



english**teachers**
association
switzerland

ETAS Outreach Survey Report

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1: Overview of respondents

There were 104 unique responses to the survey, which was conducted in February 2019. Responses were requested by personal emails to colleagues, the ETAS newsletter and ETAS social media channels, as well as by ETAS members to their colleagues. Responses came from across Switzerland, participants named the following cities as being closest to them: Zurich (29), Bern (23), Geneva (8), Lausanne (8), St Gallen (8), Basel (7), Luzern (7), Chur (4), Lugano (3) and Sion (3).

52% of respondents (53) were current ETAS members, 23% (23) were no longer members and 25% (25) had never been members.

Of those who chose to answer the question, 38% of respondents (37) worked primarily in a state school, 39% (38) worked primarily in a private school and 23% (23) worked primarily as a freelancer or were self-employed. 8 respondents indicated they were retired teachers.

2: Annual Conference attendance and feedback

Feedback from attendees

34 respondents attended the 2019 Annual Conference and AGM with the most common response (14) being, 'I always attend ETAS events'. 10 said the location was convenient and 7 said they connect with friends.

Respondents were asked how we can make the event more popular next year. Their free responses are summarised as follows:

- shorter event (one day) (3x), finish Sunday after lunch
- schmoozing time, mingling time, longer breaks
- advertise in professional journals, promote the event in neighbouring countries, make programme available earlier, have a theme for the event
- examine the format of presentations, have poster presentations or shorter presentations, swap-shop session
- incentives for members to bring a +1
- offer scholarships
- make it more pertinent to public school teachers
- more presentations for experienced teachers, clear labelling of audience experience levels (x2), better correspondence between description and content of presentation
- change cantons each year, go into western Switzerland

- change the date, combine it with PD Day

Feedback from non-attendees

42 respondents did not attend the 2019 Annual Conference and AGM. 20 of these were ETAS members, and the main reason (14) indicated for non-attendance was that they had other plans that day. 2 members said it was too far away (these members were located near St Gallen and Sion). Of the 21 non-members who didn't attend, 7 said they had other plans, 4 said it was too expensive, 3 said they didn't need any professional development and 2 said it was too far away (they were based near Geneva and Bern).

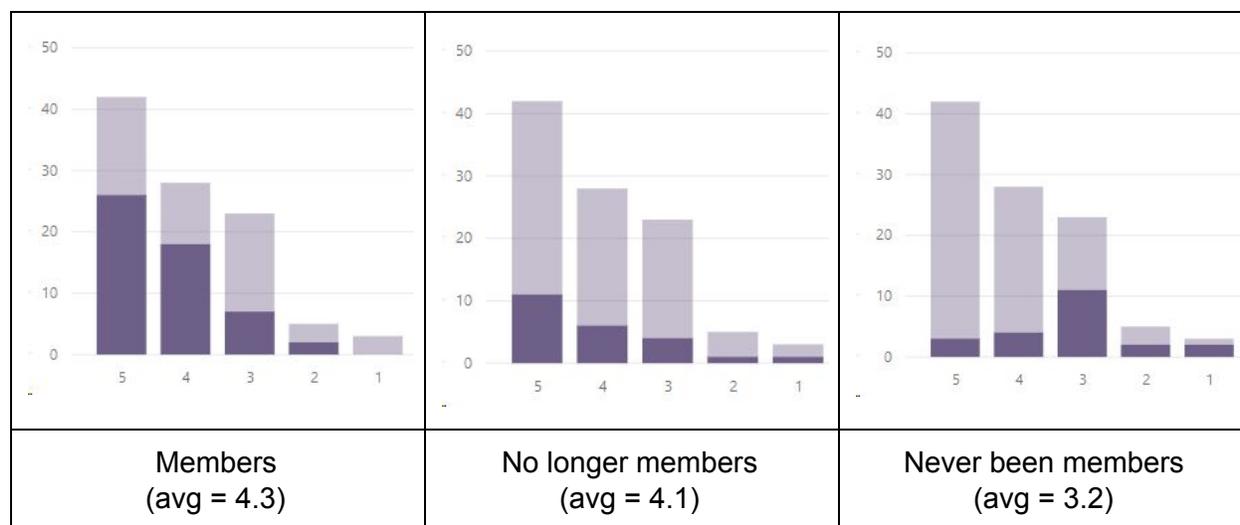
Suggestions from non-attendees for how we can make the event more popular next year are summarised below:

- 'the conference format needs refreshing', this person suggested live lessons, collaborative workshops, fewer talks, fishbowl discussions and panel debates as ideas
- issues like scarcity of work and low pay should be addressed
- less time spent on ETAS business which wasn't relevant for non-members

