European Network for Housing Research Working Group Manual

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2012 revision: A. Sule Ozuekren: draft of 6 March 2012; accepted at the Coordination Committee meeting of 23-24 March 2012 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

2000 original version: Hugo Priemus, draft of 5 January 2000, in Delft, the Netherlands.

Introduction

The European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) largely consists of the Working Groups (WGs) that its members have organized around broad areas of interest under the supervision of the Coordination Committee (CC; see note 1), which functions as the governing board (see note 2).

As set out in its governing documents, ENHR members have both rights and responsibilities with regard to the WGs. All ENHR members in good standing have a right: a) to propose to the CC the formation, modification, suspension or termination of a WG; b) to be proposed to the CC as a WG coordinator; and c) to take active part in any WG according to their research interests and skills (see note 3). Further, all ENHR members shall follow the rules and procedures of the association and when possible take part in its conferences and WG activities (see note 4).

Thus, the WGs are fundamental components of the ENHR and the workshops they convene are fundamental components of ENHR conferences. Accordingly, the ENHR is committed in forming and supporting WGs to advance research on particular topics and to oversee and publicize the workshops they organize (see note 5). Given the fundamental importance of the WGs for the ENHR, and for the conferences organized under the auspices of the ENHR, it is crucial that they work well. To help them function well, this Manual offers guidance to prospective and acting coordinators of WGs. It covers (I) the establishment, management and activities of WGs; (II) preparation for and the conduct of workshops convened by WGs at ENHR conferences; and (III) matters of ethics.

I. On the Establishment, Management and Activities of Working Groups

1. Each WG needs approval by the CC to start and to continue, following the guidelines of this Manual (see note 6).

2. Each WG has at least two coordinators. All coordinators must be ENHR members in good standing (see note 7), and they must come from at least two countries. They must be approved by the CC to act as coordinators. This approval will rest on criteria that include relevant experience documented in a curriculum vitae and their history of work within the ENHR.

3. One of the coordinators is to be identified as the main coordinator and serve as the liaison between the WG and the CC. A readiness to share responsibility for the activities of the WG (as described below) is a precondition for approval for all coordinators, but the first responsibility for WG activities is held by the main coordinator.

4. Each WG starts its activities as a new 'ENHR Working Group in Preparation' following the approval by the CC. The activities can vary according to the resources available to coordinators and other WG members, as well as their ambitions and interests, but at a minimum the WG should anticipate convening workshops that are open to ENHR members. Workshops are normally held during ENHR conferences, and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for each ENHR conference will ordinarily plan for a majority of WGs to contribute to the success of the conference by convening workshops; however, it may be the case that the LOC cannot support workshop sessions for every WG, and the WG coordinators cannot assume a right to organize a workshop at any given ENHR conference. The coordinators will need to communicate with the LOC about the possibility to do so. A WG need not convene a workshop at every ENHR conference, even if the LOC grants them the possibility to do so. Also, a WG may hold workshops outside of the ENHR conferences if the coordinators wish to do so. The coordinators have the option to use digital technologies to hold their workshops; however, if they wish to use these technologies for a workshop convened during an ENHR conference, they will have to ensure that the LOC can provide the necessary technical support and manage registration accordingly before they offer this option to potential participants.

5. A new WG in Preparation can be approved by the CC on the basis of a proposal put forward by an ENHR member in good standing (see note 8). The proposal should be in writing and include the name of the proposed WG, the names of the candidate coordinators, and information on the central themes, proposed activities and intended outputs. If the proposal is approved by the CC, the new WG in Preparation will be announced in the ENHR Newsletter.

6. To be approved by the CC as a Working Group, a WG in Preparation must successfully complete a group activity within two years. Aside from a workshop within an ENHR conference, this could be a separate workshop or conference, a collaborative research project, a joint publication, and/or a similarly substantial undertaking.

7. Each WG is an open entity, and any ENHR member can expect to be accepted as a participant in an activity organized by the WG (see note 9). The coordinators responsible for organization of the activity do however have the right to limit the degree of involvement of any one participant so the activity can successfully be carried through, as with a limit on the number of papers that one person can present in a given workshop. The coordinators may also set a cap on the number of participants that can be accommodated for the specific activity. Should such a cap be necessary, it should be publicized as early as possible with promotion of the activity.

8. WG coordinators should maintain a list of email addresses for essential communication to ENHR members who have indicated to them an interest in participating in WG activities. In doing this, the coordinators and should follow the applicable rules regarding personal data protection. Other social media may be used to augment communication by email, but coordinators should remain mindful that some interested participants may not want to or be able to join such a platform.

