



Minutes of the Steering Group Meeting George Mason University, Washington, 13-14 August 2011

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| Attending: | Arild Bjørndal, Mark Lipsey, Sandra Wilson, Peter Tugwell, David Wilson, Aron Shlonsky, Merete Konnerup, Mette Deding, Eamonn Noonan, Emily Tanner-Smith, Gary Ritter, Terri Pigott, William Turner |
| Apologies: | Paul Montgomery, David Weisburd, |
| Guests: | Gill Clark, Jenny Rehman, Catherine Gallagher |
| Minutes: | Heather Menzies Munthe-Kaas, Bjørn Tommy Tollånes |

00. Opening, adoption of the agenda

01. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Reports from Coordinating Groups

02. Reports from Coordinating Groups

2a. Crime & Justice CG (presented by David Wilson)

See attached report

Updating reviews:

- There is a degree of editorial discretion as regards the prioritisation of updates of reviews. Cochrane has produced guidelines on this topic; Peter will distribute them to editors. Co-chairs and editors are responsible for monitoring and following up on protocols and titles that are not progressing. There is a case for developing a policy in this area in order to standardize practice.

Executive summaries:

- User friendly abstracts for reviews are currently not available for all published reviews. Editors are urged to alert managing editors to flag projects nearing completion in each biannual report, so that the users' group can plan production of user abstracts. The users group should also be proactive, maintain an overview of missing abstracts and new reviews, and should interact regularly with editors.

The discussion on updates and on the need for guidelines was referred on to the editors meeting of Monday August 15.

2b. Education CG (presented by Sandra Jo Wilson)

See attached report.

Discussion points:

- Authors and review teams are slow to make changes after peer reviews. This results in a bottleneck for publication.



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- Paul presented the Education CGs Draft Strategic Plan included in the report (Appendix 2). The plan foresees the appointment of an information retrieval specialist and a methods specialist and the CG invites feedback on this and other parts of the plan.
- Editorial (Advisory) board – The CG is seeking suggestions about who to recruit. The main role is to give advice, but it would be good to attract big names in order to draw attention to the group. Ideally around half should be from outside the US.

Smith Richardson Foundation Application:

- A funding proposal called *Rebooting Campbell Education Group* has been submitted to the Smith Richardson Foundation and is under active consideration. Currently the Campbell website is populated by smaller-scale questions and the funder is interested in larger questions. Hence the CG has made 8-10 suggestions, e.g. Supplemental services to *No Child Left Behind* intervention, exit exams, high school restructuring (schools within an economy of scale school).
- Recruiting of authors and review teams for the Smith Richardson reviews will likely be via a request for proposals on the listserv with grants and incentive-based payment to review teams. (By way of example, 3ie allocates 40% on completion of the protocol and 60% on completion of the review.)
- Campbell can conduct reviews which examine the effects of types of programs as distinct from a specific branded intervention. At the same time, authors should be careful not to phrase a question so broadly that it unnecessarily blocks the possibility of other reviews. It is also important the questions posed remain relevant for policy makers.
- Methodological standards remains an issue and need further clarification.

Action: Gary will send the SG a list of topics submitted to Smith Richardson Foundation

2c. Methods CG (presented by Terri Pigott)

No report attached.

- Since the last meeting the Group has produced 5 reviews and one protocol
- Subsequent to an earlier decision by the SG, incoming drafts are now sent to a graduate student for consideration. The Methods editor remains responsible for the action letter.
- There is currently one draft review for which an action letter must be written
- One draft review from Education and one from Crime & Justice have been received recently.
- Representatives of the group have been in Dhaka and South Africa to conduct SR training
- An election for new co-chair is due. The election process presented at May 2011 meeting will be applied.
- The Guide given to graduate students now has links to resources telling authors how to prepare a Campbell review
- Methods CG now has access to reviews and protocols in the toolbox. Action letters are sent to managing editors through the toolbox. The toolbox has been updated so that emails can be sent using To and CC fields.

2d. Social Welfare CG (presented by Aron)

See attached report.

