

# Minutes steering committee meeting - Verona - February 26, 2014

Present: Myriam Deveugele (President, Belgium), Jonathan Silverman (President-elect, UK), Jette Ammentorp (NR Denmark), Lidia Del Piccolo (NR Italy), Ellen Smets (NR, The Netherlands), Hilde Eide (DNR Norway), Gerry Humphris (NR UK), Arnstein Finset (advisor PEC), Marc Van Nuland (NR Belgium), Somath Saha (Advisor AACH), Cadja Bachmann (NR Germany) (skype), Hadass Goldblat (NR Israel) (skype), Marcy Rosenbaum (chair of TEACH; NR US) (skype), Hanneke De Haes (chair of REACH, the Netherlands), Karolien Aelbrecht (daily secretary Belgium)

## 1. Minutes of SC meeting February 2013 and October 2013

Approved.

## 2. Introduction of Christine Joyce and CJAM

Welcome to Christine, manager of CJAM (Christine Joyce Association Management), the new management company that has been appointed for EACH. CJAM specialises in giving management support to non-profit organizations. Lisa Dalton will be the direct contact for EACH.

## 3. Short history and review of the choices made

The discussion about the professionalization of EACH started a year ago. During the meeting in October in Amsterdam, some decisions were made about the move to a new management company and the legal position. Five proposals for the new management company were reviewed by the members of the executive committee. There were conference calls with all the companies, and a personal meeting with Nivel.

The executive committee proposed to accept CJAM as the management company and to change the legal structure to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The latter was not discussed during the meeting of the SC but came apparent during the discussions with CJAM (see explanation next paragraph).

Afterwards, an e-mail was send asking for a vote on the decisions made by the executive. The voting was unanimous, except for Olivier. He pointed out that there were some alterations from the proposal as discussed in Amsterdam and he felt he was not in a position to fully understand the implications. He was correct in this matter; our apologies.

At this moment there is a contract for the next two years, signed by the president .

CJAM is undertaking the transition; there will be bank transfer and a new website up and running by (hopefully) the end of April.

## Legal structure: review and explanation, consequences

The legal structure that we have now agreed upon is not the legal structure we agreed to during the previous meeting of the steering committee, an INPO. A more suitable legal structure was discovered after the steering committee meeting, called a charitable incorporated organization. This has been designed by the UK charitable commission specifically for smaller organizations, not necessarily an organization that does charity in the commonly understood meaning of the word, but with a specific aim (here: to further health). This legal structure is simpler to manage and EACH will have to provide an annual report of the finances which can be submitted online. The charitable nature of the legal structure is particularly important as this clarifies the position that any profits made will not be liable for corporation tax. As with the INPO, there is no financial liability for members. There will have to be at least 3 trustees (one of which must be British; now: Peter, Myriam and Jonathan) who will manage the affairs of the organization.

Question: Should every member of the steering committee or the executive committee be a trustee?

Remark: For decisions not all trustees have to be present, but when decisions have to be made, everyone has a voice.

Decision: All the members of the steering committee will be trustees. This change be made at the steering committee following the Amsterdam conference

#### **4. Reviewing and adapting the document on Formal EACH in relation to the new structure**

There will be a newsletter to all the members about the changes within EACH and the new legal structure. Also, for formal reasons, the new constitution has to be circulated among the members of the steering committee.

The daily secretariat duties will be undertaken by CJAM.

The composition of the Executive Committee consists of the president, a past-president, a president-elect, a secretary/treasurer, and the chairs of the standing committees (REACH and TEACH).

Question: What is the role/title of the secretary/treasurer?

Remarks: This position still needs to be there, but appointed like the members of the steering committee or executive committee. This person should be the liaison between the steering committee and the management company. This person has to have specific knowledge, e.g. about finances and about the organization. This person should be elected, from amongst all members. Sandra stays in this position until the next AGM.

**Decision: The position as treasurer will be opened to all members. The person needs to meet some specific criteria. The executive committee will prepare a document suggesting criteria and send it to the members of the steering committee.**

The composition of the steering committee consists of the national representations of countries with at least 6 members, the president, president-elect and past president, the secretary and the chairs of the standing committees. There are two advisory roles: PEC-editor and a representative of the AACH board.

Question: Do we need to review the total number/minimum number of members per country to have a NR/DNR?

Remarks: We need to think about what our aspirations are for EACH, and that is bringing as many countries as possible. Of course, it might be more difficult to work with a larger steering committee.

**Decision: The steering committee decides to stay with the current numbers of members per country (n=5).**

Currently, the length of term in office for national representative (NR)/deputy national representative (DNR) is 2 years, and 2 times renewable. There are elections every 2 years. The president-elect, the president and the past-president are each terms of 2 years. In the country of the president-elect, the deputy takes on the role as national representative and there has to be an election for a new deputy.

