allowed participants to freely comment on a number of topics. Below you will find each question stated, with our summary of the key points raised - as well as the full data.

5.1. QUESTION: *“What were your expectations of the conference? Were they met?”*

SUMMARY

The overwhelming majority of the feedback from participants was very positive about the conference.

These are some of the expectations they had which were met:

- Engage in current debates
- Networking
- Engage with and learn more about ANGEL
- Meet old friends and make some new ones
- Quality learning
- Hearing about latest research

Areas not completely met:

- Dialogue and engagement with policy-makers
- Policy recommendations and how to influence policy-makers
- Expected to hear more diverse and more controversial views. Expected to hear more about academic disagreements No discussion of China for example
- Disappointed with the lack of interest in alternative concepts and approaches. Everyone seemed to agree that we do important and good work, with very little critical reflection.

What was also noticeable in the expectations feedback was that a number commented on how the event was much bigger than had been expected. Also the quality was greater than had been envisaged.

5.2. QUESTION: *“What do you feel that you gained from the conference?”*

SUMMARY

The main themes from comments from participants were as follows:

- Networking and contacts
- Hope and inspiration
- Opportunities to reflect on ideas, theories and own views
- Feeling of belonging to a community
- Better understanding of role and work of ANGEL
- Conference opened up new possibilities
- Internationalise mt research
- New knowledge
- Overview of what is happening in the field of global education

5.3. QUESTION: “What do you think of the way the event was structured? What worked well? What could have we improved upon?”

SUMMARY

Organising a complex conference such as this, particularly in a venue the organisers were using for the first time, was bound to lead to a number of issues. The organisers of the conference were very conscious of the number of presentations in some of the parallel sessions and it was aimed to try and address this by a combination of short and main presentations.

Global education conferences tend to have high expectations in terms of participation and engagement and therefore trying to include a flavour of a traditional academic conference is bound to lead to criticisms and questions.

Therefore the following comments should be seen in the light of the points above.

A common comment was that there was not enough time in the parallel sessions and that many presentations felt rushed as a result.

On the whole participants were positive about many of the presentations, but there were criticisms that some were just “*presentations of a practical project*” with no connection to global education.

There were however different viewpoints on the balance of academic papers and practical workshops, likely reflecting the varied background of the participants.

There was a consensus of valuing the length of time in the breaks for networking. Some wanted more practical sessions, including more opportunities for interaction and participation. Others welcomed the balance of structured versus more unstructured sessions.

One comment said thought the structure worked well and was very open, but because it was so successful suggested next one should be slightly different.

Another specific comments suggested sessions could have been themed around controversial or topical areas.

One specific comment gave some great ideas for a final session: “*I would also suggest to change the final meeting with some unconference approach (people divided by centers of interests that appear during the week, 30 min of “speed date” for group, 15 minutes of sharing to everybody the result of the conversation of each group, 15 minutes final speech by the organizers . I felt very fruitful the conversation in the informal space and having an official moment to share the same concerns would be wonderful*”

5.4. QUESTION: “What have you taken from the event that will inform your own future research?”

The responses to this included the following:

- Importance of relations between research, policy and practice, and understanding of the complexity around the work of NGOs in trying to shift policy

- To create networks between different stakeholders, to introduce GL in formal education, be aware of underpinnings meanings of GL
- I've learnt a lot of interesting perspectives from NGO/CSOs experts which are usually not present at academic conferences I attended before.
- We need to work on building up the research in this area from a strong foundation in the academic literature.
- The need to be more coherent and to challenge hegemonic (eurocentric) knowledge production methods

Several participants commented on the need to look specifically at research in the areas of climate emergency and migration.

There were also a number of comments on how the conference had encouraged the participants to be more confident about developing their research, to do more research and to recognise they are not alone.

There was also a recognition from a number of people about the need for a closer relationship between policy-makers, practice and research.

5.5. QUESTION: “What would you say should be the key theme for a future ANGEL conference?”

There were a range of views on this. Some felt it was good not to have a theme. Others wanted more of an interaction between research and policy.