Discussion points:



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- 6 new titles have been registered since the May 2011 meeting, two through the SWCG. The group would like to see more titles registered.
- The Group has started using toolbox and is working out issues regarding its functionality.
- The modalities of Co-registration with CDPLPG have not yet been worked out, notably on the duplication of reviews. William, Peter and Aron will meet with Cochrane representatives join meeting on Monday August 15 with a view to resolving this matter.
- The concept of a fast track review was discussed. Two years ago, a fast track review was started led by IMS in Stockholm, but the project has been held up, in part because of restructuring at IMS. It was noted that the fast track idea may be superfluous if the review process in general moves more quickly.

Conclusion: *Mette, William and Aron will meet to discuss fast track projects.*

Gibbs award

- Betsy Gibbs has offered to match US\$20,000 for the award. Hitherto the award has involved a plaque and colloquium registration for the author of the winning review. A shift to an award for a PhD student to do a post-doc, etc, is under consideration. The aim is to raise money for students to conduct a systematic review as part of their doctorate. The level of endowment needed to produce an annual award is unclear (B.Gibbs suggests US\$20,000 for a US\$1,000 per year award). How much is needed to make this worthwhile for a PhD student? This is a good way to advertise the collaboration and to support younger academics to do systematic reviews. It could be bundled together with editorial assistance from Campbell.
- Discussion on possibility of ESRC funding for PhD students to do systematic reviews

Action: *Referred to an ad hoc Subcommittee for follow up; Aron to chair, Gill, Mark, Paul and Eamonn as members.*

Action: *Aron to send possible PhD systematic review topics to Gill for consideration for ESRC funding*

Publishing in online library

- It was stated that a review finished 2 months ago has not yet been posted in the library.
- Capacity constraints with the Online Library were noted, linked to an urgent project from the Norwegian health directorate.
- (Note: it was subsequently established that the review in question had been submitted to Oslo for publication less than a fortnight before the SG meeting.)
- Discussion regarding format of progress reports to the SG. It was suggested that reports should resemble the format of the C&J CG reports.

Action: *Charlotte Gill to lead a group of Managing Editors to decide upon a format for progress reports to SG*

Cooperation with CDPLPG

- Cooperation with the Cochrane and Campbell CDPLPG group. This group has historically also been affiliated with Campbell. Arild inquired whether the Cochrane group is satisfied with present arrangements and urged better routines to share information with CDPLP. This group has been very productive in contributing to the Campbell library.

Registration of reviews:

- The SG has previously decided that Campbell editors can use RevMan, but that it not mandatory.



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- The advantages of co-registration of reviews was discussed. It was suggested that groups are now clearer about registration than previously. It was noted that reviews which are not co-registered are important for the Campbell library and for the identity of the Collaboration. The increased attractiveness of publishing in Cochrane is acknowledged, given that Cochrane has an impact factor and Campbell does not.
- A review registered with two Campbell entities is termed 'co-listed'. A review registered with both Cochrane and Campbell is 'co-registered'. It remains unclear whether a review registered with CDPLPG is better seen as co-listed or co-registered, given the historic affiliation of the group with Campbell. It was noted that co-registration is an opportunity, given that it gives access to a much bigger audience.
- No conclusion reached on how to cite a review registered both with Cochrane and Campbell libraries.
- Wiley has indicated that they do not mind if a small number of reviews which they publish are included in the Campbell library.
- There are currently 62 reviews in Campbell library, of which 28 are co-registered with Cochrane. Five years ago, the proportion co-registered was significantly.

Boundaries between Cochrane and Campbell

- What is Campbell's added value and can Cochrane respect the natural boundaries between Cochrane and Campbell? Two of the three original Campbell substantive groups have a focus which is distinct from Cochrane, but there remains a large overlap particularly in the social welfare area.

Action: *Arild to follow up regarding structure and status of CDPLPG with Geraldine in October.*

2e. Users Group

No report attached.