Remarks: We need to step away from the automatic re-election of national representatives as occurs now. So, after two years, a national representative can stand again but has to be re-elected for a maximum of two more terms. The role of the president and the NR/DNR in that country is different, so in the country of the president the deputy becomes the national representative and is replaced by a new deputy. This should create more independence.

Questions:

No position allowed after ending of a leading position within EACH?

Chairs of the standing committees/length of term subject of the decision of the committee?

What about the board of past presidents? Roles and aims?

**Decision:**

**CJAM will hold election for NR/deputy national representative every two years in all countries that have more than 5 members at the moment of election (membership fee must be collected in advance). In the country of the president-elect there has to be an election of a second deputy since the deputy becomes the NR. This selection will take place after the conference, in a different timeframe than the other elections. 18 months later, the country of the president-elect takes part in the normal elections of NR/DNR..**

**Decision: After being past president, no formal position in the leadership of EACH is allowed.**

**Decision: Length of term of the chairs of REACH and TEACH: for REACH there are no formal rules. In TEACH there is a maximum term of 6 years. It is important that that there is a maximum length of term that for members of the committees although it is important to also consider the issue of retaining expertise. This decision is postponed until a discussion will be held within REACH AND TEACH who will come back with a proposal (deadline: end of April).**

The annual general meeting is the highest decision-making organ and has to endorse the decisions made in the steering committee. The executive committee does the daily work, prepares the documents for the steering committee (strategic plan, yearly plan with activities, budget plan, financial account of the spent budget), after which the steering committee determines the course to be taken. Afterwards, the executive committee takes care of the activities that have been decided upon.

**Decision: the SC will meet every 6 months**

The election of the president-elect: until now, the president is elected from the steering committee.

Question: Discussion about the limited nomination pool.

Remarks: Maybe being a member should be enough. In AACH, previously the president was selected from the board, but now membership is sufficient to be nominated. However, running an organization is extremely difficult if you do not know the organization. This means that anyone could

apply, but only people with experience about the organization should be elected. There has to be recognition for being active, not only as NR/DNR.

**Decision:** 1. Anyone who is a member can apply as president-elect, 2. Nomination board who has certain criteria regarding the selection. Myriam and Jonathan will make a document with criteria (deadline: March).

Question: What about the nomination committee? Remarks: although in the past this has worked very well, this has not been so effective in the last year. Also, the nomination committee is a committee entirely separate from the steering group. There is a suggestion to have a small group of the steering committee, with the president-elect and two other representatives from the steering committee. This group will then select and bring it to the annual meeting.

**Decision:** The election has to be done before the annual meeting and confirmed during the meeting. The nomination committee can provide a shortlist of European candidates (3), and all the members (European or not) can take part in the voting. The voting system will be agree-not agree-comments.

## 5. Finances

Balance is approved;

## 6. Organization of the SC meeting and AGM in Amsterdam, in relation to the legal rules

The 'old' steering committee will come together by e-mail prior to the Amsterdam conference. At the steering committee in Amsterdam, the 'new' steering committee will meet. This meeting will start after the conference, at 16.00 and go on the next day to provide a real opportunity for discussion over a good length of time.

## 7. Website

There will be a new website established by CJAM. The chairs of TEACH and REACH were asked what they want for the website.

EACH further needs a dedicated space for the steering committee and for the executive committee. Also, good search facilities, and a flexible webmaster is important.

Question: open access or not? There are arguments for both approaches, but an overall consensus that restriction of information would not increase members and was not the way that the Internet was now developing.

**Decision:** There will be two dedicated spaces, one for tEACH and one for rEACH and flexibility. Each committee can decide if the information on the website is open for the world or not. The steering committee will not restrict the freedom of the committees. The chairs of REACH and TEACH will be responsible for the information on the website.

## 8. Membership fee and the relation with Elsevier

At present the membership fee consists of a part for EACH and the payment for PEC. The division is +/- 30 euro for EACH, 70 euro for Elsevier. In return EACH gets an annual donation of 15 000 euro.

Since most of the members have access to PEC by the university or by other means, some members request to pay less and refuse the access to PEC. At present the membership fee is a packet that is not possible to divide in this way.

In the future we need to review the contract with Elsevier, with the intention of having members that do not pay for PEC. This could increase the membership at the one hand (for some countries 100 euro is high) on the other hand Elsevier might reduce the donation. The discussion with Elsevier needs to be started. But there is some time as we can start this discussion only in the light of having more than 300 members every year. At present the membership is not stable and varies between years.

**Decision: the president will start this discussion after the transfer to CJAM has been completed and the membership is stable and higher than 300.**

#### **9. Discussion on discount for low income countries for ICCH**

There were some questions from low income countries concerning support to come to the conference. For previous conferences, Elsevier gave some (5 for St Andrews) small grants. For the conference in Amsterdam we decided not to allow grants for low income countries.

