



Building Back Better in Education and Training? Reimagining, Reorienting and Redistributing

13-17 September 2021

UKFIET's first online full conference

Conference Committee Report

Ruth Naylor (Chair) (Education Development Trust)

Moses Oketch (Vice Chair) (University College London)

Yvette Hutchinson (Diversity & Inclusion Officer) (British Council)

Sarah Jeffery (Conference Manager)

Sandra Baxter (UKFIET Engagement Fellow)

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Redesign of Conference for an Online Format	5
Diversity and Inclusion	6
Academic Programming.....	8
Networking Spaces.....	9
Participants	9
Costs and Conference Fees	11
Commentary and Feedback	12
Web-Based Platform.....	12
Sponsors.....	13
Exhibitors	13
Online Engagement During the Conference	13
Twitter.....	14
UKFIET Website.....	19
LinkedIn.....	20
Appendix 1: Proposed Design for an Online Conference for UKFIET 2021.....	23
Introduction	23
Considerations from UKFIET 2019	23
Principles of Design.....	23
Proposed Timetable Overview.....	24
Proposed Outline for Each Theme	24
Submissions.....	24
Networking Spaces/ “Virtual Exhibitions”	25
Platform Options to Consider	25
Appendix 2: Call for Proposals: UKFIET Conference 2021	26
Proposal Types	26
Submission Guidelines.....	27
Abstract Review Process	28
Conditions for Presenters	28
Appendix 3: Conference Planning Timeline.....	30
Appendix 4: Summary of Post-Conference Survey Feedback.....	31
Purpose	31
Conference Platform.....	31
Parallel Platforms.....	32

Programme	32
Pre-recorded Sessions.....	33
Content	33
Exhibitors	33
Keynotes.....	33
Organisation.....	34
Scheduling.....	34
Networking Spaces.....	35
Overall Ratings	35
Format for Future	36
Appendix 5: Networking Facilitator Role Descriptor	37

Introduction

The 2021 UKFIET conference was the 16th UKFIET conference but the first fully virtual one. It was planned and designed amid the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, making it highly unpredictable whether or not face to face meetings would be possible, under what conditions and what travel, both national and international, would be allowed. In the initial stages of planning the theme and subthemes in the summer of 2020, while we were aware of the huge disruption that had taken place globally, and the need for the conference theme to focus on this, we were perhaps naively assuming that by September 2021, things would be back to “normal”, and that the 16th conference would look very much like its predecessors, with delegates meeting in Oxford to present and discuss issues across a range of parallel themes. We had not at that stage recognised the need to apply the agreed conference theme to our own conference design. We constituted a conference committee and planned out a timetable following the tried and tested process from previous conferences.

By the time the first conference committee met in early December, the UK had experienced its second wave, and new variants were emerging, but case numbers in the UK were dropping, and the vaccination programme was just getting underway: we were cautiously hopeful that the conference could go ahead face to face in Oxford, but cognisant that international travel was still going to be difficult for many, so we planned for a hybrid conference, broadcasting live from as many rooms in the venue as costs and infrastructure would allow. The conference committee, together with representatives of the UKFIET executive committee, formed a contingency planning sub group to plan different options for various scenarios relating to pandemic.

By January, when the UKFIET board of Trustees met, the situation was very different: Infection rates and death rates were soaring- in the UK and globally. It was therefore agreed that the conference would need to be fully virtual. This then called for an urgent rethinking and redesign so that the call for papers could be adapted to reflect the design needs of a virtual conference. The option of postponing was considered as an alternative, but it was agreed that this might detract from the 2022 BAICE conference. The details and rationale for this redesign are discussed in more detail in a separate section below and in Appendix 1.

But COVID-19 was not the only impetus for change. From the very outset of conference planning, we had agreed that inclusion and diversity should be a key consideration: the term “redistributing” in the title was intended to have multiple interpretations, including consideration of how knowledge, power and participation in international development research, practice and discourse could be redistributed more equitably. We therefore included an inclusion and diversity officer as part of the conference committee to ensure that we kept a strong focus on this throughout the planning and delivery.

This conference report therefore sets out how and why we redesigned and planned this conference, evidence of the challenges, successes and effectiveness and considerations for how UKFIET can build back better in its convening and knowledge sharing work through conferences and other events in the future. It also includes a summary of the evaluation feedback received after the conference in [Appendix 4](#).

Conference Committee

Ruth Naylor (Chair) – Education Development Trust
Moses Oketch (Deputy Chair) – UCL
Yvette Hutchinson – British Council
Alison Buckler – BAICE
Yulia Nesterova – University of Glasgow
Rebecca Telford – UNHCR
Katie Godwin – Education Commission
Claire Hedges – The Open University
Dawit Tibebu Tiruneh – University of Cambridge
Amy Parker – SD Direct
Melanie Ehren - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Sally Rosscornes – Independent
Divya Nambiar – Oxford Policy Management
Khadijah Fancy – Cambridge Education, Mott Macdonald
Elizabeth Walton – University of Nottingham
Bronwen Magrath – Aga Khan Foundation
Sandra Baxter – UKFIET
Sarah Jeffery – UKFIET

Redesign of Conference for an Online Format

Moving to an online format gave us multiple options to consider as it freed us from the confines of a physical venue with 11 rooms booked for 3 consecutive days. This design was based on discussion and input from trustees, members of the 2021 conference contingency committee and the chair of the UKFIET executive committee. It was also informed by learning from the 2019 conference, for example:

- Just over half (54%) were based in the UK, 15% from Africa, 10% from Europe: **over 80% of participants were based within the range of time zones from 0 (UK) to +3** (Eastern Europe, Middle East and East Africa). The remaining participants were split evenly between more eastern (Asia, Pacific) and more western (Americas) time zones.
- Feedback identified **“networking”, “connecting”, and “conversation” as what participants valued most.**

The following principles of design were therefore agreed upon:

- The e-conference should not attempt to replicate the format or full scale of the normal conference (in 2019 this involved 170 hours of programming over 11 concurrent streams) but should be adapted to suit the online environment.
- The daily programme of formal sessions should be less than a full day and timed to accommodate different time zones.
- We should keep the programme “tight”, over a one week period to recreate the intensity and energy of the traditional conference.
- The design should prioritise quality of interaction over total reach: programme time should be primarily dedicated to discussion and interaction rather than live presentations.

- We should plan to allow for contributions from a large number of delegates (100+) but the number we could accommodate would probably be considerably lower than in previous years (in 2019 there were over 250 different papers/ symposia / workshops etc included.)
- There should be a registration fee- but with a discounted rate for delegates from low- and middle- income countries.
- The conference should have a clear start and end in plenary, it should also include the BAICE keynote.
- Sessions should be shorter than normal with breaks
- We should keep the 6 themes, but rather than having all running concurrently, we would have two themes covered per day so that each thematic programme would be an ongoing conversation, with a start and an end in plenary, then parallel sessions in the middle of the day.
- The number of sessions happening in parallel should be limited to ensure a good level of participation in each parallel session: we originally planned for 6 sessions to be running in parallel each day, but extended this to 7 to accommodate the large number of high quality submissions.

Diversity and Inclusion

At UKFIET we have been thinking about how we should respond to issues around racism and how we can make our activities more inclusive, diverse and representative. This was the conference committee mandate and to think through how we can work towards decolonising the education and development research discourse and community of practice.

We committed to this in two main ways:

We made a specific request on inclusion for all symposia, asking the organisers to make a brief explanation of diversity in the make-up of the symposium members. The criteria for review of submissions also included diversity and representation and the plans for quality interactions with attendees.

This approach saw a more concerted effort to have a range of national and regional voices with greater involvement of academics and practitioners from countries where research took place.

The conveners did a sterling job in selection and ensured that all symposia fulfilled the criteria. Of the 64 symposia submissions reviewed, 10 were given a score of zero for diversity by at least one reviewer (on a zero to two scale). Of these, most were rejected outright, three were accepted as posters or papers and one was accepted on the basis that whilst the submission did not explicitly respond to the diversity question, there was diversity in the ethnicity of the (all female) panel.

Some submitting symposia felt unable to complete the diversity data on behalf of other symposia presenters, but of the 25 accepted symposia able to give diversity data for at least 3 panellists, there was one case of an all-white male panel accepted on the condition of inclusion of at least one of the not yet confirmed non-white female panellists. There was also one case of an all-white (male and female) panel on donor perspectives. There were four all female panels, each with a diversity of ethnicities represented.

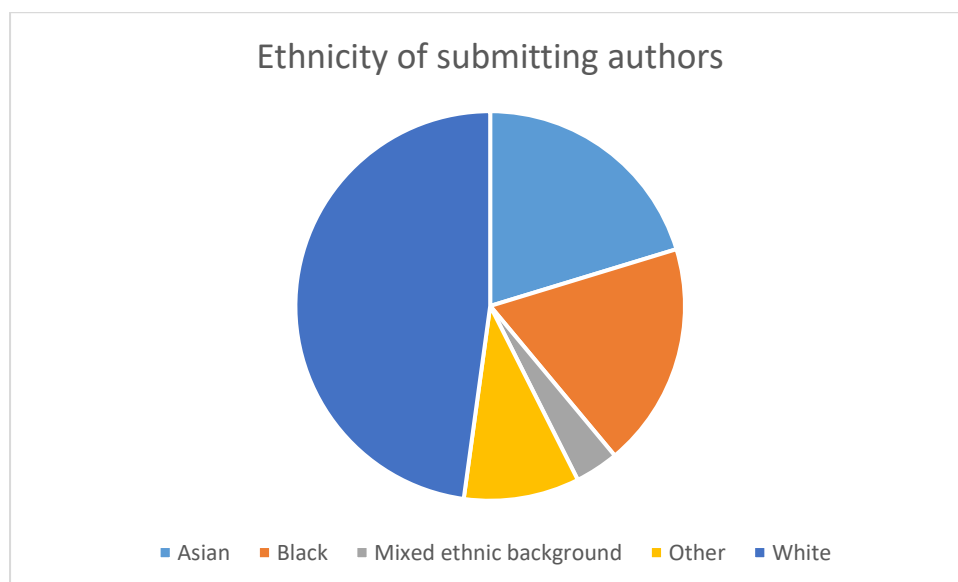
Three main lessons that we learned were:

- That we need to be more vigilant when finalising the programme .We could have paid more attention to those criteria when responding to cancellations and to including important topical debates
- We need to be alert when looking at particular topics so that in discussions about donors and finance for instance, we think carefully about the voices that we privilege in terms of main speakers and those that are the recipient/respondents.
- That we as a committee provide more guidance on what we mean by diversity and representation

The second main area was thematic. While this was a commitment across all of the themes, in the area of research methods, ‘decentering the discourse’ aimed to encourage epistemological variety. This theme looked to reimagine research methods with discussions of imaginative, innovative and inclusive methods. Second, to **reorient** ethics with explorations of contested notions of ‘ethics’, and finally on **redistributing** the ‘goods’ of research by considering engagement with non-traditional research.