9. Although WG coordinators have the responsibility for maintaining an email list for the WG, it is the responsibility of the individual ENHR member to ask the coordinators to be included on the list, and to ensure the coordinators have his/her current email address. Those who do so can consider themselves members of the WG. No other requirements for WG membership are to be imposed.

10. Coordinators can count on the ENHR Secretariat to provide that assistance which it is in the power of the Secretariat to provide so that the coordinators can undertake their duties (see note 10). This includes, for example, periodically advising ENHR members to ensure that the coordinators of their WG(s) have their current email address.

11. WG coordinators should plan to deliver an annual report of the WG's activities, outputs and future plans to the ENHR Secretariat. The Secretariat collects these reports in an overview provided to the CC and made available to all ENHR members via the website. Information provided in these reports can include quantitative details, such as the numbers of papers delivered and number of participants in a workshop and/or the number of relevant papers published. More qualitative material can also be provided, such as pictures and/or reflections from participants in an activity. The coordinators are welcome to solicit input on the annual report from WG members, but they are not required to do so.

12. On the basis of the yearly overview of the activities and output of the WG, the CC will take decisions regarding its further operation (see note 11). If the CC decides the WG must make changes in its way of operating or be discontinued, the CC will promptly notify the main and other WG coordinators. The WG can continue to exist with the same set of coordinators for up to a year after the decision. Issues about which the CC would express concern include, for example, a lack of activity by the WG; poor cooperation with the LOC for an ENHR conference; too much overlap with another working group; and non-payment of ENHR member fees. If the coordinators do not improve the situation, the CC will terminate the WG and their decision will be announced in the ENHR Newsletter. The CC can decide to continue the working group but to change the coordinator(s).

13. Any changes in the coordinators, title or topics of an existing WG should be proposed to the CC. This includes change in the main coordinator role, which can pass from one to another of the current WG coordinators or to a newly recruited coordinator (pending approval by the CC). Changes which cannot be approved by the CC will be referred back to the WG coordinators for reconsideration and possibly reformulation. A decision of the CC with regard to a proposed change will be announced in the next Newsletter.

14. If there is any conflict arising within a WG or between two WGs, which cannot be resolved within the groups or between the groups, the responsible coordinators can turn to the CC for mediation.

15. The ENHR Newsletter and web site are the media used to inform every ENHR member about plans, initiatives, activities and outputs of WGs.

II. On Preparation for and the Conduct of Workshops Held within ENHR conference

1. Preparation for a workshop involves soliciting, receiving and handling abstracts; reviewing abstracts; receiving papers; and creating a programme. The conduct of a workshop involves leading sessions in the time allocated by the LOC for the conference, following the programme publicized in advance of the workshop and updated as necessary during the conference.

2. Abstracts are solicited by the LOC through a call for abstracts sent to all ENHR members and distributed through other channels to non-members. WG coordinators should however feel free to complement this general call with a specific call sent to a list of email addresses of members and non-members that they may personally maintain for such purposes.

3. Both the general call for abstracts and any specific call for abstracts should direct prospective participants to submit their abstract through the system that the LOC has made available for this purpose. Coordinators can anticipate quickly gaining access to the abstracts through that system.

4. Coordinators can anticipate receiving instructions from the LOC regarding the use of the abstract submission system and the review of abstracts within that system.

5. Coordinators are asked to comply with requests from the LOC to complete the review of abstracts within the period specified by the LOC.

6. The LOC will strive to inform coordinators in a timely fashion about the abstracts submitted for their workshop that have passed review. The LOC will also provide email addresses for those prospective participants whose abstracts have successfully passed review. This information may be made available to coordinators through the abstract submission system under password protection.

7. Coordinators may need to negotiate with the LOC regarding the placement of some abstracts, as when they have more accepted abstracts than can be adequately accommodated in the available workshop sessions. In such cases, some abstracts may get moved to a less well-populated workshop, possibly indicated as an alternative at the time of submission. Coordinators can anticipate that the abstract submission system will prompt submitters to list more than one alternative at the time of submission.

8. Coordinators may reject abstracts that address issues that are not fully relevant to the respective WG. In such cases, they may propose to the LOC an alternative workshop that may be more suitable.

9. The coordinators support the LOC by helping to manage the submission of full papers. The LOC will normally request that participants submit full papers by a deadline well enough in advance of the conference that all prospective participants in a workshop or specific workshop session can access and read the relevant papers in advance. The LOC will accordingly support the submission of full papers as an additional function of the system through which prospective participants initially submitted their abstract(s). The LOC will also make available guidelines approved by the CC for formatting of full papers, and they will clearly state the deadline for submission in the submission system.

