

Group 1. New theoretical and methodological voices for Comparative Education	
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<p>This group focuses on papers dealing with methodological and theoretical issues in the field of Comparative Education. Comparative Education as a sub-discipline that bears in its very name a methodological approach was born in an era in which nation-states were the main actors of education policies. Today, globalization processes and global forces, as international/regional governmental organizations, international NGOs or global education networks undermine our traditional comparative methods and approaches leading us to rethink our comparing strategies. Issues like the epistemology and methodology of comparison, transfer, international and global studies, and globalism are of crucial relevance for the discipline. From international education and learning from abroad through global comparativism up to recent discussions about the post-comparison approach, this group will focus on past and current contributions to Comparative Education dealing with the links between discourses, educational practices and shifting transnational scenarios. In this congress, the group particularly welcomes those papers advancing new ideas, theoretical concepts and research strategies in Comparative Education beyond traditional outlooks. In addition, papers also are expected to delve critically into the role of history in the field of Comparative Education pointing at the history of the Comparative Education itself as well as the role of historical arguments in comparative, international, and global research in education.</p>	
Group 2. Voices from the South	
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<p>For years, education in the South was perceived through the postcolonial prism, questioning the effects of the reproduction of colonial models and the weight of the academic pattern which emerged as the dominant model. The influence of economics of education, through human capital theory, also helped the development of internationally comparable indicators organized around formal education and university. However for the last fifteen years, educational research and deliberations within UNESCO reveal, in both North and South, not only a logical diversification of school provision but also the inclusion of an educational process that extends beyond the school setting and its usual targets. By making room for “voices from the South” the XVth World Congress of Comparative Education promotes a fresh crossover perspective between the dominant model of current educational research and new trends in theory, innovative strategies and pedagogic or didactic forms that are taking place in the South (community schools, learning workshops, voluntary organizations and cooperatives, literacy centers for youth and adults, etc.). It is also an opportunity to revisit African, Latin American and Eastern European authors such as Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Julius Nyerere, Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich and Johan Ferrier, among others, who had been part of alternative education. The comparative approach will, if not encourage the emergence of a new educational paradigm, at least promote the renewal of social science reflections on education.</p>	

Group 3. New perspectives on the State, the Global and the Local	
International Convenor Dr. Iveta Silova Lehigh University, USA isilova@gmail.com	Regional Convenor Dra. M. Fernanda Astiz Canisius College, USA astizm@canisius.edu
<p>This thematic group invites paper submissions that examine the changing role of the state in education policy and practice in the context of globalization. It encourages analyses that reflect on the larger society, including social, economic, and political forces affecting education at various levels (state, regional, provincial, municipal, city councils, districts, etc.). It also invites papers examining how our understanding of the global and the local has changed in response to ongoing reconfigurations of relationships between the state and civil society, public and private, citizens and communities. We welcome papers examining the effects of global trends on local policy-making, the tensions between political actors and organizations involved in decision-making and implementation of education reforms. Papers are welcome from a variety of theoretical and methodological comparative perspectives and educational levels.</p>	
Group 4. Actors' voices in new scenarios	
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<p>This theme focuses on the increasing role individual actors and societal groups play – or are mandated to play by state policies – within different contexts of education policy and practice. This role has come to the fore for example in the 'big-society' agenda in the United Kingdom, the education missions in Venezuela, the importance of national literacy campaigns in developing country settings, and the drive towards non-state formal education in many parts of the developing and transitional world. The theme aims to analyze the potential for transformations and its limitations as propagated by different societal groups who conceptualise education policy and practice in ways that result in alternative paths for action within the education sector and beyond. Actors may include (but are not limited to) teachers' unions, student movements, PTAs, new state bodies, churches, NGOs, the business sector, and grassroots organisations (social movements, protest movements, community-based initiatives) – or a combination of those. Topics may for example center on how actors might influence educational change and reform at different levels, the roles they play in modes of non-state financed formal education, alternative forms of schooling and learning, alternative forms of educational management, and new conceptions of education as a tool for wider social change.</p>	
Group 5. New times for public education systems	
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<p>Public education systems face new and renovated challenges for which different paths are suggested. Countries that need to overcome a lag in their educational development and/or their outcomes require political, technical and management competences to accelerate their change</p>	

process. Will democratic procedures of design, legitimization, implementation and monitoring of public educational policies lead a needed reform of the educational system? Overall, this group will consider studies that analyse the following new challenges: market drivers, transnational schemes, national-regional tension within education systems and quality assurance systems. The way public education systems address each of these issues may range from traditional education reforms to the development of innovative models for programmes and institutions, new patterns of public-private relationships and the inclusion of ICT into educational management, among others. This group also welcomes studies regarding the impact on contemporary educational reforms in the public sector, their links to past reforms and their cumulative impact on educational systems.

Group 6. Educational internationalisation, academic voices and public policy

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Ever since the early days of comparative inquiry in education, the idea that policy and practice might be 'borrowed' or 'transferred' from other locations has been a continuing theme. Existing studies of the complex process of policy border crossing have tended to focus on the state, the activities of government, the interactions between states and between governments and a host of private and civil society actors. More focus needs to be placed on governance that occurs through a wide array of arrangements from public and private authorities that cut across levels from the very local to the international. Agencies such as international organizations are playing an increasingly role. Reflection on their roles in education policy-making is an important topic for comparative education researchers. This group invites papers that rethink political and institutional interventions by regional and international agencies in shaping educational policy agendas (discourses and practices). It deals with the relationships between academic voices and/or discourses and those of various international and supranational agencies, and how education policy-makers at different levels interpret contrasting international discourses. This group also targets studies that analyze the role of higher education actors in educational reform and internationalization.

