

2016 ERI-Net Annual Meeting
22-24 February, Tokyo, Japan

Concept Note

Almost six years since its establishment, the Education Research Institutes Network in the Asia-Pacific (ERI-Net) has organized 10 meetings, conducted numerous research studies and facilitated knowledge generation and dissemination of research results primarily in the fields of basic education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education. To date, the network has 63 members from 38 institutions and organizations and 14 participating countries. The Steering Group, created in 2013, provides the over-all advisory role to ERI-Net's activities.

Recently, the network has focused its research work on basic education and higher education issues. The November 2014 ERI-Net Annual Meeting in Hangzhou, China, attended by 36 researchers from 12 countries, shared the main findings of the phase II case studies on transversal competencies in basic education and case studies on academic promotion of teaching personnel in higher education. During the meeting, the network identified "**Education Strategies and Responses to Globalization and Regionalization**" as the overarching theme for the 2015 research activities and agreed that the two ERI-Net research topics are: 1) Integrating Transversal Competencies in Education Policy and Practice (Phase III) and 2) Case Studies on National Qualifications Framework.

Guided by the above overarching theme, the following two meetings were organized by UNESCO-BKK in support of ERI-Net's 2015 research activities.

- 1) The April 2015 ERI-Net Expert Meeting for School Education Group was held to finalize the research framework of the last phase (Phase III) study on transversal competencies and brainstorm on possible research topics for 2016 and beyond.
- 2) ERI-Net researchers for higher education group participated in the July 2015 KFIT Expert Meeting on Developing Regional Guidelines for National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF). They are responsible for preparing the national case studies on NQF.

For the 2015 ERI-Net research studies, several institutes have been providing technical and financial support based on their respective interests. These partners include the Government of Malaysia, the Government of the Republic of Korea, Tokyo Institute of Technology with support from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan, and Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE).

This year, UNESCO Bangkok is organising the 2016 ERI-Net Annual Meeting from 22 to 24 February in Tokyo, Japan in partnership with Tokyo Institute of Technology, this year's host. The meeting aims to share preliminary findings of the 2015 research studies conducted by both school education group and higher education group and to convene the ERI-Net Steering Group members.

Research Topic I: Integrating Transversal Competencies in Education Policy and Practice (Phase III): How are teachers prepared/supported to facilitate acquisition of transversal competencies

Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region are increasingly emphasizing the importance of integrating the formation of transversal competencies in schools in order to help develop students in a more holistic manner. This issue is particularly relevant in the Asia-Pacific region where many education systems have been focusing on the acquisition of knowledge and some academic skills. This bias towards knowledge and academic skills is expressed in the strong focus on high-stake exams and the academic performance of some countries in international assessments. It is within in this context that UNESCO Bangkok's ERI-Net launched a regional study on "Integrating Non-cognitive/Transversal Skills in Education Policy and Practice" in 2012.

In the last two phases, the regional study on transversal competencies has collected and documented experience on this region with regard to education policy (Phase I) and implementation of the education policies at school (Phase II). The findings of the two phases confirmed the needs of further research on teachers as an essential driver of transversal competencies learning, especially on how teachers could better be prepared and supported to fully facilitate such learning. In addition, the findings from the last two phases reiterated the importance of transversal competencies in responding to emerging demands associated with the changes of society, including globalization. Therefore, the ERI-Net experts agreed on having two research topics for Phase III (2015) study: 1) professional development of teachers in relation to transversal competencies learning and 2) impact of globalization on education especially in relation to transversal competencies.

Research Topic II: Case Studies on National Qualifications Frameworks

Facing the rapid expansion and globalization of higher education throughout Asia and the Pacific, new quality tools are critical to ensuring equitable access to quality higher education for all. As the only UN agency with a mandate in higher education, UNESCO is well positioned to accelerate cooperation through the development of regional tools that strengthen quality assurance and promote the cross-border mobility of students.

With support from the Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust (KFIT), UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education has recently launched its project *Developing Regional Quality Tools to Facilitate the Cross-Border Mobility of Students in Asia and the Pacific* (KFIT Higher Education Project). The project, serves as a laboratory for the development of new resources and tools to promote cooperation and build capacity in higher education. The first priority of the KFIT Higher Education Project is to take stock of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) as a baseline for the development of regional guidelines. The July 2015 Expert Meeting held in Bangkok identified and deliberated on existing national and regional approaches to define the scope, values, and priorities of regional guidelines on NQF including the guidelines for national case studies on National Qualifications Frameworks. These national case studies on NQF are the research focus of the ERI-Net higher education group for 2015.

Objectives of the meeting

1. Share the main findings of the 2015 ERI-Net research studies for school education group (phase 3 study on transversal competencies) and higher education group (case studies on National Qualifications Frameworks);

2. Discuss and finalise ERI-Net research topics/focus for 2016 and beyond
3. Convene the Steering Group Members to discuss and decide on revamping strategy of the ERI-Net, its membership, and plans for future research;

Expected outcomes

1. National case study reports presented and commented upon for the purposes of further revision and finalization;
2. Follow-up activities to finalise the case study reports agreed upon by all members;
3. ERI-Net research topics and strategies for 2016 and beyond identified and decided upon by the ERI-Net Members and Steering Group.

Participants

Approximately 40 researchers from 15 countries and economies in the Asia-Pacific region and five UNESCO staff

Provisional Programme

Day 1

- Opening and welcome remarks
- Session I: Presentations of case studies on 'Integrating Transversal Competencies in Education Policy and Practice (Phase III)'
- Plenary discussion on policy recommendations
- Wrap-up of Day 1

Day 2

- Session II: Presentations of case studies on 'National Qualifications Frameworks' (Q&A after each presentation)
- Plenary discussion on policy recommendations
- Wrap-up of Day 2
- Steering Group Meeting

Day 3

- Discussion on institutional matters on ERI-Net
- Plenary discussion on potential topics for ERI-Net research studies in 2016
- Closing remarks
(After the meeting, participants are invited to visit local Junior high school)

For further information about the meeting, please contact:

Mr Libing Wang
Senior Programme Specialist
APEID
UNESCO Bangkok
l.wang@unesco.org

Ms Satoko Yano
Programme Specialist,
ERI-Net Secretariat
UNESCO Bangkok
s.yano@unesco.org