The data we have collected suggests of the 607 named authors in the submissions, just under half (48%) identified as being white, 20% identified as Asian, and 19 % identified as Black. The ethnicity of those identified as the presenting authors showed the same distribution, indicating that white authors were not more likely to be identified as presenting authors than those of other ethnicities. Almost two thirds (64%) of submitting authors were female. Only 2.4% of submitting authors indicated that they had a disability.

Symposia authors/presenters were more likely to identify as white (50%) and less likely to identify as Black (18%) or Asian (17%). These data indicate a degree of white privilege, with white authors more likely to be put forward as part of a proposed symposium panel.



It was also interesting to note that some delegates reported that the online format felt more inclusive than a face to face format, as zoom rooms had a democratising effect, where everyone was able to participate in conversations, and those who sometimes felt excluded in face to face networking felt that they were able to join in discussions more easily.

Academic Programming

The call for papers was slightly delayed compared to previous years to allow for the redesign to a virtual format. Submissions were done through the Exordo platform, as in previous years, and were invited for papers or symposia but with a clear explanation that they might be asked to present to a different format. The call for papers is given in appendix 2.

Submissions for papers were significantly down on previous years (around half of the 2019 figure) but submissions of symposia were up (66 compared to 60 in 2019).

Table 1: Breakdown of submissions

Theme	Paper	Symposium
Reimagining Learning Spaces	12	30
Rethinking the education Workforce	7	27
Towards Building back Equitably	22	39
Governance Power and Planning	13	23
Resilience Protection and Wellbeing	4	31
Research Methods. Building back Better	8	22
Grand Total	172	66

Given the high number of symposium submissions it was agreed that there should be 7 parallel sessions per day rather than 6 to accommodate these. However, we agreed not to increase the number of parallel sessions beyond this as it would risk very low participation in some sessions.

In order to ensure that acceptance rates were roughly consistent across themes, and to guide the convenors regarding their feedback and decisions, the available conference slots were allocated to themes in proportion to the number of submissions. Convenors were told how many papers and symposia they could accept for each theme at the outset of the review process, with additional flexibility to combine symposia or repurpose as theme plenaries.

Each paper submission was reviewed independently and blind by the relevant sub-theme convenors and given a score (1-5) against four criteria (see [Appendix 1](#)) together with feedback comments to the authors. Scores were not shared with authors. The chair and vice chair reviewed any submissions where other committee members had conflicts of interest and submissions where there was a large difference in the scoring given by the two theme co-convenors. They also reviewed all reviewer comments and decisions, resulting in a few additional papers and symposia being accommodated.

Submissions by early career professionals that were not accepted by theme convenors were then reviewed by the early career session convenors who selected a set of six papers (one was later withdrawn) for their session on the Monday afternoon.

The daily programming for each theme was designed with a theme plenary as the first and last session, these were shorter sessions (45mins) but expected to attract a larger audience as there would be only two parallel sessions. The second and third sessions were used for parallel sessions and were a mixture of paper session and plenaries. Convenors were given the option of selecting papers or individual symposia for the theme plenaries but all opted to use symposia submissions to fill these slots. The reduction in time was presented as a trade-off to allow for greater reach for those submitting symposia and programme space was provided in the networking sessions to extend discussions from these symposia.

Overall, 59% of papers and 70% of symposia were accepted in some format, though for many submissions, particularly for symposia, they were changed to shorter format pieces or combined with other symposia so that they used less of the limited programme time.

Table 2: Breakdown of accepted submissions

Theme	Papers	Theme plenary	Parallel symposium	Poster	Grand Total
Early Career Session	5				5
Reimagining Learning Spaces	15	2	5	7	29
Rethinking the education Workforce	18	1	2	4	25
Towards Building back Equitably	19	2		9	30
Governance Power and Planning	9	2	4	3	18
Resilience Protection and Wellbeing	22	1	1	2	26
Research Methods. Building back Better	10	2		2	14
Grand Total	98	10	12	27	147

PLENARIES

Opening Keynotes: Education, Equity, Voice & Justice: the COVID Dividends?, Baela Raza Jamil.
Building back better: framing and inquiry, Dean Brooks

BAICE Presidential Address: Covid and 'Building Back Better': Global Agencies, Crises, and the Future of Education. Prof. Paul Morris

Closing Plenary: Keynote: Building back better in international education and development: FCDO's strategic approach to ODA Alicia Herbert, Director of the Education, Gender and Equality Directorate (EdGE), FCDO followed by a panel discussion with Stephen P. Heyneman, Vanderbilt University; Becky Telford, Chief of Education, UNHCR; Keith Lewin, University of Sussex

Networking Spaces

The programme was designed with networking sessions before, between and after sessions to allow for continued discussions for sessions and for other conversations to take place. The format for the networking sessions was a zoom meeting with multiple breakout rooms and two facilitators who could put delegates into the breakout room of their choice or set up a new breakout room on request. The conversations in the networking rooms were rich, with more informal "breakfast banter" sessions in the morning then more focused discussion later on in the day, but participation was limited in some sessions/ rooms. For future online conferences we recommend more but shorter networking sessions. The extended slot at the end of the day was unnecessarily long but it would have been helpful to have more shorter sessions in the middle of the day.

The networking function provided by the platform (OnAir provided by Giggabox) only allowed for bilateral communication and did not seem to enable much networking.

Participants

2021 registrations

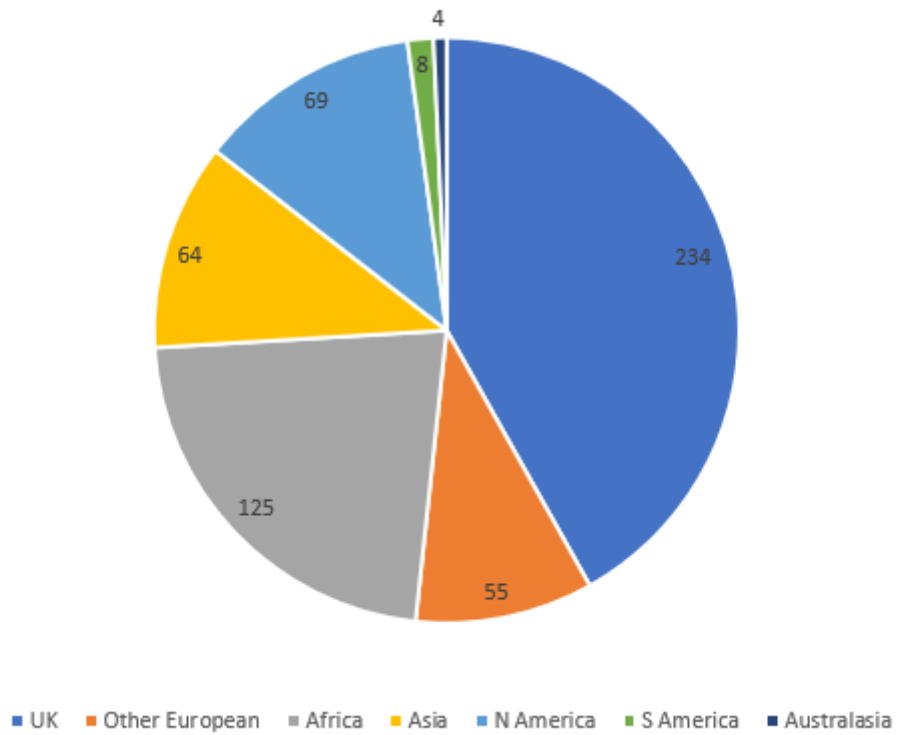
The Conference drew 560 participants, lower than in 2019 (691) . This included 53 delegates qualifying for the Lower- or Middle- Income country registration fee rate and 68 student delegates. Over 60 countries were represented. Whereas in 2019 with the face to face conference, most participants (54%) were based in the UK, for the 2021 virtual conference UK based delegates were in a minority

