4.1 Membership Development Group Report of first meeting

**27 February 2015**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

1. **Present: Sergio Aires** (Sergio had to be excused right at the start of the meeting as he just got word of a family bereavement), Jasmina Krunic, Luigi Leonori, Tess Murphy, Vilborg Oddsdottir, Kamila Plowiec

**In attendance:** Barbara Helfferich, Fintan Farrell and Kart Mere (Kart attended as she was in Brussels for another meeting and in the absence of Sergio she Chaired the meeting)

**Apologies:** No one was absent

1. **Welcome, Adoption of Agenda, presentation of new Development Officer**

Kart welcomed the members of the group. The agenda was agreed without changes. Barbara informed about new Development Officer who could not be present but will start in EAPN on 15 April. **Action: Barbara will send CV of new Development Officer to the members of the Group**

1. **Establishing the Group:**
   * ***Info re Handbook:*** Fintan gave some information about the documents that were in the handbook prepared for the group.
   * ***Agreement re mandate of the group:*** In the general discussion key things were highlighted that this group should try to address:
     + To try to help to overcome the feeling that the European level work is imposed on the National Networks
     + To ensure a good use of NASS to strengthen our Networks
     + We need to help to find commonalities within our very different realities
     + Already the mandate is a large agenda so we shouldn’t enlarge it too much
     + This group should help EAPN to be more receptive to the signals coming from the ground and the changing realities of how people live in poverty.
     + Can we find a positive way to talk about EAPNs role, not just anti-poverty but for equality
     + We should first fill more simple knowledge gaps about who are Networks are (this discussion got picked up in the mapping exercise below)
     + We need to think better how we work with countries not in the EU (sometimes our request do not relate to these countries)
     + We need to add enlargement in the mandate of the Group.
     + Grants from the National Network Solidarity Fund and their follow up should be added to the mandate of the group.

**Action: It was agreed that the mandate of the group should be revisited by the Exco to ask that they agree with these two additions for the mandate**

* + ***Role of European Organisations in this group:***

There was discussion but no real agreement about the role of EOs in this group. It was generally agreed that the role of EOs in EAPN is more a question for the Bureau and Exco to follow up. It was felt that it would not be appropriate for this group to start trying to build capacity of EOs as they have their own ideas for that and only part of what they do is related to EAPN. Some suggestions on the role of this group included:

* May be this group could ensure progress is made on criteria for the EO Solidarity Fund from the EAPN Fund
* Ensuring a good cooperation between national members of EOs in EAPN and the National Networks
* Trying to identify a project that EOs could do jointly to bring their experience to EAPN. However others felt that such a project work needs EOs and NN involvement like we have in the Task Forces and in projects at present.
* This group could track and encourage greater participation of EOs in EAPN statutory and working groups.

**Action: Irrespective of what was the role of EOs in this group it was agreed that Luigi should try to ensure a chance for EOs to meet before next Exco. Barbara said she would be available to help organise such a meeting if that was helpful.**

**Action: Role of EOs in the MDG to be on next agenda.**

* + ***Chairing of the Group:*** It was decided to have a rotating chair system decided alphabetically using first names. **Action: Jasmina will chair next meeting**.

1. **Reporting by Networks**

* **Reports from Networks 2012/2013:** The following Networks have not submitted reports in these two years: Cyprus, Greece, and Lithuania.They should be reminded that it is important that they do so. **Action: Fintan to reminded**
* **Making more use of information in National Reports and in other documents we receive:** It was agreed that the MDG members should do a mapping of key information about the National Networks including: their membership, their budgets, staff situation, key areas of work, key groups they work with, capacity building needs….. It was agreed that Fintan should prepare a draft template for this mapping to send to the members of the group to be agreed before the Exco meeting. The members of the group divided out the National Networks and they would try to fill in the mapping document for a range of Networks and to follow up with personal contact (at Exco or phone calls) to find missing information. Fintan would distribute existing documents (annual reports, info sheet on funding received by Networks..) to the members of the MDG to help with this work. It was agreed that such an exercise would provide a good basis for the work of the MDG, it was also agreed that there needs to be a balance to get the info needed but not make the task so big that we will not be able to complete. **Acton: Fintan to draft mapping template for members of the MDG to suggest improvements and adoption. Members of the MDG agreed to follow up as follows:**
* **Jasmina: Finland, Romania, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Serbia**
* **Tess: Ireland, Belgium, Norway, Austria, Malta, Greece, Italy**
* **Vilborg: Iceland, Hungary, Estonia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and UK**
* **Kamila, Poland, Macedonia, Cyprus, Spain, Latvia, Czech Republic and Sweden**
* **Sergio: Portugal, Lithuania, France, Luxembourg**

1. **EAPN Fund – Agree procedure re following up applications for Solidarity Fund for National Network**

