APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY AROUND THE WORLD

Competences in Psychology

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IAAP

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Editorial

Pr. Dr. Christine Roland-Lévy, IAAP Past-President (2022-2026)

With this issue of APAW, I first wish you a very fruitful year 2023 and a wonderful year of the Water Rabbit!

This first issue of Volume 5 of *Applied Psychology Around the World* is dedicated to a series of papers around the broad topic of **Competences in Psychology.** It will be introduced by A *Message from the President* of IAAP, Lori Foster, followed by a series of 13 articles.

The first one, by Kurt Geisinger and Dragos Iliescu, is entitled *Universal Human Rights, Universal Ethics, and Psychologist Competencies: What Can and Should Psychologists do to Protect Human Rights* to the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists*, is a follow up on Volume 4, Issue 3 of APAW, which was devoted to an analysis of the *Ethics in Psychology* and in particular to the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* (Appendix 1). For more on the topic, one might watch Alfred Allan's Keynote on our Webpage. In this issue, the authors go further with a focus on Competences via the *International Declaration of Core Competencies in Professional Psychology* which is presented as an Appendix (Appendix 2), with an overview of its development and its international impact on Psychology and Psychologists. This article is a very stimulating one based on key notions for all psychologists and researchers in Psychology around the world, and as such for the *International Association of Applied Psychology*.

The second article is entitled *An International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes: Delineating Foundational Psychology Competences at the Undergraduate Level*, by Susan A. Nolan and Jacquelyn Cranney. It aims at guiding the development of learning outcomes, such as psychological literacy and global citizenship. It also describes an international collaboration, that aims to delineate foundational competences for the undergraduate psychology major in a process similar to that for professional psychology competences (*International Project on Competence in Psychology*, 2016).

These first two articles are followed by a series of 11 reports related to various sessions presented at the United Nations and its agencies, such as the UNESCO and WHO. These reports are produced by members of IAAP's Students and Early Career Psychologists' Division, attending Dr. Judy Kuriansky's Master class on the topic of "*Psychology and the United Nations*" given at Columbia University Teachers College. Thank you very much Judy, not only for sharing these, but also for raising the young generation's understanding of how Psychologists and Psychology can contribute the Sustainable Development Goals at the UN as well as to so many important domains. The reports highlight some of the competences Master students need and have.

Before concluding, allow me to remind you that our 3rd *Early Career Marathon: Integrating research and Practice* is coming soon; it will take place from Saturday, November 11 at 9:00 AM London and end Sunday, November 12 at 9:00 AM London time. The deadline for submissions is **February 28** 2023, so do submit and encourage your students (Master or PhD) and early career professionals (less than 10 years after the last obtained degree or no more than 10 years of professional experience to submit).

More information on how to submit is on the IAAP site.

Meanwhile, I hope that you will enjoy reading this first issue of Volume 5!

The Sixth P: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnerships, and Psychology

Lori Foster, IAAP President (2022 - 2026)

The year 2023 has arrived and so has the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Rabbit. Please allow me to begin by wishing each of our IAAP members and APAW readers a year filled with peace and prosperity.

The new year offers a renewed opportunity to strengthen our commitment to global citizenship, a mindset that includes social justice and community welfare values (Nolan & Cranney, 2023). With this in mind, I would like to discuss some important things happening within the United Nations (UN) system, with relevance to applied psychology.

In the context of the UN, this year is significant for at least two reasons. First, this year marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which will be celebrated on December 10, 2023. The UDHR outlines rights and freedoms everyone is entitled to, no matter where in the world they happen to live (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). The right to health and wellbeing, food, education, and favorable conditions at work are among the imperatives laid out in this landmark document. A year-long outreach campaign to promote and recognize the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is currently underway. It includes tools to support the campaign and human rights, which can be found on the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Those interested in applied psychology's role in protecting human rights around the globe are encouraged to read a book published in late 2020, *The Cambridge Handbook of Psychology and Human Rights* (Rubin & Flores, 2020). This book includes contributions from a number of psychologists, including IAAP members, on topics such as humanitarian work psychology, behavioral insights, psychological ethics, and psychology's historical engagement with human rights within the UN framework.

The year 2023 is significant for a second reason as well. This year marks the midpoint in Agenda 2030, otherwise known as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 SDGs include 169 more specific subgoals, known as Targets. They were established in 2015 in a resolution titled "*Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*" (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). In addition to goals related to eradicating poverty and hunger, Agenda 2030 includes goals promoting health and wellbeing, quality education, access to decent work, and gender equality. There are also several goals related to planetary health as well as other imperatives, such as a goal related to peace, justice, and strong institutions and a goal focused on partnerships.

The Sixth P cont.

Like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Agenda 2030 applies to all people in all countries, from the poorest to the richest of the world. Another noteworthy aspect of Agenda 2030 is its emphasis on "leaving no one behind" and the concomitant recognition that disaggregated data are needed to achieve that aim (Foster & Kumpf, 2019). High-level averages can be deceptive and can mask inequalities. For example, if we only look at the average number of people moving out of poverty in a given country, we might see notable progress. However, if we take a closer look at disaggregated subgroup data, we might discover marginalized groups who are actually slipping further into poverty, despite aggregate progress.

Clearly, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals do not exist in isolation. They are intertwined. This month, two important UN reports were or will be released: The 2023 edition of the UNDESA World Social Report and the World Economic Situation and Prospects Report. The first of these documents, the UNDESA World Social Report, illustrates many linkages among the SDGs. As an example, consider the following excerpt connecting education (SDG 4) and health (SDG 3): "*A person's education affects health not only through its impact on income and access to health care but also through behavioural and psychological dimensions such as smoking, diet and access to social support, all of which influence physical and mental health in later life. The significant education gradient in health and well-being across the life course is an argument for improving education access and quality for all, not only as a goal in and of itself but also as a health policy*" (UNDESA, 2023, pp. 103-104).

Together, the 17 SDGs are said to encompass the five P's: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). I would like to add a sixth P: Psychology. Applied psychology has an important role to play in achieving sustainable development. Even a quick glance through the 169 targets reveals the need for behavior change on the part of individuals, leaders,

organizations, and communities. Psychologists have the tools to understand and promote such change in an ethical and empowering way, through theory, research, and practice.

The SDGs were established during Ban Ki-moon's tenure as UN Secretary-General. I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Ban in 2016, along with his Deputy Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet. The role of applied psychology in solving some of the world's toughest challenges was not lost on them. As Ban Ki-moon has stated, "*In order to succeed, Agenda 2030 must account for behavioural insights research… Our organization, our global agenda – and most importantly the people worldwide they are intended to serve – deserve nothing less than the best science available. A human-centered agenda requires a rigorous, research-based understanding of people*" (United Nations Development Programme, 2016).

A few years later, I was invited to speak with Ban Ki-moon's successor, Secretary-General António Guterres, and his leadership team. Mr. Guterres subsequently made the important decision to release a guidance note on behavioural science. In it, he argues for the importance of the behavioral sciences, stating: "*In many areas, the delivery of our mandates is linked to changing human behaviour, such as taking medicine, allowing a child to attend school, halting violence, reducing stigma, reaching agreements, or saving money. Behavioural science enables us to diagnose barriers preventing people from adopting a certain behaviour, understand enablers that help people achieve their aims, and design and measure the impact of interventions …*" (UN Secretary-General, 2021, p. 1).

Various UN entities have also taken decisive action to more strategically leverage behavioral science to support their mandates. For example, late last year, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) began recruiting for a Senior Social Behavioral Change Specialist to Lead UNICEF's applied behavioral science agenda. The job ad specifically called for candidates with a background in psychology or related disciplines such as behavioral economics. Key functions

of the position include supporting continuous learning about behavioral science at UNICEF and providing expert support for offices and teams to generate and utilize research, data, and evidence in support of social and behavioral change worldwide.

At his year-end press conference a few weeks ago, Secretary-General Guterres resolved to make 2023 "*a year for peace, a year for action*" (UN Secretary-General, 2022). It won't be easy. We begin the new year confronted with many challenges, including but not limited to those connected to the aftermath of COVID-19, the cost-of-living crisis, the war in Ukraine, and climate change. While no simple solutions exist, change is possible, and applied psychology is required.

To some, the notion of applying their psychological skillset to sustainable development may seem daunting. But, it needn't be. Perhaps the answer lies in how we frame and scope the challenges and opportunities on the horizon (Foster, 2017). Some years ago, psychologist Karl Weick published an article titled, "Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems" (We). In it, he states, "*The massive scale on which social problems are conceived precludes innovative action because bounded rationality is exceeded and dysfunctional levels of arousal are induced*" (p. 40). Weick relates such dysfunctional levels of arousal to the Yerkes-Dodson law. Stress (arousal) can boost performance up to a point, after which it becomes counterproductive and begins to have a negative impact. Weick's proposed solution to this problem involves breaking seemingly overwhelming challenges into manageable parts, something we are all capable of. He notes, "*Reformulations of social issues as mere problems allows for a strategy of small wins wherein a series of concrete, complete outcomes of moderate importance build a pattern that attracts allies and deters opponents. The strategy of small wins incorporates sound psychology and is sensitive to the pragmatics of policymaking*" (p. 40).

Exactly what this looks like will vary depending on the interests, skills, and priorities of those involved.

For concrete examples of how psychologists are applying what they know and can do to UN mandates, readers are invited to IAAP's first webinar of the year on the topic of mental health, wellbeing, and decent work. In this session, IAAP's New York based UN team will describe the expanding role of psychology at the United Nations and how IAAP members can get involved. As with all of our webinars, this session will be recorded and available to IAAP members both during and after the event.

In conclusion, both the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Agenda 2030 remind us of our shared aspirations and encourage us to take action. They also indicate a sizable gap between where we are now and where we would like to be. As we look to the year ahead, there is no shortage of opportunities for applied psychologists, as global citizens, to contribute to a better future for all.

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Universal Human Rights, Universal Ethics, and Psychologist Competencies: What Can and Should Psychologists do to Protect Human Rights[1]

Kurt F. Geisinger and Dragos Iliescu

In this paper, we discuss the interrelationship of three important documents regarding the role of psychologists in assuring human rights. The first document is the well-known *United Nations Statement of Human Rights*. The second is the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists*. We note that the primary article (i.e., Gauthier et al., 2010) describing those ethical principles is subtitled, "A Culture-Sensitive Model for Creating and Reviewing Codes of Ethics." The third document is the *International Declaration of Core Competencies in Professional Psychology* (Bartram et al., 2022). After briefly describing each of these documents, we interrelate them with the thesis that the core competencies and ethical principles of psychologists should be implemented in psychologist training programs and licensure frameworks and they should be used toward the assurance that human rights are protected, insulated, and prophylactically insured.

The first and easiest linkage of the UN's Human Rights statement may be to the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* (2008), so we attempt to align the two documents to the extent possible. Second, a relatively newer document that is still being refined but that has been adopted by the International Association of Applied Psychology and the International Union of Psychological Science (both in 2016) is the *International Declaration of Core Competencies in Professional Psychology*. We therefore next attempt to relate and align the two previous documents to the core competencies of psychologists; we believe that observance and protection of human rights (especially as many of the clients of

psychologists are vulnerable people) is foundational for the work of psychologists, be they counseling, clinical, or industrial-organizational psychologists, or scientists, teachers, or administrators.

Brief History

Human rights appear in many types of documents. Virtually all the modern constitutions have either separate sections (e.g., the U.S. Constitution has the Bill of Rights) or explicit statements about the rights of humans. But we should not assume that the consideration of human rights occurred recently. The Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Bible, the Quran (Koran), and the Analects of Confucius are five of the oldest written sources that address questions of people's duties, rights, and responsibilities. Although the rights that are confirmed in these foundations are varied in form and function, each were historically novel cultural advancements at the time of creation and adoption. For example,

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[1] This paper was first drafted as the senior author's presidential address to Division 52 of the American Psychological Association in Minneapolis, MN (USA), in August 2022. The second author added considerably to that original paper and it is now a joint publication.

the Hindu Vedas asserts in the hymn (oral tradition) *Atharva Veda* being born a human man entitles a person to rights, specifically food and water. (Kumar, 2021). The Code of Hammurabi is historically significant as it is the earliest known record that publicly displayed the rights, duties and penalties of the population; in this manner it was a novel attempt to ensure that laws and rights were enforced without nepotism, subjectivity or prejudice. (Jenkins, 1905). "In addition, in what would become the United States of American, the Inca and Aztec codes of conduct and justice and an Iroquois Constitution were indigenous peoples or Native American sources that existed well before the 18th century. In fact, all societies, whether in oral or written tradition, have had systems of propriety and justice as well as ways of tending to the health and welfare of their members" (Flowers, 1998, p. 1), primarily attempting to assure harmony among peoples.

