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POLAR EDUCATORS INTERNATIONAL AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ICARP III

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Polar Educators International (PEI) is a vibrant network promoting polar education and research to a global community by fostering dialogue and collaboration between educators and researchers.

Since June 2014, PEI is an official participating organization of ICARP and contributes to establishing a framework for the next decades, including the identification of Arctic science priorities, the coordination of various Arctic research agendas, the information of policy makers and the public, as well as bridging the gap between producers and users of knowledge. As a non-scientific institution the main focus hereby will be on finding solutions to distributing scientific knowledge, on developing new partnerships with local and national institutions and on helping to build constructive relationships between producers and users. PEI sees its role mainly as moderator/communicator between research and public, with the task to filter the scientific findings and make them available in a transparent and understandable form for laymen.

A recent international survey among polar educators (more than 70) should identify the key questions of polar research for educators, the major challenges they are facing and their ideas how they could better support the scientific community. There was an overall agreement that the major topic is climate change and its related consequences for people and ecosystems. Also of great interest is the cultural life in the Arctic and socio-economical aspects. Unfortunately many educators cannot teach as much about polar topics as they want as it is not in the regular curriculums. PEI itself identified as the biggest problems a lack of time and funding. However they see chances for the future to support the scientific community to bridge the gap between researches and the general public by disseminating the results in clear words, but also highlighted that a better cooperation and exchange (e.g. participating at conferences and meetings) with the scientists would be needed.

The poster summarizes the main work of PEI and its vision about polar-related outreach work for the coming decades.