Idea from Marcy: We could ask members to make a donation, e.g. minimum of 10 euro, in accordance to the opting out method (i.e. checking a box when you do not want to support lower income students).

**Decision: After the transition CJAM can start a donation fund. This should be available for Heidelberg**

#### **10. ICCH 2014: Amsterdam**

The submission of abstracts was a success, with 574 submissions for oral/poster presentations, 64 for workshops, 30 for symposia and 21 for speed pitches (i.e. brief presentation).

The committee is hoping to inform the participants before May 10.

Question: If you want to plan a meeting during the conference in Amsterdam, let Ellen know before March 6.

Regarding the Jozien Bensing award. Myriam will ask CJAM to handle the submission process. Arnstein will write a text and take responsibility after the submission deadline (May, 1<sup>st</sup>). Arnstein asks Karolien to spread information as much as possible (conference website, e-mailing the members...).

#### **ICCH 2016: Heidelberg**

There isn't a signed contract yet. Myriam will ask Wolfgang to review the budget plan and deliver a definitive plan. Myriam and Jonathan are planning to go to Heidelberg in June to meet Wolfgang and his conference administrator.

Remark: If someone thinks of specific things to ask in Heidelberg, let Myriam and Jonathan know.

## **11. ICCH 2018: how to proceed and the announcement of the application**

Already several countries have asked to be considered for 2018: a) Cyprus, b) Portugal, and c) Belgium (not a formal application).

Myriam will ask Christine from CJAM to send out a request to all the members to apply (with budget plan, website venue, etc.) before December 2014. Afterwards, a small group from the members of the steering committee will review the applications. At the steering committee in February/March, the decision will be made.

Remark: for all future conferences, we expect the venue to be university accommodation.

## **12. TEACH**

TEACH is an active group of 35 people from a large number of European countries, meeting twice a year with subgroups working on distinct projects in between meetings. TEACH has begun the process of collating teaching and assessment tools to be available on the website. TEACH runs four train the trainers courses every year. This year, one was cancelled because there weren't enough participants. Currently the members of the tEACH core planning committee are turning their attention to planning the membership and activities of tEACH for the next 5 years, building on what has been created in the last 5 years. The new tEACH vision will emphasize developing ways to increase the visibility of tEACH as a primary resource for communication teachers throughout Europe. Planning for this new focus will also include an examination of current tEACH membership and needs in regard to recruitment of new members with particular expertise in future. tEACH is currently in the process of developing programmes to assist in communication skills curriculum development in countries that are lacking comprehensive communication skills teaching in the health professions. A project has been initiated in Poland which will include members of tEACH conducting an on-site needs assessment with health professional teachers throughout Poland in Spring 2014 which will help guide appropriate interventions to develop and enhance national communication skills teaching in that country during 2014-2015. tEACH plans for the Amsterdam conference include:

- 2 preconference workshops including What to Teach and Curriculum Development
- Guidance for accepted workshops including optional evaluation and feedback
- Pairing with Colleagues programme
- tEACH has submitted 2 workshops and 1 symposium

Last year, there was a profit of approximately 2000 euro from train the trainers courses.

## **13. REACH**

This year there was a summer-school for eight early career researchers in Gut Gremmelin. EACH will not get another Steffens grant, which means that EACH will have to try to raise money so the summer-school can continue.

The young EACH group has an active Facebook group. There was a workshop during the conference in Montréal and there will be one in Amsterdam.

The pre-conference workshops from rEACH are: Coding Cues and Concerns with VR-CoDES, Qualitative clinical communication research: making methods fit the purpose.

Concerning the research committee: Hanneke will step down and Gerry will take over. Hilde and Jozien also stepped down. Mary Catherine Beach (US) and Arwen Pieterse (NL) joined the Research committee.

With regards to the finances, it was decided to start with a new slate with the new management company.

#### **14. PEC**

PEC has a new cover. There was a renewal of the editorial board and the process is smoother (i.e. every submission first goes to editors who reject a considerable proportion of submissions). There is a new guide for authors. There is an increase in submissions, with more brief papers/pilots (not count as publication). The current rejection rate is 75-80%. There is a need for an outlet for less scientifically founded papers (descriptions of CST interventions, pilot studies). PEC is discussing launching a new electronic journal for such papers. Remark: without impact factor, researchers cannot use this for their careers.

The EACH pages haven't taken off. Four pages a year – January (presidential column), April (R-EACH), July (T-EACH), October (other topics) - to make promotion for EACH/AACH. PEC can be used to promote EACH and his activities.

Question: Arnstein asks the executive committee to make a decision regarding the EACH pages.

This decision needs to be taken in conjunction with the decision as to whether to have regular newsletters sent out by CJAM electronically. AACH now sends out a regular video message from the President to its members.

Question: What can EACH and his members do to improve PEC as their journal? To be a more active organ for EACH? This will be on the agenda for next meeting.