It was agreed that all applications received would be sent to all members of the group as soon as possible after the deadline. People would read the applications and make an assessment on the basis of the agreed criteria. We would have face to face meeting/s (during the Exco- starting at the lunch time on the Friday) to make a selection of Networks to support and prepare a recommendation for the Bureau. If a member of the MDG is from a Network applying for support they will be excluded from this process. **Action: Fintan to distribute the applications received.**

1. **Training and Capacity Building**

Two capacity building events are budgeted for in the 2015 work programme. It was greed that the first one would be a ‘basic training’ building on a previous model that EAPN ran. The second would be more on a theme. There was an observation that for capacity building it is often better that two people attend from a Network as they can support each other to follow up when they go back from the training. However it was felt that this would be difficult this year as we only budget one person for each of the two events. There was a comment that it would be good in addition to try to raise other funds to have an event like the ‘Learning Forum that was held in 2013.

It was also clear that the one of the purpose of the training is to motivate and up skill people to take up roles in the National networks. With this in mind it was agreed that as a general approach for the capacity building and training events we should design it as a ‘training of trainers event’ so that there is an expectation that the person who attends would use what the learn in a training they would organise for the members of their Network.

It was also said that training should help to get from individual stories to have a ‘helicopter view’. Training should help to show different understandings of lobbying, advocacy, campaigning and equip people to do this better in their networks.

It was decided that some form of training needs assessment has to be done by asking the National Networks. The request should be simple and it should be possible to reply in the same email. Closed questions should also be used (like which of the following is the most important training need for your Network 1) how to do participation of PeP, How to communicate, to know better the way EU Institutions work…)

**Action: It was agreed that an email should be sent to Networks to 1)explain the idea that the training would be a ‘training of trainers’, asking them about training needs, and asking them to identify early the person they would send so that we can build the training around the profile of the people attending. Such an email will be tested with the members of the MFG before sent to everyone.**

**It was agreed that first training event would be held on 18-19 June**

**Members of the MDG are asked to let Barbara know if they could host one of the trainings. They would need to make some effort to get matching funds but reduced price for venues or other costs would also be helpful.**

1. **Visits to Networks**

***France:*** Already a request on the table and **Barbara and Sergio are following up**

***Netherlands,*** Already a request has been received. It is also useful to find out more about impact of support from EAPN Fund and to know if they manage to have new members in the Network as a result of their efforts. **Barbara is following up and will set up the meeting.**

***Slovenia:*** We have had some contacts from people interested to create a new initiative to build a network in Slovenia. Following this up should be a first priority for the new Development Officer. Hopefully the conditions would be write to set up a meeting in Slovenia. Barbara and Fintan should ensure the new development officer is well briefed on the engement we have had in the past with representatives from Slovenia. **Action Development Officer to follow up with support from Barbara and Fintan**

***Greece:*** Barbara to be in touch and set up a meeting with the Greek Network to how they are developing. It is a concern that we still don’t have their report on the use of the National Network Solidarity Fund grant. **Action: Barbara to follow up**

***Involvement of Members of MDG in visits:*** As a norm visits should involve at least one from the secretariat and one from the MDG. Once dates for meetings are agreed it will be seen who is available. The Development officer will have a key role to play in the setting up and following up of the meetings. In situations with more conflict involved a Bureau member should attend the meetings.

1. **MASS Follow Up**

It was emphasised that MASS follow up needs to be integrated in all aspects of our work (how we ask for annual reports, how we do strategic planning, how we arrange capacity building events, induction for new members….). In addition there is a more intense process identified to be systematically used with at least two Networks a Year. This allows a greater opportunity for Peer exchange and meetings with Peers from other countries in the two countries that chose to take up this opportunity. There is a budget for up to 5 people to travel for each MASS exchange. There had been some interest expressed by Spain and Portugal to take up this MASS challenge. It was decided to check with these Networks to see if they are still interested. It was felt by the MDG that if they were prepared to wait that it would be good to offer the opportunity to the Latvian and Lithuanian Networks. **Action: Fintan or new Development Officer to follow up**

1. **Membership Requests**

Two expressions of interest were received about membership, one from the European Federation of St Egido and one from Don Bosco**.** They are not as yet formal applications and as both have strong Italian origins a request for an opinion should be asked of the Italian Network. It was agreed that the important thing is to follow our presently agreed procedure. It was also agreed that the procedure for request for membership from National Networks and European Organisations should be reviewed at a future MDG meeting. **Action: Barbara to check with EAPN Italy. Procedure for membership requests to be distributed to members and discussed at next MDG meeting.**

1. **AOB**

* ***Review Meeting:*** It was agreed that it was a very positive meeting and a good start to the work of the group.
* ***Date of next Meeting:*** Group will met again 18 September. However it was also agreed that we would try to have meetings by skype (or some such technology) in the meantime as well as taken opportunity to meet during Exco meetings. **Action: Members were asked to let us know if they would like to host the meeting.**