

Presidential Report on the last four years of IAAP (2002-2006)

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The International Association of Applied Psychology has had a four-year period of high degree of activities, some growth in membership, and a consolidation in finances. During the last four years our association has done a lot to increase its presence internationally, particularly within the United Nations system and to advance important issues, particularly in the area of policy orientation.

My presidency is coming to an end and this makes it useful to take stock and to report what IAAP has done. IAAP would not be where it is today without the activities of the other officers (Mike Knowles, José Maria Prieto, Charles Spielberger, and particularly Ray Fowler, who has shouldered an enormous amount of important activities), the Board of Directors (including the Presidents of the Divisions, formerly the Executive Committee) as well as the members, who have taken up the task to participate in committees.

Let me say how much we all appreciated the enormous work that went into the preparation of the Athens conference that takes place July 16-21, 2006. Thanks are here particularly due to James Georgas, Marina Manthouli, Anastasia Efklides and Thales Papadakis, Elias Besevegis and Vaso Boukouvala, the committee members of Greek psychologists, and the liaison scholars from our IAAP divisions. It is impossible to thank all of the many people, who are participating in this endeavour and who will make the congress in Athens very successful and will make it one of the most significant scientific international events.

In addition, thanks are due to Ubolwanna Pavakanun and her able team of colleagues and students, who have worked tirelessly to make the Asian Applied Psychology International-Regional Conference (AAPI-RC), November 14-16, 2005 in Bangkok/Thailand an enormous success. There will be a report on this conference in this issue of the Newsletter by incoming President Mike Knowles. There were over 400 participants from Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, People's Republic of China, Taiwan (Province of China) and of course many people from Thailand. As you know, the regional congresses are done together with IUPsyS and IACCP, who very actively participated in the Bangkok conference. IUPsyS was the organizers of a very successful Middle East and North Africa Regional Conference (MENA) conference in Dubai in December 13-18, 2003. The incoming president Mike Knowles was the one who worked on the side of IAAP to make this regional conference successful (there was a report by Mike Knowles on this conference in our IAAP Newsletter, Volume 16, Issue 2, Spring 2004). I am also very happy to report that IAAP has a very collegial and positive relationship with IUPsyS (President Bruce Overmier, Treasurer Michel Sabourin, and Secretary-General Pierre Ritchie) and with IACCP (President Shalom Schwartz). This has not always been so and therefore I am very grateful that during my time as president we have had many fruitful and helpful interactions with these two associations.

1) Working with the United Nations system

One of the most important accomplishments of IAAP has been to achieve the Non-Governmental (NGO) status with two different sections of the United Nations. The first section of the United Nations is Department of Public Information (DPI), which is the

department that is responsible for the communication with the NGOs and which is also the most important starting point for every NGO. It is also the DPI that organizes large conferences of NGOs in which we actively participated. We were fortunate enough to have two very able and active representatives in New York City, who followed through with the United Nations activities: Judy Kuriansky (e-mail: DrJudyK@aol.com), and Laura Barbanel (e-mail: lbarbanel@earthlink.net) as well as Moshe Banai and Walter Reichman during the first years of my presidency. They have all been extremely active and have very quickly become important participants in the United Nations system. IAAP has been active and important contributors to the NGO conferences in 2004 and 2005 and our representatives have been able to make applied psychology more and more a household term in the United Nations. It is due to this work that we received a very positive response from Shashi Tharoor (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information at DPI) when we invited him to address the Athens congress in July 2006.

We are also fortunate to have very good relations with the United Nations representatives of APA (Division 52), and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, IUPsyS as well as the International Council of Psychologists. We think it is very important to raise the level of awareness on psychological issues and on psychological knowledge within the United Nations system and we are well aware that we have to do this together with other organizations and NGOs.