Discussion points:

- 66% of online library is covered by user abstracts.
- The users group has created Facebook and LinkedIn groups to increase awareness of knowledge translation, give opportunities to exchange experiences and to keep people engaged between symposiums. The Facebook group is a way to keep the general constituency involved and is open. LinkedIn group is closed and requires application for membership, is connected to RSS feed from the Campbell website. Facebook posts get approximately 50-70 hits each and LinkedIn group has 20-30 members.
- Public service reform is high on the agenda in the UK, with a focus on delivering at lower cost. Reviews on policing are a good way to test the impact of reviews.
- It remains important for Campbell to be visible and active in UK. Eamonn will speak at a NESTA seminar on new frameworks for bringing evidence to bear in social policy.

2f. International Development CG (presented by Howard White)

See attached report.

Discussion points:

- The IDCG started at the end of 2010 with Secretariat and editors based in London.



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- Money to conduct systematic reviews is available from a number of funding streams (ie. German, Dutch, AusAid, DfiD)
- Not all reviews are Campbell reviews (usually because credible evidence is not available, ex. Free trade zones in developing countries)
- The advisory board will have its next meeting on Monday August 15 in Washington.
- Currently 2 titles are registered in library. Titles are under internal review for 4 reviews, and discussions with the review teams are proceeding (e.g. re scope). Two projects will be co-registered with Cochrane: slum upgrading on health outcomes – because approached by Cochrane; street children – because of impact factor. A project on the impact of Deworming on education enrollment is registered with Campbell because an important Kenyan RCT was excluded from a Cochrane review on deworming for unclear reasons. Other topics include farmer field schools, conditional cash transfers, vocational educational training, water supply, sanitation and supply, social accountability in public services, nutritional support programmes to reduce MMR, and preschool feeding programmes (co-listed with SW CG).
- The target is to register 10 review projects by the end of 2011.
- Study designs accepted in IDCG are to be presented on Tuesday at symposium
- There are 800 ongoing or completed RCT studies on developing countries. This will soon give a lot of scope for systematic reviews.
- A number of challenges emerge in the development of reviews: it is difficult to get AusAid and DfiD to develop good questions; and it is difficult to calculate effect sizes from complex (quasi-experimental) study designs.
- Methodological expertise for conducting primary studies in this field is coming from economists (econometrics courses during Bachelor and higher level education focus on impact evaluation).

Deferred: Ongoing discussions on the creation of a global alliance will be followed up by Peter and Arild.

Governance Plan

03. Review of Governance Plan and Strategic Plan

3a. Governance Plan

- Before 2008 there was no governance plan or strategic plan. The 2008 plans have provided a useful structure to date, but may now be somewhat out of date. There is a need to revisit goals and strategies.
- Mark circulated a revised version of the governance plan for discussion. The plan is to take account of points made in the discussion and to circulate a revised plan for adoption by electronic vote.

A list of revisions accepted for inclusion in the revised Governance Plan.

Action: Mark will send a redraft for comment and amendment. Thereafter a revised text will be put to an electronic vote.

3b. Partner organizations versus centers:

- Mette presented a draft for proposed amendments to the governance plan articles on partner organizations and centers. She raised concerns about the lack of distinction between partner organizations versus centers.



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- One difficulty is the question of what say funders may have over activities, while the use of Campbell name means that Campbell needs a degree of control over activities. Centers are possibly not the appropriate organizational structure for Campbell; there has been no serious drive to open new centers.
- It was suggested that partners be redefined as those who actively contribute to Campbell work and that a centre could also be a partner. The need for Partners to support infrastructure, etc, as distinct from simply producing reviews was discussed. The use of limited-term MoUs as a framework for cooperation was discussed.

Conclusion: *The governance plan will be revised to reflect the points made in the discussion. Provisions on partner organizations, length of SG membership terms and conflict of interest issues should be addressed.*

Conclusion: *The Center model does not work for the Collaboration at this time. There should be a relatively short list of active partners with whom there is an MoU.*

Action: *Mark to circulate a revised version for comment.*

3c. Strategic Plan

Discussion points:

- Mark sketched the history of the strategic plan. In revisiting the strategic plan, a number of broad themes are important: the dissemination of reviews; guidance on the inclusion of different study designs; taking account of advances in the methodology of research synthesis; and addressing our relationship with Cochrane.
- Peter noted Cochrane's approach to updating the strategic plan, which focused on the Cochrane library, methods development, and increasing financial support to the editor-in-chief's office. They are now restructuring into the following departments: administration; library (including methods). 30,000 people now call themselves members of Cochrane. It is emphasized that Cochrane does not aim to be the only systematic review organization – they want to be an actor in a larger sector.