The Magna Carta (1215) is often listed as a first statement of the rights of citizens, but it actually relates more to the rights of Parliament viz-a-viz the monarch in England rather than the rights of citizens per se. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 ended 80 years of wars including the Thirty-Years War and established that different country-states should not war with each other. The four outcomes of the Peace of Westphalia were significant then and continue to be needed practice today. They are national self-determination; the precedent for ending wars through diplomatic congresses; the notion of peaceful coexistence among sovereign states as the norm; and maintaining a balance of power among sovereign states with the acceptance of principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other sovereign states. Clearly, those are incredibly important standards that establish rights of countries and I believe we can all imagine situations in the past 100 years where following those principles would have been of benefit to our world. More citizen-level rights were enumerated in France, as in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*s in 1789. In the 19th century, two prime themes emerged in the realm of human

rights: the attempts to prohibit slavery and to avoid wars. After World War I, the League of Nations floundered, at least in part because the United States refused to join. During World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt provided a precursor of human rights in his 1941 State of the Union, where he announced four basic human rights: freedom of speech and of religion and freedom from want and fear.

After the atrocities of World War II, the United Nations was born and among its crowning achievements was the *Universal Declaration of Human Right*s, which was adopted unanimously by 56 member countries in 1948 with no opposing vote (although 8 countries abstained). We note that much of the declaration is so widely known and approved that it is generally considered customary international law and can be used as such by the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands, the primary court of the United Nations.

This brief historical review of human rights highlights a simple fact, human rights are not constant. For many centuries, human rights for average people did not exist. Basic human rights historically have been given, changed, violated, and subjectively enforced by different régimes and cultures. They are a fragile and hopefully evolving structure much like technology, and to achieve greater heights they must be nurtured and protected by multiple facets of our society, not just government mandate.

Human Rights

Much of the next section describes the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which includes a preamble and then a listing of 30 such rights, some of which have multiple components. The preamble is so critical in setting the stage for the listing of human rights that we quote much of it below; it leans heavily on a State of the Union address given in 1941 by US president Franklin Roosevelt.

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the

Universal Human Rights cont.

human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind (sic), and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man (sic) is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge, (Assembly, 1948, pp. 14-25).

The 30 rights are enumerated below; some have been re-worded for ease of presentation.

- All human beings are born free, equal in dignity, and rights.
- Everyone has such rights as enumerated, regardless of race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. (Note that gender was not mentioned in this listing although it was in the preamble.)

- Everyone should have life, liberty and security of the person.
- No slavery or servitude. They are prohibited in all their forms.
- Torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments and punishment are also prohibited.
- Everyone has a right to recognition under the law.
- All are equal before the law.
- When acts violate one's rights, one has a right to remedy by national tribunal or by law.
- No arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile.
- Everyone is entitled to fair and public hearing by impartial judges if charged for obligations or criminal acts.
- All tried for penal offenses have the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty by law and where such a person has an opportunity to present a defense.
- All have the right to privacy and interferences as well as the right to defend against attacks on one's honor under protection of law.
- Everyone has the right to free movement within their sovereign state and to leave and return to their nation.
- Everyone has the right to seek asylum from persecution although not from non-political crimes.
- Everyone has the right to a nationality and cannot be arbitrarily deprived of their nationality.
- Men and women of proper age, without any limitation due to race, nationality, or religion have the right to marry and have a family. They should have equal rights in the marriage and to its dissolution. It should only be entered into with full and free consent and the family is the natural and fundamental group unit in society and should be protected by society and the State. (Note that while there is an implication that it is men and women who are marrying, it never states that they are marrying each other; it just says that men and women have a right to marry and have a family; it does not designate who are the people that they can marry.)

- Everyone has a right to own property and should not be deprived of it arbitrarily.

- Everyone has the right to freedom of religion and freedom to change one's religion and to practice their religion of choice.

- Freedom of opinion and expression and to seek information and ideas as they so choose.

- Freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one should be compelled to belong to a group.

- The will of the people should be the basis for a government's authority. Everyone should receive equal access to governmental activities and services and the right to participate in government personally or through elected representatives.

- The right to social security and social and cultural rights to maintain one's dignity and personality.

- The right to work, to choose one's employment, and to just and fair conditions of work. The right for equal pay for equal work and the right to just compensation, the right to join unions.

- The right to rest and leisure, including reasonable working hours and periodic paid vacations.

- Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family (food, clothing, housing, medical care). Mothers and children may need special care.

- The right to education. Free and compulsory elementary education, Later education based upon merit.

- The right to participate in the cultural life of the community, the arts and sciences and for protection of creative interests in work in which one is the author or maker.

- We are all entitled to a social and international order that permits these rights to be realized.

- These rights may include some responsibilities and we should all be subject to limitations as set by law in the exercise of our rights, primarily when our rights limit those of others.

- No state, group, or person has a right to engage in activities aimed at the destruction of the rights of others.

Obviously, we could expand upon this listing and also amend them as our cultural morés have changed in some ways. Let's focus briefly on a few of these: that people should be free and equal in dignity and rights; that people are entitled to life, liberty, and security of the person; that there should be no torture or cruel or degrading treatments; that people should have the right of asylum to avoid persecution (from non-political crimes, and that all are equal before the law).

Many of these specific human rights have a strong immigration and international component. The declaration never states that the vast majority of these rights are intended only for the citizens of a country but are indeed to be extended in general to all persons. Thus, worldwide concerns with immigrants approaching a country's borders, especially those believing that they are persecuted within their own countries should be treated humanely and permitted asylum, as long as they are not seen as non-political criminals in their own lands.

Torture and degrading treatments have been practiced not only in wars, but also in peacetime by some regimes and by some representatives of law enforcement and others. Immigrants as well as all others in underserved groups are entitled to dignified treatment, privacy, and equal treatment under the law. Equal treatment under the law is not restricted to citizens of a particular sovereign state, but to all. It is not entirely clear what "cultural rights" means in the 22nd human right article, but it can be interpreted to mean the right to continue to practice the norms of one's culture as long as they do not drastically contradict or infringe upon those of the host culture or the human rights of individuals. The right espoused in Article 25 that everyone should have "a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his (sic) family (food, clothing, housing, medical care)" may not be not observed in some countries.

Before closing out this section of the paper, we posit a few personal and random thoughts. First, it is our experience that no matter how strongly we will

stress diversity, inclusion, and affirmative action, we can still report our belief that the hardest kind of diversity to accept is serious differences of opinions. The right to freedom of opinion and expression and to understand and appreciate information and ideas as others so choose is a difficult one to accept at times. It is much easier to accept a colleague whose skin color and culture are different when their values and beliefs are highly similar to our own. Second, there are some human rights where psychologists have limited roles. An example of such a right is that everyone has a to be free from slavery. Yet throughout the history of the world slavery has been widely practiced until the past two centuries, and there continue to be instances where slavery continues to exist, although it is often not termed as such. Moreover, downtrodden peoples, including immigrants in some situations, live in a type of slavery. As psychologists, one would hope that we as a profession would stand up for the rights of all persons to be free. As the educated experts who stand at the scientific crossroads of diagnosis and treatment of psychological wellbeing, it is most certainly justifiable for psychologists to champion human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists

The first two sentences of the abstract for a primary article that describes the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* state that "Psychologists live in a globalizing world where traditional boundaries are fading and therefore, increasingly work with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds. The *Declaration* provides a moral framework of universally acceptable ethical principles based on shared human values across cultures" (Gauthier et al., 2010, p. 179). Rather than being an ethical code—of which we are all familiar—it is framework through which ethical codes can be evaluated and even developed. The goal of the *Principles* is to help psychologists and psychological associations enforce ethical behavior to increasingly difficult problems; especially problems that may have different satisfactory solutions dependent on culture. It is also intended to "promote

global understanding and cooperation while respecting cultural differences" (p. 179). "These shared human values guide psychologists in conducting their professional and scientific activities, whether acting in research, direct service, teaching, administrative, supervisory, consultative, peer review, editorial, expert witness, social policy, or any other role related to the discipline of psychology" (p. 180). The *Declaration* was adopted by the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) and the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) in 2008 after six years of development, consultation, and research. The *Declaration* is not intended to be an ethical code *per se* – in fact, the authors note that most ethical codes need to be based on the cultural and moral values of the particular culture or country for which they are developed, whereas the *Declaration* lays out broader and more universal principles. The Gauthier et al. (2010) article describes many of the reasons why different associations may wish to have codes of ethics; what the driving principles of such codes of ethics should be; and the degree to which various cultural, religious, scientific, social justice issues, the protection of vulnerable peoples, and other issues can or should influence codes of ethics, depending upon the country, the orientation of the relevant association and other local considerations.

The *Declaration* includes four general principles that should guide the development and evaluation of all ethical codes. These seem highly related to and overarching of the human rights espoused by the United Nations. We list them first below and then briefly discuss each of the four principles. They include:

Principle 1: *Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples,*

Principle II: *Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples,*

Principle III: *Integrity, and*

Principle IV: *Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society.*

Universal Human Rights cont.

Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples. This principle is fundamental to all ethical decisions, and many human rights and subsidiary ethical principles are ultimately tied to this one. It cuts across cultural and political boundaries and across professional disciplines, which is one of the reasons that the initial core competencies in psychology resembled professional competencies of many other different professions. The need to respect all individuals regardless of their social status, ethnic origin, gender, capacities, or other characteristics is central to this principle. "The different cultures, ethnicities, religions, social structures, and other such characteristics of peoples are integral to the identity of their members and give meaning to their lives" (Gauthier, et al., 2010, p. 194). The respect for individuals also includes understanding each person's moral perspectives and maintaining respect for all individuals regardless of their differences from our own perspectives. Respect for individual differences varies in its manifestations across different cultures, societies, and groups. Thus, in short, respect for the dignity of all persons includes respect for the worth of each person, for diversity in all its manifestations, for customs and beliefs—with a limitation only when the customs and beliefs of one party lead to serious harm to others, the privacy of individuals and confidentiality of their information, and fairness and justice for all. When a culture, society, or group's beliefs or practices cause serious harm or infringe on the human rights of individuals regardless of group affiliation, ethically the rights of the individual should supersede cultural practices.

Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples. Competent caring for the well-being of persons "involves working for their benefit and, above all, doing no harm" (Gauthier, et al., 2019, p. 194). A psychologist must use knowledge and skills to affect this principle. One must also understand one's own values and consider them carefully in providing services to those who differ from the psychologist. Therefore, the values that psychologists must espouse and incorporate include the active concern for the individuals and groups with whom they are working, ensuring that no harm is done to such people, maintaining competence in one's skill and knowledge, and respecting those with whom one is working to make decisions for themselves as best they can. It must be stated, however, that doing no harm is typically a rather minimal standard. Had we stated that our goal should be to improve the lives of individuals and groups, then the standard would be more aspirational and emphasize what we actually hope to accomplish. Doing no harm, while obviously the intent, seems an extremely modest goal.

Integrity. Integrity is ultimately honesty, truthfulness, and accuracy in communications. It is necessary for the advancement of the discipline of psychology as a science and as a profession. It includes such issues as monitoring and managing one's personal perspectives, avoiding conflicts of interest, and exploiting others for one's own benefit. One must maximize impartiality, avoid conflicts of interest, and disclose the fullness of situations as completely as possible.

Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society. All psychologists, regardless of their subdisciplines, work within society. "As a science and a profession, it has responsibilities to society. These responsibilities include contributing to the knowledge about human behavior and to persons' understanding of themselves and others and using such knowledge to improve the condition of individuals, families, groups, communities, and society" (Gauthier, et al., 2010, p. 196). Psychologists are called in difficult or fuzzy social situations and challenges to be the scientific, rational, and ethical voice championing the rights of individuals, while evaluating ethical choices through the cultural lens appropriate for the client and the situation.