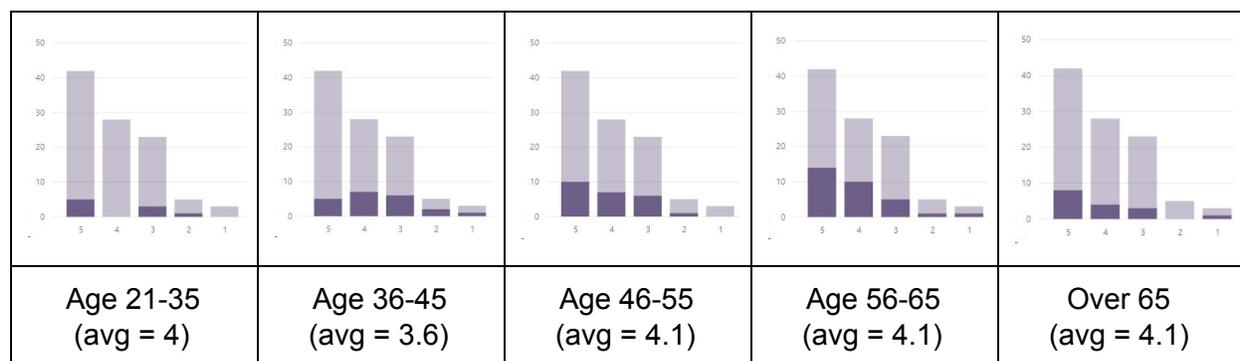
3: How important are teachers associations are for English teachers in Switzerland?

Answers to this question were given out of 5, with 5 being extremely important. In the charts below, the dark purple area indicates the responses of the mentioned sub-group, while the light purple area indicates the results for all respondents. The average is given below the image.

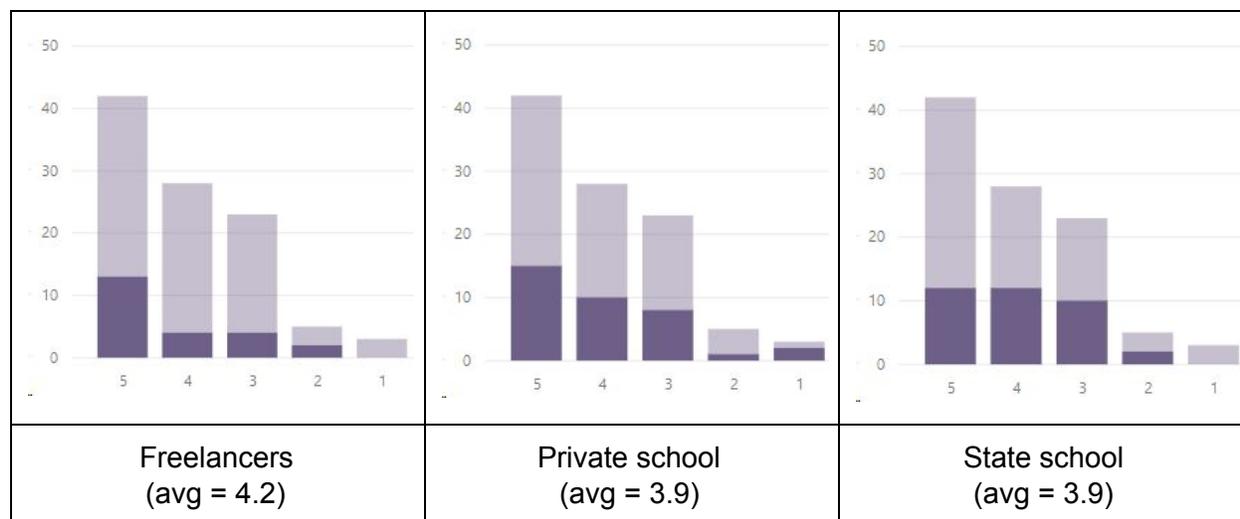
Responses of members and non-members



Response by age



Response by primary teaching environment



Why did you say, '5, teachers associations are extremely important'?

- sharing, being part of something, having opportunities to discuss things with colleagues, teaching can be lonely otherwise, networking, socialising, exchanging ideas and experiences, supporting each other
- CPD, keeping up to date with latest trends and theories, professionalism, mentorship, peer feedback, lifelong learning
- as a means of lobbying for certain issues (pension schemes for freelancers)

Why did you say, '4, teachers associations are very important'?

- being part of a community, beating isolation, meeting in person, socialising, supporting and encouraging each other, contact with other teachers, networking
- workshops, professional development, exchanging ideas, finding new ideas, access to new materials and resources

Why did you say, '3, teachers associations are somewhat important'?

- a feeling that things/times are changing, feedback, events are better than 7-8 years ago, there are other CPD opportunities in Switzerland, state school teachers have their own

training to do, some teachers just aren't interested in CPD, a monolingual conference may be intimidating for non-native speakers

- good for networking
- *Unedited response*: 'I think associations such as these are important; however, I would like to see more practical information/resources/support for independent teachers. (Information/support about setting up a teaching business, how to best obtain clients, what to charge, etc.) More information about different professional channels available would also be appreciated (how to get into a school system, how to become involved with publishers, how to be an exam proctor...) There's a wealth of information within ETAS membership, but while I was a member, I didn't feel like it was being shared formally. Events tended to be specific to course content and teaching methods, rather than to the profession as a whole.'

Why did you say, '2, teachers associations are not very important'?

- you can get information/training online and for free
- people just don't have time

Why did you say, '1, teachers associations are not at all important'?

- teachers need associations to stand up for their rights and name bad employers
- CPD is available for free

4: What are the biggest benefits of membership?

