AYHD Board Meeting 24th January 2017

AYHD Board Meeting Report

The AYHD strongly believes in transparency. Therefore, the minutes from the three-monthly board meetings will be made available to all members. If you have any questions or comments regarding these notes, feel free to contact our secretary: [christa.matthys@ugent.be](mailto:christa.matthys@ugent.be)

Attendance

First Board Meeting 24th January 2017 (online)

Present: Tim Riswick (president), Benjamin Matuzak (vice-president), Jeanne Cilliers, Edward Morgan and Stephanie Klages (PR-officers), Christa Matthys (secretary)

Content

1. *Follow-up first general meeting report (20th September 2016 – Leuven)*

The minutes of this meeting can be accessed via the Facebook Group and are available here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/12_HhBW7hlbjjn1mhgczJ4JOg36CrXXf5mABlQJELwDo/edit>

There are no general remarks. Specific topics (i.e. website, social media, educational initiatives...) will be covered under the following points.

1. *Progress with regard to the website* (pr-officer Edward)*, the newsletter* (pr-officer Jeanne) *and the Facebook-group* (pr-officer Stephanie)

*Website*

* The pr-officer adds topics to the website that are posted by members in the Facebook-group.
* The website has been updated with a **conference page**, where you can find upcoming conferences that may be of interest to the AYHD-members. Plans are made to add an interactive dimension (poll) to this page, where members can indicate whether they will attend a conference or not. This will enable the board members to adequately plan AYHD-activities at popular conferences.
* Board members and regional ambassadors will be approached by Edward to send brief **biographies and contact information**, which will be added to the website in the near future.
* Develop a protocol for transparency: **minutes of board meetings** will be put on the site.
* In a later stage, we will also add a **blog** to the website, where several authors can address a variety of topics (research specific content, conference reports, popular media, etc.). We aim at monthly updates.

*Newsletter*

* There was some concern about the **duplication of information** on the AYHD’s different platforms (website, FB-group, etc.). After a brief discussion, the consensus was that the **members use all of the platforms differently**:
* The newsletter provides a first and regular overview of relevant developments and events in the field.
* Those members who are interested, can consult the website for more information. In the newsletter, all links to the website or external sites will be made active to facilitate the traffic between different platforms.
* Old newsletters can be archived on the website.
* The Facebook group is a communication channel rather than an information channel. Edward picks up relevant information for the website.
* The newsletter will appear every three months and is emailed to everyone on the mailing list. The first newsletter will be sent out on February 1st.

*Facebook-group*

* As stated above, the **Facebook-group** is mainly aimed at communication between the AYHD-members. It is only accessible for members.
* The pr-officer will add a **Facebook-page** as well. This will be accessible for non-members as well and is aimed at spreading information. If this turns out to be a success (numbers of likes, page-visits, etc.), a **Twitter-account** will be added later. This will also be aimed at spreading information and is complementary to the newsletter (newsletter: updates in big blocks of information, twitter: attracting attention with brief and catchy updates).

1. *Progress with regard to vacancies*

There are currently still several **vacancies for regional ambassadors**. Ambassadors are the vital link between the executive board and the community of a certain geographical area. We are still looking for ambassadors in:

- Africa

- Western Europe

- North America

- Latin and South America

- Oceania

Strategies to attract ambassadors:

- making the AYHD widely known (see point 6)

- put vacancies in the newsletter

- regular contacts with currents ambassadors + biographies on website

1. *Progress with regard to the committee of recommendation*

While the AYHD is intended as a platform for junior researchers, we do seek support from **senior scholars** for our mission statement. We believe that this will enhance our visibility, networking opportunities and therefore improve the efficacy of our initiatives.

However, if we are ‘under the roof’ of a larger organization this will likely increase our dependency from senior academics. There is still some discussion on how this collaboration should look like. Regardless of this, the ESHD seems the best option to seek support (largest and most active organization in Europe), so Tim will approach them.

*5. Delimitation of responsibilities by board members*

Each board member has specific tasks.

* **President** (Tim): representing the organization, networking, seeking collaborations, strengthening the association
* **Vice-president** (Benjamin): next to his representative function, Benjamin will also follow-up all **topics related to education**. Here, some questions still remain. First, as discussed in the previous meeting, we strive for consistent use of R (free!) in the existing summer courses. We still have to develop an action plan towards our own members and the senior community. Second, the question remains on whether we should organize courses ourselves. The idea is to use online media -> low cost, for example Youtube-videos. Here we also need to take action in the future.
* **Pr-officers**: each responsible for a medium: website (Edward), newsletter (Jeanne), Facebook-group and –page (Stephanie)
* **Secretary**: practical organization of meetings and activities, practical support of all board members
* **Ambassadors:** local representatives, disseminate information, inform the AYHD about the regional needs and interests. Since they have a very important function, there should be regular contacts between the ambassadors the board members. The president will take care of this.

**The board meets four times a year**, before the newsletter is disseminated.

**Once a year** there will be a **general meeting for all members**. This will be organised in real life at the biannual ESHD-conference or online via Skype .

*6. Advertising the AYHD*

* Via the **mailing list**. There are now 120 members of the Facebook-group. Stephanie launches a call there to register for the mailing list. Suggestion to send the newsletter to professors as well (in this early stage of our association), so they can distribute them further to their students.
* Stephanie will also add monthly reminders for the newsletter. Use the FB-group to promote our work (eg. conference pictures)
* **Advertise at universities and research institutes**. For another association, Christa has to make an overview of historical demography-institutes in Europe (overview will be finished February 2017). This can be a starting point.
* At **conferences**. It is important to make use of existing conferences because we have no financial means ourselves. A list of future conferences is on the website, but we have no formal activities planned so far. However, we can try to attract new members informally.
  + Edward mentioned the opportunity of the upcoming Popfest (Stockholm, May 2017)), which is particularly dedicated to postgraduates. No other board members were going but it seems like a good opportunity to get the AYHD known there.
  + Christa is going to the Conference for Young Demographers (Prague, February 2017) and will promote the AYHD.
  + The Posthumus Institute (graduate school for students in social and economic history) and the Scientific Research Group Historical Demography (unites postdocs and professors from the low countries) have asked the AYHD to contribute to the annual Posthumus Conference in June 2017 with a session on the ‘future of historical demography’. While Posthumus is mainly aimed at students from the low countries, they are currently trying to become more international. Christa will further discuss this with Tim.

*7. ‘AYHD-meetings at conferences*

* See conference list on the website. As mentioned before, Edward will add a poll where member can indicate their participation. Based on this, the board can schedule meetings.
* See point 6 for the first initiatives (Popfest, Young Demographers and Posthumus). Regarding the Conference for Young Demographers, Tim sought collaboration but the organizers do not want to expand their activities beyond their annual conference.
* For now (see also point 5), we agree to meet with all members at the biannual ESHD-conferences (upcoming Belfast 2019). At other conferences, we can organize activities as well for smaller groups.

*7. Question round*

One topic was discussed: the cancellation of the Conference for Young Historical Demographers in Cluj (see AYHD-website) due to the low number of applications. We questioned the possible reasons for this.

* Is there a structural problem: do young researchers have already enough to present? Is the absence of important international professors a reason not to attend.
* Is there a financial issue: some member might not have enough funding to go to international conferences in general.

The board agreed on monitoring which conferences the AYHD-members attends the most to get a better idea of the underlying issues.

For now, it is important to focus on encouragement (social activities, etc.): conferences like the one in Cluj are important because they are exactly designed for junior people who need to gain experience!