The International Declaration of Core Competencies in Professional Psychology

Some might question why we need a set of core competencies in professional psychology. Aren't all educational programs accredited in their respective countries against a number of explicitly stated

competencies? While the answer to this question appears to be "Yes", it is also "No," for several main reasons, some of the most important being outlined below.

First, psychology is a very diverse field of practice – for example, clinical psychologists, psychotherapists and other similar sub-specializations are more consonant in their practice approach and underlying competencies with practitioners in the life sciences (e.g., physicians), while industrial-organizational psychologists are oftentimes confounded with management consultants, and school psychologists sometimes are similar to educational specialists and pedagogues. While all these areas of practice have a common core, they are also divergent enough to mandate a discussion about what makes them part of "psychology".

Second, educational programmes at all levels (undergraduate, master and doctorate) have striking differences from one country and culture to another, sometimes with vastly different curricula. One of the main reasons why the identification and training of core competencies relates therefore to the migration of professional psychologists themselves across borders, and sometime even inside national borders (e.g., governmental agencies in the United States award the license to practice at the State level, with visible differences from one state to another). Psychologists may need to relocate from one country to another, and the imposition to retake all their exams is unrealistic – there should be a way to acknowledge at least part of their professional competence. Also, psychologists may need to serve international clients – for example, an industrial-organizational psychologist may advise a multinational company about selection procedures and personnel assessment in several countries.

Third, our clients also move from one country to another. With ever-increasing internationalization and the advent of tele-health services, psychologists may need to serve either clients from another country visiting the psychologist's country of residence (e.g., a Dutch client living in Spain, being served by a Spanish psychologist), or to a client of their own

country living abroad (e.g., a Spanish client living in the Netherlands, being served by a Spanish psychologist through online services). Who is more likely to be able to understand the concerns of such clients, a Spanish psychologist or a Dutch psychologist who has also moved to Spain? And how can licenses be migrated across borders? Any decision in this respect must surely be based on the competencies of the respective professional.

Fourth, the duration, complexity and time taken for training also widely varies from one country to another. In the United States, a doctoral degree is needed to practice. That requirement is only true in a few countries; in many countries, it helps to remember that students start college in their specialty field, in our case, psychology. Their undergraduate degree is in the field and in some countries that is all that is needed to practice. One can get a license to practice psychology in Brazil with a baccalaureate degree, yet psychologists' hunger for continuing education and attend conferences for such enhancement. For example, over three thousand individual psychologists attend an annual conference on psychological assessment in Brazil each year, more than attend in the US the yearly conference of the Society for Personality Assessment. In Europe there is large consensus that was reached inside the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) and is now reflected in the various programmatic documents of this association (e.g., related to the EuroPsy certification) that 5 years of academic study (3 years undergraduate and 2 years of Master courses) and one extra year of supervised practice are needed for a psychologist to practice independently. As we see, not only the content, but also the depth of professional requirements varies widely enough as to mandate the question "what is common"?

As a conclusion, we could say that the reasons for the development and approval of core competencies are connected to the need that we want consistency in the provision and quality of psychological services, across countries, specializations etc. In addition, other professionals require a sense of what psychologists

know and can do prior to making referrals, and clarity in these aspects also influence the public's perception of our profession. Finally, an explicit statement on core competencies also helps in that that psychologists will feel a sense of professional community with other psychologists.

It should be noted that the project described in this section did not develop in a vacuum. For example, Rodolfo et al. (2014) described foundational work to define competencies. Their approach led to a preliminary model "resulting in a shift away from a model of training that involved tracking the number of hours spent learning specific knowledge or skills to a 'culture of competence' that emphasizes outcome, that is, the acquisition of the essential knowledge and skills" (p. 1). Morgan-Consoli and her colleagues (2018) called for the need for considerable cultural understanding to practice internationally, with a specific emphasis on clinical and counseling settings, although teaching, research, and consulting as professional activities of psychologists were also discussed.

It may help to describe briefly the process through which the core competencies of psychologists were developed. As noted above, the work began primarily by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB), subsequently in conjunction with several international psychology associations and the Norwegian Psychological Association, as represented by Sverre Nielsen. These groups coordinated conferences on psychological licensure, which culminated with the 5th International Congress on Licensure that was held in Stockholm in July 2013: a working congress, by invitation only, to which almost 20 national psychological associations and several international associations were represented.

The stated goal was "To create the foundation for a global agreement on identifying the benchmark competencies that define professional psychology." To help move this process along, a definition of competence was adopted: "A combination of practical and theoretical <u>knowledge</u>, cognitive <u>skills</u>, <u>behavior</u>, and <u>values</u> used to perform a specific behavior or

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Table 1. *Organizations Supporting the Stockholm Core Competencies of Psychologists' Conference*[1]

APA – American Psychological Association

APS – Australian Psychological Society

ASPPB – Ass. of State and Provincial Psychology Boards

ATP – Association of Test Publishers (USA)

BPS – British Psychological Society

CR – Canadian Register for Health Providers in Psychology Canada)

CPA – Canadian Psychological Association

ECP – European Congress of Psychology

EFPA – European Federation of Psychologists Associations

IAAP – International Association of Applied Psychology

ITC – International Test Commission

IUPsyS – International Union of Psychological Science

NIP – Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen

NPA – Norwegian Psychological Association

NR – National Register for Health Providers in Psychology (USA)

PsySSA – Psychological Society of South Africa

SPA – Swedish Psychological Association

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1 The three tables were first used as part of a PowerPoint presentation by Iliescu (2022).

set of behaviors to a standard in professional practice settings associated with a professional role. In some regions of the world, the term competency (pl. competencies) is used with the same meaning as the term competence (pl. competences)."

Universal Human Rights cont.

After this invitational meeting, a smaller working group of about a dozen international psychologists was then formed and fleshed out many details, consulted the community and presented their changes at six large international conferences. The final document was approved in the summer of 2016 by both the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) and the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) as well as a number of national

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Table 2. *Composition of Working Group of Psychologists for the Core Competencies Project*

Sverre L. Nielsen, Norway, chair

Buxin Han, China

Dave Bartram, UK

Dragos Iliescu, Romania

Germán Gutiérrez, Colombia

Janel Gauthier, Canada

Moana Waitoki, New Zealand

Steve DeMers, USA

Steve Osborne, New Zealand

Tholene Sodi, South-Africa

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psychological associations. After receiving these approvals, it was still presented at three meetings of the European Congress of Psychology, two International Congresses of Psychology, and one International Congress of Applied Psychology for dissemination and additional feedback. The document is composed of a brief history, followed by a preamble, and then the listing and description of the competencies. Rather than providing the entire listing of competencies, we are providing a listing of the organization of the competencies with some additional information related to the topics. The competencies are grouped into three categories: (a) psychological knowledge and skills underlying the core competencies, (b) professional behavior competencies, and (c) professional activities competencies. We note that especially in the professional behavior competencies, the competencies are those of professionals in many fields, not just psychology. However, that is appropriate because psychologists, like physicians and attorneys, must behave professionally.

Under the psychological knowledge and skills underpinning the core competencies there are two categories, each of which is then also subdivided into two general categories. The two more basic categories are: possessing the necessary knowledge to perform as a professional psychologist and possessing the necessary skills to perform as a professional psychologist. Under each of these categories are: foundational knowledge and specialized knowledge under knowledge and basic skills and specialized skills under the skills category. Please note the truly general catchment quality of this portrayal of knowledge and skills. That generality is needed because the same set of knowledge and skills is needed for professionals in clinical, counseling, school, educational, and industrial-organizational psychology, for example, but over time, these competencies may need to be fleshed out more fully and enumerated, for different specializations.

Some 24 competencies are listed in the professional behavior competencies section, they broken into six subcategories: behaves ethically, acts professionally, relates appropriately to clients and others, works with diversity and demonstrates cultural competence, operates as an evidence-based practitioner, and reflects on own work. Examples of the "Acts professionally" category are: follows accepted best practices, maintains competence, operates inside boundaries of competence, consults peers, and makes referrals when needed. We all probably know individuals who have stretched the boundaries of where they are competent. Of course, for international psychologists, working with diversity and understanding and appropriately handling cultural differences are critical skills.

Table 3. *The Core Competencies of Psychologists*

Knowledge and Skills

KN: Possesses the necessary knowledge

KN1: … foundational knowledge of psychological concepts, constructs, theories, methods, and practice to support competence

KN2: … specialized knowledge

SK: Possesses the necessary skills

SK1: … basic skills to support competence

SK2: … specialized skills to operate in own areas of psychological practice to support competence

Professional Behavior Competencies

PE (1-3): Practices ethically

Applies relevant ethics codes, adheres to relevant laws and rules, resolves ethical dilemmas

AP (1-6): Acts professionally

Follows accepted best practice, maintains competence, operates inside boundaries of competence, consults peers, makes referrals when needed

ER (1-2): Relates appropriately to clients and others

Appropriate working relationships with clients and others, and with colleagues

WD (1-6): Works with diversity and demonstrates cultural competence

Knowledge and understanding of the historical, political, social, and cultural context of clients, cultural humility, respects diversity, is inclusive of all forms of diversity

EP (1-3): Operates as an evidence-based practitioner

Adopts an evidence-based orientation, consults research to inform practice, recognizes the limitations of the available evidence

SR (1-4): Reflects on own work

Evaluates own efficacy, reflects on improvement, validates reflections with peers or supervisors

Professional Activities Competencies

SG (1-2): Sets relevant goals

Develops goals based on needs analysis, aligns goals

PA (1-3): Conducts psychological assessments and evaluations

Identifies needs, selects or develops, delivers assessments and evaluations

PI (1-6): Conducts psychological interventions

Plans and carries out psychological interventions, designs and develops, evaluates usefulness

CO (1-3): Communicates effectively and appropriately

Communicates with diverse audiences, provides relevant and clear feedback, reporting and guidance to clients, provides information on psychological matters to relevant audiences.

There are some 14 competencies in four subcategories under the Professional Activities category: setting relevant goals, conducting psychological assessments and evaluations, conducting psychological interventions, and communicating effectively and appropriately. Again, what a clinical psychologist does in conducting a psychological assessment is likely different from what a school psychologist or an industrial-organizational psychologist does. Moreover, even if the same measures are used, the results may be interpreted differently, and scores used for different purposes.

In the future, assessments of psychologists for licensure and various certifications are likely to align with competencies such as these rather than focusing more highly on academic knowledge. There have been several articles about this possibility in publications such as the *American Psychologist* and ASPPB has been considering such a change against a negative reaction from faculty and trainers (Callahan et al., 2019). Nevertheless, it is the direction that virtually all licensure decisions for professionals have moved given that the ultimate goal of licensure is to protect the public.

Pulling it All Together

Our argument is that these three critical documents are vitally important to the operation of our profession, regardless of our respective sub-professions. That the *UN Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* overlap considerably is not surprising. They are indeed very close and, thought of as a Venn diagram, would be lying largely on top of one another, although the declaration deals with items normally thought of as outside the focus of psychology. Consider a simple example using the first ethical principle and the first five human rights in the UN Declaration. If we treat people with dignity and respect regardless of the diversity of their culture, background and complete individuality, psychology should be able to help them enjoy life, liberty and security and other associated rights. If we start with a perspective of providing all people with respect and dignity then no slavery or servitude, no torture or cruel and degrading treatments are possible; the two sides of that equation are simply incompatible. So, the real question is how the core competencies of professional psychologists can work to ensure human rights.

The comparison of the core competencies in psychology are less clear in terms of their relationship to the protection and insurance of human rights than are the ethical principles. A chapter describing the core competencies makes the following comment.

"While the goal to use an international set of core competencies to facilitate global professional mobility and unify the professional identity of a psychologist may be important and of interest at the present time, there are significant cultural and ethical considerations to encouraging the global practice of psychology or any highly skilled profession (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998; Van de Vijver, 2013). Of major importance in ensuring human rights is professional competence within the cultural, social, and legal context where the professional practice will occur (Hook & Vera, 2020; Kearney, et al., 2020)" (Bartram, De Mers & Nielsen, 2022, p. 16).