Overall, 34 of 52 member respondents said high-quality professional development was one of the main benefits of membership, 9 said interesting articles, 4 developing relationships, 2 finding inspiration and 1 mentioned the IATEFL discount.

5: Why aren't you a member?

There were only a few responses to this question. They have been grouped by the type of school where the respondent teaches.

Freelance and self-employed teachers

There were two responses each for 'It's not relevant to me', 'I found another place to get CPD', and 'There were no events near me'. There was one response for each of 'My needs changed', 'It didn't feel meaningful', 'It just doesn't seem worth it' and 'The events I attended were poor quality'.

Private school teachers

There were 5 responses for 'It's too expensive', 4 for 'My needs changed' and one response each for 'It's not relevant to me', 'It just doesn't seem worth it', 'I don't find the events and workshops interesting', 'It doesn't focus enough on academic/research issues', and 'The events I attended were poor quality'.

State school teachers

5 respondents selected 'Other' and primarily mentioned lack of time in their comments. 3 people chose 'There were no events near me', 2 said 'It's not relevant to me' and 'My needs changed', one said 'I found another place to get CPD', 'It didn't feel meaningful' and 'It's too expensive'.

What changes would make you want to be a member?

Of 45 non-member respondents, 13 said 'lower fees', 11 said 'more events in my area', 3 said 'better speakers at events', 1 said 'more academic focus', 1 'monthly payment option', 1 'more networking events'. Men were more interested in fees, women in location of events. Other suggestions were that we should have debates, and we should act like a union.

6: What is the most important change ETAS has to make to be attractive to other English teachers in Switzerland?

Below is a summary of free responses to this question.

Suggestions from non-members

Freelancers

- be cheaper
- discourage marketing pitches at workshops/events

Private school teachers

- reach out to CLIL teachers, not just language teachers
- be a union
- more networking events

State school teachers

- trial rates for new members
- lower workshop prices
- guest rate at events
- more practical workshops
- better outreach in the state schools in local languages
- group for university teachers

Suggestions from our members

Freelancers

- more articles and resources for new teachers
- promote networking more effectively and on different online channels
- more publicity targeting state schools
- shorter events (no more two day Annual Conference)
- lowering membership fees by not printing the journal
- use the website to build a community
- be more active in other linguistic regions in Switzerland

- changing the perceived image of ETAS as middle-aged ladies wearing glasses on a chain

Private school teachers

- more publicity, more visibility, more outreach to private schools, public advertising
- offer webinars (x3)
- smaller local events
- offer help to freelance teachers
- have more for newly qualified teachers
- have more practical articles in the newsletter (Journal?), something people can photocopy and use
- move to focused conference formats with 3-4 plenary speakers on that topic
- establish a vision and find followers

State school teachers

- raising the profile of ETAS and improving the reach of our marketing, people just haven't heard of us
- marketing, publicity, especially in public schools
- lower fees
- clarify our offerings for state school teachers
- make a tertiary teaching SIG
- bring back regional reports in the journal
- encourage state schools to set up their own events
- have a moderated chat room (members-only Facebook group?) and have a member of the National Council in charge of answering questions each week

7: Discussion

Two things seem especially noteworthy for member recruitment. First, the most common reason people gave for going to the Annual Conference was 'I always go to ETAS events'. Second, the responses of people who rated the importance of teachers associations 4 or 5 in section 3 mentioned community, togetherness, beating isolation, finding support and encouragement and avoiding loneliness. These responses show that our members and ex-members think teachers associations in general are much more important than people who have never been members. Together, these results suggest that our members do not primarily attend events for the speakers and workshops, but to feel part of something. Perhaps people who have never been members do not understand this about our members and why ETAS is so important to us. The reasons why people are not members reflect this sentiment, especially 'It's not relevant to me'

and 'It just doesn't feel meaningful'. But our members feel ETAS is very meaningful, as shown in their answers to why teachers associations were important. It is essential to find a better way to communicate this aspect of our membership.

Further discussion about member attrition was also held on Twitter, under the following post: <https://twitter.com/BenTchsEnglish/status/1103230003406430209>. There was general agreement that memberships were in decline in all teaching associations which responded, and they offered several explanations. A major reason is the lack of available time which teachers seem to be suffering from more than in the past. This also relates to the frustration some teachers expressed that professional development organisations were not doing enough to address the perceived worsening of employment conditions, especially for private school and freelance teachers. Finally, it was mentioned that the value proposition for teachers associations needs to be reframed. When teachers associations define themselves by the discounts they offer to trainings or other organisations, it does not compare well financially with all of the free training on offer online and in-person from publishers and other groups. But by highlighting the more intangible benefits of membership in an association, our groups stand out with the strength of our social and professional bonds.

8: Conclusion

A major theme in section 6 was the need for more marketing, outreach and publicity to make ETAS more well-known. It is also clear that the message needs to convey the depth of feeling and the wealth of support one receives from being part of the ETAS community. A new marketing campaign that focuses on the personal stories our members and their reasons for membership could be very motivating for new and experienced teachers and would differentiate ETAS from other professional development providers.