

European Society for Prevention Research (EUSPR) Marketing and Communications

Skype Meeting Report 8 September 2015

On the call:

David Foxcroft (DF)
Jeremy Segrott (JS)
Elena Gervilla Garcia (EG)
Mariangels Duch (MD)
Joanna Travis-Roberts (JTR)
Zili Sloboda (ZS)
Hanno Petras (HP)
Andrew Brown (AB)
Jeff Lee (JTL)

Group members not able to join:

Martha Canfield
Simon Claridge
Fideli Kalambayi
Melissa Kenzig
Catia Magalhaes
Fernando Mendes
Michal Miovsky

Note: Actions proposed or decisions made or further discussions required marked in red.

- JTL thanked those on the call and all involved in supporting the work on the marketing and communications thinking with respect to its development for promoting EUSPR
- He suggested that the group go through the document he had provided for the call as a summary of responses received thus far and to pick up any issue that required further elucidation or discussion
- The question about the overall scope of EUSPR's work was introduced at the outset and reoccurred throughout the discussions. Should EUSPR be seen to be focussed on substance use prevention or broaden the remit to issues of broader public health concerns, multiple health risk behaviours which appeared to be where the prevention science and policy focus appeared to be moving towards. DF suggested this was an issue for consideration by the EUSPR Board but added that he felt the need to address "where we are" with "where we want to be". This might mean a continued short-term focus on the area where EUSPR is known ie, substances and prevention but allow for a development of a broader focus in what we say about EUSPR. This should be reflected in the Mission statement which should become the starting point for what else is communicated about EUSPR.
- JTL pointed out that the item under discussion (item 1 of the document) was reflecting the constituency of EUSPR rather than its focus of work and that

the broad multi disciplinary field of the health focussed community remained EUSPR's target groups.

- It was therefore proposed that the Mission statement should be broad but encompass a short term focus with substance use but provide the breadth of reflecting EUSPR's awareness of the its role for broader health behaviour related issues. This would be a matter for the Board to agree but a proposed Mission Statement could be provided by the Marketing group.(see later action proposed)
- The issue of whether EUSPR should be seen as having an advocacy role was discussed. ZS suggested this was a matter of how advocacy was defined and understood. She suggested that EUSPR should become the "go to" place for prevention. JS proposed EUSPR can and should be an advocate for research, evidence base and prevention science but not for particular programmes eg GBG, SFP.
- Item 2 of the paper which reflected views on EUSPR's role and function was seen as requiring revision given it placed networking as the first element of its work. JTL said it was presented in no particular order of EUSPR's role. ZS agreed to rewrite the statement.
- JTL pointed out that the request for comments with respect to EUSPR's management, governance, endorsement issues had not been answered by many and reflected either that people did not know what to write or felt it of less importance than other issues raised. DF suggested these issues should be available on the website but not form part of EUSPR's front line marketing. This received general agreement. AB pointed out the need to be transparent on these matters and to have the information available. He also stressed the need for EUSPR to be open about its ethics in terms of from whom it would or would not take funding. This was important for EUSPR's credibility but a highly sensitive issue that required further discussion. JTL pointed out that our marketing may need to differ depending on the target group being targeted. In cases of fund raising, for example, issues of funding sources and governance become very important.
- A discussion ensued re the need to engage and communicate with the membership. ZS and HP suggested the value of having a Newsletter to engage with the membership even though it could be a demanding task for the writer. At a later stage of discussions DF spoke of a Newsletter that could be valuable even if it included duplication of what was available elsewhere. It would be directed to the membership and help to generate information and awareness of EUSPR. HH experience in writing a Newsletter for SPR was a useful experience in what EUSPR might do. JS suggested the need for efficient systems in the work required to produce a Newsletter and to use other people's material if it helps. DF offered to take this on and move things forward. JTR offered to assist with this.
- The issue of EUSPR's "brand" was then discussed. Clarity on the meaning of the term was requested by DF. No one claimed to an expert on marketing in the group but comments reflected views that that Brand issue included:
 - The visible representation of EUSPR (its logo etc.)
 - Linked to how it was perceived and what it stood for

- A broad concept that encompassed everything about EUSPR including how it was perceived from the outside as well as internally.
- Suggestions about the brand had been identified in the paper. ZS pointed out that the EUSPR conference had a good brand.
- It was suggested that further information might need to be sought on this matter but it was necessary to reflect on how we presented ourselves eg JS suggested always using the fully spelt out version of EUSPR as well as the acronym in our communications but that we should seek to reflect an understanding of our brand in what EUSPR represents and undertakes.
- The development of the Mission and Vision was then discussed. JTR felt the formula of Mission, Vision, Aims/Objectives remained helpful. The issue of EUSPR's breadth of focus returned to the discussion. It was felt that the current Mission Statement did not need reference to "...environmental, universal..." Etc. The suggestion within the paper: "EUSPR will advance the application of prevention science to promote human health and well-being through evidence based interventions, policies and practices" was seen as near to what was required. It required "tweaking" for example to reflect the need for research to be mentioned and should be in the present tense. JTL and ZS will communicate to propose a mission statement based on this and the discussion for other to respond to. Any new Mission Statement would need to be presented and agreed by the EUSPR Board.
- DF said that the outcomes of the Group's work and the meeting and any matters for their agreement and recommendations for future developments should be proposed to the Board at the September meeting. JTL said he would work towards this by circulating the notes of the meeting for comment before preparing a document for the Board.
- JS asked that the issue of addressing health inequalities be included in EUSPR's role and using a formula of Mission Statement followed by .."The Society will achieve this Mission by..." of
- A discussion of EUSPR's target groups followed. This also raised the focus on substance and prevention and a broader health focus. DF and HP suggested the need to play to EUSPR's strengths and experience in the substance misuse prevention field but not neglecting and broadening to the multiple risk behaviour field and audience. ZS raised the problem that becoming broad meant it could become too large and diffuse in terms of people that became involved and the issues addressed. JTL suggested that often the focus may depend on needs and potential funding streams and may need to be adapted for this purpose. AB proposed the need to remain science focussed with multiple behaviours being addressed by considering the different interventions required to address different levels of risk behaviour. He also stated the need to consider the implications for policy as important. JS stressed the need to reflect on "commonalities" of interventions that help people in different settings. DF agreed that these were important issues for the future but that a short term target was to increase the membership which had grown from 70 to approximately 100 over the past year. It remained small and there was a need to address how best to increase the numbers and whether this would be best achieved by maintaining the short