Campbell Colloquia:

- An explanation of the goals of Campbell colloquia was recommended in order to guide future events. One aim is to energize and interest researchers to contribute to work within the Collaboration. A focus on training, on the presentation of Campbell reviews and on showcasing Campbell was important. There was discussion of the place of smaller seminars as an effective means of connecting with the policy community. It was agreed that colloquium/seminar are entirely dependent on a local host/partner taking responsibility for logistics (e.g. GMU)
- A revised strategic plan should include both near term and longer term goals, for example in relation to website development
- The C&J CG model of Campbell-branded panels at professional conferences was recommended to other CGs. It was noted that the SW CG holds an annual interest group meeting.
- The possibility of a joint international conference with 3ie in Asia in 2012 or 2013 was discussed. The event could combine training, primary studies and systematic reviews.

Engaging with policy makers and public:

- Campbell needs to engage with both the research community and policy makers. Channels such as the users group and the website are needed and should be further developed.



- Campbell will work towards more visibility using media, including website and online library. Options to consider include an online forum for users and reviewers, ways to increase citations of reviews in the online library (e.g. formally listing Campbell as an open access journal to be searched via open access databases), online training, organizing Campbell panels at other conferences, increased accessibility of presentations from colloquia, and low-cost video recordings of relevant presentations
- The idea of creating a branch to engage specifically with policy makers was raised. It is important to have a pool of experts who can present reviews directly to relevant policy makers when the opportunity arises.

Action: *Arild, Eamonn and Mark will revise the strategic plan according to suggestions and send it out for feedback*

Action: *Secretariat will investigate how to get C2 library listed as an open access journal and to ensure that C2 reviews appear in Google searches*

Action: *Names of participants in 15.August training should be recorded for follow-up*

Production of reviews

04. Production of Reviews, including revision of policy briefs

Consistency in the publication of reviews:

- Content and style (formatting) concerns about reviews were raised. Consistency of appearance and accessibility are important. Challenges with reformatting reviews, such as changing DOI numbers, were noted.
- It was suggested that a source document be created for each review so that documents can easily be translated into various outputs. Limitations on in-house resources are a potential barrier to this.
- The question of updating older reviews was discussed. (see discussion under)
- Cochrane guidelines on the reporting of empty reviews should be disseminated to SG members and editors.
- The existing set of minimum standards for the production of reviews may need revision. These should be made easily accessible to review authors on the website; existing guidance documents should be integrated and collected in one place. Revising and clarifying policies on review production is important, but so it practical guidance on production tailored for review authors. A manual would be useful, if resource constraints can be overcome.
- The question of a policy on Risk of Bias assessment and GRADE was raised. The assessment of quality of evidence differs across groups.

Referred onwards: *The question of quality assessment tools was referred to the editors meeting.*

Referred onwards: *Consistency of appearance was referred to the editors meeting.*

Referred onwards: *Discussion on common standards and procedures and use of new tools was referred to the editors meeting.*

Action: *The review submission checklist developed by Terri should be made available on the website. This indicates for review authors what needs to be included under background and methods.*

Dissemination



05. Dissemination activities; and the Online Library

Monograph Series:

- Mark raised the issue of a new portal to the online library. A preliminary outline had been distributed. It is important to differentiate between the monograph series and the library; the portal should lead to the monograph series.
- Emphasising the Monograph series would allow users to browse more easily. Reviews would be organized by volume. This would also give the same feel as an online journal.
- Publications should be referenced similar to Cochrane method, using 'suggested citation'.
- The list of names of editors on the website should be updated regularly. Names of Managing Editors should be added to the Editorial Board page.
- Updates of reviews in the monograph series will be entered as separate entries. The original will have a tag that indicates it has been updated and the update of the review will have a link to the original review.