10. Participants are encouraged to present a paper during the conference but may also participate without presenting. ENHR accepts papers of all degrees of completion but expects papers to be of good academic quality.
Experience shows that some prospective participants will not want to submit a full paper because of concerns about double publication, while others will not be able to prepare a full paper in time for submission through the system provided by the LOC. For this reason, coordinators can anticipate communicating with prospective participants about their intention to put forward a full paper in the workshop, or to present work in an earlier stage of development, and whether they will do so before or after the deadline for paper submission has passed.

11. Coordinators can inform those who do not intend to submit a full paper that they may be allocated less time – or even no time – in the programme for presentation and discussion of their work-in-progress, should there be many full papers to discuss. In other words, coordinators reserve the right to not accept a presentation if no full paper is to be made available.

12. When a prospective participant indicates that s/he will not submit a full paper through the official system, the coordinators will do well to request a copy of the material to be presented so it

can be made available to the other participants in advance of the workshop. This is particularly important when the coordinators intend to assign discussants for the work to be presented.

13. The coordinators support the LOC by helping to ensure that prospective participants register for the conference. The coordinators can reinforce messages from the LOC (e.g., as given at the time of abstract submission) that a prospective participant will not be included in a workshop programme unless they have registered for the conference.

14. Given confirmation of the payment of the registration fee, the creation of the workshop programme is the prerogative of the WG coordinators; however, they must hold to the limits set by the LOC for the number of workshop sessions and the timing of those sessions when creating the programme, which may include an introduction and other components in addition to discussion of papers and presentations.

15. Different WGs have used different programme formats over the years, in line with the goals of their workshops, the number of people who wanted to put work forward, and the time available for them to do so. One format in particular has distinguished ENHR conference sessions from sessions at other conferences. It promotes relatively intensive and extended discussion of individual papers, and it assumes that full papers have been submitted and read by workshop participants well enough in advance. In the time allotted, the author only briefly introduces the paper, after which an assigned discussant constructively criticizes aspects of the paper, such as its theoretical foundation, the formulation of the research problem, methods, analysis, and so on, with the intent of helping the author make improvements. It is neither necessary nor desirable for the discussant to summarize the paper. Following these initial comments, the remaining time allocated to the paper is open for general discussion. The author has the opportunity to respond to the comments, but coordinators would do well to advise them of the trade-off in this regard: on the one hand, the time allocated to one's paper can be well used for receiving as many comments as possible, while on the other hand one can argue points and so perhaps bring other participants into the discussion. The format has frequently been used at ENHR conference, and it has been particularly appreciated in workshops with relatively small numbers of participants and so the possibility of allocating relatively much session time to individual papers (e.g., two 45 minute slots in a 90 minute session). WG coordinators can consider whether or not this format would work for them, as sketched above or with adaptations that make it suitable to the given circumstances.
Based on the format mentioned above it should be made clear in the call for papers that it is not permissible to give a presentation without sending in an underlying paper on time.

16. As indicated above, the WG coordinators can exercise discretion in several ways when creating the workshop programme. These include the choice of format; allocation of time for any one paper or presentation given the amount of time available looking across the set of workshop sessions; the allocation of time for discussion of submitted full papers versus presentations within and/or across sessions; and decisions about the assignment of discussants. This is in addition to the programming discretion that coordinators exercise in matters of content, as when they group papers thematically. With regard to this thematic grouping, coordinators may also want to consider organizing sessions in cooperation with another WG on a topic of common interest; however, the respective sets of coordinators must secure the support of the LOC to do this, and they may have to accept that the LOC cannot provide the support needed.

17. The CC and LOC will want WG coordinators to promote a welcoming culture in their workshops. Following are some characteristics of inclusive workshops:

There is no compulsion to talk at the seminar but the ambition is that the person who presents the paper gets the views of as many participants as possible, and that all participants feel comfortable to comment or ask questions. This might be stated by the coordinator at the start.

After the presentation of the work (and perhaps comments by an assigned discussant), the coordinator invites participants to signal a desire to comment on the work, so that a list can be composed. The coordinator then opens for comments following the list, taking each commentator in turn.

Everyone can be encouraged to participate if the coordinator can provide a moment of reflection and free conversation among neighbors after the assigned discussant is finished, and while compiling the list of commentators.

All participants should strive to express themselves in a concise and comprehensible manner.

People speaking for the first time should be prioritized on the list of speakers, which can be extended as the discussion proceeds and sparks further reactions and ideas.

