

General assembly ANSER 30 November 2017

Attending: Hazel Barrett, Els Leye, Tom Claes, Simukai Shamu, Anna Galle, Olena Ivanova, Tammary Esho, Sonia Dias, Kaiyan Pei, Elin Larsson, Feng Cheng, Gunta Lazdane, Ines Keygnaert, Soraya Mohammed, Diane Cooper, Olivier Degomme, Katherine Muylaert, Hanani Tabana, Lucia Knight, Peter Gichangi, Dirk Van Braeckel.

1. New members

5 new applications were received: Centre for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies – University of Antwerp, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology- Riga Stradins University, Department of Women's and Children' Health - Uppsala University, Institute of Development Studies – University of Sussex, School of Public Health – UWC (see applications files that were circulated prior to the General Assembly meeting).

Three applicants are represented and present their institutions: Riga Stradins University, UWC, Uppsala University. There are no objections raised against their membership, and they are warmly welcomed as new members of the network.

2. Governance structure

So far we worked with a structure of rather loose working groups and tasks forces, of which some were very active and others weren't. We want now to establish a Management Committee. Prior to the meeting, all members have been given the opportunity to raise their candidature for this committee. The following applications were received:

- Hazel Barrett (Coventry University-CTPSR)
- Feng Cheng (Tsinghua University Research Centre For Public Health)
- Olivier Degomme (UGent-ICRH)
- Sonia Dias (Universidade NOVA de Lisboa)
- Elin Larsson (Karolinska Institutet)
- Simukai Shamu (Foundation for Professional Development)
- Wei-Hong Zhang (Université libre de Bruxelles-SPH – UGent-ICRH)

All candidates are accepted without voting.

The management committee will meet every two months, and also work out operating procedures for itself and for internal communication within the network.

Evaluation of working groups

Gender based violence: worked on sexual harassment in the academy, organised a workshop in Ghent on 2 May 2017 and will organise another workshop in February 2018. There is frequent communication between the members of the working group, but there is little contact with the ANSER members outside the working group.

FGM working group: they are making joint proposals, developing an online module, and organizing staff mobility.

Abortion and family planning: one pagers were drafted following the launch conference.

In general: some members are very active, others are not active at all.

Comments on the governance of the ANSER network:

- We should find ways to get members more involved and create ownership.
- Members who really never respond to mails or participate in activities could be asked if they really want to stay member. However, first we should try to understand why they are not responding and seek ways in which they can be made more active.
- ANSER has been using several communication systems and this was sometimes confusing. The Zephyr platform appeared to be sometimes little user-friendly for users outside the UGent network and especially for sending mails to members. The Management Committee will explore which would be the best communication system (also taking into account software for joint project work) and then implement this.
- We should distinguish between inside communication (mails, closed platforms...) and outside communication (website, newsletter...). Anna suggested that it might be better to have a website that is completely open.
- The coordination of the network must stay with UGent due to the funding conditions, but other members are very welcome to take up coordinating tasks and leadership of specific projects, working groups or task forces. The Management Committee should communicate with all members in such a way that people feel inspired and invited to launch ideas and take initiatives.

3. Activities 2016-2017

An overview of all activities in 2016 and 2017 was circulated prior to the meeting. The general feeling is that quite a lot has already been done, though there were also many ideas that were not (yet) implemented.

Comments:

- Joint publications: 1 person should be appointed to take the lead. This does not necessarily have to be the person who launches the idea.
Members are encouraged to use the network to send around draft publications.
- Joint proposals: similar to joint publications. Ideas can be launched at any moment, not only at a face-to-face meeting.
- The doctoral schools were evaluated very positive, but the participants would have liked to have had more interactions.
- The workshop on sexual harassment in the academy was also very productive, and there will be a follow-up activity in 2018.