The challenge of any attempt to develop principles, standards, or codes in an international context is the broad diversity where cultures, values, language, customs, educational background, and histories differ so greatly (Morgan-Consoli, et al., 2018). We must step backwards, sometimes much further back than we are comfortable, to find compromise language that unites us rather than dividing us. The core competencies workgroup was specially formulated to insure wide, international perspectives on the discipline, including those of indigenous peoples. A number of the core competencies involve ethical and cultural diversity and the ability to work with diverse populations. Indeed, one competency is "Works with Diverse Populations and Demonstrates Cultural Competence." The "practices ethically" core competency is probably most critical in the context of this discussion. Clearly, one who is practicing ethically cannot accept, much less work to include torture and cruel and inhumane treatment in working with detainees, as we all learned and reacted to in relation to the involvement of psychologists in the Guantanamo debacle. Acting ethically also includes the need for privacy and confidentiality, something all psychologists address in their training and practices. While the competencies involved in practicing ethically are highly tied to laws and ethical codes, from a broader perspective they must also address a great number of the human rights as enumerated by the United Nations. Acting both professionally and ethically should ensure that psychologists deal with those human rights dealing with legal resolutions to concerns, such as the right to a legal review before an impartial tribunal, the right to counsel, and a prohibition of arbitrary arrests. Many of the human rights can be assured when the professional has continued competence and acts professionally. "Operates as an Evidence-Based Practitioner," demonstrates the Professional Behavior Competencies, as does "Reflects on Own Work." Reflection is critical to providing support for the human rights of others with whom we interact. If we use the issued definition of competence, we can say that competent psychological

professionals have knowledge of human rights and demonstrate skills and behaviors that support and value all humans by using their competencies in an ethical manner.

Finally, we believe it is within the scope of our profession that we must work to assure human rights. What we are left with is to protect human rights we need professionals with sets of skills and knowledge that must be so thoroughly integrated with ethics that they are seen as one set of professional behavioral tendencies. Knowledge and skills on one hand and ethics on the other are the competencies needed to protect human rights. It should be impossible to imagine a psychologist with strong professional skills who acts unethically and does not stand up for human rights.

Conclusion

We believe that all three of these influential documents should be included in the education of all graduate students in psychology and others planning for professions as psychologists, whether they plan to practice, perform research, teach, or engage in some other activity. Knowing about the statements on human rights is needed as part of the "do no harm" requirement.

We fear that we teach ethics codes as part of educational programmes to students from many nation-states much as we teach automobile speed limits. Rather we stress that these are things NOT to do, or at least not to be caught doing them. The Declaration of Ethical Principles provides a broader context for the understanding of specific geographically defined ethical codes and places emphasis upon what our ethical goals should be. At one level ethical behavior must be both ingrained and integrated in professional behavior; at the other, it should be aspirational.

We believe that over time the core competencies document will help shape our graduate and professional training curricula for psychologists. Consider

changes in the licensure tests used by many professions, including those for psychologists in many countries. Most disciplines have moved from testing people on that knowledge they are taught in graduate or professional schools to those skills they need on the job (Geisinger 2020). Psychology has not yet moved fully in this direction Where graduate curricula are relevant and parallel practice, of course, licensure testing focusing on both is best. Licensure tests, after all, are employment tests and must meet the legal and professional standards as employment tests.

One need only look at current events to know that human rights continue to be abused. Psychologists have a role and a responsibility to work to assure that individuals and groups are provided the human rights to which they are entitled. Our shared ethics and our shared skills demand such action.

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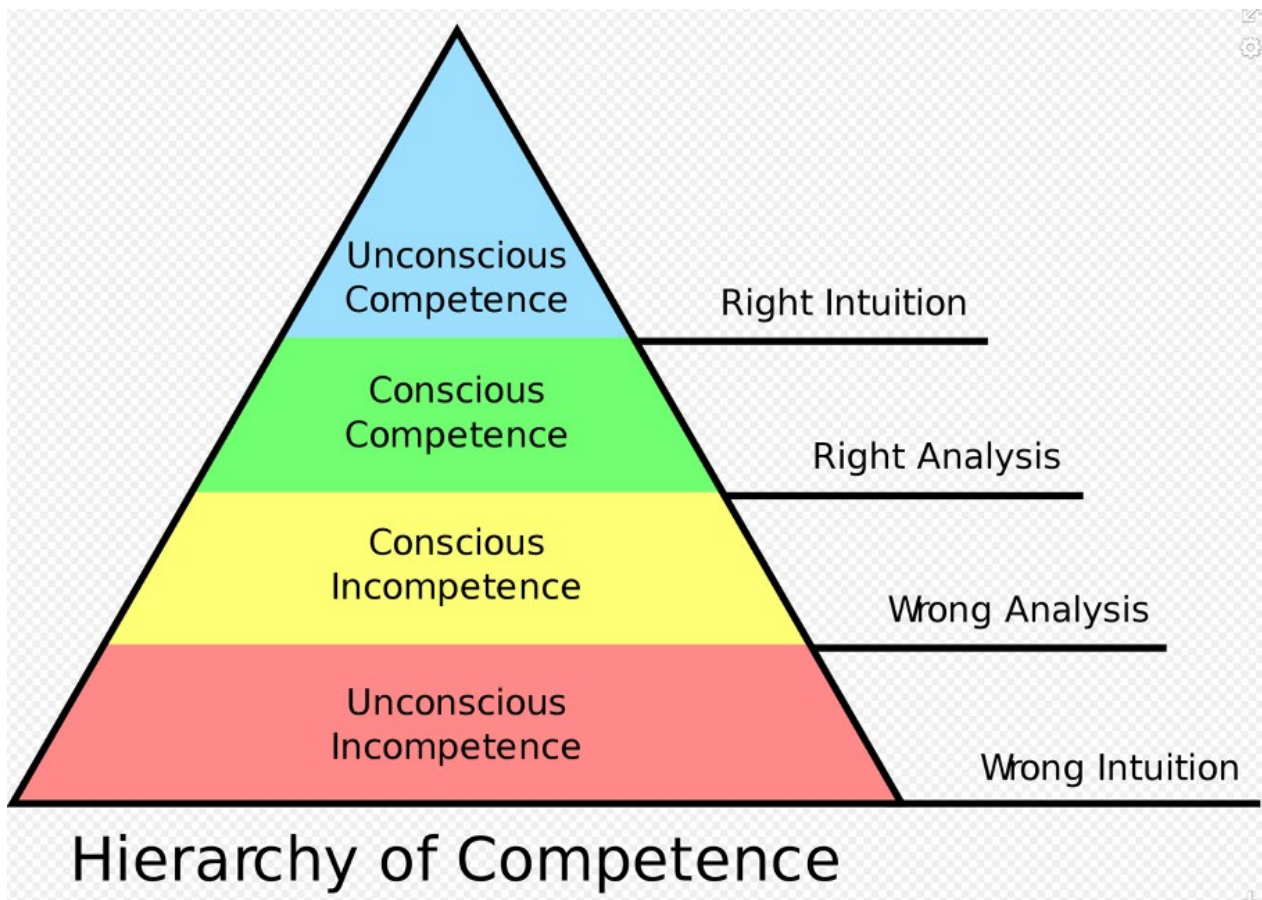
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_stages_of_competence

An International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes: Delineating Foundational Psychology Competences at the Undergraduate Level

Susan A. Nolan[1] and Jacquelyn Cranney[2]

Abstract

The field of psychology is increasingly global, with growing numbers of psychology undergraduate programs worldwide, raising the question of what graduates of such programs know and can do. The current paper outlines models that might guide the development of learning outcomes, including psychological literacy, the "intentional values-driven application of psychology to achieve personal, professional, and community goals" (p. 3, Cranney et al., 2022a), and global citizenship, "the understanding of global interrelatedness, and the capacity to live, work and contribute positively as a member of global communities" (p. ii, Cranney et al., 2012). Together, these models contribute to an understanding of what it means to be a psychologically literate global citizen. Finally, we describe the *International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes*, launched in 2022, that aims to delineate foundational competences for the undergraduate psychology major in a process similar to that for professional psychology competences (International Project on Competence in Psychology, 2016). We describe the structures and processes that guide this project, including a smaller central committee and a broader advisory group. We outline the steps that have occurred thus far, as well as the planned processes for the delineation of competences, including broad and iterative stakeholder engagement.

Keywords: learning outcomes, competences, undergraduate psychology, international, psychologically literate global citizen

The study of psychology is increasingly popular worldwide (McCarthy et al., 2012; Takooshian et al., 2016) with the most recent estimates indicating that there are more than 4000 psychology education or training programs around the world (Bullock, 2014), a number that is almost certainly higher now. A related trend is the increasingly global nature of higher education. Indeed, scholars have argued that "the internationalisation of education policy in general, and [higher education] policy in particular, is one of the most significant forces affecting universities across the world" (pp. 127-128, Robson & Wihlborg, 2019). One challenge accompanying both the growth in psychology and the related internationalization is the difficulty in defining what the field of psychology encompasses (Zoma & Gielen, 2015). At undergraduate and graduate levels, what are students learning? Such questions were addressed for professional psychology competences – usually at the graduate or advanced undergraduate level, depending on the

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nation – through the International Declaration on Core Competences in Professional Psychology (International Project on Competence in Psychology, 2016). These competences were endorsed by both the International Association of Applied Psychology and the International Union of Psychological Science. To date, there has not been a parallel process with regard to foundational psychology competences – usually at the undergraduate psychology level. Note that we define the term 'competence' later in this paper.

The current paper will outline the importance of delineating and developing international foundational competences and then provide an overview of an international effort, launched in 2022, to develop a guiding set of such competences at the undergraduate level. Along with several colleagues, we (the current authors) recently published a paper positing that the field of psychology should more explicitly contribute to local and global communities (Cranney et al., 2022a,b). We emphasized that undergraduate psychology should focus not just on core aspects of psychology (e.g., knowledge of content, understanding of research methods), but also on evidence-based competences.

Moreover, we argue for consideration of a broader range of stakeholders, including employers, civil society, government, and the general public as well as the students themselves, than are typically considered by psychology programs in many countries (Nolan et al., 2020). Indeed, it has been argued (e.g., Cranney et al., 2012) that the traditional narrow focus on the re-creation of ourselves (i.e., applied psychologists, and psychological scientists and educators) has been to the discipline and profession's disadvantage. A broader stakeholder focus will create a greater societal appreciation of the value of the discipline and profession of psychology, and thus greater opportunities such as funding and influence. In summary, as Cranney and colleagues (2022a, p. 2) explained, in the wake of the disruption that was the COVID-19 pandemic, "we have an opportunity now to rethink

and to 'sell' psychology education as a valuable preparation for work and life in the post-pandemic 21st Century."

There are several challenges to achieving a set of international competences for undergraduate psychology. One of the most formidable is the wide range of types of undergraduate programs, with their different aims. In some countries, the focus is primarily clinically oriented, whereas in other countries, the curricula are far more general. In the latter types of programs in particular, many graduates do not go on to become practicing psychologists or doctoral-level researchers or academics. As one example, only 14% of psychology bachelor's graduates in the U.S. go on to earn graduate degrees in psychology, with only about a third of these graduates earning a doctorate, the degree required to become a psychologist in the U.S. (American Psychological Association, 2017). What knowledge and skills should the 86% of other graduates have that can transfer across employment and other settings?

Even in countries, such as many in Europe, where most graduates go on to work as psychologists, there is an increasing focus on skills. For example, in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), many countries have adopted the EuroPsy certificate which offers a diploma that outlines minimum competences beyond the actual degrees that a student earns (Lunt et al., 2015). That is, the EuroPsy diploma constitutes a credential in addition to the degrees a student earns. Specifically, the EuroPsy certificate requires both a bachelor's and Master's degree, and includes competences at the undergraduate level (and not just at the graduate level). It therefore affects all students in those countries, including students who do not plan to pursue an applied psychology career. These examples highlight the opportunity for psychology undergraduate education to focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all bachelor's graduates can use in their careers, no matter what they pursue, as well as in their personal and community lives.