term focus on substances as a means of doing this. JTL agreed but stated that the constituency of members could be drawn from a broad field and that EUSPR could present itself as having a substance use focus but communicating a message that work in this area related to a broader health focus. He agreed on the value of increasing membership numbers as this can be important politically in seeking endorsement and support. **DF raised the issue of whether more members might be attracted by a reduced membership fee and an increased conference cost. This issue required further exploration.** JTR pointed out the need to be aware of devaluing membership and engagement if the cost of membership was too low.

- Terminology was then discussed. It was agreed this could become a long and detailed debate. It was stressed that terminology used in communications was important and needed to be checked carefully as to its appropriateness. This was particularly true for those whose first language was not English as the English terms often had very different meanings or no clear translation exists in some other languages. This was pointed out and agreed as a real issue by EG and MD. It was agreed that any communications using contentious terminology should be checked and include feedback from non-English first language countries. Using “cover all” phrases like “those working in the prevention field” or “the prevention community” may be useful in certain circumstances. **Specific words such as professional, researcher, scientist, practitioner may need to be used but their meaning in other European contexts should be checked to avoid miscommunication.**
- **Next steps**
 - JTL to circulate report to Skype group for comment, additions, amendments and return to JTL by 16 September
 - JTL to send revised notes to all of Marketing Group for information and comment by 23 September
 - Colleagues to address tasks where they have offered input and respond to JTL by 17 September
 - JTL to prepare short report of Marketing and Communications Group for the September Board Meeting by October 9.
 - JTL to prepare recommendations and issues for Board discussion and agreement by October 9
 - DF to advise JTL of any amendments required to papers presented and any further action for Board meeting and papers by October 14
 - Final papers and action agreed by DF by October 16.
- DF thank JTL for his work on the marketing and communications. JTL said he was grateful for all inputs provided by group members, the patience and involvement of the none English first language speakers. He expressed his hope that the ground work undertaken could lead to practical developments and outcomes in what EUSPR did in respect of its marketing and communications activity in the future.

Jeff Lee
8.9.15

PTO

Please note subsequent feedback on circulation to those on the call:

Hanno Petras: *I am not sure if everybody has seen the newsletter of the US SPR. I have attached a link if you are curious:*

http://www.preventionresearch.org/SPRCommunity_VOL3_ISSUE1.php

Joanna Travis-Roberts: *within Target Groups, EUSPR doesn't have to limit itself in its definition. There are two separate things - the EUSPR strategy, which includes the full range of target groups, and then a marketing strategy, which is designed to achieve specific goals such as increasing membership. The marketing strategy can focus upon specific target groups, but EUSPR's statement of who they are in their strategy can be broad.*

Elena Gervilla: *Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to join this team. Although it was a bit difficult to hear some of the interventions, the meeting was really useful.*

I just have joined the Society and do not have much experience or knowledge about how some things work. I apologize for that. I will try to contribute sharing my Spanish young researcher point of view. In this sense, I have been thinking about some of the points you discussed yesterday.

First, I agree with you and David about the need to increase membership because it would mean more financial support at the end. But I am not sure about the consequences of reducing fees in terms of devaluing the role of the Society. I think Hanno said that at some point the experience has been yet tested and it did not result in more people attending the annual congress, for example.

If we want to increase membership we could offer some reinforcement. Maybe investing more money to reduce attending fees to the annual Congress for EUSPR members would be interesting, making bigger the difference between members and non members fees, and to offer grants to young researchers. I know EUSPR is promoting this last suggestion and in my opinion it is very useful for young researchers. On the other hand, the time is also a problem to attend a Conference, and maybe one solution would be offering the possibility to attend it online. I have to admit that I met the Society because Andrew tweeted information about the last conference in Palma... I know it is not an easy way and it is not the same that attending in person, but it is only an idea.

Second, you talked about the brand and the mission. Personally, I joined the Society because I thought it would make me stay up to date in my research area and would offer

the chance to create an international network of people working on the same issue and possible collaborations. I thought an European Society would try to offer the last research and methods applied to substance misuse prevention. In this sense, I think the Society could try to finance projects. This would also be a reinforcement to members and would help to market the brand.

I am sorry for the extension of the message and I hope my inexperienced point of view could help in some way.

Jeff Lee
17.9.15

...and subsequently from Martha Canfield:
The idea of the Newsletter is great as it covers many methods for marketing EUSPR. For example, research summaries, advertisement of events in the field, a section about publications in the field and so on. I also feel that this newsletter should be designed and written with a non-specialist approach in mind as it might make easier/quicker to read and to reach all target groups at once. The SPAN newsletter is a good example of it.

The discussion about terminology is very relevant. I particular think that we should try to apply more general words instead of specif roles as, e.g., professionals, researchers, etc. In my mother tongue (Portuguese), for example, the term 'professionals' cover all types of roles (e.g., researchers, practitioners) so by applying specif roles used in the English language brings a bit of confusion. Having said that, I think that 'EUSPR is an organisation for those working in prevention'.

Jeff Lee
9.10.15