



RDI Network Committee Meeting
29 November, 10:00am – 12:00pm
Web Conference

Minutes

Attendees: Juliet Willetts (Chair), Tessa Hillgrove, Sarah Burrows (partial), Mike Toole, Thomas Soem, Saba Mebrahtu, Jo Crawford, Philippa Smales, Jenny Vaccari

Apologies: Kurt Seemann, Robyn Mildon, Peter Westoby, Elise Klein, Rochelle Spencer, Sumera Jabeen

1) Welcome

Juliet opened the meeting and welcomed members to the call. Attendance was noted. Input provided in advance by committee members not on the call was noted.

Sarah was introduced as the new ACFID Co-chair of the Committee (replacing Gareth Beyers). Sarah shared briefly about her background and expressed interest in working to further bring the RDI Network work into ACFID and the membership.

Juliet noted that Bridi Rice (ACFID) will continue to be involved in some aspects of the work, particularly in ensuring synergies are capitalised on.

Welcoming Sarah, Jo identified a potential synergy between the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) process and the Network's ethical practice work. Sarah agreed, and noted that at a recent UK summit on safeguarding, UK research bodies brought commitments around PSEA.

Action: Sarah to share those commitments and take conversation offline with Jo.

Juliet provided an overview of the agenda for the day and then presented the minutes of the September 2018 meeting for review.

The minutes were agreed to with no changes.

Sarah left the call

2) Updates on DFAT and secretariat

Juliet provided an update on the Program proposal process that has been underway with DFAT. DFAT accepted the proposal as per the version agreed previously with the Committee. As a positive, this indicates trust developed, and acknowledges that we had worked together with them on it through the process.

It was noted that we have now officially commenced the new program (as of Oct 27).

Juliet acknowledged Jenny's upcoming departure from the secretariat and thanked her for her work and support to Philippa and the committee.

Philippa updated the committee on the recruitment process underway: the PD has been advertised widely and the closing date is Monday 3 December.

3) 2015-18 grant closing off

Philippa updated the Committee on the status of the previous grant activities, referring to the final work plan version which was shared with the meeting papers, and combines the 3 years of the grant.

She explained the colour coding used to indicate the status of activities:

- Green: Built on into next grant in some way
- Blue: Completed, not in the new grant
- Yellow: Rolling over, partially completed
- Red: Not completed

It was acknowledged to be an achievement of the secretariat and committee efforts to have completed the large majority of activities.

Juliet queried the interest of ACFID in future work on the one red coded activity – ACFID Research Strategy (3.7). Philippa noted the small pieces that had been worked on linked to this, however a coherent strategy had not been tackled – partially due to changes in staff and capacity within ACFID.

Action: Raise the ACFID Research Strategy discussion with Sarah at a future occasion.

Philippa highlighted some of the activities in yellow (rolling over into new grant for completion):

1.5. Voluntary ethics peer review program: an intern currently working with Philippa, has completed a lit. review and 3 in-depth interviews with people who have had peer review groups. Looking towards having a product in the new year.

2.4.1: Guidance for partnering with churches in the Pacific. This publication is now online, and Philippa has hard copies. It will be presented at the NZIPR Conference (Auckland) next week and at the AAC2019. It was showcased at the interfaith breakfast at ACFID Conference, and has been shared with the Church Agencies Network (CAN).

3.1.13 Urbanisation: A public version of the paper is being finalised. It was confirmed that this will be given to DFAT to review prior to publication.

Jenny provided updates on some further activities rolling over:

3.6: Research Communication and Uptake: The research commissioned to Coffey has been completed, and we are close to having a polished report, a snapshot of sector practice. It will be launched in the new year, including at the AAC2019. An engagement plan has been drafted and agreed to with the steering group for 2019.

Thomas suggested the PolicyLab at the University of Sydney would be interested in this work. Juliet agreed to reach out regarding a Sydney-based roundtable, already proposed.

Action: Juliet to communicate with Thomas to invite PolicyLab to be involved in Sydney event

5: MEL program report: Sumera, Thomas and the co-chairs have been working with Jenny to produce a whole-of-program report against the outcomes, to be provided to DFAT and made public. This will be shared with Committee once finalised in the coming weeks.

4) New Grant Workplan GY1

NGO representative elections

Philippa informed the committee that the elections for NGO representatives on the committee are due for early 2019 (previous round was Jan 2016). The committee discussed the options regarding timing for a call for Eols.

The next committee meeting will be face to face in Canberra in Feb 2019. It was acknowledged that Mike has previously indicated his intention to retire, but plans to encourage a Burnet rep to apply.

It was confirmed that all six NGO positions are up for election, and the election process is based on merit, with the university reps undertaking the decision.

Decision: The committee decided to aim to have new members in place for Feb 2019 meeting.