We also want to note a growing international movement in higher education to develop curricula that are, at least in principle, interchangeable across countries within a given region (e.g., EHEA). Such a process promotes mobility of students, faculty, graduates, and degrees. Although many default to thinking about this interchangeability as "standardization," the goal is more accurately described as "harmonization" or "tuning." Such harmonization "involves research and surveys of faculty members, students and employers, and consultation with business and government leaders, to determine exactly what a degree in a given field stands for in terms of students' learning and competencies" (Jaschik, 2009, para. 2). We do not think a regional model can be scaled to work internationally; however, we believe undergraduate psychology education can learn from the thoughtful flexibility that has been built into these models.

In this paper, we will discuss models and initiatives that emphasize the application of psychology knowledge and skills to everyday life, and we will outline an increasing focus on psychological literacy and global citizenship in psychology education. We will discuss the need for psychology educators to prepare students for a range of professions, provide opportunities for development of life skills beyond employment, and communicate to students themselves, employers, civil society, and the general public what a psychology graduate can do. We will then provide an overview of an ongoing initiative, the *International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes* ("*Collaboration*"), led by the authors and intended to develop foundational competences for the undergraduate psychology major that might be relevant in many contexts globally.

Skills and competences

We will summarize two existing models that might drive the development of international psychology foundational competences at the undergraduate level: psychological literacy and global citizenship. But first, we will define scientific literacy as a framework that informs the two models we introduce.

"*Scientific literacy is the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity… Scientific literacy means that… a person has the ability to describe, explain, and predict natural phenomena… Scientific literacy implies that a person can identify scientific issues underlying national and local decisions and express positions that are scientifically… informed. A literate citizen should be able to evaluate the quality of scientific information based on its source and the methods used to generate it. Scientific literacy also implies the capacity to pose and evaluate arguments based on evidence and to apply conclusions from such arguments*" (National Research Council, 1996, p.22).

This definition of scientific literacy emphasizes the application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes derived from science education in everyday life. The creation of psychological knowledge is primarily derived through the scientific method. In the quote above, the word 'scientific' could feasibly be substituted with 'psychological' (Morris et al., 2021). The emphasis on application is clear in Cranney and colleagues' (2022a, p.3) definition of psychological literacy as the "intentional values-driven application of psychology to achieve personal, professional, and community goals." The extension to societal/global contexts is evident in Cranney and colleagues' (2012a) definition of global citizenship as having "the understanding of global interrelatedness, and the capacity to live, work and contribute positively as a member of global communities" (p.ii).

Cranney and colleagues (2022c) have since elaborated on the relationships among psychological literacy, psychologically literate (global) citizens (PLC), and global citizenship. In brief: Global citizenship (GC) can be acquired through multiple disciplinary pathways. For psychology, the student starts with the acquisition of psychological literacy, which does not necessarily include social justice or community welfare values, and then may progress to psychologically literate [global] citizenship, which does include

those values. As Cranney and colleagues argue, the «trajectory from psychological literacy through PLC to GC necessarily involves increased interaction... with at least one 'other-discipline literacy'... and that discipline's parallel potential development into the concepts of 'other-discipline literate citizenship'... and [global citizenship] ... characterized by a deep appreciation of and respect for other disciplines/professions, reflected in very high levels of [cultural responsiveness] and [values & ethics]» (p.11).

A distinction has also been made between 'general' (as quoted above) and 'group' conceptualizations of psychological literacy (Morris et al., 2021). The modern conceptualization of psychological literacy was initiated by McGovern and colleagues (2010) with a 'group' definition, which encompassed nine psychological literacy 'aspects' (expected learning outcomes) common to several Western regions, and which Morris and colleagues (2021, p.3) summarized as "discipline knowledge and its application to personal, professional and societal contexts; developing scientific, critical and creative ways of thinking; and behaving in an ethical and diversity-respectful manner." Cranney and colleagues (2022a; see 2022b for in-depth literature-based arguments) proposed five core undergraduate psychology capabilities briefly referred to as: psychology knowledge (& skills), research methods, and application of knowledge & skills to the personal, professional, and community (local, national, global) domains. They also proposed three 'generic' capabilities of communication, critical & creative thinking, and values & ethics, with due reference to Murdoch's (2016) argument that such 'generic' capabilities are strongly informed by psychology knowledge and skills.

The current international *Collaboration* will consider these approaches, among others, in striving for an international consensus regarding foundational psychology competences at the undergraduate level (it should be noted that such competences could be partly acquired in psychology programs at the pre-tertiary level). Meanwhile, there are existing

teaching and assessment resources (e.g., Hulme & Cranney, in press; Taylor & Hulme, 2015, 2018) and pedagogical frameworks (e.g., Winstone & Hulme, 2017) to guide educators in promoting the acquisition of psychological literacy as a foundational general outcome of undergraduate psychology. Moreover, an essential part of the *Collaboration* involves sharing relevant literature that introduce us all to additional models from around the world.

It should be noted that over 50 years ago, the need to promote psychology education as a conduit to the resolution of societal/global issues was emphasized by Miller's (1969) exhortation to psychological scientists to "give psychology away" (p.1071). This idea was further reinforced by Halpern's (2010) 'call to action' to psychology educators to support the development of psychological literacy for the undergraduate psychology major, to better address the myriad human behavior-based problems in our world. In the past decade, there has been progress in some nations, as exemplified by the UK's adoption of psychological literacy as the primary outcome of undergraduate psychology, and the parallel emphasis on authentic assessment (e.g., QAA, 2019). Relatedly, there are increasing calls for a focus on skills that psychology students and graduates can apply to their professional and personal lives, and to their communities (Appleby et al., 2019; Naufel et al., 2019; Naufel et al., 2018).

The soon-to-be-published 3rd revision of the 2013 American Psychological Association (APA) Goals for Undergraduate Psychology Education, as well as the APA Introductory Psychology Initiative (Gurung & Neufeld, 2022) also emphasize skills over knowledge, including how psychological science applies to building greater cultural awareness and addressing social justice issues. In the context of the negative impact of anti-science attitudes during the ongoing global pandemic, the timing to build on these initiatives and take a more international perspective within undergraduate psychology education is critical. In summary, there have been increasing calls

for psychology educators to support undergraduate psychology students in developing competence in applying psychology to achieve valued and diverse personal, professional and community goals (psychological literacy), and an increasing emphasis on university students being willing and able to make contributions to social justice and wellbeing for all (global citizenship). These considerations provided the impetus for the *Collaboration* that we now describe.

The International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Education

As we noted previously, in 2016, a global collaboration resulted in the successful outcome of international consensus regarding professional psychology competences (International Project on Psychology Competences, 2016). Given the previously discussed large numbers of psychology graduates at the bachelor level in some nations (e.g., Trapp et al., 2011), and the untapped potential of such graduates to utilize their psychological and scientific literacy to enhance the condition of humanity and of our habitat, in late 2022, we (the co-authors) launched the *Collaboration*, forming the 18-person International Committee on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes (ICUPO), and a larger reference/advisory group, the International Reference Group on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes (IRGUPO). This project emerged from the call issued in our recent paper (Cranney et al., 2022a) to renew the nature and particularly the intended foundational psychology-specific outcomes/capabilities of undergraduate psychology, starting with an international review.

In launching these groups, we were guided by the core principles of inclusivity and diversity regarding stakeholders and stakeholder groups. It was for this reason that we developed the central committee, ICUPO, that meets approximately every 6 weeks, as well as the advisory/reference group, IRGUPO. We hoped that, in particular, the IRGUPO would allow more, and more diverse, input as the project developed, and would also serve as a 'bridge' in later

consultation with international and national stakeholder organizations. We sought geographical and other forms of diversity in terms of invitations to both of these groups. The ICUPO members represent 14 countries: Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Romania, the United Kingdom, and the United States; and the IRGUPO members represent approximately 30 countries.

As these groups begin their collaborations, we are eager to engage in a larger dialog on how psychological literacy, global citizenship, and related concepts could drive learning outcomes internationally. Psychology education, particularly with an emphasis on psychological literacy and the empowerment of students to collaboratively apply psychological science to solve societal issues (psychologically literate global citizens), should be seen as the new 'liberal arts and sciences' program (McGovern et al., 2010) that future-proofs not only psychology graduate jobs, but our local, national, and global societies. Indeed, the pandemic has highlighted both the importance of connectedness and the existence of social inequities.

Next, we summarize the project work thus far. The aims of the overarching project are encapsulated in our collaboratively agreed-on Terms of Reference. These include:

"to: (a) produce a draft consensus document (ID-COUP) which outlines the draft outcomes of UG psychology education; and then (b) seek endorsement by international psychology organisations of the final consensus document (IDCOUP)" (IDCOUP = International Declaration of Core Outcomes of Undergraduate Psychology)

to "provide a guiding framework for national psychology organisations responsible for the quality and outcomes of UG psychology education"

to "consider outcomes/capabilities that will enable ALL graduates of an [undergraduate] psychology

program to apply the knowledge, skills and professional values gained in their [undergraduate] program to achieve valued personal, professional, and community-related goals".

Although face-to-face meetings are preferred, for this project, there will likely be few opportunities (which we are exploring, such as hybrid meetings in conjunction with international/national meetings); thus, we have begun with the assumption that all meetings will be virtual. As such, we have put in place processes to maximize participation despite time-zone challenges. Specifically, we are recording meetings and providing automated transcripts; flipping ICUPO meeting times; sharing responses to pre-meeting tasks; and providing rapid reporting on meetings/actions. It is likely that at least one IRGUPO virtual meeting will be organized for 2023.

Prior to the first ICUPO meeting, we asked members to undertake several tasks/activities to (a) help orient them to the project; (b) help us all gain a sense of what undergraduate psychology is like in various nations/institutions, and (c) gain input to project processes and desired outcomes. A similar process is now underway with IRGUPO.

Two-hour ICUPO meetings were held on October 24, November 22, and December 14. These meetings started with 'preliminaries' including introductions and reminders of the project aims and meeting/team processes, and ended with an opportunity for members to raise any issues. At the first meeting, it was decided that there would be 3 working groups (WG): Terminology (T-WG), Process (P-WG), and Outcomes (O-WG), that would meet as necessary between each of the ICUPO meetings. All WGs are open to all ICUPO members (numbers of WG meeting attendees have ranged from 4 to 8), and are led by ICUPO members other than the ICUPO co-leaders when feasible.

The two meetings of the Process WG (led by Remo Job, Università degli Studi di Trento, Italy) were highly productive, with focus ranging from the timeline to the details of the ICUPO meeting agenda to the overall approach to stakeholder engagement.

During the first (October) ICUPO meeting, Judith Gullifer (Monash University, Australia) raised the importance of first gaining consensus for what we would call each 'learning outcome', and what we meant by it (i.e., its definition). Thus, the T-WG was born (chaired by Judith Gullifer). T-WG members reviewed key documents on UG psychology outcomes, identified the key 'outcome' term and its definition, and then rated those terms/definitions. This formed the basis for robust discussion at the first T-WG meeting, resulting in the choice of the term "competence" (with the plural being "competences," and the initial understanding being that magnitude variations on this term would be something like "competence category" and "competence aspect"). The recommendation from this meeting was considered at the second (November) ICUPO meeting, where the method and rationale were presented. The term was accepted, and the working definition was tweaked:

Competence = "a specific behaviour or set of behaviours performed to a standard, within professional, personal and community contexts. These behaviours are underpinned by practical and theoretical knowledge, cognitive skills, attitudes and values."

In terms of our work on outcomes, we have initially focused on aims and frameworks. At the ICUPO 2 & 3 meetings, and the November O-WG meeting, an initial categorization of aims of UG psychology education was proposed and discussed. At the ICUPO 3 meeting, there was particularly robust discussion regarding this proposal, and this discussion will continue in 2023, as we attempt to identify commonalities and differences within and across national UG psychology programs.

Secondly, during the first T-WG, second O-WG, and ICUPO 3 meetings, Susanne Narciss (Technische Universität Dresden, Germany) presented on different terminology and competence frameworks adopted by different international (e.g., OECD), regional (e.g., European Higher Education), and various disciplinary bodies. The aims and outcomes frameworks will be further researched and robustly discussed at

working group and ICUPO meetings in the first half of 2023. Importantly, ICUPO outputs will lead to additional and ongoing interactions and consultations with IRGUPO and with national and international psychology organizations throughout 2023.