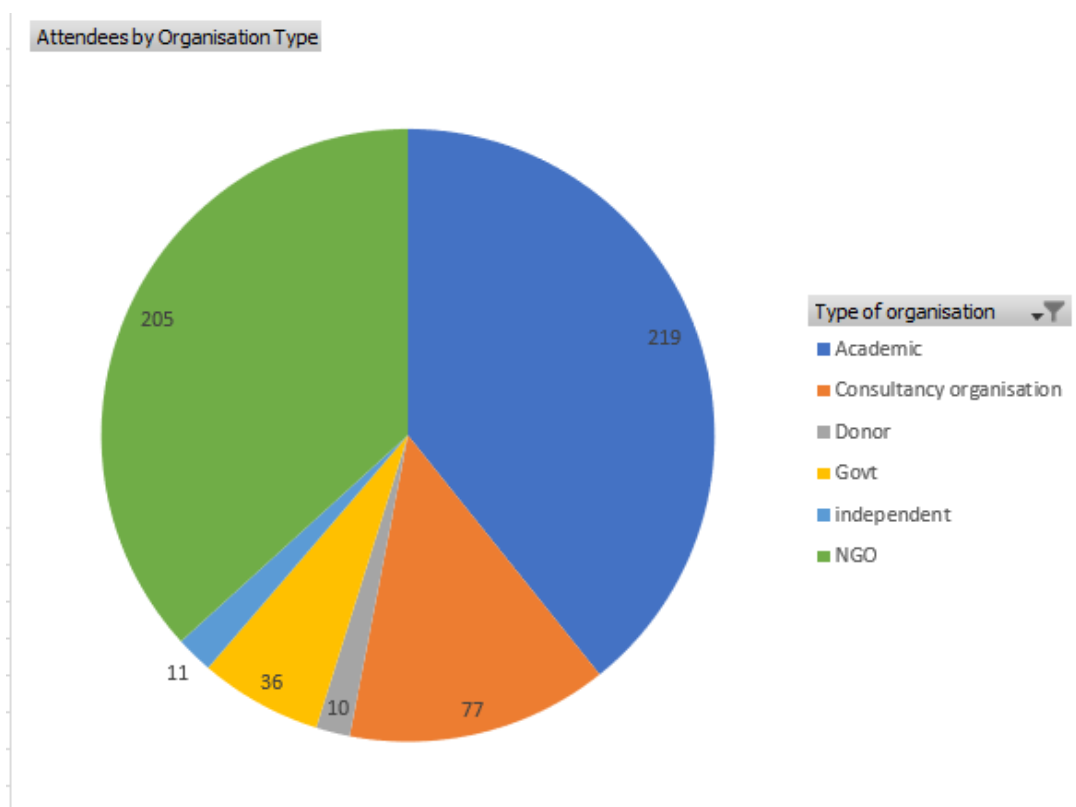
(42%), albeit a large one. There was a higher proportion of delegates from Africa (22% compared to 15% in 2019), and also more delegates from Central and Southern America (11 compared to 1 in 2019).

A breakdown of attendees is shown below.

64% of attendees were women, 34% men and 2% preferred not to say.

Attendees by Continent





Attendance rates for the full plenary session was as follows:

Opening plenary: Baela Raza Jamil and Dean Brooks	203
BAICE Keynote - Covid and 'Building Back Better': Global Agencies, Crises, and the Future of Education.	78
Closing Plenary – with keynote from Alicia Herbert,	107

For the thematic sessions, the average attendance was 35, and only one session had fewer than 10 participants- this was a session focused on Children and Young People's Perspectives on and Experiences of COVID-19 in China and the United Kingdom which had only 9 attendees, indicating that sessions without a clear development context are not popular.

Costs and Conference Fees

The Ticket Tailor platform was used for registrations as a more cost effective option to Eventbrite. The associated transaction costs were built into the registration fees. These costs were negotiated at charity rates. The booking costs of the venue (for which a 50% deposit had already been paid) did not need to be covered as they were able to defer our booking. The largest significant cost was the web platform (OnAir provided by Giggabox), and whilst costs were lower than venue booking costs they were still significant.

The Trustees were emphatic that we needed to run the conference on a full cost recovery basis, while continuing to offer bursaries and also introducing a new rate category for those based in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The conference rates for 2021 were significantly reduced compared to the 2019 conference.

Conference fee rates	2019 (face-to-face)	2021 (virtual)	Reduction
Standard	£465	£270	41%
Student	£235	£90	62%
LMIC delegates	n/a	£135	n/a

Registration fees covered the full costs so the conference did not operate at a loss.

Bursaries were offered and advertised but were very undersubscribed.

Commentary and Feedback

Generally, feedback from the conference was good with constructive comments.

On the format of the 2023 conference the majority considered that a hybrid version; face to face with online elements was the preferred option, followed by face to face only and very few considering that on line only would be a good option.

Web-Based Platform

Once the decision had been made to go virtual in January 2021, the conference committee considered options for on-line conferencing platforms. A number of different companies were considered, but Giggabox was selected on the basis that compared to other providers it offered to provide most of the functionality that we had stated for our platform requirements. However, at a later stage we found that some of the standard functions were more limited than we had hoped for, for example, the networking function provided only options for bilateral networking, and the zoom rooms were not facilitated for most presentation sessions.

Workarounds were developed to cover for this: we set up our own networking space using a zoom meeting in which facilitators could direct participants into a room of their choice to continue a conversation from a session or initiate their own conversation. We took on two facilitators to run these and to support the facilitation of other zoom sessions.

The plenaries were streamed live. This involved the speakers being together in a zoom meeting then the participants viewing a live stream of the presenters as they spoke. They were able to put comments and questions in a chat box but were not able to ask questions in person. A silent moderator was required in these sessions to feed the audience questions to the chair. These sessions should have been preceded by a 30 minute “green room” session where the Giggabox team would explain the technical process, and run sound and video checks. However, as the week proceeded, the Giggabox team became progressively later in starting the green room sessions, which was a cause of concern for some speakers, left waiting to enter the room and without clear guidance of the technical process of live streaming. There were a few technical glitches with the live streaming, most unfortunate of these was with the BAICE presidential address, but mostly they ran smoothly. It should be noted however, there is no control by anyone over what happens in between speakers and audience.

Parallel sessions were Zoom rooms. For paper sessions these started once the videos of the presentations had been shown. All speakers and participants were able to speak. Paper sessions were chaired by convenors and symposia appointed their own chairs.

The platform was generally well received in terms of ease of navigation and its various functions, especially the option for viewing videos of some papers in advance and catching up on videos of all sessions afterwards. The technical support was generally very well received. The networking function was very limited as delegates could not easily see messages from other delegates unless they were on-line at the same time.

Whilst the Giggabox platform performed satisfactorily over the conference week, Giggabox were sometimes not very clear on how the system would run and much of the information and guidance from them came at the very last minute. They were late in making the site available to participants and there was little opportunity for a virtual walkthrough or pre-checking of the virtual platform site before it went live, so corrections and changes to the webpages had to be made “on the hoof” while the conference was live, but the Giggabox team were generally very prompt in making the changes requested by the conference management team. The company did not seem experienced in running a conference of this size and complexity.

Sponsors

BAICE – Wednesday overall

ACER – Research Methods theme

Education Development Trust – Towards Building Back Equitably theme

Curriculum Foundation – Rethinking the Education Workforce theme

Cambridge Education - Education for Resilience and wellbeing theme

Exhibitors

ACER

Bloomsbury Academic

Bristol University Press

VSO

EENET

Curriculum Foundation

BAICE

Education Development Trust

Cambridge Education

Online Engagement During the Conference

With the 2021 conference being virtual, our audience was already online. There are risks with this as people are already overloaded with conference activities (and their normal online routine) and may

not be able to or want to engage further. But the up side is that people are already online so may be willing to see what's going on through social media and engage.

The conference platform did not integrate social media platforms as the 2019 conference app had and our social media channels are open to all of our network, not just those attending the conference. So there was no way of engaging solely with the conference goers apart from a daily email update prioritising key messages. This is not necessarily a negative thing as we tend to pick up many more followers during the conference season as people want to follow what is going on through social media, even if they are unable to attend.

Engagement has continued across the platforms after the conference, as visitors read the blogs coming from the conference sessions and from ideas discussed at the conference.

Twitter

As in previous conference years, we used Twitter as the main social media platform in the lead-up to and during the conference. The website, Facebook and LinkedIn continue to serve more of an ongoing purpose.

Some highlights from the Twitter activity during the month of September 2021 include:

- The UKFIET messages received **105,000 Tweet impressions** during the month of September compared to the similar number of 109,000 during September 2019. (Impressions are the number of times users saw the Tweet).
- The UKFIET profile received **11,200 profile visits** during September 2021, compared to 3,100 both during September 2019 and the month preceding the conference, August 2021.
- UKFIET gained **286 new followers** during September 2021. At the end of the month, the total number of followers was 4,725 – an increase of 1,200 from the previous year.

The Twitter September 2021 summary is as follows:

SEP 2021 SUMMARY

Tweets

109

Tweet impressions

105K

Profile visits

11.2K

Mentions

286

New followers

286

This shows stark increases in all areas in comparison with the previous 2 months (July and August):



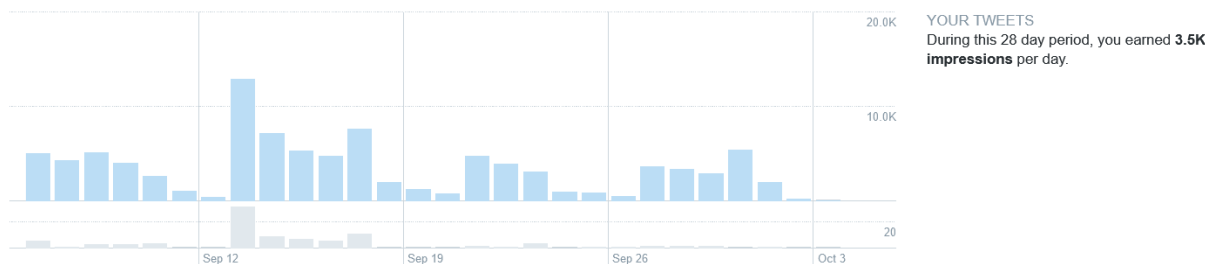
A summary of the final 28 days of September, including the conference week, showed a total of 98,800 Tweet impressions and 10,300 profile visits:

28 day summary with change over previous period



There was an obvious spike during the conference week, particularly on the Monday:

Your Tweets earned **98.8K impressions** over this **28 day** period



As in previous years, UKFIET used the hashtag #UKFIETConf for conference related messages. This was widely used by followers, in addition to some using #UKFIET.

Whereas in previous years, there were many messages about content of presentations and sessions, this year, the content being shared by others focused largely on advertising their upcoming sessions. It will be interesting to see if this balance shifts back if the next conference is in person again.

A few messages were sent, either publicly or privately, about issues related to the conference and several informal comments were heard in discussions about how the UKFIET Twitter channel was responsive in dealing with problems.

