



Mark G. Wilson

21<sup>st</sup> June 2012

Dr Kevin Young,  
Director Science & Medicine, RSA,  
The Melon Ground, Hatfield Park,  
Hatfield, Hertfordshire  
AL9 5NB

Dear Dr. Young,

**Re: Chief Executive Officer, The Cochrane Collaboration (Ref: 12073)**

I would like to apply for the post of Chief Executive Officer of The Cochrane Collaboration, believing I have the experience, skills, knowledge and personal attributes that you are looking for in this exciting and challenging position. In this brief letter I will show this in reference to the Person Specification set out in the candidate's brief.

**1. Organisational Leadership and Management of Complex (Multi-Stakeholder) Organisations in the Not-For-Profit Sector; Business experience (i.e., understanding of people and fiscal management)**

I have a proven record of leadership and management success for nearly two decades in complex humanitarian and development organisations at both headquarters and field levels. For the last eight years I have been the Executive Director of Panos London ([www.panos.org.uk](http://www.panos.org.uk)), one of the world's leading communication for development organisations and the largest of a network of seven Institutes with more than 200 staff in over 20 offices in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and Asia, and a combined budget in 2012 of £11.5 million. I led the establishment of the international Panos Network, transferring offices in Africa from managerial accountability directly to me to becoming independent Institutes in their own right. I led the drafting and establishment of a constitution, by-laws and Codes of Conduct relating to programme coordination and fundraising agreed by all members of the Panos Network; its registration as an international NGO; and the development of a Secretariat in New Delhi.

Following this institutional formation, I then led the development and final drafting of the Panos Network's first integrated *Strategic Plan 2010-15*. This, in turn, demanded a profound strategic re-assessment and re-positioning of Panos London. As Executive Director I led this process and completed development of a new *Strategic Plan to 2015* for the organisation, along with a business plan encompassing changes in Panos London's structure, systems and processes in order to deliver it. This process demanded respect for the organisation's continuing mission with a determination to adapt and adopt rigorous, effective and efficient internal organisational processes focused on Panos London's areas of demonstrable expertise and added value.

Before joining Panos I was a leader and member of the senior management team of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the largest humanitarian organisation in the world comprising 186 National Societies. I was the 'Chef de Cabinet' and Senior Advisor to the Secretary General, as well as Head of Planning at the Secretariat in Geneva with an annual turnover of approximately CHF 350 million whose *raison d'être* is to lead and support its members. I was in charge of the overall management coordination of the Federation Secretariat and field offices, including business processes and strategic and operational planning. I introduced a new integrated strategic and operational planning system into the organisation; and at the request of the Secretary General, Markku Niskala, I led the change management process which reduced the size of the Geneva Secretariat and decentralised managerial authority to zonal, regional and country delegations.



As Senior Advisor I worked with the Secretary General on the vision and the strategic positioning of the Federation in the humanitarian world and with external stakeholders. I was appointed to this position because of my proven experience in bringing strategic vision and rigorous analysis to the increasingly complex organisational, social, economic and political challenges within which humanitarian and development organisations work.

Between 1993 and 2001 at the International Federation I led, managed or was directly involved in some of the largest and most successful humanitarian disaster response and rehabilitation operations the organisation has ever established:

- From March 2000 to September 2001 I was the Federation's Head of Delegation leading the coordination of the International Red Cross/Red Crescent's massive relief and rehabilitation operations and support to the Mozambique Red Cross following the calamitous floods which devastated large parts of the country in 2000 and 2001. I directly led an international delegate team of over 30 with hundreds of local staff;
- In 1999-2000, during and after the Kosovo war, I was a leading member of the management team established by the Federation and ICRC which oversaw the largest combined Red Cross/Red Crescent operation in its history;
- From April 1996 to March 2000 I was the Operations Manager responsible for Federation operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including the major emergency operations for Kosovo in 1998 and 1999 involving hundreds of international and thousands of local staff;
- Between July 1994 and April 1996 I was responsible for all Appeals and Reports for operations in Africa and Europe, and was a member of the Federation task forces on the Great Lakes crisis (1994-95) and Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia (1994-96);
- From 1993 to 1994 I was a Regional Information Delegate in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan working on the large relief and rehabilitation programme following the collapse of the Soviet Union; and led the media and information campaign for operations in the Russian Federation.

#### *Financial Management & Fundraising*

I have had personal responsibility for budgets of over CHF 30 million per annum at the International Federation and possess extensive programme and project management skills involving design and planning, implementation and budgetary control, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. As Executive Director of Panos London, I am responsible and accountable for all aspects of the business and have built up considerable hands-on knowledge and experience in the areas of finance, human resources, IT, programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting.