Conclusion

The *International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes* is in its early stages. As such, we are eager to communicate the aims of the project with the hope of eliciting interest from psychology educators and leaders, with eventual input, and hopefully support, from stakeholders including individuals and relevant organizations. If readers are interested in occasional updates on the project, please contact Susan Nolan (susan.nolan@shu.edu).

We hope that our eventual draft consensus document (IDCOUP) will lead to: enhanced communication (and even mobility) across psychology programs globally; broader adoption of competences that embrace the societally and globally conscious paradigms that are psychological literacy and global citizenship; and a degree of consistency across countries with respect to the quality and outcomes of undergraduate psychology education. Ultimately, it is our students and societies that will benefit from graduates who are able to apply their knowledge and skills to their personal, professional, and community-related goals.

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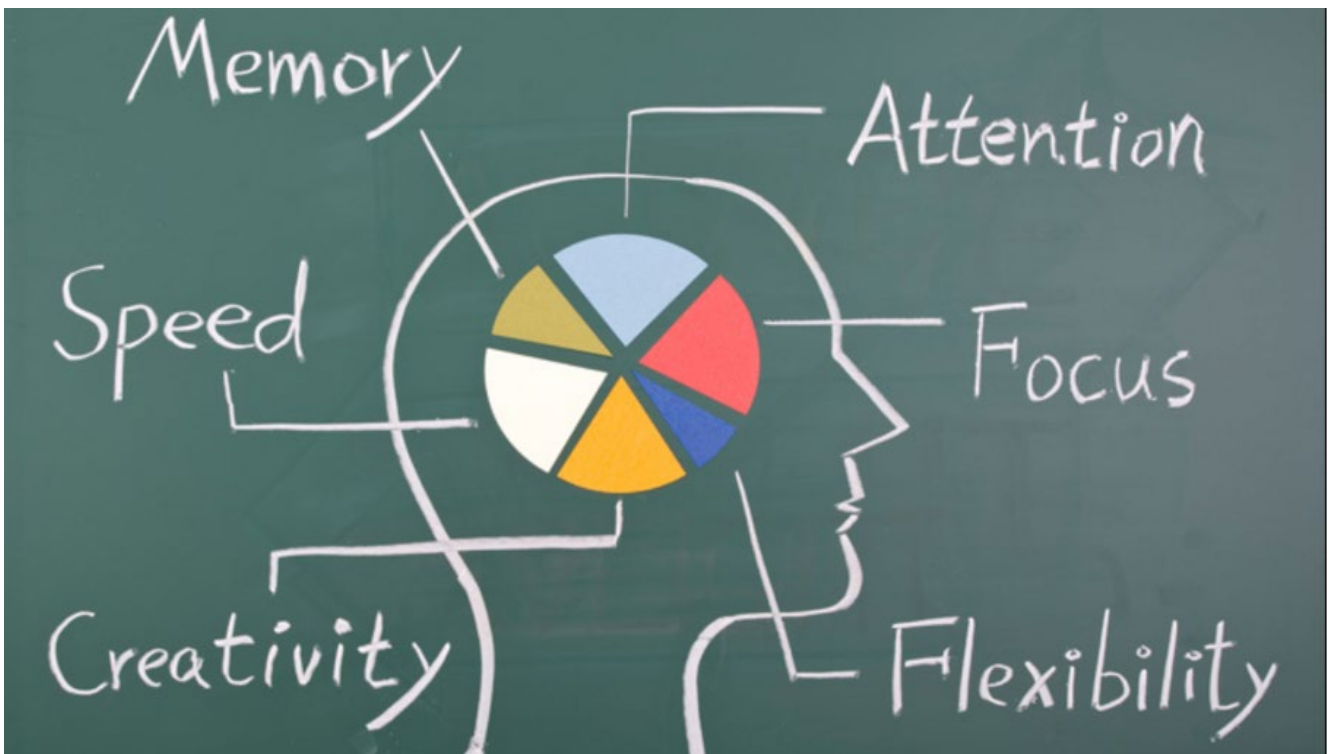
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Higher education and multilateralism: Academia response to global challenges

Ge Zhang[1]

What's happening in the world of Transformative Education?

Seventy-seven years to the date after the United Nations was founded as the cornerstone of multilateralism, its principles and values remain valid. While crises, conflicts, and challenges have emerged in the current global context, the UN still serves as the center to harmonize actions and as a beacon of hope for billions of people. Faculty members at higher education institutions have studied this organization extensively through teaching, research, and writing analyses for decades. Professors and lecturers as well as scientists have significantly contributed to the work of the UN. Interest in the UN and expectations for the organization to fulfill its charter for peace, human rights, and development had grown significantly, especially in the post-COVID era when the world was crippled economically and psychologically. In addition, young people, particularly college and graduate students, have been more active in advocating for the UN's various campaigns, causes, and initiatives. UN bodies continue to sponsor and host panels about the topic of higher education and multilateralism, which is the UN's aim of countries and stakeholders working together.

This report covers a panel discussion related to this aim, which addressed two major goals of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, namely, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education and SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals, bringing together leaders from government, academia, civil society, and business to accelerate the implementation of Transformative Education around the world.

A particular emphasis was put on Target 4.7, which states: By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship,

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1 Reported by Ge Zhang, member of the Student Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology pursuing a masters' degree in the Department of Applied Statistics and Developmental Psychology, Columbia University Teachers College, and a student in Professor Judy Kuriansky's class on "Psychology and the United Nations." In addition to her scholastic work, she has 4 years of research experience and 4 years' experience working internationally to support early and higher education. She is interested in applied psychology, creativity, infant-study, and methodologies.

Higher education and multilateralism cont.

and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

The event, entitled "Higher Education and Multilateralism: Academia Responding to Global Challenges," held on Monday, October 24, 2022, from 3:00 pm–5:15 pm (EDT/New York time), aimed to highlight what universities and colleges worldwide are doing concerning global challenges, what multilateralism means for institutions of higher education, and what these institutions mean to the United Nations. The event was meant to answer questions such as: "How to improve the relationship between academia and the United Nations?" and "What role is there for faculty and students?"

Jayashri Wyatt, UN Department of Global Communications

The moderator, Jayashri Wyatt, Chief of the Education Outreach Section of the Outreach Division of the UN Department of Global Communications, said that the global community faces an onslaught of challenges and crises. Hunger and inequality are increasing, and myths and disinformation feed hatred and division. Women, young people, and the most vulnerable are always hit the hardest. Conflicts are raging. The climate crisis is triggering floods and fires, ravaging our planet and homes, and forcing millions of people to flee. Higher education plays a critical role in responding to these challenges through open dialogue, research, education, and community engagement, which drives research-based solutions to address

Melissa Fleming, UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications

Welcome remarks were presented by Melissa Fleming, UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications. "We hope UN Academic Impact serves as a catalyzer to bring together professors, researchers, and young students for events like these at this panel," she said, "so I am pleased to open today's discussion".

She explained that the United Nations Academic Impact (AI) is a framework that aims to align higher educational institutions and research with the organization.

Higher education institutions have always been valuable partners of the UN, she said, a connection which has only grown since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015.

"We have the opportunity to hear from our member institutions about their thoughts on the UN," she explained. "We are open to criticism about the role we play on the global stage. We will also hear about the relationship between academia and the UN and its challenges and solutions."

She called on everyone, inside and outside the UN, to be part of the solution.

Higher education and multilateralism cont.

The UN would soon celebrate the 2022 anniversary of the UN AI. And since the UN has 1600 member institutions and more than 115 countries, she hoped everyone would celebrate the 2022 anniversary of the UN AI. She looks forward to enhancing the collaboration in the coming years so that all can share knowledge and solutions "across this incredible network and work together to create a better world".

Panel 1

The first panel was on the topic of "Teaching, researching and writing about multilateralism and the United Nations: Reflections, lessons learned and knowledge-sharing".

Speaker Daniel Naujoks

The first speaker was Daniel Naujoks, Ph.D., Director for the International Organization and UN Studies specialization at the School for International and Public Affairs at Columbia University (SIPA) in New York, and an advisor to several UN agencies.

Dr. Naujoks introduced his "WTF" framework for the UN AI, which at the meta-level, identifies three things that higher education, academia, and universities can and should contribute to the UN: The "W" is for "writing and research, "T" is for "Think Tank," and the "F" is for "forging talent."

With regard to the "W" for writing and research, he explained that academia and higher education must

forge talent for the UN. Academics try to provide education for, with, and about the UN. Since UN staff members are often short on time and do not have the luxury of getting involved in long-term data analysis, this is where academia plays a role.

With regard to the "T" for "think tank", he explained, "We amplify the UN's ideas and messages through outreach events, social media, and other forms. He clarified that, "We do not blindly amplify whatever the UN is doing, as we also have a watchdog role; for instance, we try to see how decolonizing aid and racism within the UN influences its effectiveness."

With regard to the "F", Dr. Naujoks said that he found it a privilege for himself to teach at an institution where all the students have amazing enthusiasm for multilateral cooperation and where he can bring outside speakers to classes. To "forge talent", besides teaching students, he also tries to leverage students' expertise and ideas to contribute to the UN. For example, two years ago, for the UN's 75th anniversary, Dr. Naujoks and 120 students discussed different topics for a week and submitted a student report as an official contribution to the UN's 75th anniversary.

Speaker Savita Pawnday

The next speaker, Ms. Savita Pawnday, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the City University of New York, made 3 essential points:

Higher education and multilateralism cont.

1. Academia examines and re-examines many discussions and truths. The rigor that academia brings to policymaking is so important to how we change lives on the ground.

2. No one does a better job of talking about the UN's values than academics. No other outreach program has as much impact as academics coming together and discussing the UN, not only by amplifying the good things that the UN does, but also by amplifying and questioning many things that the UN has *not done* very well and by discussing how we talk about development in the multilateral system and engage with communities on the ground.

3. Policymakers need more time, but academics can take the time to support and examine previous issues and make a difference.

Speaker Peter J. Hoffman, Ph.D.

The next speaker was Peter J. Hoffman, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director of the Graduate Programs in International Affairs and Director of UN Summer Study, at The New School in New York. He is also the author of the book, "Humanitarianism, War and Politics: Solferino to Syria and Beyond". He focused on how to engage young people with the UN.

Considering the questions, he has heard from his students, he posed the questions, "What is the point of preparing for a future that does not exist?" "What solutions does the generation that created all these problems have to offer us when they have not pursued any solutions?"

He argued that if we want to change the structure of the UN, we need to change the context, and the participants need to change their perspectives. Therefore, he said, the UN needs to get youth invested in participating in support of the causes, initiatives and principles of the UN.

His recommendations about what we need to do are to:

- talk about the UN and discuss how it was built and what impact it has had.

- change the narrative around the UN.

- have more voices at the table.

Decolonizing the UN and, more broadly, international affairs, he said, involves creating knowledge platforms to engage youth in expressing their agency. Thus:

His recommendations to students is: "This is not just about us providing the chance to come to the UN meeting. You also have to step up."

His recommendation to faculty and scholars is: "We need to get more involved in what we often refer to as 'normal entrepreneurship' in the academics. We must take some of these ideas and carry the weight for many of our UN colleagues."

Speaker Ş. İlgü Özler

The next speaker was Dr. Ş. İlgü Özler, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the

Higher education and multilateralism cont.

State University of New York at New Paltz, and founder and director of its Global Engagement Program. She is also the founder of the Mid-Hudson Valley local chapter of the UN Association-USA.

Dr. Özler's shared with the audience three ways that the State University of New York at New Paltz (SUNY New Paltz) inspires its students to achieve the UN goals of global peace and sustainability and to adopt a dignified, just world and human rights. The University:

1. brings students to the UN through direct engagement.

2. brings the UN's ideas to its campus through its curriculum and everyday practices.

3. engages directly with rural Hudson Valley communities through different programs.

Since 1978, SUNY-New Paltz has been teaching a one-semester course in its Political Science and International Relations Department, which brings students to the UN. To date, more than 1,000 students have gone to the UN, to hear from officials who work with the UN Global Communications Speakers Bureau.