Conclusion: *The SG approved the proposal to create a new portal. Some details need to be finalised and will be addressed during implementation.*

Action: *SG members are asked to review documents and to inform Mark of necessary changes or additional relevant information.*

Action: *Bjørn Tommy will manage implementation, in liaison with Mark and Eamonn.*

Networking

06. Colloquium

6a. Status of the join Symposium at GMU

Cynthia Lym from GMU gave a brief update on the status of the event:

- Over 300 participants to the conference
- 160 participants in methods workshops
- 75 participants for policing workshops
- 275 participants for the main day

6b. Preparation for the next Colloquium, Copenhagen (2012)

- The Copenhagen Conference, May 29-31, 2012 will focus on methods training for researchers with a fourth day for practitioners and policy makers from the Nordic region. Attendance is targeted at 150 (with room for up to 250)
- Suggested agenda for event:
 - 1-2 days for annual Steering group meeting (before or after at the conference, held at SFI office)
 - 1 day for training on methods
 - 1-2 days for substantive reviews presentations, panels
 - 1 day for policy makers
- The communications department at SFI has booked venue in central Copenhagen and is arranging accommodations, etc.



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- Program committee (soliciting of and reviewing papers): Coordinated by Social Welfare group (Aron Shlonsky as Chair) and other members include: Gary Ritter, Terri Pigott, Paul Connely, Charlotte Gill, Jenny Rehnman
- Types of submissions:
 - *For methods workshops* - by invitation, not open call, to ensure Campbell perspective (need to pass around definition of what the call will look like).
 - *For reviews* – each CG to invite presenters and assemble a panel
 - It was suggested that there be an open call for posters that have some connection to Campbell reviews (even just data points within a review) to get more people to come (funded by institutes)
- SFI Campbell is in the process of seeking funding, which will determine the registration fee. Possibility of early-bird registration from 1 January.
- Theme should be around systematic review methodology.

Action: *The Program Committee, Mette, Arild, Eamonn and Mark will take the planning process forward. Eamonn will share planning documents from Oslo conference with Mette. A link about the event will be posted on the Campbell website by the end of August.*

07. Partnerships

7a. Cochrane

Deferred.

7b. SFI Campbell

See attached report.

7c. Center for evidence transition (Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy)

Catherine Gallagher outlined the development of a Cochrane Policy College (see attached information sheet).

- The college was created in partnership with George Mason University with the aim of improving Cochrane's profile in particular in relation to US government agencies
- Neither Cochrane nor Campbell is in receipt of funding from US government agencies, despite the existence of funds for evidence based policy research. Cochrane, working with key US contributors, wishes to establish a new format for disseminating information on Cochrane activities
- The Cochrane college is supported by George Mason University and aims to ensure that Cochrane is more present in the policy arena
- 21 staff members will provide tailored outreach to officials, including packaged information for distribution to their constituencies. The College will also work with local and national media outlets so that Cochrane reviews are clearly reported
- They are looking at innovative methods for conducting rapid reviews, involving different ways to prioritize different types of evidence.
- They will discuss key policy areas with a congressional delegation
- The goal is self-sufficiency in funding
- They want to ensure that the college and Campbell align as well as possible. One option to consider is for Campbell to authorize college staff to represent Campbell interests to policy makers and institutions
- The Edinburgh academy of evidence was recommended as a model for the college to consider



Discussion

- In the short term the college is likely to focus on Cochrane relevant, health-related arenas. In due course there will be scope for more focus on Campbell fields. Ways and means to connect the Campbell brand to the college should be considered.
- Suggestions on practical cooperation, including ad hoc cooperation on specific issues, should be drawn up.
- Completed reviews and work in progress that overlap with health issues should be flagged, together with names of experts and other information of relevance on key topics.
- Concerns were expressed about rapid reviews, and the general reservations about these are well known to the College.

Action: *Secretariat will follow up on ways to cooperate and on the possibility of an MoU*

Administration

08. Head office Report

See attached report.

