



BERA International Strategy

British Educational Research Association

Company Limited by Guarantee

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International Strategy

This strategy was agreed at Council on 29th January 2019

Introduction

1. BERA is committed to advancing research quality, building research capacity and fostering engagement in education research internationally. Activities to enhance international work are carried out in accordance with BERA's principles of openness, integrity, transparency and ethical practice. This strategy statement outlines BERA's vision and aims for extending its participation within education globally as part of the contribution to knowledge and positive influence on policies and practices of education.

Context for the BERA international strategy document

2. This document emerged as the culmination of work done by BERA Council to formalise and strengthen its international strategy. BERA members have always had an international outlook on educational research through their collaborations and networks. As an organisation BERA has also had a long association with the international context of educational research, especially through partnership with other national and transnational learned societies.
3. BERA's strategic plan 2016 – 2021 brought into focus the need to reconsider the aims, objectives and principles in relation to international contexts. In addition to the internal driver of the strategic plan, developments globally, and in particular Brexit, had increased the need to reconsider BERA's work beyond national boundaries. BERA recognises the need to work strategically, and in partnership, at an international level to help address major global, national and local challenges in the 21st century.

Vision

4. BERA envisages that through its international work it will:
 - contribute to advancing the quality of educational research, in its many forms, through partnership and advocacy, both in the four nations of the United Kingdom and other national and transnational contexts;
 - build the capacity of its own members to engage in ethical and high-quality international research collaboration, and work in partnership with other peer and practitioner associations to support the development of educational research in other national contexts;
 - foster engagement with British educational research in international contexts where educational policy, research and practice are discussed, and encourage its use in informing democratic debate and decision-making.

Objectives for BERA's international work:

5. The following objectives focus the work of BERA committees, Trustees and other members:
 - contribute to developments in education globally;

- enhance the quality of research in the UK through productive and equitable engagement with colleagues outside of the UK;
 - contribute to the enhancement of research in contexts outside of the UK;
 - support understanding that the highest quality research in any national context is located in an international field of scholarship;
 - support colleagues in contexts where research is difficult to undertake;
 - support educational research in low GDP countries
 - raise awareness of BERA worldwide.
6. One of the most important drivers of BERA's international strategy is to facilitate exchanges of ideas and understandings between colleagues in different regions. This strategy acknowledges the importance of cross-country and multiple-country partnerships, and the importance of collaboration with research and education communities seeking to advance their own practice. At times, this facilitation may involve contributions to specific topics of interest that require the benefit of international perspectives, for example on national/international educational policies and/or practitioner research. BERA will seek to create and contribute to opportunities that foster engagement with research, policy, practice, and topics related to belonging to an academic community.
 7. Alongside this, the mutual benefits surrounding best practice for BERA and BERA members should be at the forefront of our international activity.

Operational Features

8. In order for BERA to achieve its objectives for international work there are a number of operational requirements. International work must be based on a financially sustainable approach. This approach requires balancing some activities that do not generate income for BERA with some that do generate income. Facilitated by a financially sustainable approach, BERA will take steps to raise its international profile and reinforce its global reputation for research and scholarship in education.
9. Sustaining links through networking has been part of BERA's mission since inception and remains essential to BERA's development. Such links require BERA members to travel to other countries in order to contribute positively to meeting BERA's objectives for international work. In addition, colleagues from other countries need to be supported to work with BERA members. International activities will provide creative opportunities which support and sustain high quality education programmes and research across international contexts. Importantly, BERA seeks to support research, policy, practice, and engagement where impact can effect change across a broader international stage.
10. BERA also needs to support members to build networks that will support research funded by organisations outside of the UK, for example by European funding sources. In accordance with our research engagement mission BERA seeks to share research outcomes; identify future funding priorities for research; and promote philanthropic/collaborative engagement with countries and regions, including those with developing education systems.
11. BERA's international strategy is as a whole consistent with BERA's ethical principles. In addition, BERA's ethical guidelines include guidance on carrying out research in countries outside of the UK. Some key ethical aspirations for BERA include activity that is genuinely cooperative, that is mutually beneficial and

respectful. This does not preclude the need for BERA to offer constructive challenge, for example to help enhance research capacity. At the same time it is recognised that BERA has much to learn from the knowledge of colleagues around the world in any region.

Priority Activities for 2018 – 2021

12. BERA Leadership Committee has indicated the following activities in bold are the immediate priorities to be pursued and also suggested where the leadership for that work should reside.

Promoting Quality

- i. **Redraw the criteria and approach to how we send international symposia to other conferences – focus on annual rotation of regions that are strategically important, these may include low GDP countries. Clearly define expected outcomes and monitor these annually and over time. Fully fund BERA members who are part of symposia. (CEC)**
- ii. Address pros and cons of engagement with AERA annual conference. Seek discussions with President of AERA to improve processes and representation. Improve clarity about benefits for BERA.

Building Capacity

- i. **Retain links with international ECRs who study in the UK then return home. BERA should be more proactive in following up with members who end their periods of study. (EC)**
- ii. Through BERA's existing programme of work (e.g. current awards, publications, events etc.) explicitly support at least two groups of BERA members to develop new collaborative links internationally.

Fostering Engagement

- i. **Maintain good ties with and within EERA with direct dialogue to explore the relationship and by creating a role that is our representative on EERA Council. (Council)**
- ii. **Look to develop links within the Commonwealth using existing links and relationships. (BERA LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE)**
- iii. Develop new engagement work with at least one country which has potential for mutual benefits but where cultural, political and language differences have hampered cooperation in the past