I am a skilled and proven fundraiser and mobilizer of resources from external stakeholders. At the International Federation I successfully raised funding for some of the organisation's largest operations in the Balkans and in Africa. When I joined Panos London in 2004 the organisation was on the point of bankruptcy but within four months I had raised over a million pounds to keep it alive. I have been personally involved for over 20 years in both organisational and programme fundraising at the Business Council for Sustainable Development, the International Federation and Panos London: including leading the Federation's funding team to CHASE (DFID) in 2003; and leading the negotiations which generated Panos London's six-year PPA funding contract with DFID (2005-11) and similar ongoing multi-year framework agreements with Sida (Sweden, including a new framework agreement for 2012-15), Norad (Norway) and DIDC (Finland).

#### *Supporting Organisational Governance*



Effective governance structures, systems and processes have to be in place in order for membership organisations like The Cochrane Collaboration to flourish. I have eight years of experience working as CEO to support the governance of a UK company and independent charity, where I facilitated a process of governance reform which allowed Panos London to meet the UK's blue ribbon standard: the *Good Governance Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, and to join the INGO Accountability Charter, putting it in the front rank of organisations seeking to adhere to the highest standards of governance and accountability.

At the International Federation I was directly involved on behalf of the Secretary General in managing and overseeing the governance relationships with the senior leaderships of the National Societies, including preparation and follow up of its Governing Board, Commissions and bi-annual Assembly. In each institution I worked to ensure that its governance was of a high quality and supportive of the tough decisions the senior management must make to set often contentious priorities and allocate scarce resources within broad strategic objectives.

## **2. Demonstrable experience of well-developed people management and networking skills**

I have lived and worked across Europe, Africa and Asia with my entire working career spent in managing complex international organisations with diverse structures across the world. To succeed, these organisations had to be led and supported with great cultural sensitivity, strategic imagination and managerial dynamism. I have worked in a number of international Secretariats serving the diverse needs of its members; as well as establishing and leading international networks with and without direct managerial control and therefore requiring very different strategies and approaches to meeting collective goals. I have also led an organisation which is part of an international network, so I am aware of the very different perspectives and needs of powerful members of a federated organisation. I am, therefore, well aware of the dynamics as well as the political and organisational sensitivities involved in complex organisations like the Cochrane Collaboration, with the huge potential but enormous challenges that they contain.

Shared values and a passionate commitment to excellence lie at the heart of successful teams, but they must also work within a framework of identified priorities and strategic clarity, and be sustained by the integrity and example of leaders who do as they say, hold themselves accountable to the highest standards, work as hard as any of those they ask to go an extra mile, and who are themselves ready to admit mistakes and learn from them. These are the qualities I seek to show and those I look for in colleagues I manage and lead. The Cochrane Collaboration's senior management must be dynamic, innovative, sensitive and collaborative; but also independent, clear-sighted and equipped to deal with the challenge of making the organisation's overall impact much larger than the sum of its parts.

The ability to manage cross-cultural organisations and teams is, I believe, one of my greatest strengths. This expertise is based not only on twenty years of experience in the INGO and private sectors, but also through a special Masters of Management degree from McGill University, Montreal, Canada, given as part of the international IMPM programme which involved modules spent in five leading universities and business schools, including INSEAD, the University of Lancaster and the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore. I am also a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute, the professional body in the UK dedicated to promoting the highest standards in management and leadership excellence.

Job application letters are poor places to evaluate the claims that people make about their own aptitudes and personal qualities. I believe I have those essential for this position, but ultimately these qualities are proven by daily actions and within the working relationships formed and sustained through years of trust and partnership with colleagues. What I can confirm is that I have built a reputation in both the International Federation and within the Panos Network for my ability to combine cultural and personal



sensitivity with a constant drive to achieve objectives and planned results amongst both large and small teams.

**3. Gravitas/ambassadorial skills to represent the Cochrane Collaboration internationally and to raise its profile**

I am a professional communicator, having trained and worked as a journalist, editor and Director of Communications from 1986-1993. My written and verbal communication skills are of the highest order and I am an outstanding writer and speaker, completely at home in front of a camera, giving speeches or facilitating large or small meetings.

My experience in relations with governments is extensive. I have represented both the International Federation and Panos London at the highest political and diplomatic levels, including lobbying ministers and senior officials on humanitarian and development policy around the world. I have long-standing experience of establishing and expanding operational partnerships with governments, INGOs, United Nations organisations (such as OCHA, UNHCR, UNDP, WHO, UNAIDS, FAO, IFAD, etc), academia related to humanitarian issues (including ODI, IDS, Tufts University Boston), and trusts and foundations (including the Ford Foundation, as well as Rockefeller, Gates, Comic Relief, Bernard van Leer, etc).