The top Tweet from September proved to be one of the messages about it being the last day to register for the conference:

Sep 2021 • 30 days

TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

Top Tweet earned 4,976 impressions

DON'T MISS OUT!

Last day to register for **#UKFIETConf** is TODAY Monday 6 September.

Join us at our conference next week with inspiring keynote speakers, an exciting programme, pertinent themes + great opportunities to network with others. More details here:

ukfiet.org/2021/what-to-e...

pic.twitter.com/NpPrkfJ32H



5 6

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

Top Follower followed by 38.4K people



salma jafar

@Chitan **FOLLOWS YOU**

Independent Thinker, Development Consultant, Pashtun Chauvinist, always shouting Rights-of-Balochistan; my beautiful land!

View profile

Top mention earned 302 engagements



Girls' Education Challenge

@FCDOGEC • Sep 13

Are you joining **#UKFIETConf**? Join the **@FCDOGEC** over this week as our team members chair, discuss and present across a wide range of panels at the event. Below is an update schedule for **#GECatUKFIET @UKFIET**

pic.twitter.com/zyb6Z6tJwp

1	Register for research evidence symposium	Tuesday, 13 September 2021 11:00 - 11:00
3	Register for research evidence symposium	Tuesday, 13 September 2021 14:15 - 14:15
4	Panel: Register for a conference panel: Building for a Resilient and Inclusive Girls' Education Challenge portfolio in conflict-affected and fragile states in the COVID-19 response	Wednesday, 15 September 2021 09:00 - 10:45
5	Register for a conference panel: Register for a Resilient and Inclusive Girls' Education Challenge portfolio in conflict-affected and fragile states in the COVID-19 response	Wednesday, 15 September 2021 10:00 - 11:30
6	Register for a conference panel: Register for a Resilient and Inclusive Girls' Education Challenge portfolio in conflict-affected and fragile states in the COVID-19 response	Wednesday, 15 September 2021 11:00 - 11:30
7	Virtual education training and professional development: This process and evidence-based content will explore how high-quality virtual education can contribute to professional development in conflict-affected and fragile states	Wednesday, 15 September 2021 11:30 - 11:50
8	Register for a conference panel: Register for a Resilient and Inclusive Girls' Education Challenge portfolio in conflict-affected and fragile states in the COVID-19 response	Tuesday, 14 September 2021 09:00 - 10:45

19 45

View Tweet

Top media Tweet earned 4,819 impressions

REGISTER NOW: 15 October

2:30-4:00pm online

UKFIET invites you to "Meet the Editors" of:

Comparative Education Review

@COMPARE_Journal @baicenews

International Journal of Educational

Development

Journal on Education in Emergencies

@JournalonEiE @INEEtweets

tinyurl.com/xs9ctdz4

pic.twitter.com/MgvFB7719b

UKFIET INVITES YOU TO MEET THE EDITORS



Friday, 15 October 2021 2:30 - 4:00pm online
www.ukfiet.org/2021/09/13/invite-to-meet-the-editors/

Meet the Editors of:

- Comparative Education Review
- Compare
- International Journal of Educational Development
- Journal of Education in Emergencies

17 26

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

Indeed, the top media Tweet from August was announcing the conference round-up page with details of the keynote speakers, link to the programme, how to register, what to expect, etc.

Aug 2021 • 31 days

TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

Top Tweet earned 4,668 impressions

Fund Girls' Education. Don't Greenwash It.

[@FCDOGovUK](#) claims girls in poor countries are "among the greatest assets we have in responding to the [#ClimateCrisis](#)."

This blog argues this strategy is empirically + morally flawed.

[@susannahares](#)

More here:

ukfiet.org/2021/fund-girl...
pic.twitter.com/2Ziw5tYRhr



5 replies 8 likes

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

Top Follower followed by 30K people



FE News - The #FutureofEducation

News Channel

Thought Leadership, Good News, Events, Videos & Podcasts in [#FEVoices](#) [#EdTech](#) [#Apprenticeships](#) [#Skills](#) [#FE](#) [#HE](#) [#FutureofWork](#) & [#Employability](#) [@FECareers](#)

View profile

Top mention earned 72 engagements

FT for Schools
[@ft4s](#) · Jul 26

Let's solve the learning crisis together ft.com/content/1904f3... via [@financialtimes](#) [@GPforEducation](#) [@save_children](#) [@riseprogramme](#) [@UKFIET](#) [@UwezoUganda](#)

12 replies 15 likes

View Tweet

Top media Tweet earned 3,068 impressions

What to expect from the 2021 UKFIET conference:

The programme, list of keynote speaker, blogs on the 6 themes related to [#BuildBackBetter](#), how to register, list of our sponsors + networking opportunities

Join us on 13 September for a great

[#UKFIETConf](#)

ukfiet.org/2021/what-to-e...
pic.twitter.com/OvGWA7qBrD



10 replies 17 likes

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

And the top Tweet for July 2021 was when the UKFIET conference programme was announced:

Jul 2021 • 31 days

TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

Top Tweet earned 8,607 impressions

Out now! Announcing the **#UKFIETConf** Programme

Link to our full programme, details of keynote speakers, conference theme, networking opportunities, sponsorship, registration

Looking forward to seeing you in September!

ukfiet.org/2021/out-now-a...
pic.twitter.com/WqnFkPv4vH



1 reply 18 retweets 34 likes

[View Tweet activity](#) [View all Tweet activity](#)

Top Follower followed by 43K people



Roger Federer Fdn

@rogerfedererfdn FOLLOWS YOU

Welcome to the official Roger Federer Foundation Twitter account. You will find information about our work and related topics. **#rogerfederer** **#educationempowers**

[View profile](#)

Top mention earned 91 engagements

FT FT for Schools

@ft4s · Jul 26

Let's solve the learning crisis together ft.com/content/1904f3... via

@financialtimes @GPforEducation @save_children @riseprogramme @UKFIET @UwezoUganda

12 replies 15 likes

[View Tweet](#)

Top media Tweet earned 6,273 impressions

So many **@GPforEducation** **#GlobalEducationSummit** **#GES2021** side events from today!

We have collected as many as we could find on our events page

Today + tomorrow holistic skills **@Foundation_JF** + social norms to end **#ChildMarriage** + advance **#GirlsEducation**

ukfiet.org/news-and-event...
pic.twitter.com/rGXd6LtcuQ

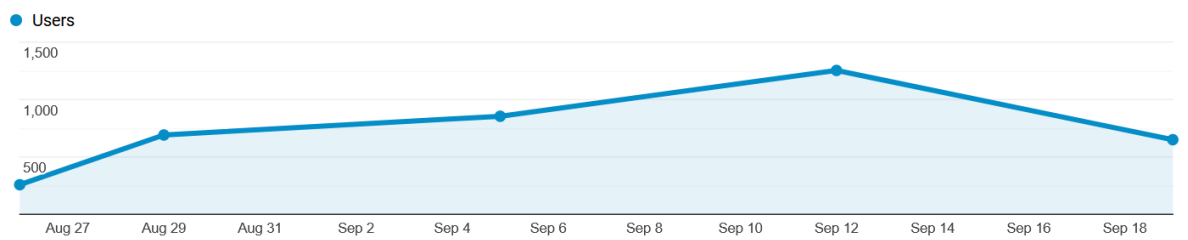
<p>Expanding Measurement of Holistic Skills: Why, What, How</p>	<p>EXPANDING MEASUREMENT OF HO WHY, WHAT, HOW</p> <p>Time: 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p> <p>Event Type: Webinar</p>
<p>Transforming Social Norms to Marriage and Advance Girls' EI</p>	<p>TRANSFORMING SOCIAL NORMS TO MARRIAGE AND ADVANCE GIRLS' EI</p> <p>Time: 2:00pm</p> <p>Event Type: Webinar</p>

9 replies 11 likes

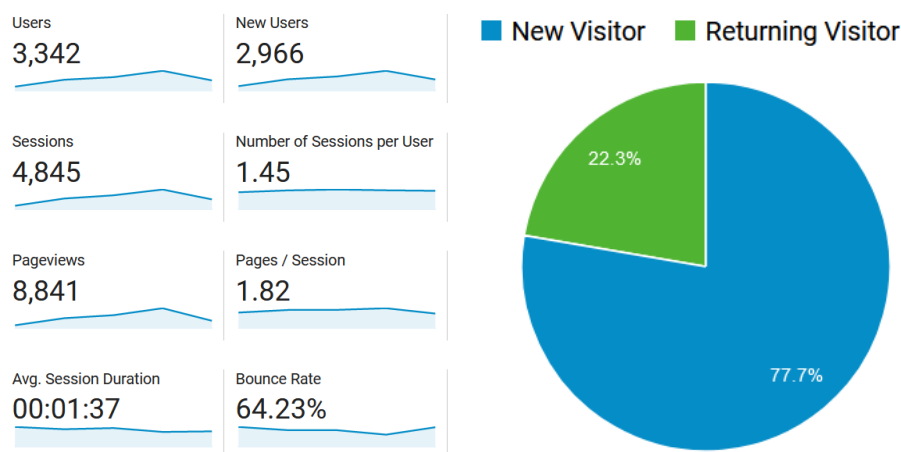
[View Tweet activity](#) [View all Tweet activity](#)

UKFIET Website

A brief analysis of the www.ukfiet.org website engagement showed a significant increase during the lead-up to the conference, and in particular, a spike on the day before the conference started, Sunday 12 September 2021.



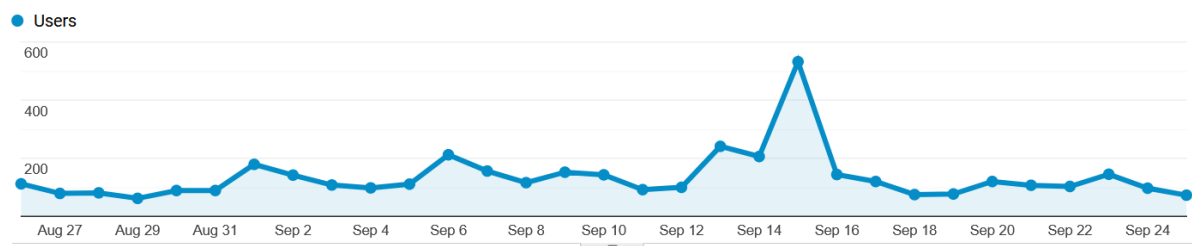
Analytics for the month of September show that 78% of visitors to the website were new, with only 22% being returning visitors.