In 2005 we also received consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. ECOSOC initiates studies and reports on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters. As an NGO with consultative status, as we are now, we can send observers to meetings of the council and its subsidiary bodies and may submit written statements relevant to the Council's work. In comparison to DPI (for which we have been an NGO since 2003 now), there are much fewer NGOs with ECOSOC and it is very difficult to become an NGO with ECOSOC. The main representatives for IAAP at ECOSOC are Walter Reichman and his deputy Mary O'Neill Berry. Walter Reichman has made inroads into the United Nations systems within an incredibly short period of time. We were also able to appoint representatives in Geneva and in Vienna, representing IAAP at ECOSOC. These are important parts of the United Nations system and we congratulate Lichia Saner-Yiu and Raymond Saner (Geneva) and Wolfgang Beiglboeck (Vienna) to represent us at ECOSOC in these cities. In principle, we could also have representative with regional ECOSOC committees in Addis Abeba (Ethiopia), Geneva, Latin America and Caribbean, as well Beirut and Bangkok. If people are interested to do work in this area, we would be delighted to hear about your interest.

Of course, we continue to be further aligned with the International Social Science Council, which is associated with the UNESCO.

2) Make applied psychology more policy-oriented

Applied psychology is uniquely able to produce good policy recommendations and it is surprising that we do not do this enough. In comparison to economics, medicine, sociology, psychology has lagged behind in giving policy implications, even though the data may actually be better than in some other disciplines.

Fortunately, we are not alone in asking for an increase in policy orientation. Our theme of policy orientation has been taken up by other international associations and it has preceded

ours at APA. We have made advances by instituting policy oriented committees: a large number of them will report their ideas at the conference in Athens. It is hard work to be policy-oriented because we have to take a stand even though we might not yet have all the data in. We might have to take a position which we have not studied yet to all of our satisfaction. And we need to become an organization that wants to move things, which may not be the primary objective of many scientists. However, I think we have to take a stand on many issue, and we will make headways within the next 10 years. I am glad that the incoming president, Mike Knowles, agrees to the importance of increasing our policy orientation and will carry this forward in the future.

These are the symposia/workshops planned for the Athens conference on this topic:

General symposium on Policy implications (Frese & Berry)
Environment (Canter & Bonnes)
Human Capital (Hakel)
Indigenous (Berry & Sam)
Unemployment (Kieselbach)
Active Ageing (Ballesteros)

3) Our response to the Tsunami

A concrete example of our stronger policy orientation and the attempt to make use of psychological science was our response to the Tsunami catastrophe one year ago. IAAP developed a seed fund for local groups doing research on how to deal with the Tsunami victims. We also supported a symposium on the Tsunami, first financed by IUPsyS, with a second one financed by us during the regional conference in Bangkok in November 2005 (very ably organized by Elizabeth Nair and Ubolwanna Pavakanun).

Of course, we also suggested to our members to give money to the Tsunami relief effort and to other efforts to deal with the catastrophes of the last years, like the earthquake in Pakistan, and the hurricane in the United States.

Thanks to the work that has been done by the specialists in the area of psychological catastrophe relief effort, a consensus seems to appear that relief efforts have to be local, continuous, focussed on the future, adequate, and informed about the culture, and that it is most probably more useful to wait with psychological approaches and that the psychological approaches should be future-oriented and based on some cognitive-behavioral intervention and that it should not dwell on the catastrophe itself.

4) The Tandem Agreement of IAAP and ICP (International Council of Psychologists)

IAAP has always had a good relationship with the International Council of Psychologists. As a matter of fact, a number of presidents of IAAP had also been presidents of ICP at some point in time (e.g. Charles Spielberger). However, we have made a big step forward now:

Ray Fowler has been active in negotiating with the leadership of ICP, President Dennis Trent, and liaison person Ann O’Roark, on developing a Tandem Agreement. The Tandem Agreement gives all ICP members an automatic IAAP membership. Because of the special situation of ICP, this can be done without raising the contribution of ICP members to ICP.

The Tandem Agreement also includes that IAAP members can become members of ICP for a very small additional fee. In addition, we will coordinate our congresses, so that they happen in the same country and that various other activities are also coordinated. We begin our joint ventures in Greece in July 2006. The ICP conference will be held on the Kos Island just prior to the IAAP congress in Athens. IAAP has set aside several “invited” program hours to feature ICP presentations. ICP members will be able to attend the IAAP congress with member registration level fees.