To enable students to become practitioners, Dr. Özler founded the SUNY Global Engagement Program ten years ago. The program brings students to New York City to intern with the UN. Also, many of her academic colleagues at SUNY New Paltz, from the theater arts class to the business school, are incorporating the UN SDGs into their curriculum. Last year, the Sustainability Committee for the university reviewed 30 courses that incorporated the UN SDGs as a guide.

SUNY-New Paltz also engages with the community and hosts the SUNY New Paltz Center for International Programs, which was key in spearheading the founding of the UN Association. These activities intersect the community and the university. The small yet active local chapter of the UN Association provides educational programs that reach rural high school

students and community members who would ordinarily not hear about the UN. The students and the members of the local chapter actively engage with Congresspeople to support the UN's work.

Speaker Dr. Courtney Smith, Ph.D.

The next speaker was Dr. Courtney Smith, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Diplomacy and International Relations and affiliate with the Center for UN and Global Governance Studies at Seton Hall University in New Jersey in the United States, who is also Assistant Treasurer of the Academic Council on the UN System. His book is "Politics and Process at the United Nations: The Global Dance".

Dr. Smith commented in response to three different questions asked of the panelists:

(1) What are universities worldwide doing regarding global challenges? In his answer, Dr. Smith explained that universities has a key role to create an environment in which students are inspired to think about how they can play a role in addressing global change. In other words, the role of universities is to create an incubation space that inspires students to think about their own roles in building social justice. Professional educators must help students build the knowledge they need to make a difference. This includes designing the right curriculum and having the proper faculty members deliver it. The ability to connect this knowledge to skills is also essential. Thus, professional internship programs are needed.

Higher education and multilateralism cont.

(2) What does multilateralism mean for institutions of higher education? In Dr. Smith's view, multilateralism provides both challenges and opportunities for institutions of higher education. The two challenges are: 1) higher education institution is a complex environment, and 2) it mandates that educators try to comply with the full scope of the SDG Agenda, including the 17 goals and 169 targets. Students have to experience multilateralism through different programs, such as the UN Intensive Summer Study program.

(3) What do these institutions mean to the UN? Institutions of higher education help and support the UN in several ways, he explained. They play a role in spreading the good word about the UN by sending students to UN meetings, having them do podcasts, reports, and publications, and giving a platform to UN officials. In addition, institutions provide student interns and alumni opportunities to work in UN offices. Further, faculty members serve as experts for various UN missions and offices and conduct scholarly research. Another way that institutions support the UN's work is by formally collaborating through the UN's institutional structures. In other words, institutions of higher education actually contribute to the UN's work.

In his role as the treasurer of the Academic Council on the UN system, he recommended a concrete opportunity to improve access to equity in education. The Academic Council on the UN System is a professional association of scholars, practitioners, institutions, and individuals active in the work and study of the UN, which holds an annual meeting, to take place in Washington, D.C., in June, 2023. The organization has given 42 awards, totaling $25,000, to sponsor the attendance of scholars from the Global South. This is an example of an organization that engages in fundraising.

In diversifying their curriculum, they integrated existing courses and created new courses over the past few years, he explained. A helpful resource is the University Leadership Council for Diversity, Inclusion, and International Affairs, which has a syllabus repository located at Georgetown University.

Panel 2

The second panel, made up of students from various universities, addressed the topic of "Student activism and engagement on the United Nations goals and principles: Actions and voices from campus."

Speaker, student Ms. Sybil Wang

The first speaker was Ms. Sybil Wang, a student at New York University in New York City. She highlighted the relationship between higher education and global challenges, and also the role of women and female students. She also explained how far we are from the ideal world in which all women have equal access to higher education.

Speaker, student Ms. Lulu Okeke

The second speaker, Ms. Lulu Okeke, a student at Pace University also in New York City, discussed the Millennium Fellowship Project, which she was in,

Higher education and multilateralism cont.

which focuses on SDG 3 to foster good health and well-being, and SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls worldwide. She explained that this project created an avenue for her to promote her love for women and to help women improve their situation.

Speaker, student Ms. Maryam Albakarti

The next speaker, Ms. Maryam Albakarti, a student at New York Medical College in New York, is originally from Saudi Arabia and came to the United States three years ago to pursue a master's degree in public health. Trained as a dental hygienist, her goal is to bring awareness to people in her country that preventive care is a better solution than treatment. Thus, she would like to see she higher education address preventive care in medical fields around the world, particularly in the developing world. She also highlighted the importance of studying abroad and the desire of many international students like herself to take their acquired knowledge and skills and return to their home countries to improve the situation for the people.

Speaker, student Ms. Rolake Tomoye

Next, Ms. Rolake Tomoye, a student at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania in the United States, said that she believes that the voice of youth should be controversial, in that they should challenge conventional wisdom by introducing fresh thoughts and ideas. As a UN youth representative for the Center for Women's Studies and intervention at the United Nations. she said that she and her peers have never shied away from asking hard questions and neither should all young people.

Speaker, student Ms. Alyssa Taylor

Next, Ms. Alyssa Taylor, a student at Hood College, a private school in Maryland in the United States, said that to incorporate students' voices, there has to be a common platform for students to share their opinions on topics and discussions at UN conferences. Social media is one platform; however, the UN can also use podcasts, YouTube videos, discussion boards,

and other means to ensure that opposition positions and beliefs are seen and heard. Through the UN Academic Impact, UN representatives can encourage, sponsor, and aid student projects related to the UN Charter and the SDGs. She also emphasized that students should be regularly invited to conferences hosted by the UN, such as the World Health Summit.

In highlighting the role of youth, she said she believes that the new structure and new offices, which were created through the resolution, will help ensure that more students participate in the UN and its proceedings.

Selected Questions

In the next section of the program, questions were asked by student attendees.

Question 1: What can students and teachers can offer to their universities and the UN as concrete next steps for decolonizing curricula, systems, and structures?

Answer: Dr. Özler replied by giving an example about how her field of political science generally does not see or hear "color". Last year, when her chair asked them to assess the syllabi as a department, she did an assessment and looked at who she was assigned. She asked, "What are they about? Are we covering race, class, and gender issues in a representative manner?" She recommended that every department go through this exercise to reflect on what is being taught. "Of course, there is academic freedom," she said, but "I recommend that people reflect on what they teach."

Question 2: What is the UN doing to decolonize the institution itself?

Answer: Dr. Naujoks answered that decolonizing is about people and power, and the origin of important ideas because the UN country teams only work on the Global South. Our global system has many imbalances, he added, but there are political ideas behind this. Decolonizing is not just a technical glitch, and

as academics, he said, we are watchdogs who are empowered globally. "We now have a new section on global international relations which advocates for understanding that international relations is not just a Western concept," he elaborated. "Still, there are many initial international ideas about Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and other parts of the world."

Question 3: What access do the voiceless, especially in rural areas, have to education and to engagement at the UN?

Answer: Dr. Naujoks explained that it is not just about providing the important amenities, but it is also about creating leaders who acknowledge the world over there, choosing those leaders to speak at events, giving the spotlight to those who come from those rural areas, and learning from them.

Issues in the Chat

The chat questions, which were not answered, included:

* People who come from developing countries do not see many opportunities to collaborate with the UN, and they do not have access to talk with the UN or collaborate with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the Global North. How do you see these collaborations in the near future?

* How can we include more students, NGOs, and developing countries in working toward the same causes?

* How can you help youth in developing countries promote advocacy? Other institutional organizations can fulfill this promise by promoting the SDGs and the work that everyone is doing and by engaging in enriching dialogues.

Some comments in the chat reflected the point that everyone needs to do their part and commit to the blueprint of the future.

Higher education and multilateralism cont.

Key Takeaways

Key take-aways from this event are:

- Academics participate valuably in many ways, including in role-playing UN interactions, such as in the Model UN and also in UN country team simulations, climate negotiations, UN General Assembly (GA) negotiations, briefing notes, and other activities that are important for the UN.
- The UN must get youth invested in participating in principles of the UN.
- The UN should encourage more intersection between local communities and universities.
- Multilateralism provides challenges as well as opportunities for institutions of higher education.

Personal Reflections

I became interested in the UN due to its role in the international community and the involvement of the US and my home country of China. This event piqued my interest and motivated me to report on it. I learned more about how the organization sees its future and prioritizes its work. I found it encouraging to see that the students and young professionals communicate with UN Studies Specialists and I learned how the UN considers multilateralism an essential element for better education and a better future.

It occurred to me that despite the wide variety of international institutions in this field, there currently needs to be a forum that brings together government officials and high-level individuals to discuss global issues. This would make multilateralism a real possibility.

History has shown that collaboration is the best way to address international issues. In recent years, various prominent individuals have called for establishing a new multilateral framework and how we still need to pay more attention to the importance of ongoing multilateral dialogue. The global health crisis has highlighted the need for practical solutions; this is why it is essential that the government and private sectors work together to develop a new global assembly for science and higher education.

While so many points were important, as a student in the psychology department at Columbia University Teachers College, and taking a major course on "Psychology and the United Nations" which focuses on global mental health and its nexus with the SDGs, and is taught by noted international psychologist and mental health advocate Dr. Judy Kuriansky who represents several NGOs accredited at the UN, I was disappointed not to hear any of the speakers mention mental health as an area that should be addressed more in the future in higher education and its intersection with the UN. UN-related courses are domain-specific, especially systematically approaching specific SDG indicators from social, economic, and environmental perspectives; however, a focus on mental health and well-being is integral to all these. As a graduate student in applied statistics, I look forward to seeing how the assessment of the SDGs advances, especially in the post-pandemic ear when such achievement of the Agenda has been challenged.

Yet, it was very inspiring to hear the personal stories of individuals who have experience working within the UN system and how they feel their work has a meaningful impact.

After having the opportunity to listen to both professionals and students discussing their personal experiences with higher education and the challenges internationalization of higher education in individual countries and systems has faced and will face, I am looking forward to the measurement and evaluation of the strategies they have developed to deal with these challenges in a post-pandemic world.

I appreciated this panel and hearing about all the UN-related programs and courses offered by their various institutions and how they are providing young professionals with a global perspective on international issues, business, culture, design, and education.

EVENT OVERVIEW:

TITLE: Higher education and multilateralism: Academia response to global challenges

Date/Time: Monday, October 24, 2022; Time: 3:00 pm–5:15 pm (EDT/New York time)

Location: Conference Room 6 United Nations Headquarters, New York, via broadcast

OPENING REMARKS and INTRODUCTIONS

Jayashri Wyatt, *Chief of the Education Outreach Section at the Outreach Division of the United Nations Department of Global Communications*

Introduction and Welcome remarks:

Melissa Fleming, *United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications*

Panel #1

Teaching, researching, and writing about multilateralism and the United Nations: Reflections, lessons learned and knowledge-sharing

Introduction of the following speakers by Robert Skinner, *Deputy Director and Chief of Partnerships and Global Engagement at the Outreach Division of the United Nations Department for Global Communications*

Presenters:

Daniel Naujoks, Ph.D., *Lecturer of International and Public Affairs and Director of International Organization and UN Studies Specialization, Columbia University (United States). Advisor to several United Nations agencies.*

Savita Pawnday, *Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, City University of New York (United States).*

Peter J. Hoffman, Ph.D., *Associate Professor, Director of the Graduate Programs in International Affairs and Director of United Nations Summer Study, The New School (United States). Author of the book Humanitarianism, War and Politics: Solferino to Syria and Beyond.* Ş. İlgü Özler, Ph.D., *Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the State University of New York - New Paltz (United States) and Founder and Director of its Global Engagement Program. Founder of the Mid-Hudson Valley local chapter of the United Nations Association – USA.*

Higher education and multilateralism cont.

Courtney Smith, Ph.D., *Dean of the School of Diplomacy and International Relations and affiliate with the Center for UN and Global Governance Studies, Seton Hall University (United States). Assistant Treasurer of the Academic Council on the United Nations System. Author of the book Politics and Process at the United Nations: The Global Dance.*

Question and Answer Session

Moderated by Robert Skinner

Deputy Director and Chief of Partnerships and Global Engagement at the Outreach Division of the United Nations Department for Global Communications

Panel #2

Student activism and engagement on the United Nations goals and principles: Actions and voices from campus

Moderator and Introduction of Keynote Speaker:

Ms. Jayashri Wyatt, *Chief of the Education Outreach Section at the Outreach Division of the United Nations Department of Global Communications*

Presenters:

Sybil Wang, Student at New York University (United States)

Lulu Okeke, Student at Pace University (United States)

Maryam Albakarti, Student at the New York Medical College (United States)

Rolake Tomoye, Student at Lehigh University (United States)

Alyssa Taylor, Student at Hood College (United States).