As would be expected, the majority of visitors were based in the UK (18%), with large numbers also in the USA (12%), Philippines (12%), Pakistan (11%) and India (9%).

Country	Users	% Users
1. United Kingdom	601	17.83%
2. United States	418	12.40%
3. Philippines	395	11.72%
4. Pakistan	358	10.62%
5. India	287	8.52%
6. Uganda	154	4.57%
7. Nigeria	73	2.17%
8. France	53	1.57%
9. South Africa	53	1.57%
10. Canada	43	1.28%

A broad analysis of visitors viewing the website on a mobile device also showed a peak during the conference week – in particular on Wednesday 15th September.



One key message for UKFIET to consider is the weighting of visitors coming to the website on a mobile versus desktop. The free website analytics show that 65% of users were viewing the website on a mobile during the month of September 2021, with 32% (half this number) on a desktop. This could have had severe implications for conference delegates if the weighting was similar for users of the conference platform – particularly given several comments about it being difficult to read some of the slides on a larger desktop screen.

Device Category ?	Acquisition		
	Users ? ↓	New Users ?	Sessions ?
	3,342 % of Total: 100.00% (3,342)	2,967 % of Total: 100.03% (2,966)	4,845 % of Total: 100.00% (4,845)
1. mobile	2,179 (65.20%)	2,065 (69.60%)	2,662 (54.94%)
2. desktop	1,091 (32.65%)	838 (28.24%)	2,080 (42.93%)
3. tablet	72 (2.15%)	64 (2.16%)	103 (2.13%)

LinkedIn

Looking at the broad analytics provided by the LinkedIn platform, we can see that engagement had increased substantially during the previous month:

Visitor highlights ?

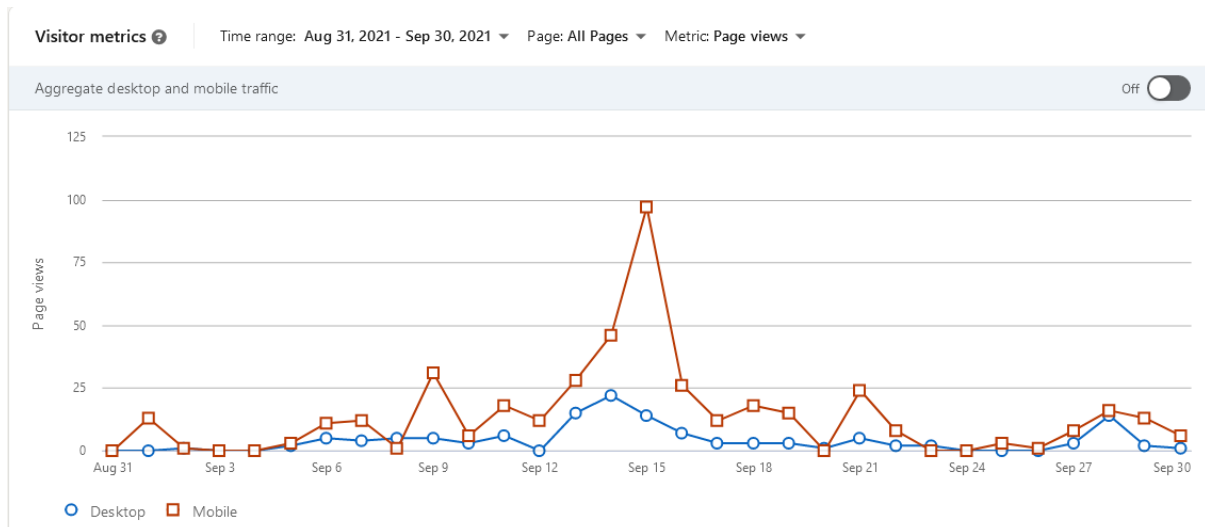
Data for the last 30 days 9/2/2021 - 10/2/2021

544 ▲511%
Page views

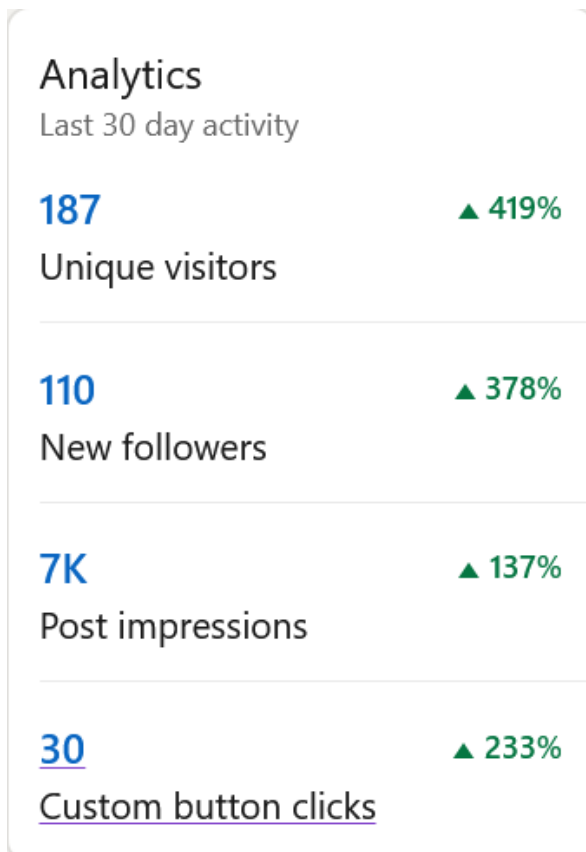
187 ▲419%
Unique visitors

30 ▲233%
Custom button clicks

As with the other platforms, there was a spike in engagement during the conference week, particularly on Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th September. As with the website, we can see that users are accessing LinkedIn much more on mobile devices than on a desktop – this could be a further argument for prioritising mobile device access for any future conference platform.



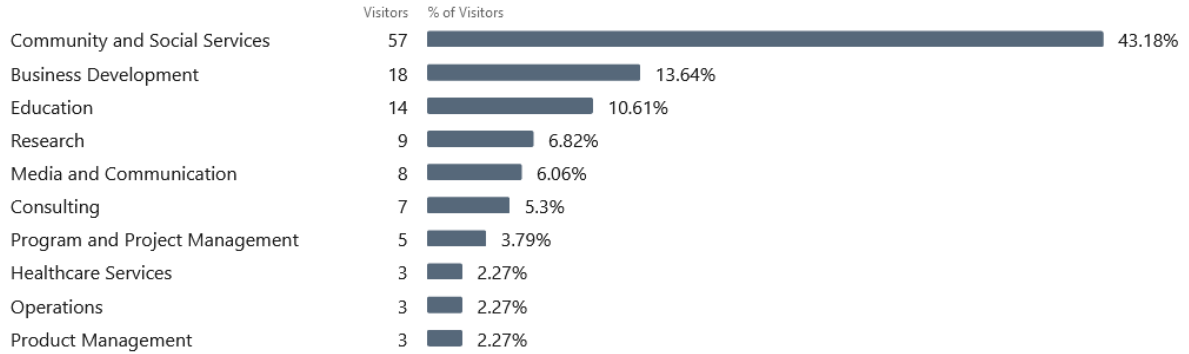
The UKFIET LinkedIn channel now has 1,418 Followers. This is surprising as people generally tend to follow organisations where they have worked. So to see an increase of 110 new Followers in the month of September is positive as people were obviously looking at the site.



LinkedIn provides some breakdown of job function of visitors. The categories may obviously differ to how we would break down these roles within the UKFIET network.

Visitor demographics ⓘ Time range: Sep 16, 2021 - Sep 30, 2021 ▾ Data for: Job function ▾

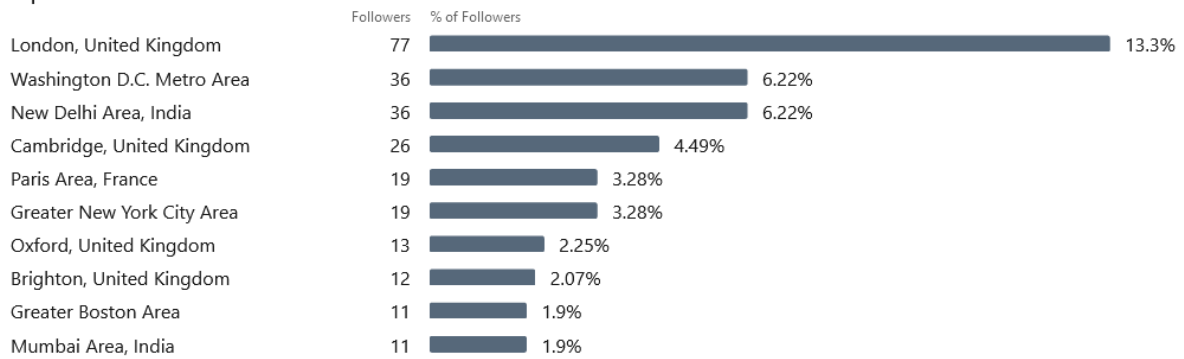
Top job functions



Finally, there is also a breakdown of key locations (mainly based around key cities) around the world. London is top with 13%, followed by Washington and New Delhi (6% each).

Follower Demographics ⓘ Data for: Location ▾

Top locations



Appendix 1: Proposed Design for an Online Conference for UKFIET 2021

Introduction

Given the current high rates of COVID-19 infection, and the anticipated timetable for the roll-out of vaccinations (unlikely to be complete by September 2021 in the UK, and later in many other countries) the UKFIET trustees at their meeting of 14th January 2021 agreed that the 2021 UKFIET conference should be entirely on-line. The option of postponing was considered as an alternative, but it was agreed that this might detract from the 2022 BAICE conference.