Group 7. Voices of diversity and new forms of educational democratisation

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This group focuses on papers that discuss meanings of educational democratization in the XXI century. There will be studies of education systems in comparative perspective that explore issues such as: gendered voices and gender policy (masculinities, femininities and sexualities, gender-related issues such as reproductive health education); indigenous minorities; social movements; religion, ethnicity, and voices from majority and minority groups. This group also encourages papers on democratic school reforms, both system-wide and school-based, that involve giving voice to all in the school communities. Papers sent to this thematic group would be dealing with a combination of questions such as: what does comparison of pedagogical experiences of recognition or indifference to the students' identities, cultural belongings and beliefs reveal about democratization and justice tensions in education and schools? What are the tools for the practitioners in schools – individually and as communities – introducing the ethno-cultural diversity dimension within the classroom and in

the curriculum as a mobilized dimension for inclusion? In diverse multicultural schools where recognition of pluralism is not equally adopted regarding the national education system, what do large scale analysis or comparative and local case-studies reveal on the inclusive or exclusive links between the voices of diversity and the educational democratization process? International, national and local contexts can be considered.

Group 8. Voice and language

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The strand “Voice and Language” focuses on the role of minoritized languages and their speakers in an increasingly homogenous global context. Papers in this strand examine the human and cultural cost of decreasing linguistic diversity and also the impact language loss may have regarding human wisdom and knowledge. Losing a language may also have epistemic consequences: the majority of minoritized languages in the Third World are oral, and the wisdom and knowledge developed by their speakers has not been written. Hence language loss may also imply losing a specific world-view and also an alternative knowledge system. We seek papers that examine these processes in educational contexts, whether in the context of obligatory schooling or in less formal educational contexts. These investigations may also involve language and culture policy and politics at the local, regional, national and transnational levels, grass-roots initiatives of linguistic revitalization and normalization, attitudes of minority and majority speakers toward minoritized languages and cultures and towards intercultural bi- and multilingual education programs, and political and social factors that influence all of these processes. Specific attention will also be placed on academic research being carried out at tertiary level regarding alternative epistemologies as well as the positive recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity in the curriculum.

Group 9. New Times for curriculum

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The field of Comparative Education has long featured studies that map curricular change over time and that compare different approaches to organizing knowledge in school settings. Numerous claims have been advanced, however, that our present era is marked by fundamental disruptions in the ways education systems assemble and disseminate knowledge in schools. This thematic group seeks to generate discussions about what transformations we may be presently witnessing in view of a number of new trends -including the rise of digital culture(s), new patterns of educational governance and new approaches to knowledge management. We welcome studies that examine the cultural traditions, historical contexts, and functions of curricula in different institutional systems. Of particular interest are the ways that curricula in different systems relate to global and local processes and formations; are being reconfigured in shifting terrains of new assessment and accountability practices; and are affected by broader competency-based and standards-driven recastings of schooling and teacher education. Submissions may also include -but are not limited to- transnational, comparative and/or single-site research on: new curricular trends such as new areas of curricular inquiry (e.g. human rights, sustainability, environmental issues, values education); ICT

inclusion; new approaches to curriculum design; and new ways that school knowledge and school subjects are organized.

Group 10. Voices from countries/areas in conflict or fragility

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The past two decades have seen the field of Education and Conflict move from a peripheral issue in the Comparative and International Education field to one which now is a major concern of academics, development practitioners together with growing acknowledgement that countries and regions facing conflict are least likely to achieve the education related MDG and Education For All goals. Hence, this group welcomes voices, new thinking and research focusing on education's complex and evolving role to conflict. In particular the group invites papers which explore this evolution through new theoretical lenses, innovative methodological approaches, empirically rich case studies, or from geographic spaces and scales that remain underexplored. Key issues to explore may include: education in relation to security, sectarianism and fundamentalism in both the developing and developed world; the complexities of issues related to peace, reconciliation or forgiveness in conflicted societies; the education of refugee and displaced persons and the impact of displacement on educational opportunities; linking and relating scholarship and best practice on education in conflict/emergencies to the evolving field of disaster risk reduction; the role of education institutes and actors (including educators) in relation to conflict and peace; postcolonial legacies in conflicted societies and the new roles of education toward peace; placing education reform within agendas of state and nation (re) building. Academics, practitioners, and policymakers from states labelled as conflict affected and fragile are especially encouraged to submit to this group.

Group 11. Voices from those in adult learning/lifelong learning/nonformal learning

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This thematic group focuses on teaching and learning dynamics outside the formal school system. It includes studies on historical and current developments, as well as prospective analyses. Reflections from those who educate outside the school walls are expected. The group aims at revealing different voices that the formal education system does not always pay attention to, especially the voices of adult learners and educators in non-formal and informal education systems. Among possible topics for this thematic group are adult education policies and practices, globalization and adult education, adult education provision in urban and rural areas, the current state of the Education for All initiative, literacy and adult basic education programs, labor education, workplace learning, migration and education, social movement learning, adult citizenship education, community education, online learning, university extension, peace education, environmental education, adult education and social change, and lifelong education approaches.

Group 12. New ways of communicating voices

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<p>This thematic group welcomes studies on knowledge and educational practice in new communicative scenarios. It aims, specially, at studies that tackle the relationship between teaching and the challenges posed by the transition between literate and digital culture. The comparative perspective is relevant to offer an analysis of change at different pace in diverse world regions (the digital divide). Papers are expected to study the development of reshaping didactics, use of ICT and challenges to 'traditional' teaching (digital and social media, networking, online learning, just-in-time learning, simulations, virtual reality), changes in teacher education for a digital culture, changes in professional development when the activity is redefined, ICT in educational management, and the potential role of ICT and social media for democratic participation.</p>	