

### **Survey of Global Congress Attendees based on Questionnaire**

From 6 - 8 September 2007, Dublin Castle served as the global knowledge centre in dental education. 330 delegates from 66 countries from all continents came together for the Global Congress on Dental Education III. Over a period of two years prior to the Congress 14 Working Groups had collaborated via the web <http://dented.learnonline.ie/> to prepare reports for discussion and completion at the meeting. There were 304 registered attendees at the Global Congress. A questionnaire (Appendix 1) was distributed at one of the Plenary sessions to determine willingness of delegates to participate in the newly established International Federation of Dental Educators and Associations Global Network. There was significant ongoing activity within the 14 Working Groups towards the completion of their reports and other delegates were engaged in organisational activities therefore a significant number of participants did not return the completed questionnaire. 200 questionnaires were collected from delegates, representing over 60% of all attendees.

The following were the main responses:

	Question	Response	#
1	Level to which attendees would be prepared to contribute to Network	Active participation (1 hour per week)	156
		Not prepared to participate	5
		Only as observer	6
		Left blank	33
2	Would your institution be prepared to collaborate with schools in less privileged circumstances?	Yes	157
		No	16
		Left blank	27
3	Would you be prepared to submit modularised programmes for peer review to be entered on the IFDEA web site?	Yes	123
		No	49
		Left blank	28
4	Would you be prepared to act as a reviewer for programmes submitted for inclusion on the IFDEA web site?	Yes	136
		No	42
		Left blank	22
5	Would you be prepared to act as an expert in visiting another dental school?	Yes	148
		No	27
		Left blank	25
6	To what extent would you be able to cover your own costs for visiting?	All of them	5
		Partly or depending on circumstances	60
		Not at all	90
		Left blank	45

### **Discussion of the responses questionnaire**

The 304 invitees represent global leaders within dental education. A team of dental students collected the completed questionnaires. Amongst the 200 questionnaires completed the response was very positive

At least 50% of the registrants and over 75% of those who completed the questionnaire indicated willingness to devote at least one hour per week in engaging in the global network's activities (Question 1). That is encouraging and those who responded positively could form the core group or groupings of an evolving network.

One of the most heartening responses was the willingness of 157 participants to involve their school in a collaborative effort with colleagues in schools working under less favourable circumstances (Question 2). An even more optimistic way of looking at this is that only 16 explicitly stated they would not be in a position to do so. That alone would seem sufficient to justify the holding of such a Congress and needs to be pursued before momentum is lost.

A core objective for the new Network is the dissemination of information and in particular current peer reviewed course modules. So another greatly encouraging response was that at least 123 individuals were prepared to submit modularised programmes for inclusion on the Network site (Question 3). As these would need to be peer reviewed it was also considered helpful that at least 136 individuals would be prepared to act as peer reviewers (Question 4).

The DentEd visit system [www.dented.org](http://www.dented.org) is well known to many delegates. 148 said they would be prepared to offer their services in such an effort (Question 5). 60 delegates who responded said they would be prepared to part-fund their participation in such a collaborative initiative (Question 6).

It is difficult to interpret the level of compliance in completing the questionnaire. Many of those involved in organisational duties and completion of the reports of their working groups may not have returned their completed questionnaires. The fact that there were many for whom English was not their first or even second or third language might have impacted on the time available to them to complete the questionnaire. It is also possible that those who were students or more junior faculty members felt that some questions precluded them from making certain commitments as set out in the questionnaire. Others represented regions or countries with low income and were constrained in responding to such a questionnaire.

### **Conclusions**

It would seem reasonable to conclude that the responses indicate an encouraging willingness of at least 50% of the attendees (despite their many other commitments) to engage actively in a global network in dental education. It is vital that the goodwill generated at Global Congress III in Dublin be harnessed to best effect in advancing the network and the future of dental education. The information collated from this survey yielded a data base of individuals who are prepared not only to submit modularised programmes and offer expertise as visitors or reviewers but to collaborate via the network in the advancement of dental education and the provision of oral health care.

### **Acknowledgement**

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