This proposed design is based on discussion and input from trustees, members of the 2021 conference contingency committee and the chair of the UKFIET executive committee.

Considerations from UKFIET 2019

- The conference included over 250 different papers/ symposia / workshops etc **and over 170 hours programming**, with 11 concurrent streams.
- There were 691 participants: most of these contributed to the programme in some form.
- Just over half (54%) were based in the UK, 15% from Africa, 10% from Europe: **over 80% of participants were based within the range of time zones from 0 (UK) to +3** (Eastern Europe, Middle East and East Africa). The remaining participants were split evenly between more eastern (Asia, Pacific) and more western (Americas) time zones.
- Feedback identified **“networking”, “connecting”, and “conversation” as what participants valued most.**

Principles of Design

- The e-conference should not attempt to replicate the format or full scale of the normal conference but should be adapted to suit the online environment.
- The daily programme of formal sessions should be less than a full day and timed to accommodate different time zones.
- Keep the programme “tight”, over a one week period to recreate the intensity and energy of the traditional conference.
- The design should prioritise quality of interaction over total reach: programme time should be primarily dedicated to discussion and interaction rather than live presentations.
- We should plan to allow for contributions from a large number of delegates (100+).
- There should be a registration fee- but with a discounted rate for delegates from low and middle income countries.
- The conference should have a clear start and end in plenary, it should also include the BAICE keynote.
- Sessions should be shorter than normal (1 hr max) with breaks
- We should keep the 6 themes with two themes covered per day.

Proposed Timetable Overview

Timing*(approx.)	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8-9		Networking space	Networking space	Networking space	Networking space
9-12		Theme 1&2 plenaries parallel sessions	Theme 3&4 plenaries parallel sessions	Theme 5&6 plenaries parallel sessions	Conference close
12-3	Open conference and keynote	parallel sessions wrap up	parallel sessions wrap up	parallel sessions wrap up	
3-5	Networking space	Networking space	BAICE keynote and virtual drinks	Networking space	

* these timeslots indicate the time during the day when session will take place. Sessions themselves should be limited to 1 hr maximum.

Proposed Outline for Each Theme

Each theme will be assigned a day (Tues to Thurs) with two themes running in parallel each day (to be assigned based on number of submissions for each theme)

Session 1	45 mins	plenary (for the theme participants): presentations and/or panel
Session 2	1hr	Parallel sessions – up to 3 per theme
Session 3	1hr	Parallel sessions – up to 3 per theme
Session 4	30 mins	Wrap up: Invited discussants

Each theme has capacity for 6 parallel sessions, these can be of two formats:

- facilitated discussions on individual papers (up to 6) based on 5 min video presentations available prior to the session.
- symposium organised and chaired by delegates.

Each theme can therefore accommodate a combination of symposia and papers (e.g. 2 symposia and up to 24 papers), in addition to presenters, panel members and discussants during the plenary sessions.

Submissions

We recommend two types of submission:

- 1) Paper: this involves a 5 min pre-recorded video and involvement in a panel discussion during the parallel sessions organised by convenors. The submission should be a standard paper abstract (300 words). The review will be blind and it is likely to be competitive (there will be capacity for up to 144 papers, in 2019 there were over 350 paper submissions).

- 2) Symposium: a one hour session organised, chaired and facilitated by the group submitting the proposal. Symposia places will be restricted (maximum of 2 per theme, ie 12 in total) so selection is likely to be highly competitive (for comparison, there were 60 symposia submissions in 2019). The submission (700 words max) should include short abstracts of any presentations, a detailed schedule and session structure including an explanation of how delegated will participate, names of presenters/ discussants/ panellist and chair and an explanation of how the session organisers are addressing diversity issues in the design of their session.

The one presentation per person rule will apply

High quality/ high relevance submissions/ speakers from symposia proposals may be invited to be included in the theme plenary sessions *instead of* being part of parallel sessions.

Networking Spaces/ “Virtual Exhibitions”

There should be networking and knowledge sharing spaces available outside of the core programme: these could include:

- speed networking (participants are paired randomly for 2-3 minutes)
- exhibitor space (delegates can browse multimedia displays and request 1:1 chats with the stand holders)
- discussion groups: facilitators host 20 minute discussions of a problem/ issue with up to 12 delegates (sign up)

Platform Options to Consider

Zoom appears to be widely used for presentations/ panel sessions / discussions.

A conference app is needed for interactive timetabling/ facilitating networking

Other platforms to consider:

Giggabox

B2match

Appendix 2: Call for Proposals: UKFIET Conference 2021

As education and training institutions and systems recover and rebuild after a crisis, there is a unique opportunity to reflect, redesign and to build back better. Planning for the reopening and return to education and training provides an opportunity to rethink the way we educate the next generation, and how to prepare learners for unpredictable futures in a rapidly changing society. Innovative and pragmatic solutions developed and adopted during times of crisis can challenge traditional delivery models and offer more effective or more accessible options. Crises expose vulnerabilities, as well as highlighting the skills we value most. Crises often widen inequalities. As systems and institutions rebuild, they need to consider how resources can be redistributed to ensure that gaps in access and learning are narrowed. Inequalities within the workforce also need to be examined; ensuring a diverse representation, especially among education leaders. Building back better should also consider how education and training systems can be reoriented to become transformative, challenging discrimination, and acting as drivers for a more equitable distribution of wealth and power in society. This conference will also consider how the international education and development research community itself can “build back better”: exploring innovations for more effective, efficient and lower carbon research methods, as well as considering strategies to address prejudice and inequality within the research community.

Submissions to all themes which address issues of race, discrimination or decolonisation and submissions by members of under-represented communities are particularly welcome.

Themes:

- Reimagining learning spaces
- Rethinking the education workforce
- Towards building back equitably
- Governance, power and planning
- Education for resilience, protection and wellbeing
- Research Methods: Building back better in international education and development research

Proposal Types

All proposals should relate to the overall conference theme and link to one of six sub–themes.

Paper: A presentation informed by theory and / or empirical data which prompts purposeful discussion. Up to six papers will be scheduled per 90 minute session, providing 5 minutes for each presenter and time for discussion. The work should not have been published elsewhere and should not have been submitted for publication prior to the conference. Alternative formats for presenting papers may also be available.

Symposium: Symposia can take a variety of formats offering different perspectives on a specific topic, issue or programme. We encourage imaginative formats as well as more traditional offerings; possible formats include 3-4 related papers, 6 short talks or a facilitated discussion. All symposia should aim to prompt inclusive stimulating discussion. Symposia will be scheduled for a 90 minute slot. Please be aware that there will be a limited number of programme slots for symposia in the 2021 conference. The Conference Committee will be prioritising symposia proposals that offer critical reflection on programmes and cross-constituency dialogue.

Each symposium will require an organiser who serves as principal contact. Symposia must also have a nominated chair and may have a nominated discussant. If the contributions are all from one

programme or constituency the discussant should be external to the programme or from a different constituency.

Please note that all those participating in the session will be expected to register and pay to attend the conference.

Submission Guidelines

The following are guidelines for the types of submission invited for consideration. The Conference is using the Ex Ordo abstract submission system. Please follow the instructions on screen during the submission process.

TYPE OF SUBMISSION	MAXIMUM No. of WORDS (references are not required but must be	NOTES
Paper	300 words	Please note that these will undergo blind review so we ask that you do not identify authors in the main text of the abstract
Symposium	700 words	<p>The 700 word abstract should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title, organiser and chair • Title and author/presenter(s) for each contribution in the session • Overview of the symposium, including interactive elements <p>A brief explanation of how the organiser has addressed diversity in the make up of the symposium members.</p>

- Abstracts are expected to show a clear link to the overall conference theme and chosen sub-theme.
- Avoid including references in the abstract unless essential (but these must be included in the word count if used).
- Avoid an overly long title for your abstract.
- Ensure that the context of your abstract is sufficiently clear, e.g. country(ies) of focus, level of education or training addressed, type or period of research etc.
- Indicate, if appropriate, whether the abstract is based on ongoing or completed research.
- Use clear and concise language. The official language of the conference is English. We encourage authors to have their work proof-read before submission.

Due to pressure of space on the conference programme, abstracts will not be accepted after the deadline of **23:59 BST, Monday 29th March 2021**

Abstract Review Process

Each abstract will be reviewed by at least two members of the Conference Committee and assessed against each of the following criteria:

- **Relevance;** does the paper directly interrogate the conference theme (Building Back Better in Education and Training?) and the chosen sub-theme
- **Originality;** are there new thoughts, arguments, findings, methodologies or ways of addressing the topic?
- **Clarity and coherence** of the enquiry or activity or conceptual framework
- **Significance** for educational practice, policy or theory

Submissions for symposia will also be reviewed based on diversity and representation, and on the plans for quality interactions with attendees.

The review process for papers will be blind, and reviewers will not have sight of presenters'/ authors' names. Symposia abstracts include presenter names and the review process will not be blind.

In recent years the number of submissions has greatly exceeded the conference capacity. The Conference Committee will allocate each selected submission to the format most suitable.

Conference Committee decisions on the abstract review process will be communicated to authors by **late May**.

Conditions for Presenters

Abstract submission: All types of proposal require an abstract. Please see submission guidelines for the criteria for the different types of proposals.

One-time presentation: We will continue to implement a one-time presentation rule. You can be a named author or contributor on several submissions, but you can only present once. Please plan your submissions accordingly. Symposia chairs and discussants can also present papers in other sessions.

Conference registration fees: all presenters and symposia members will need to pay the conference registration fee. As this is a virtual event, registration fees will be reduced.

Presenter registration deadline: In order to plan the conference timetable presenters of accepted submissions, must register by **1 July 2021** to have their contribution timetabled. Failure to register and pay for your place by **1 July 2021** will result in your contribution being excluded from the programme.

Presentation / paper expectations: we require presenters of all accepted papers to upload either:

- a set of slides with a five minute audio commentary, or
- a 5 minute video presentation by **9 August 2021**.