My knowledge of and expertise with the media is extensive. Panos is a specialist media and information organisation and I have an excellent knowledge of the UK media scene, particularly as it relates to international development. I am a founder member of the Global Forum for Media Development – the international media development sector's representative body – and continue to sit on its Steering Committee. I represented the International Federation in the media on numerous occasions relating to humanitarian operations.

For the last 25 years I have been a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) and the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) and currently am a member, too, of the Royal African Society, the Development Studies Association, and the 'Supper Club' of CEOs of the UK's leading development organisations organised by ODI, which meets with senior figures every quarter at the House of Lords to discuss critical international development issues. As a result, I know many of the leading members of the UK's development community. I have a personal library of over 4,000 books and journals on international political, economic, social and development issues and continue to update my knowledge and expertise in these areas.

I think that the experience and skills I have outlined above match those you are looking for in the new Chief Executive Officer of the Cochrane Collaboration. Whilst I do not have the scientific background and detailed health knowledge which may appear necessary for this position, my understanding of the candidate brief is that the Cochrane Collaboration is aware that this expertise already exists with its Editor-in-Chief, Dr Tovey, and the rest of the editorial team. What it requires is a CEO who has the knowledge, experience and gravitas to lead and manage a complex organization in an exciting though challenging environment. This is what I offer the organization. As requested, I have also attached to this letter of application a copy of my c.v. to provide you with further details of my background. If you require any further information about this application, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Mark G. Wilson



## MARK G. WILSON

M.A., DIP. JOUR., M.PHIL., M.M., FCMJ

### PROFILE

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- A dynamic, innovative leader, with proven leadership experience at the highest levels within both large and medium-sized international humanitarian and development organizations;
- A skilled and experienced manager of complex organizations and international operations involving multi-cultural teams, strategic thinking and policy making, organisational planning and implementation, network and change management;
- A professional communicator, with an extensive track record in representing organisations nationally and internationally to governments, donors, the media and the general public.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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#### **Panos London**

*Executive Director*

June 2004 - Present

- Chief Executive Officer of one of the UK's leading international development organizations whose mission is stimulating the voice and participation of poor and marginalised people in debates that affect their lives, focusing particularly on development of the media and information and communication technologies in the developing world (see [www.panos.org.uk](http://www.panos.org.uk) for more details).
- Led the development of a diversified international Panos Network of seven independent Institutes with 22 offices in 18 countries around the world, over 200 staff and a combined annual income of £9.6 million in 2010 (£3.7 million for Panos London). I was its Executive Chairman for three years and now am the Chair of the Network's Forum of Directors.
- Established a new *Strategy to 2015* for Panos London focusing on its specialist communication for development expertise in the areas of Voice, Dialogue, Media and Information and Communication Technologies; and improving business processes.
- Anticipating a significant funding shortfall in 2010-11 as a result of the global recession and changes in the priorities of key donors, I designed and implemented a major restructuring which cut staff by nearly 50% but ensured the continued existence of the organisation.

#### **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

*Chef de Cabinet & Head of Planning: Geneva, Switzerland*

January 2003 – May 2004

- Supported the Secretary General in all aspects of organizational management, including oversight of business processes and ensuring coherence with other members of senior management between planned objectives and organisational performance.
- Led a change management process that refocused and re-structured the organisation, reduced headcount and costs, and established greater de-centralisation of organisational and operational management and control from the Federation's headquarters to regional zones around the world.
- Designed and introduced a new, integrated strategic and operational planning system for the International Federation's Secretariat and global field offices.



*Senior Advisor to the Secretary General: Geneva*

September 2001 – December 2002

- Advised and coordinated support for the Secretary General on all operational matters, policy issues and external relations with Governments, United Nations organisations, NGOs, as well as communications to the Federation's National Societies and external media.
- Managed senior management business processes, including agenda-setting, preparation and follow-up of meetings.

*Head of Delegation: Mozambique*

March 2000 – September 2001

- Coordinated and managed international humanitarian operational assistance totalling US\$20 million a year to the Mozambique Red Cross during large-scale flooding, supporting over 240,000 people in both 2000 and 2001.
- Led an international team of more than 30 expatriates and hundreds of local staff.
- Designed and facilitated a change management process for the Mozambique Red Cross (CVM) senior leadership centred on institutional development and expanding health, disaster preparedness and disaster response programmes.