We hope that we will be able to speak with one voice very soon in many important matters and that we will continue to increase our relationships for mutual benefits. We think that this Tandem Agreement is a good example of an agreement between two associations that want to work more closely with each other, and we expect that agreements with other associations might also go in the same direction.

5) Student Division and Student Activities

The BOD in 2002 agreed to found a Student Division and Pedro Neves (University of Lisbon, Portugal) agreed to work as president of this division. The first wave of students joined the student division at the conference in Singapore itself and then several waves of students joined so that the student division is now one of the bigger divisions and that we were able to double the number of students in our association. Ray Fowler has organized a highly successful drive with Pedro Neves to increase the number of students from the ranks of the APA Graduate Students Association. Many IAAP members have been enthusiastic of getting their graduate students to join IAAP. We have drastically reduced the price for student members to 10\$. We are very proud of our very fast-growing and very active student division in our midst. You will notice that there is now an active student division in the Athens conference. We expect that the student division will continue to grow and continue to be as active as it has been during the last four years.

6) Divisions should be networks of likeminded researchers and scholars

We have been very lucky with the support from the Divisional Presidents of most divisions. A particularly good example of an active division is Division 1 (Organizational Psychology, with its very able president Virginia Schein). Division 1 had a very specific and very clear plan of action for the period 2002-2006. It has developed a Division 1 Newsletter, produced a membership survey, developed a Leader-Links Program, stimulated scientific discussions, facilitated publishing in scientific journals via workshops, hosted round-table sessions at SIOP and EAWOP conferences and subsidized annual dues for tenure members from developing countries. Other divisions (notably Division 4 – Environmental Psychology, Division 5 – Educational, Instructional and School Psychology, Division 7 – Applied Gerontology, Division 8 – Health Psychology, Division 9 – Economic Psychology, Division 12 – Sport Psychology, and Division 13 – Traffic Psychology) have recruited prominent members, have held and co-organized conferences with other organizations and produced workshops (notably Division 6 – Clinical and Community Psychology, Division 7 – Applied Gerontology, Division 8 – Health Psychology, Division 11 – Political Psychology, Division 13 – Traffic Psychology). It was just delightful to see the amount of activities. Sadly, we also lost one prominent and active president, due to sudden and unexpected death; Professor Paul Pintrich passed away on July 12, 2003, and we hold him in dear memory.

7) Membership Recruitment

One of the important goals is to increase membership of IAAP. While most general purpose organizations lose members, IAAP is gaining members, albeit not as quickly as we would like it.

We did the following membership drives:

- a) We sent out letters to all non-members who participated at ICAP Singapore.
- b) We sent out letters to lapsed members, who had not renewed their membership in 2000, 2001, 2002 or 2003.
- c) We asked the Divisional Presidents to write to 30 prominent people active in the field and ask them to become members of IAAP.
- d) In my personal letter to all members of IAAP at the end of each year, I have asked the members to recruit an additional member within their faculty.
- e) We sent letters to past authors of *Applied Psychology: An International Review* of the last five years, who are not yet members, asking them to become members.
- f) I personally recruited many members on my meetings and travels with psychologists around the world.
- g) We sent letters to Board Members of APA Division 52.
- h) We sent letters to people in countries with few IAAP members, asking to recruit more members.
- i) We asked IAAP-BOD members to participate in the Action 10+5.
- j) We sent letters to Presidents of National Psychological Associations.

Of course, the most important membership drive will be the members gained as part of the congress in Greece. We expect that we will more or less double our membership in 2007 as a result of the Greek congress. However, the important issue will then be to retain those members.

We have also tried to increase membership from developing countries. However, we were not as successful as we would have liked to be. Membership from developing countries stayed more or less stable. However, in some countries we have had tremendous success, such as in Indonesia, Nigeria, Uganda, Romania, The Philippines. In each of these countries the number of members doubled. We also expect that the number of Thai members will increase drastically in 2006, although we do not yet have the data available.

One of the innovations that we have introduced is to be able to pay membership for four years. We expect that in some developing countries, where it is hard to exchange currency, or where credit cards are not generally available, it may be useful to pay once every four years at the time of the congress.

