

Race Ethnicity Education

Main activities and events of the SIG in the past year.

Unfortunately, our first event as the new SIG convenors which was scheduled to take place in the University of the West of Scotland, Scotland, the 3rd of April 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19. However, following the death of George Floyd an African American through police brutality and the subsequent protests across the globe by the #BlackLivesMatter movement, the convenors put out a call inviting academics from all background to support and address not only the #BLM movement but the broader issues of racial justice in the UK and beyond. The eventual result was a special Blog series, titled Education, #BlackLivesMatter and racial justice in the UK and beyond –which was published on BERA’s website on the 15 October 2020. The Blog series had a total of eight contributors with a diverse discussion topics ranging from decolonising education, employing a more diverse workforce, inclusion in decision-making bodies across the education sector, making racial equality part of the curriculum, and much more.

What are the key issues currently affecting your Special Interest Area?

Like most SIG, the COVID-19, which led to the cancellation of our first event as the new SIG convenors is the main issue affecting the REE SIG not least because we are unable to plan for events that would bring the SIG members and the rest of the community together. Another issue that we found as having a negative impact of the SIG is the cost of attending SIG events. We’ve noticed even though many members had expressed interest in attending the event that we had planned for the 3rd of April 2020 in Scotland, most of our members and members of the public found the attendance fee a bit on the high side. The convenors have taken this on board and will work with BERA Event team in seeking ways by which we could make sure that attendance fees are kept as low as possible in the future. This is very important to us particularly as inclusivity is one of the aims of the REE SIG.

Are there any particular developments for your SIG on the horizon, e.g. newsletters, publications, blogs, events, projects?

A Newsletter with updates on current and future events e.g. a podcast series and symposia in January 2021 will be published soon.

What other organizations does your SIG collaborate with?

In planning the cancelled 3rd of April symposium, the convenors collaborated with University of the West of Scotland who provided the venue with no extra cost. Our collaboration also extended to FE colleges in Scotland. The convenors are currently speaking to representatives from the university of Suffolk with a view on hosting a joint conference on Race and Racism next summer at the university of Suffolk, Ipswich, England. We also work in collaboration with the Chartered College of Teaching.

How has your SIG worked to encourage diversity amongst your membership? How do you plan to encourage diversity in the future?

The REE SIG always aims to engage members across the four nations by holding our major events in England, Scotland and Wales. Our first event which was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19 was supposed to be held in Scotland, which was intended bring together academic scholars, schoolteachers and researchers across Scotland, England and Wales. The symposia scheduled for January 2021 will be led by academics (BERA members) from the University of West of Scotland .additionally, we’re currently in talks with University of Suffolk to hold our next major SIG event in Ipswich, England in summer 2021. We also plan to hold the third major SIG event of our tenure in 2022 in Wales.

Our goal is to encourage diversity amongst the REE SIG membership, and we do this through advertising our events to a diverse groups such as school primary and secondary teachers, FE academics, PhD students, early careers researchers, and other SIG members with a view to making them not only aware of the REE SIG but also for those who are not yet members to become members of our SIG and BERA in general. We also publicise our events and activities on different social media handles such as Twitter and Instagram. The efficacy of this media platform was evidenced both in the high number of people that responded to our call for a special Blog series on racism through our Twitter handle but the diversity in the eventual contributions. Our strategies on engaging the 4 nations, collaborating with other organisations and SIGs as well as publishing our events through various social media platform, would ensure we are reaching to different groups which in turn would translate to a diverse membership in the future.