In addition, presenters may also provide (optional)

- A short paper outlining the key points of your presentation (max 2000 words) or,
- A blog style piece discussing issues in your presentation (up to 800 words)

Symposia organisers will be responsible for the uploading of slides and any other materials relevant to their sessions by the same date.

These outputs will be made available to session chairs in advance of the conference and to conference participants during the conference.

We encourage presenters to give careful consideration to the number of slides they prepare; we recommend a maximum of 5 slides for a 5 minute presentation.

Presentations will be accompanied by live Q&A session.

Appendix 3: Conference Planning Timeline

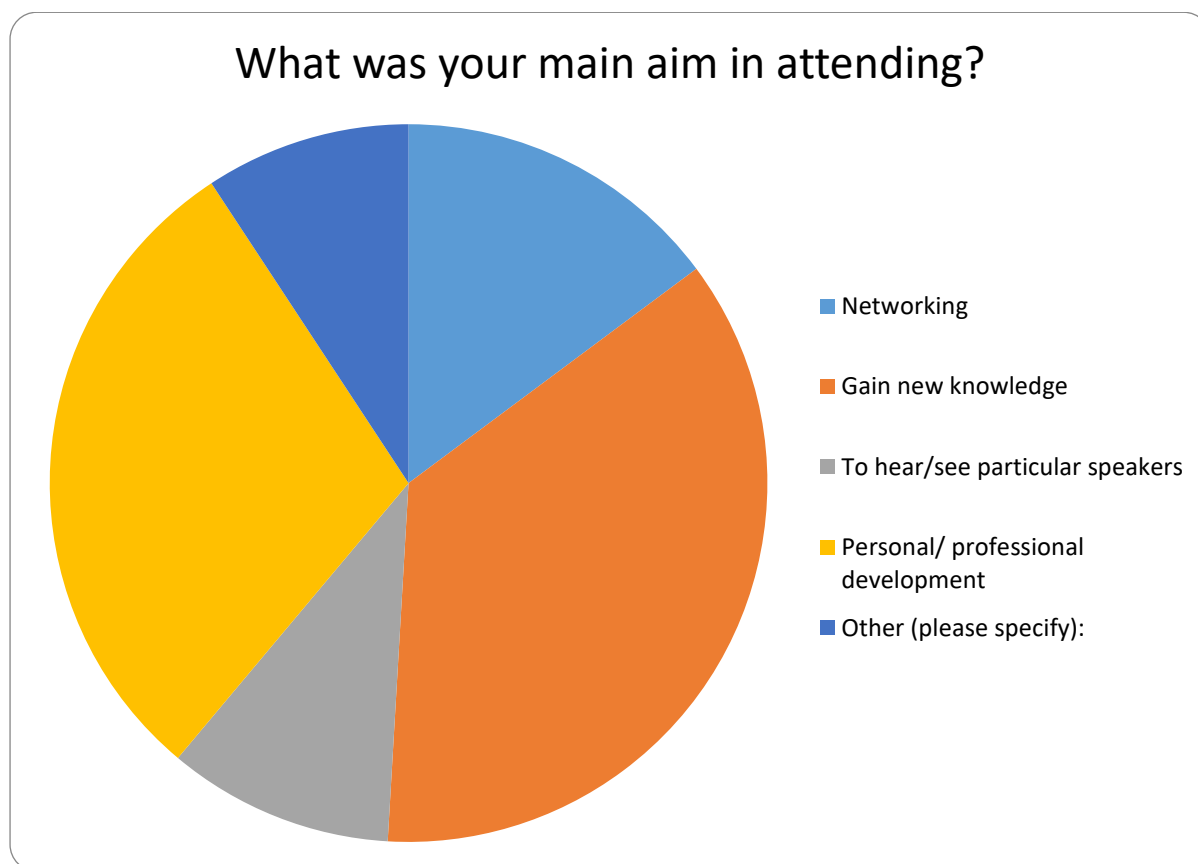
	Conference Key dates
September 2020	Conference Theme agreed, announced via UKFIET website. Call for committee members to apply
November 2020	Committee applications review completed, and invitations sent
December 2020	First Conference Committee meeting 1December
March 2021	Publish final sub-theme info and Open Call for abstracts: 1 March
March 2021	Registration opens 22 March Call for abstracts closes March 29
April 2021	Conference committee meeting for agreeing acceptances 19th April Selection of conference papers / dialogue with authors
May 2021	Confirmation of acceptance to presenters Week of 17 May
June 2021	Correspondence with presenters/ withdrawals etc.
July 2021	Deadline for presenter registration: 1 July Conference committee meeting for programming 22nd July Meeting for detailed programming 23rd July.
August 2021	Deadline for 6 min pre-recorded presentations for papers 9 August
September 2021	CONFERENCE 13 - 117 Sept
September/ October 2021	Submission and analysis of feedback

Appendix 4: Summary of Post-Conference Survey Feedback

The online evaluation feedback received limited response, just under 5%, and mostly from participants who were presenting. These results may therefore not be seen as representative, but are worth noting to consider for future conference organisation.

Purpose

One is the split of why participants joined in for the online conference – as is to be expected with an online event, the aim of networking was lower than it has been previously for face-to-face events. Participants largely wanted to gain new knowledge, followed by aims for personal or professional development purposes.



Conference Platform

There were several comments about the technical issues with the platform. This put some people off engaging and there were feelings that the platform provider was not professional enough to deliver the full online conference experience.

“Platform was quite old-fashioned and confusing. Quite hard to navigate to events and noticed attendance was very low at some, probably as a result.”

“Clearly this year was an experiment with virtual delivery. Everyone was on a steep learning curve. And all credit is due to those at the sharp end of delivery. However, digital issues (possibly in several quarters) were clearly apparent with a number of the sessions, the BAICE presidential talk being the most obvious victim.”

A couple of individuals commented about the length of time it took for the providers to respond when there were glitches, although a few commented on how efficient their response was on smaller issues.

Some commented on the useful explanation videos provided by Ruth Naylor for sessions, however this was not for all sessions and an introduction video on the overall conference platform format and functions would have been useful. Without this, many participants did not realise the range of functions available but just focused on navigating their session.

“It would have been useful to have had a guided tour around the platform before we began to highlight key features such as the stall, posters, Hub, presentations.”

“The 'digital divide' is not just internet and devices...it is also knowing how to navigate (having the confidence to...) platforms such as this. I kept hitting the 'back' arrow for example which chucked me out rather than going to the previous page.”

Parallel Platforms

There was confusion about having parallel platforms used within the same session i.e. the conference platform for watching the videos and then zoom being used for discussion. Several people didn't realise they then had to go to a different site. One person commented on how helpful the introductory video was that explained how to engage with this.

“The need to see videos in a different platform prior to a panel was awkward and took time away from deep conversation.”

A couple of the speakers noted the confusion with the presenters being in a zoom room while the participants were watching through the conference platform. You could also have both switched on but they run a few seconds earlier or later than each other.

Presenters were not always able to enter sessions in advance and one commented about these delays losing valuable time. They wanted more time in the 'green rooms'. Chairs wanted more consistent advice.

All of these confusions with the platforms and format of sessions led to less time for discussion. And plenary sessions were less interactive – you could not see who else was watching, how many people were watching, and although you could post questions, the format did not invite discussion.

“I was frustrated that there was too little time for discussion in the plenary sessions.”

“Restricting questions to the chat can limit the type of questions / comments that are made and, on occasion, lead to performative comments.”

“The inability of participants to ask open questions and interactive with presenters was a missing ingredient in the conference.”

Programme

The online programme was not easy to navigate. You could mark up selections but this did not seem to save when opened up again later. Some found it hard to search and one commented that they would like to be able search beyond session title to session participants, their presentation titles, and their presentation abstracts.

Pre-recorded Sessions

Despite challenges in navigating from the pre-recorded presentations to the following discussions, this format was appreciated for an online conference. Several commented on the higher quality of these presentations as speakers had had time to practice and really consider what they wanted to say in their allotted slot.

"I think the improved quality of the presentations - achieved because people had to practice and get their message into 6 mins was excellent."

"The pre-recorded videos were a little stressful to produce in August but actually made for a more relaxed conference experience in the end (I could go into my session prepared to answer questions but without thinking about my presentation). It's also great that we have time to watch them still. 6 minutes seemed to be a good amount of time - it could possibly be increased to 10 minutes, but certainly made for more succinct presentations than the usual 15-minute slots."

"I liked that the papers were pre-recorded and that the sessions are available after-conference. This meant I could more fully digest the information. While I attended fewer sessions overall, compared to when I attend UKFIET in person, I think I benefited more from the content because it was offered in this way."

Several commented on the quality of the PowerPoint slides from presentations as these appeared blurry and out of focus (they were pixelated and shrunk due to large borders and it was not possible to increase the size or zoom in on the platform).

Content

The choice of themes and content of sessions was praised highly and many appreciated being able to hear how others have been dealing with challenges posed by the pandemic. However, some commented about sessions from the same theme being scheduled in parallel on the same day, rather than spread out across the week – this meant that at times there were several sessions they wanted to attend and at other times there were none.

Exhibitors

A few exhibitors commented about the format of this space not working well. It was poorly attended and hard to navigate for them.

"The Virtual Exhibition Stand did not work for me. I could not accept people and visitors (via Whatsapp!) said they could not join. The other thing was that unless I was 'standing' on my stall I could not see if anybody was waiting. A notification system of some sort would have helped."

Another suggestion was for a marketplace for innovations:

"I would definitely urge a marketplace for innovations with those who want to bid for certain innovations and bring equity to the ideas for scaling up ... no harm in having some business foundations and venture partners participate too."

Keynotes

The middle keynote on the BAICE day was largely inaccessible due to platform issues. For those who managed to watch it later, there was praise. Overall, the keynote plenaries were appreciated, although more chance for discussion was called for.

"The closing plenary was such a high point as well- policy-evidence- action and critique all wrapped as one with Alicia's heavy lifting done so brilliantly."