8) Publications

Our flagship journal *Applied Psychology: An International Review* is doing well and Robert Wood has done a great job. In contrast to many other journals, it has a very stable number of library subscriptions. The number of consortia libraries that have access to *Applied Psychology* has more than trebled: 2527 institutions had access to the journal via the Blackwell consortia program, and 753 library consortia offered access in 2003. An additional

1591 institutions are accessing *Applied Psychology*. The total readership of online articles in *Applied Psychology* has increased by 102%, there were 93.723 article downloads in 2004 (it was about half of that in 2003). We received an increase of income from the journal by 20%. Thus, the journal is an healthy enterprise.

To make the journal even more attractive, Robert Wood as editor in cooperation with the officers and Miriam Erez as chair of the publication committee has added a subsection on health psychology. I am glad to tell you that Paul Martin will be the section editor and will help to increase and process the health psychology, community psychology, counselling psychology, and clinical psychology contributions to the journal.

In addition, Charles Spielberger has edited a very successful Encyclopedia for Applied Psychology as IAAP activity (the returns of this Encyclopedia also went to IAAP).

In the same spirit, I have also initiated a series of International Handbooks of Applied Psychology. We have started to appoint editors for the first three handbooks and we envision to have 10+ handbooks within the next 10 years. The handbook series is in cooperation with Blackwell Publishers, but the series belongs to IAAP and thus is an IAAP activity. We hope to make this a definitive series of international handbooks that stand out both in terms of their international approach as well as in terms of their scientific excellence. The members of the general editorial committee are Monique Boekaerts, Shalom H. Schwartz, Jai B. P. Sinha, Stevan E. Hobfoll,; Robert Wood, Michael Frese. There are already editors for three handbooks: Organizational Psychology (editors: Miriam Erez, Robert Wood, Benjamin Schneider), Health Psychology (editors: Stan Maes, Susan Pick, Howard Leventhal), and Educational Psychology (editors: Monique Boekaerts et al.).

Our IAAP Newsletter is of high importance. We are delighted that Elizabeth Nair has worked so well to keep it up and to make it interesting.

9) Additional activities

There are so many other additional activities. We were given the task by the General Assembly in 2002 to rework the constitution and Ray Fowler and Mike Knowles have done that very effectively. Ray Fowler and Charles Spielberger have developed a set of guidelines for determining the new membership category of Fellows in our association and we have now admitted the first group of fellows to our association.

We have developed relationships with a number of journals, so that our members can get cheaper access to these journals. We have attempted to professionalize our approach, both in terms of homepage as well as in terms of having clearer guidelines for regional conferences and for applications for the international conferences of applied psychology. José Prieto has worked tirelessly to make our association more electronically visible. We will also start to send out the Newsletter electronically and use the money that we save in this way to add more pages to *Applied Psychology: An International Review*.

ARTS (Advanced Research and Training Seminars) – a cooperative endeavour with IUPsyS and IACCP - its purpose being to provide training opportunities for scholars from low-income countries and to promote their attendance at the international congresses of these associations, has been very effective in Beijing and will show its usefulness again in Athens.

Thanks to John Adair and Ingrid Lunt for doing this service to psychology of developing countries.

In short, we think that the association is now more agile, more outward-oriented, more financially viable than it has been four years ago.

Thus, we think that our association has done quite well, but I think we can do much better and that, given the importance of IAAP, we should also do much better. We should do more to educate society about the function and importance of applied psychology, and we should do more to help deal with societal, educational, and company problems. We should also grow to be able to distribute the load of activities on more shoulders and to be available and significantly present in more countries. We should also lure more scholars into our association so that many more scientists have a more international outlook. We should showcase more best practice examples for good applied psychology. We should be proud of our contributions that we already make and transmit this pride to our students. We should include ourselves in more significant debates nationally and internationally. We should use our methodological knowledge to produce better and cumulative knowledge for areas of importance. We should do research in applied psychology areas that are of future importance, etc., etc. I hope that you, the members of IAAP, will help the association to shoulder the many things that we in principle can and should be doing.

Michael Frese

President of the International Association of Applied Psychology