It is desirable that the coordinator allocates the time available for the discussion equally and holds to the schedule, which could mean that sometimes it is necessary to interrupt people who are rambling on.

Questions and comments related to the ongoing discussion can be given precedence as the coordinator opens for further comments.

The coordinator can recommend that detailed discussions which most participants cannot follow be taken between the interested parties after the session.

All participants scheduled to give a presentation within a given time slot must be able to do so; violation of this guarantee can entail significant problems for the presenter and the LOC.

18. The LOC will not create a workshop programme unless communication between the LOC and the WG coordinators breaks down (e.g., should the latter become ill) and the LOC and CC cannot identify suitable substitutes for them.

19. As the date of the conference approaches and degrees of freedom for the overall conference programming become more restricted, the WG coordinators can anticipate that the LOC may have to make requests for help in resolving broader programming issues. This could involve, for example, making room for one or another additional paper or having to use different rooms for different workshop sessions. The CC asks that coordinators respond quickly and constructively to such requests from the LOC and work with them to the extent possible and appropriate to resolve the broader programing issue. In the end, it is the LOC that makes the final decisions about rooms and time slots.

20. Preparation for and the conduct of a workshop require timely communication and cooperation between the LOC, the WG coordinators, and the prospective participants. To support the efforts of the coordinators, the LOC should anticipate that they will need (a) easy and timely access to the abstract/paper submission system, together with clear instructions for its use in receiving and reviewing abstracts; (b) access to the email addresses of prospective participants; (c) information on the intention of prospective participants to submit a full paper through the submission system or for distribution by the coordinators only to the other workshop participants; and (d) confirmation of the paid registration of the prospective participants. To support the efforts of the LOC, the coordinators should anticipate that they will need (a) early confirmation of the intent to hold a workshop at the conference; (b) a description of the workshop that they intend to convene, perhaps with details regarding specific themes of interest; (c) timely abstract reviews and confirmation that the abstracts submitted for the workshop can be accepted into that workshop (versus transferred to some other workshop); and (d) a detailed workshop programme.

21. After an ENHR conference, WG coordinators can anticipate that the LOC will want to know if anyone they have had listed on the workshop programme does not then attend to present the paper. Such people will be identified as no-shows in the final internal account of papers presented at the conference, and they will not be mentioned in external accounts of the work done at the conference. Neither a certificate of attendance nor a certificate of acceptance of a paper can be provided to a no-show, even if that person has paid the registration fee for the conference. Reimbursement of the registration fee in the case a person cannot attend is not a matter for WG coordinators to resolve; the person in question must take this up with the LOC.

III. Ethical Matters

The coordinators and other members of WGs are expected to adhere to the ENHR code of ethics, expressed in article 2 of the internal rules, which reads as follows:

"The ENHR is an inclusive and democratic organisation that exists to promote research in the area of housing. ENHR strives to bring together people, and accord to them equal respect regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, age, opinion, religious or sexual orientation. Consequently, behaviour that can be construed as being discriminatory, offensive, predatory or bullying is inconsistent with ENHR's ethos. Participants at ENHR sponsored activities are reminded that behaviour that respects their colleagues is fundamental to the network's ethos."

This text is also posted on the ENHR website and so is readily available to all members should questions arise about the contents of the code of ethics.

In general, WG coordinators should ensure that participants in their workshop behave in a respectful and collegial manner toward their fellow participants. Undesirable behavior by any one participant toward another might result in the chairperson intervening to re-establish order and respect. Undesirable behavior can include, for example, interrupting presenters while they answer a question; making offensive or demeaning remarks about presenters or fellow participants; and not complying when the chairperson asks that a comment or question quickly be concluded.

Notes

1. According to articles 11.1 and 22.2 of the ENHR bylaws and articles 1, 3, 4 and 7.3 of the ENHR internal rules (now in force and passed in the General Assembly in Athens on 30-8-2019).

2. The Coordination Committee is referred to as "the Governing Board" in the internal rules of the ENHR (article 5). In the bylaws of the ENHR, the Board is equated with the Coordination Committee (article 3.2). The references to "Coordination Committee" in this document align with the history of the use of that label in the ENHR.

3. As stated in article 3 of the internal rules.

4. According to article 4.1.

5. According to articles 1c and d of the internal rules.

6. According to article 7.3 of the internal rules.

7. As defined in article 3 of the bylaws.

8. In keeping with article 3 a) of the internal rules.

9. As per article 3 c) of the internal rules.

10. As per article 8 of the internal rules.

11. According to articles 7.3 b) and c) of the internal rules.