Organisation

Thankfully, all comments were positive about the organisation from the UKFIET team.

"I feel it was excellently run, particularly for the first time this conference has been online."

"Considering the challenges of COVID and hybrid and totally Digital in this case it was an outstanding job by the UKFIET team for bringing a diverse and huge global community together. Kudos to all of them for doing this brilliantly and so patiently - I was honoured and proud of this association of such great professionals and organizing committee."

Several people commented about appreciating the chance to re-engage with people after working online for so long, hear of experiences from different countries, and especially from colleagues where there had been little contact during the pandemic, on what they were doing to address challenges of the pandemic.

"I call this the COVID Dividend since the conference was able to not just simultaneously bring state of the art on knowledge creation on themes so pertinent to our times - but the presence of great minds, their work, research and passion was simultaneously received in a personalised space. Furthermore the powerful social media was instant and brilliantly done for impact, and course corrections. The networking was also full of opportunities."

The quality of the presentations and keynotes was praised. Participants thought they were well thought-through, a useful mix of themes and experience presented in succinct presentations. The quality of the Chairs was also mentioned a few times.

"Variable discussion in the sessions; some were brilliantly chaired with opportunities for multiple voices and dialogue. In others, speakers spoke for long periods, in reality extending their presentations rather than engaging in dialogue."

"More staff are needed to support those organising presentations and symposium. It was clear that there wasn't enough capacity to manage."

Scheduling

A few recommended a lighter agenda as most people did not engage throughout the conference.

"Engaging online for long stretches is tiring. If going for more of this in the future perhaps keeping the session in just half a day rather than all day as you would in person would be better."

There were comments about screen fatigue more broadly so perhaps this reflects the stage of the pandemic. A few comments focused on the plus side of being able to revisit sessions later – particularly if they had wanted to attend sessions running concurrently.

"It was good to spread the conference over more days to mitigate the effects of screen fatigue, however it meant that some of us returned to our working day in the afternoon and couldn't immerse ourselves in the conference fully."

"It was really nice to see that the rooms that I attended had a number of people attending as well. This is encouraging as I have attended other online conferences where only 1 or 2 additional people attended our presentation."

Networking Spaces

One participant commented that the networking sessions was their favourite part of the conference *“mainly because I was not expecting to like them! But the groups were quite small due to being given the choice of what rooms to join which allowed for some useful discussions.”*

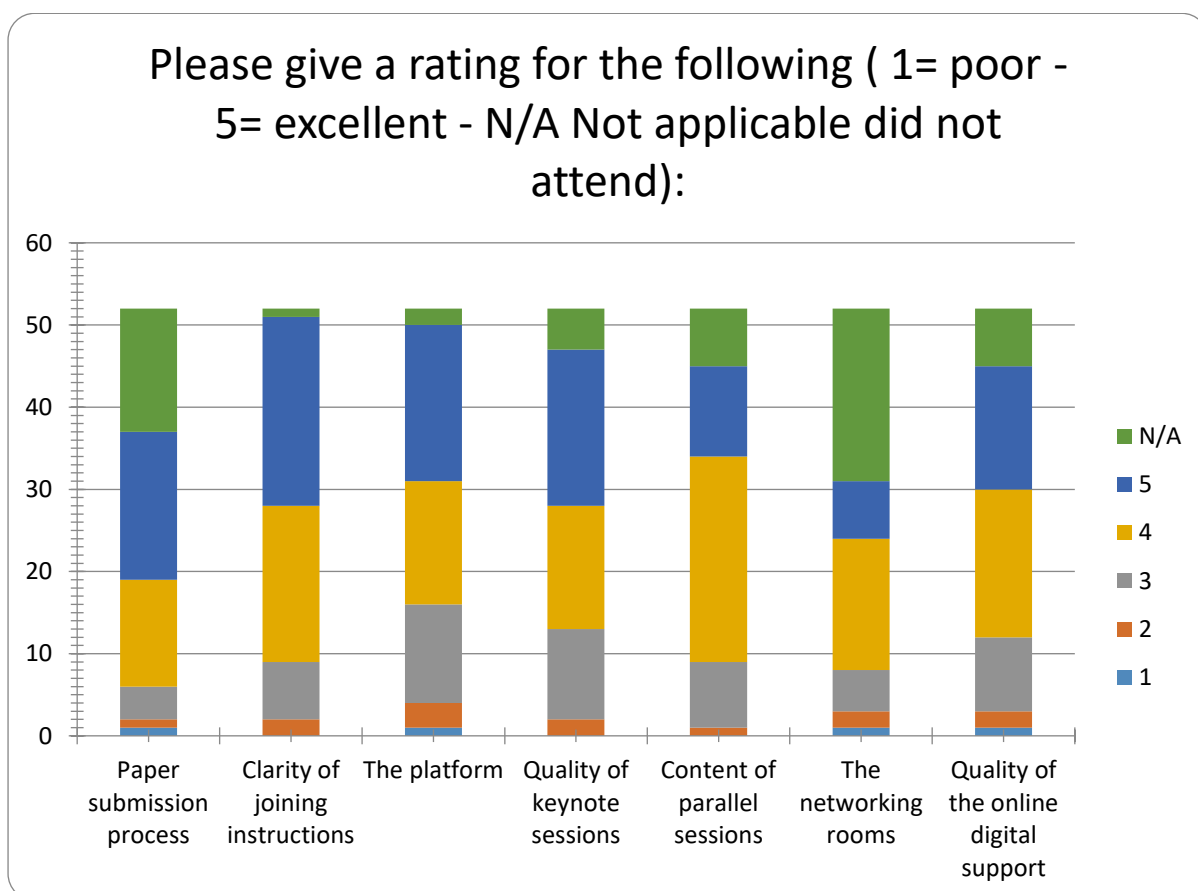
There were recommendations to schedule the follow-up discussions to follow directly from each session to allow for a more informal natural flow and making it more likely that people stay on. Also for the networking session to be chaired by those who were presenting as they know the detail of the debate.

“The networking rooms were generally good but they seemed to serve two different purposes: to continue the conversation/discussion from an earlier session; and to meet people interested/working in a particular topic. It might be worth making this distinction clearer. For example, I went into a room on Tuesday with a general interest, but couldn't really participate in the discussion because I hadn't been in the corresponding session.”

“Perhaps Special Interest Groups or 'buddy systems' can encourage more of the 'side-chat' that is often the most enjoyable and useful part of these conferences? Something that encourages you to link up and talk with others without having to throw yourself into a networking session...”

Overall Ratings

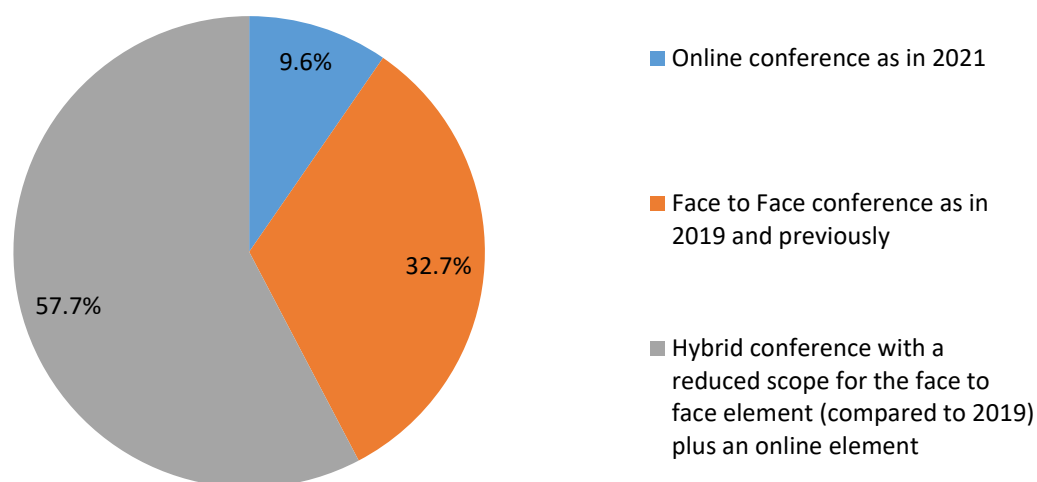
Survey respondents were asked to rate the various categories of the conference and these were largely rated very good to excellent.



Format for Future

When asked about the format for the next conference in 2023, 58% voted for a hybrid approach, with a third wanting to revert back to the previous face-to-face format as in previous years.

For UKFIET 2023 (assuming that there are no barriers to holding a face-to-face conference), what would you consider the most appropriate modality for the conference?



This reflects the stage we are at with the pandemic – events are starting to be delivered in a hybrid format to enable more diverse audiences, but at the same time, people are craving the personal interactions, especially the informal networking.

“A huge benefit of these face to face conferences is about the informal connections that happen around events - so it would be a great shame to shift entirely to online.”

“...the informal discussions over breakfast and evening drinks were greatly missed.”

“There's so much benefit to be gained from serendipitous encounters, bumping into someone you hadn't expected to see, etc.”

The benefits to making the format hybrid could be including participants in different time zones, as well as less costs for travel and accommodation. However, the benefits need to be weighed up against the technical challenges and costs, as well as being able to make the experience meaningful for both those in person and online.

“Hybrid is future - especially good for southern delegates. Invest in high quality platform and be innovative in format of delivery.”

“The trick with Hybrids is to provide equally valuable and high quality experiences for all which is not easy! My worry about it would be that the face to face people would be a bit of an exclusive club and

that they would not be representative of the LMIC community. I wonder whether online all day for the opening and closing days and then face to face for 2 days in-between might work? Could some regional hubs be developed for the face to face 2 days?"

Appendix 5: Networking Facilitator Role Descriptor

The facilitated networking sessions were set up as Zoom meetings with break out rooms.

We had two facilitators who worked together one to share their screen and display the list of pre-planned networking sessions and to update with any new discussions that delegates wanted. The other was allocating the participants to the discussion sessions as they arrived. This was either done via the Chat function when it was busy or verbally when there were less people arriving.