- The overall level of funding from Norway in 2010 will be approximately the same as in 2011
- Funding has been made available for editorial infrastructure as a core priority. Another 5000 USD will be made available for a position as Social Welfare Group Managing Editor, on condition that matching contributions come from other sources.
- Eamonn sought guidance on priority areas from SG in the event of more funding becoming available. Editorial infrastructure is a priority. The website and development of the library can benefit from greater investment, and it should be noted that the present set up has been achieved on the basis of a very modest budget.
- We maintain framework agreements with different institutions to fund editorial work. The goal has been to buy one day a week of an academic's time for editorial work. In no case is there provision for more than a 20% full time equivalent (i.e. one day a week). This is a significant constraint and is in many cases inadequate for the work involved. Our present level of funding does not allow for significant increases in existing commitments. William noted that this is not enough considering the objectives of the organization, and that production suffers as a result.
- The possibility of utilising graduate students to support editorial work was discussed. It was also proposed that a request for editorial funding be built into the Education CGs application to Smith Richardson

Fundraising:

- Funding from Norway cannot cover all the needs of the Collaboration. CGs need to examine ways to raise funds.
- An ad hoc committee to examine the Colloquium's business strategy was proposed. This should include representatives of each CG and should look at the possibility of a consortium of universities which could provide support, particularly for the editorial process (such as managing editor positions).
- New forms of funding were discussed. Employing external fundraisers was not seen as a viable step. It is difficult to identify potential funders; conversations with obvious candidates have not been very productive. Funders not open to giving infrastructure support. The possibility of seeking UK government or ESRC support for a research assistant was discussed, but difficulties were acknowledged.



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- European Commission funding was discussed. It was noted that Oslo does not have capacity to devote significant time or resources to funding applications. A better option is to join in with a consortium seeking funding. People within Cochrane have extensive fundraising experience and can provide practical guidance.

Action: Paul to send information on European funding to SG members.

Other

09. Any other business

Prospero

Deferred: Discussion on Prospero will be addressed via email after the meeting.

10. Next SG Meeting

To be determined at a later date; either immediately preceding or immediately after the Copenhagen Colloquium (29-31 May 2012).



Changes accepted for inclusion in the revised Governance Plan

Article 1 section 3 – add ‘and their delegates’ (for clarity) – accepted

Article 2 section 2 – delete (redundant); duly selected in place of duly elected – accepted

Article 2 section 10 – delete; ‘made available with notification to all SG members...’ in place of ‘circulated’ – accepted

Article 2 section 11 – addition regarding inclusion in quorum – accepted

Article 3 – approved changes

Article 4 – reference to CEO document deleted (not found); communication duties inserted elsewhere rather than in a communications officer position (funding not currently available). Changes accepted

Article 5, section 2 – Details to be given in an appendix rather than the main text; changes regarding nomination, recruitment of editors – section 2 accepted

Article 5, section 3 – drawn from document from section 2 (paraphrased). Due differentiation between substantive and supportive CGs: ‘as appropriate’ to be added as appropriate.

Article 5, section 4 – question of SG right of approval of CG governance documents and changes thereto. CG plans should be available on the website. Clause added: ‘CGs have power to determine own membership requirements’

Article 5, section 5 – (j)(role of editor-in-chief in approval for publication. Suggested wording ‘publication is dependent on and follows approval by the editor-in-chief’

Article 5, section 6 – ‘determined in consultation with’ in place of ‘determined by’

Article 5, section 7 - accepted

Article 5, Section 5 relocated

Article 5, section 9 – becomes a separate article

Article 5, section 10 - becomes a separate article

Article 5, section 11 - becomes a separate article

As not only trials are sought, the term should be changed to ‘Information retrieval specialist’

Article 5, section 12 – small changes

CG governance plans are more explicit on voting, but unless there are common standards, they will not be specified in the SG document

Article 6 – recasting of material moved from above

Section 2 is new: editors-in-chief function. Sending protocols to the EiC is useful to lessen the chance of rejection at a later stage. Editors in chief have final approval. ‘Access and notification’ in place of ‘receive protocols’

Section 3 – minor editorial changes

Section 4 – wording to be reviewed; ‘formal suggestions’ or specifics on action letters to be included; Methods group’s responsibility for training to be specified

Section 4 (to be changed to section 5) –Mark to review the wording with input from managing editors.

Section 5 – ‘Information retrieval specialist’ in place of trial search coordinators; edit down to a concise description of tasks.

Article 7 & 8 see section 3b and 3c.

Article 9 – minor editorial changes