Action: Philippa will progress the call for Eols as soon as possible, allowing for a large window over the break.

Action: All committee to consider who would be a good fit, and promote the opportunity.

Philippa raised some key priority areas of the Work Plan for 2018-2019:

1.1 RDI Conference

A list of the conference committee members is at the back of the work plan, FYI. Planning is well underway with a conference website set to launch on December 5. A call for abstracts will be open from December 5 – January 30. Otherwise, planning largely on track.

Action: All Committee to assist with promoting the call for abstracts.

2.1: Champions & action research

The process for the research was discussed - particularly the relationship between the champions, a steering group and the (potential) contracted organisation or consultancy to lead. It was discussed how a fair commissioning to contract this out would happen.

It was agreed to add Thomas to the steering group for this, as he has been involved in the discussions to date. Noted currently all university reps: Juliet, Peter, Thomas.

Action: Saba, Tessa and Mike to test for interest within their organisations. (2.1)

3.1.1 and 3.1.2:

This is continuation on the research communications work that is ongoing. There is a current active steering group, but could benefit from a few more as the activity is expanding. Potentially an overlapping steering group between the two items (3.1.1 and 3.1.2).

Action: Jo noted potential nomination from IWDA, and will check interest for steering group. Saba to check within Oxfam. (3.1.1 and 3.1.2).

3.2 – Framework to track processes of influence

This piece builds on the ADRAS study, and reflects interest expressed by DFAT around the FERDI.

Action: Committee members to test interest with colleagues with known interest (3.2).

Action: Philippa to share a background document about steering groups with Committee, to assist with approaching those outside of the committee to contribute.

5 - MEL

Philippa flagged the need to convene a steering group to support on MEL. Committee members nominated potential members.

Action: Philippa to follow up with committee members not on this call, inviting their engagement.

5) Program 2018-21 MEL

Sarah re-joined the call

Juliet detailed the background to the current approach to the new Program's M&E, noting the ad-hoc nature of application in the previous grant, as the tools were not initially in place.

The draft framework, prepared by Juliet and Paul Crawford (consultant) was discussed by the Committee. Juliet talked through the summary framework – appendix.

Noted there is one primary tool for each Key Evaluation Question. At impact level, we are not trying to get full attribution, simply looking for contribution. For each outcome there is an M&E method. We are not trying to measure everything, but capture the biggest pieces of work:

- EOPO1 – methods around metrics of engagement, also thinking around tools on how people are experiencing Network events.
- EOPO2 - action research, incorporates a system to prompt champions to prompt and document reflections, changes in institutions.
- EOPO3 - tracking capacity, one of the hardest things to do. Proposed tool is a scorecard based on one used by CS WASH fund.

Full details of each tool are detailed in the remainder of the document. The committee were invited to provide feedback and respond to the framework.

Committee members endorsed the document, commending it as clear, streamlined, sensible and accessible.

It was noted that DFAT had been part of the co-design workshop where the background to this framework was discussed. This version of the document will be shared back to DFAT as the next step, as well as a discussion regarding the use of ongoing, low-level external M&E support.

Juliet also described Paul's recommendation to consider online information management tools which could assist with data collection and reporting for M&E. This is being explored by the co-chairs and includes discussions with ACFID on their tools and systems.

Action: Anyone who has had experience with online IM systems such as Oracle Apex to contact Philippa

Action: Philippa to take on Sumera's feedback received, and invite input from remainder of committee on the draft framework.

Action: Philippa to discuss the M&E Framework with DFAT at the next available opportunity

Tessa acknowledged Juliet's approach to this work to date, and endorsed the proposal to work with someone ongoing.

6) Wrap Up

The Committee were invited to raise any discussion or events which may be of interest to the committee.

Jo noted a desire to have the opportunity to make use of seminars and technology to potentially engage with DFAT, even informally. Based on thinking following some events attended in recent weeks: important ideas, and not necessarily DFAT presence. Juliet agreed, and noted this type of thinking aligns well with Outcome 1.

Juliet highlighted increasing reliance of audiences on podcasts as a communications channel. Sarah noted ACFID learning team currently looking at opportunities like this. This idea was endorsed, and it was noted that events like the AAC2019 offer opportunities to make use of thought leaders while they are in Australia (e.g. panel Jo/IWDA linked to).

Thomas highlighted Sydney Uni is hosting the Global Health Security conference with the DFAT Health Security section. It will happen in the week after the RDI Conference, at Sydney Convention Centre. There will be side events at the University, Thomas will keep the Network informed of opportunities.

Philippa highlighted that the Network will be offering some scholarships for RDI Conference – details to be shared soon.

7) Closing

Noting this is to be his final meeting given the decision made on elections - Juliet acknowledged Mike's significant and valued contributions over 6 years on the Committee.

The meeting was closed.