But what was clear was the need to involve and listen to more voices from the Global South. Sustainable development and the SDGs was also another theme suggested.

The changing political climate was also mentioned and the need to address the challenges from the far right.

5.6. QUESTION: “Do you have any other feedback, comments or suggestions about the conference?”

SUMMARY

The overwhelming majority of the general comments from the participants was that it was very good conference. On the whole people liked the venue although there were some problems with being able to hear everything in the main hall. There was also one criticism that it was not good for disabled access.

There was a theme from several comments about lack of voices and engagement of people from the Global South.

Another theme was the ongoing issue about definitions and conceptualisations which several people said could have been discussed more.

The contribution from Lotte and the Climate Change discussion was appreciated.

One person also suggested we should have had a conference dinner.

A specific comment that we could discuss for the future was:

"The ethos of the conference was most important in terms of the organizers' and participants' friendliness and a general sense of peoples' enthusiasm to learn from each other. This must be maintained as the network expands into the future. 2.) Inter-generational dialogue could be promoted through this forum. 3.) Bringing in colleagues through Skype etc. (a few sessions already started to do this). Live stream? 4.) A session at the conference could be dedicated to papers/work that develop linkages between GCE & ESD."

Follow up ideas included:

- Ongoing online platform for attendees to continue their interactions and dialogue
- Need for more stories of success
- Inclusion of other theories beyond postcolonialism

5.7. QUESTION: "The ANGEL network "aims to forge a European community of researchers and scholars in the field of Global Education". What do you think we could do to help further this goal?"

SUMMARY

In terms of the network taking forward the idea of a European community of researchers, there was a comment from several participants on the need to bring in more non-English speakers and perspectives. There was support and interest in regional meetings. A common theme was also the value of the opportunities for ongoing dialogue, forums for debate. Online forums were suggested by several people.

The value and importance of ANGEL is perhaps best summarised by this comment:

"Continued focus on the research/theory contributions of this group. There are lots of opportunities for multi-stakeholder discussions in Europe (hopefully that continues!) that are extremely valuable. I find that ANGEL is very important to mobilise the academic/research contributions in a space that can be focused on the theory/research/praxis as when presenting at multi-stakeholder groups (which also should continue), one must to some extent translate or focus on implications of research. That means we don't always come together to deeply consider the academic debates and concerns. I value both and praxis a lot! But I really need ANGEL as I am somewhat on my own with this work at my institution)."

5.8. QUESTION: "ANGEL hopes to orientate it's activities around the priorities of it's members. What activities or projects do you think a network for Global Education researchers should prioritize?"

SUMMARY

There were many suggestions here but the most common were the following:

- Dialogue and partnership between the Global North and Global South
- Climate Change debates
- Implementation of strategies and the relationship between theory and practice.
- Partnership and learning within partnerships between Global North and Global South
- Sharing good practice
- Developing pool of academics who could be available to advise policy-makers

- Some form of online conference

5.9. QUESTION: “We have discussed the possibility of forming 'Special Interest Groups'. Are you willing to engage with such a group, and if so, on which topic?”

SUMMARY

There was support for Special Interest Groups and the main topics identified were:

- International exchanges and study abroad and volunteering- the international experience
- Migration
- Climate Change
- Global Competencies
- Differing perspectives including faith based ones
- Specific areas of education including formal education, teacher education

6. CONCLUSION

The second ANGEL conference was clearly a great success. Among its many achievements were the raising of the profile of GENE, the value of research-policy dialogue and the need to address current topical issues be they climate change or migration or rise of populism.

But what the conference also showed was the value of having a network where people can share and discuss their research and ideas in a supportive environment, where they can interact with like-minded people, become more confident about their work and research.

The range and quality of the presentations demonstrated that global education is not only alive and well but is making an important contribution to broader educational research. The number of early career researchers demonstrates that this field is a growing one. What was also evidence that interest and engagement in global education is having an impact beyond traditional areas of support such as Western Europe and North America to include Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America.