*Operational Manager - Balkans: Geneva*

June 1996 – March 2000

- Raised and managed US\$30 million per year to support humanitarian operations in Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (including Kosovo) and Bosnia and Herzegovina, benefiting hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries.
- Managed the overall performance of International Federation activities in the Balkans, involving more than 50 expatriate delegates and hundreds of local staff, and advised senior Federation management on all policy issues related to the region.
- Leading member of the integrated Kosovo Task Force in 1999 set up by the Federation and the ICRC to manage what was the first integrated and largest ever humanitarian operation by the International Red Cross.

*Appeals and Reports Editor/Manager: Geneva*

1994 – 1996

- Responsible for the writing, editing and production of all international appeals and reports for Federation operations in Africa and Europe involving a team in Geneva and the field.
- A member of the Federation's task forces managing the operations in the Great Lakes crisis and former Yugoslavia.
- Redesigned the Federation's corporate 'look' which is still being used today.

*Information Officer: Georgia, Armenia & Azerbaijan*

1993 – 1994

- Designed and ran international media campaigns for operations in the Caucasus and Russia;
- Supported the development of national information and media departments within the national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies in three countries.

**Business Council for Sustainable Development, Geneva, Switzerland; & Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, UK**

*Communications Director*

1991 - 1993

- Designed, co-ordinated, managed and implemented a worldwide media and public relations strategy involving 50 of the world's leading private-sector companies leading up to the United Nations' 'Earth Summit' in 1992.
- Modernised a Christian publisher's editorial and production systems; updated sales, marketing and promotional strategies; and analysed and ran new strategic projects in Eastern Europe.





**'Billion' magazine, Hong Kong**

*Deputy Managing Editor*

1988 - 1990

- Developed and managed *Billion's* editorial team in Hong Kong and throughout Asia; working with the Managing Editor and Editor-In-Chief on every aspect of the planning, design, editing and production of the monthly magazine.
- Travelled extensively across Asia, writing major business, economic and political stories on the region.
- Set up and managed the magazine's editorial production process from receipt of copy to final printing.

**Other Journalism**

1987 - 1988

- Covered Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; the United States; East Asia and selected countries in Africa as a staff writer for *World Opinion*, a London-based fortnightly magazine.
- Freelanced for the *Financial Times*, *Broadcast* magazine, *Keesings Contemporary Archives* and *South* magazine.

**Political Researcher, House of Commons, UK**

1986

- Worked as a policy researcher and adviser for Clement Freud, M.P., the Liberal Party's Education and Arts spokesman.

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**QUALIFICATIONS**

*Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute (FCMI)*

2012

In 2012 I became an accredited Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute, the only chartered professional body in the UK dedicated to management and leadership.

*Master of Management (M.M.)*

1999-2001

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

- An innovative, executive International Masters Program in Management involving five leading business schools: McGill University, INSEAD, Lancaster University, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and Hitotsubashi University (Japan). My thesis was entitled: *Three into One Can Go: Modeling Red Cross Integration from M&A Experience in the Private Sector*.

*Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Soviet and East European Studies*

1990 - 1991

University of Glasgow, U.K.

- This two-year post-graduate degree was completed in 12 months. Specialist subjects were Soviet foreign and security policy; and economic and monetary policy in the Soviet Union. My thesis was entitled: *Gorbachev and the Soviet High Command, 1985-1991*.

*Post-Graduate Diploma in Journalism Studies (Dip. Jour.)*

1986 - 1987

University College Cardiff, U.K.

- One-year diploma at the university's Centre for Journalism Studies, then one of only two UK post-graduate journalist training institutions.

*Master of Arts - Politics (M.A. Honours - II.I)*

1982-1986

University of Edinburgh, U.K.

- *Honours Courses:* Politics & Government of the United States, Soviet Union, Eastern & Western Europe; Security, Stability & Resource Competition in the International System; The Making of Economic Policy; Political Theory. Thesis: *The Role of Perception and Misperception in Foreign Policy Making*.



## PERSONAL INFORMATION

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- Marital Status: Married with three children
- Nationality: British
- A member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London;
- A member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA, Chatham House), London;
- A member of the Royal African Society;
- A member of the Development Studies Association.
- A trustee of the Panos Network Foundation, and Panos Caribbean.
- A personal library of over 5,000 books and journals on international political, economic and strategic affairs; and English, Russian and American literature.
- International Federation Staff Association co-founder and first President, 1996-98.
- Other interests and hobbies include sports (football, rugby union, badminton); film history, the theatre and collecting Scottish whisky.
- Fully computer-literate, working in both PC and Apple Macintosh operating systems and within a range of word-processing, presentation and spreadsheet programmes.





## REFEREES

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- Other references upon request.