4. Planning of activities in 2018

- All ideas for projects and publications that were raised and discussed during this ANSER week will be circulated to the members, inviting them to take initiatives or to embark on initiatives taken by others.
- There will be a follow-up workshop on harassment in the academy in February 2018, and later on a joint research project on the topic.
- Doctoral schools: KI and UGent can take the lead in this, but others are welcome to join. Options will be explored to involve more than two sites, both for teachers and for students. UWC is most interested to be one of these sites, they have a similar initiative to the UGent Summer School, the UWC Winter School.
- Establish a doctoral community: Anna will explore what could be a good system for this.
- Participate in- or organise conferences with ANSER. Gunta will see if it is possible to do something within the context of the ESC conference in Budapest in May. The world conference on migration and health in Edinburgh in May could also be an opportunity, and an ANSER event on China-EU cooperation is already planned for May (Beijing). All members will be invited to look for opportunities.
- It would be good to post a list of topics of expertise and services provided by ANSER on our website. Mentioning also names of individual experts is considered rather tricky.
- Education and capacity building: the online module for policy makers on medicalization of FGM will be further developed in 2018. Who wants to start developing other modules, on other topics?

Members are encouraged to inform their students about the possibilities within the ANSER network. Simukai will explore the options for a South-South cooperation in capacity building.

- Training for ANSER members in communication, media etc.: maybe organize a face to face workshops in combination with the next annual meeting, and for the rest use online training tools. There appear to be lots of online tools for media training available, but it would be best to have one (or more) specifically about SRHR. Members are invited to provide links to good tools.
- Workshops: Karolinska Institute will organise workshop for policy makers in Sweden on the development of action plans, and within this context there will also about the role that ANSER could play in this.
- Policy briefs: a policy brief will be made on medicalization of FGM. Based on this policy brief a workshop for policy makers may be considered. Members are invited to suggest other topics for policy briefs.
- It could be a good idea to circulate drafts of papers to other ANSER members for a first review.

5. Internship programme

Only few people replied to the request to communicate 'offers' and 'demands', but the few internships that have taken place are evaluated as positive. ANSER internships are especially considered a good option for PhD students. Analysing existing data sets could be a good assignment for interns, and could lead to quick publications. Financial constraints are an important barrier, not only concerning housing and travel costs, but also because of the fees that

some universities have to ask from interns. ANSER can help look for sources of funding but cannot finance all costs.

All members are invited to communicate suggestions and proposals, and the Management Committee will consider a revision of the current system.

6. Staff mobility

This is for shorter periods than internships, and should be clearly related to ANSER output (joint research proposal or publication, online course...).

Also here only very few members responded to the call for applications, and also here members will be invited to make suggestions to the Management Committee that will consider a revision of the guidelines?

7. AOB

7.1 Outline of ANSER

A need is felt to have a clear outline of what ANSER is and what the members can expect from it. The Management Committee will take this up.

PR-policy:

- The ANSER coordination will send a mail to all member institutions explaining what has been done during this ANSER week and what had been the output and added value. The institutions which were represented in this week will also be thanked for that.
- We need a flyer to present ANSER to a broad audience. The Management Committee will work on this.
- Christmas greeting with a few lines about ANSER will be sent to the external participants in the ANSER seminars that took place on Monday and Tuesday, as well as to other 'external friends'.
- Newsletter: is already in place, but it would be good to extend the mailing list.
- Members are requested to add ANSER affiliation when they have ANSER-related publications together with other ANSER member.
- Overall, the Management Committee will explore what are the best communication channels for different types of information and for different audiences.

7.2 Next meeting

There will be an evaluation of this ANSER week, and based on that a rough outline of next year's meetings will be drafted. Members will also be questioned on what would be the ideal time for the next meeting, and also on ideas for a meeting place. A proposal for dates and place will be circulated in the next few weeks.

7.3 Finances

We receive 60,000 EUR per year for ANSER. There was some underspending this year, so quite some flexibility next year. We need 20% co-funding. All expenses for flights etc. covered by

member institutions also count as cofounding, so everybody is requested to communicate the amount to the ANSER secretariat (Katherine Muylaert).