

Meeting of the SIRG Coordination Committee on August 1, 2006

Present: Henny Lantman, Phil Davidson, Tony Holland, Bob Davis , David McConnell, Mike Kerr, Gwynnyth Llewelyn.
Representing the Physical Health, Aging, Psychiatric and Parenting SIRGs

Minutes previous meeting in Taiwan were accepted

Moved Bob, Seconded Phil that minutes accepted with the acknowledgement that Phil Davidson was also present

Review Draft Bye Law to be presented as circulated prior to the meeting by Henny (attached)

Henny talked to this document that was developed by Neil Ross and Henny Lantman
Moved that submit as included seconded Phil and carried

Discussion:

Below the points that were brought up, grouped by issue:

There is a need to clarify the function of the SIRG Coordination committee and its relationship to aspects of ratification of new SIRGs
Recent problems with changes in the SIRG executives and communication and ratification of these changes to IASSID. Issue was highlighted by recent changes in parenting SIRG.

Membership

SIRG's original function was seen as a gathering point for various interest groups within the IASSID and the framework was originally set up with a requirement of membership in IASSID.

Given that the membership ranged between 450 and 700 there was a limited number of SIRGs that IASSID could support.

When new members join there was an opportunity to promote SIRGs that might be relevant to that members interests and it would be an opportunity to get information to that member at that time.

The question of IASSID membership being a requirement of SIG membership was brought up.

IASSID needed to look at accountability of SIRGs to SIRG members and to IASSID itself.

Recently developed and developing SIRGs (eg. parenting and family SIRGs) have different priorities needs including initial support and communication with potential members.

Cooperation

There were a wide range of developmental and organisational differences within the various SIRGs and there are some broad interest groups within the intellectual disability research community without any SIRG representation eg. special education. Often the SIRG's might be driven by an issue that was topical or as a result of activity of some members. As such with some issues there was a tendency to lose momentum over time. Question as to whether this was a good or bad thing. Initial development that happened when SIRG's first created has stalled and that some aspect of the SIRGs are working somewhat independent of IASSID Danger of only driving force of IASSID is meetings rather than the building of collaborative networks May be important to work out a reciprocal agreement between SIRGS and IASSID with clearer idea of relative responsibilities. IASSID needs to be in more control the SIRGs structure and function and expected output eg expectations of SIRG's involvement of conferences. One of weaknesses is difficulty in including all SIRG's in this process.

Preparation of Capetown:

Montpellier was far better in approaching the SIRGs and having their input included in the program. He had concern that this was not happening for South Africa committee and there was a need for the SIRG's to empowered to make recommendations.

Discussion on 4 yearly conference. Including the SIRGs within the program is potentially divisive and there was some merit in using conferences to highlight different themes where SIRGs could contribute to the dissemination of information across the broad spectrum of IASSID membership.

Other remarks on SIRG meetings.

Tony Holland brought up the separate issue of the relationship of the SIRG's to the congresses, the regional and SIRG meetings. Suggestion that a regional representative of the SIRG could be involved in the development of the regional meeting.

Mike Kerr said that SIRGs work more effectively when own activity and not combined with IASSID meeting.

Phil Davidson indicated that there was a priority to have meetings each year for the SIRG's and that sometimes there was conflict in priorities and planning of IASSID

This meeting was seen as a step to deal with some of the issues raised above but was only a start of the process and that there was a need to look at the structure and strategies of IASSID.

Tony Holland felt that a permanent secretariat might facilitate this process and that it needs to be considered.

Phil Davidson said that IASSID needs to support SIRG representation on council by contributing to travel costs.

At the end of the meeting it was resolved to present to council a synopsis of this discussion and the following submission was formulated.

The Meeting felt that it was crucial for the SIRGs development to have an up to date knowledge of those who have enrolled in the specific SIRG and active communication between IASSID and the SIRGs

For this to happen we ask the council to consider providing

- “core secretarial support” as a focus for administration
- Stipends to help cover the basic costs of maintaining the SIRGs eg teleconferences
- Financial support for representation on council

In return the SIRG’s provide the following for IASSID

- Facilitate recruitment to IASSID through the SIRGs
- Contribution to papers, journals, consensus statements, books etc.
- Organisation of SIRG meeting
- Contributions for wider membership within scientific programs eg. presentations not aimed at the SIRG
- Contribute to develop of policy statements
- Professional expertise for advocacy on SIRG related issues

The SIRG groups want direction from council on the question of the relationship of SIRGs and the various levels of conferences eg regional, four yearly congresses