Promoting and Protecting Learners' Mental Health in Schools and Learning Environments: An Event at the UNICEF House

Xin Chen[1]

One in seven adolescents experiences mental health-related issues around the world, according to the adolescent mental health report by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2021). This statistic represents a global crisis.

A solution lies in the achievement of Goal 3 about "Good Health and Well-being" as well as Goal 4 about "Quality Education" in the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. This point was clear at a side event during the United Nations General Assembly sponsored by three UN agencies, namely, UNICEF, WHO, and UNESCO, as well as by the Queen of Spain and the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand. The event addressed the topic of "Promoting and protecting learners' mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments", as part of the "Transforming Education Summit" (TES), held in person on 20 September 2022 at UNICEF House in New York City.

UNICEF Flyer for Promoting and protecting learners' mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments

Opening Address

In her opening address, Ms. Catherine Russell, the Executive Director of UNICEF, identified the urgency of the mental health crisis for children in and out of schools. Ms. Russell noted that schools and other educational settings are the essential places where children and youth receive not only education but socialization, which have been seriously interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation has increased children's vulnerability and the prevalence of mental health conditions of children, which was already on the rise before COVID-19. Also, current conflicts and crises worldwide have compromised children's mental health and well-being. In many countries, not

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1 Reported by Xin Chen, a student pursuing a master's degree in Developmental Psychology at Columbia University Teachers College, and a student in Professor Judy Kuriansky's class on "Psychology and the United Nations." In addition to my scholastic work, She has 6 years of experience working to support the social-emotional learning of children and families in the U.S. and in China. She is interested in implementing SEL curriculums in schools in China and promoting the psychosocial well-being of children and families through community involvement.

2 Source: http://www.happycampcc.org/news/what-every-child-needs-for-good-mental-health8295195

enough attention or funding is in place to address this issue. However, change is beginning, and more engagement is evident in media, social media, and day-to-day conversation.

Ms. Russell then pointed out that educational transformation must have top priority to support the well-being of children, citing the drastic situation of children and schools, particularly in countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan.

"All children benefit from a learning environment that nourishes and supports their minds, health, and well-being," she said, while re-stating five essential pillars (noted below) for promoting and protecting mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments.

Ms. Russell ended her speech by quoting UNICEF's mission of "supporting children so they can reach their full potential", and calling for action from UN Member States and partners across sectors to support the psychosocial well-being of children and youth.

Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell (source:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob-vt40p6bo)

The Five Essential Pillars

A briefing was then given by UNESCO, UNICEF, and WHO on the five essential pillars for promoting and protecting mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments, that aim to define mental health and address the importance of the first two decades of life in developing life-impactful psychosocial competencies.

These pillars are meant to be important for policymakers and national governments, as well as mental health and education coalitions and advocates, by noting key policy recommendations regarding students, teachers, and caregivers (WHO, UNESCO, and UNICEF, 2022). The 5 Pillars are:

Pillar 1: create an enabling learning environment for positive mental health and well-being.

Pillar 2: guarantee access to early intervention and mental health services and support.

Pillar 3: promote teacher well-being.

Pillar 4: enhance Mental Health and Psychosocial Support System (MHPSS) capacity in the education workforce.

Pillar 5: ensure meaningful collaboration between the school, family, and community to build a safe and nurturing learning environment.

The Five Pillars acknowledge the current burden on teachers, the lack of support and access, and the critical role of school-level interventions.

The briefing also offered successful examples of school-based mental health interventions and policies, such as the Adolescent Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (AMHSP) program in Kazakhstan where the school-based program responded to students' psychosocial needs through collaborative efforts of the education system and the health system, the service provided by the Department of Student Counselling (DECE) in Ecuador where children's well-being were supported by professionals from

multidisciplinary teams, and the training manual and training for teachers about MHPSS co-developed by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF in Mozambique where the need for teachers' capacity development is addressed.

It is hoped that the Five Pillars can direct such implementation in more countries in the future.

Speech by the Queen of Spain

As a UNICEF Advocate for Child and Adolescents Mental Health, H.E. Letizia Ortiz Rocasolano, the Queen of Spain, shared her experience and insights about children's mental health. She said that unfortunately, teenagers tend to turn to peers instead of to parents or professionals when they encounter mental-health-related issues because they feel safer. Sadly, schools have failed to be the kind of safe environments that are well-equipped to support teenagers' needs.

"Every 24 hours, 126 children and adolescents around the world take their own lives," the Queen said. "We ought to stop for a minute and try to imagine the suffering and emotional distress each of these children has felt up to the very moment they decided to give up their lives." It is the duty of the adults to act now, she emphasized.

She further pointed out the stigma has led to worsening the psychosocial well-being of children and youth in many parts of the world. On a positive note, she recognized recent national efforts in Spain, namely, the National Health System's Mental Health Strategy and new Mental Health Care Plan, to address the issue and aid young people in Spain in the next four years.

Queen of Spain H.E. Letizia Ortiz Rocasolano (Source: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob-vt40p6bo)*

Speech by the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand

In his presentation, H.E. Don Pramudwinai, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, emphasized that the pandemic has worsened the mental health situation of children and youth and that the online world has exacerbated their feelings of isolation, all of which has been escalated by economic uncertainty. To promote education that supports children to be productive members of society and prepares them for a healthy and fulfilling life, he said that collective efforts need to be in place to destigmatize mental health issues and to promote creative and conducive learning environments by equipping children with social-emotional skills and resilience to face the challenges.

In addition, he pointed out schools' critical role in detecting signs of early behavioral changes and mental distress, which have been the goal of Thailand's School Health HERO initiative, a platform for teachers to assess students' mental health risks and to reach mental health professionals.

Facing COVID-19 and beyond, he notes that his country, Thailand, is committed to transforming education to be a "booster dose of inspiration" for all children, and called for further action from countries to invest in education to ensure joy and positivity in children's growth.

Promoting and Protecting Learners' Mental Health cont.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand H.E. Don Pramudwinai (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob-vt40p6bo)

Stories of Youth Advocates

Three youth advocates, from Jamaica, Ireland and Vietnam, shared their personal stories on children and adolescent mental health issues regarding gender, sexuality, and self-identity. They pointed out that the dire situation of children and youth facing psychosocial challenges needs support from schools and policymakers. Stigma and poor access have been worsening the problem, while COVID-19 aggravates children's uncertainty and challenges.

Ree-Anna from Jamaica proposed normalizing conversations about mental health to reduce stigma, while Rory from Ireland identified cultural taboos about mental health problems to be the biggest barrier to tackling the mental health issue in children and youth. Together, they called for resources and support for teachers and educational stakeholders to be competent contributors, including effective training, financial means, and legislative efforts.

The third youth advocate, Giang from Vietnam, shared her personal experience dealing with mental health problems growing up, in a video showing herself in her classroom. In a letter she wrote to her younger self, she wrote "Be courageous and don't give up on hope." She also sends this letter to all children and youth around the world, hoping to inspire others similarly suffering.

Speech by WHO official

Dr. Dévora Kestel, Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva, stressed the importance of the developmentally sensitive period in promoting mental health and psychosocial well-being of children and youth. She echoed the Five Pillars with an emphasis on 1) building individual capital, which aimed to improve children's competencies to regulate emotions and behaviors and to cope in difficult situations through implementing school-level social-emotional learning programs, and 2) policies and capacity building, which aimed to improve school culture and safety and to enhance social resources for students and staff.

Kestel highlighted the Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT) toolkit created by the collaboration of WHO and UNICEF in 2020.
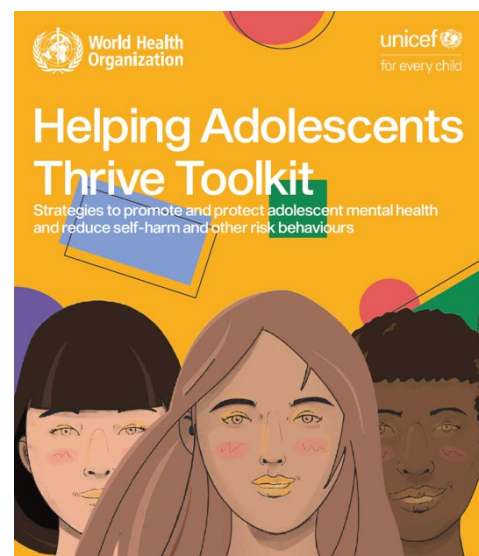
WHO UNICEF HAT Toolkit (Source: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240025554)

The HAT toolkit introduces four evidence-based strategies to promote and protect adolescent mental health and reduce self-harm and other risk behaviors, including:

implementation and enforcement of policies and laws

environments to promote and protect adolescent mental health,

caregiver support, and

adolescent psychosocial interventions.

In each strategy, the toolkit introduces the rationale, approaches, examples, implementation considerations, and resources (WHO & UNICEF, 2022).

Dr. Kestel ended her speech by calling for more collective capitalization and more country-level investment and impacts on the issue.

Panel Discussion

Robert Jenkins, Global Director of Education and Adolescent Development at UNICEF, moderated the panel discussion on how to act on the issue.

Reflecting on recent efforts and lessons learned in tackling the issue in their countries, Heidy Rombouts, Directorate General for Development Cooperation of Belgium, mentioned the lack of preparation in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet the quick reaction through online tools.

Dr. Berhanu Nega, Minister of Education of Ethiopia, shared about Ethiopia's inter-ministry committee and interventions, such as training the trainers so that the effects of the interventions can scale up, which accelerated the process of basic psychological support reaching the majority of schools nationally. He added that there are challenges in balancing the benefits and potential damages brought by technology in implementing mental-health-related interventions.

When asked about the biggest takeaways, Ms. Rombouts stressed the importance of preventing low affordability from reinforcing inequalities in the accessibility of mental health resources, as well as the importance of amplifying voices in support of the mental health of children and youth expressed in the panel out to the world.

Dr. Nega pointed out that it is critical to pay attention to the quality of education while improving accessibility, and further emphasizing the importance of inter-ministry and intentional efforts on the country level.

All panelists acknowledged the deleterious impacts of COVID-19 on children's psychosocial well-being and called for global action.

(Left to right): Heidy Rombouts, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Belgium; Robert Jenkins, UNICEF Global Director of Education and Adolescent Development; H.E. María de Lourdes Alcívar, First lady of Ecuador; Dr. Berhanu Nega, Minister of Education of Ethiopia. (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob-vt40p6bo)

Speech by UNESCO Official

Ms. Astrid Gillet, Director of the Executive Office of the Education Sector at UNESCO, pointed out the strong connection between learning, health, and well-being. She noted that COVID-19 had increased the risk factors for mental health issues among children and youth, growing the gap in accessibility wider, while global issues such as climate change, anxiety, humanitarian crisis, and cyberbullying were multiplying, thereby exacerbating the situation. Mental health-related disorders have become the leading cause of illness and disability in children and youth, yet countries are not putting enough effort to address the issue while providing insufficient or no school-based programs.

"School must offer a safe and positive learning environment," said Ms. Gillet. When children know when

and where to seek help for their psychosocial problems, they develop a sense of being included, supported, and valued, which in turn allows them to build confidence, develop strategies for self-care, and thrive. Social-emotional learning (SEL) curricula must be put in place in schools to address the issue.

Ms. Gillet called for action across government ministries to make safety, well-being, and respect the center of schools, and closed her speech by saying, "Healthy children learn better, and better-educated children are healthier".

Astrid Gillet, UNESCO Director of the executive office of the education sector
(Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob-vt40p6bo)

Closing Speech

WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus gave the closing speech virtually, citing the dire situation of mental health problems in children and youth in the context of the pandemic and global conflicts and issues. He emphasized the gap in accessibility as well as the lack of age-appropriate mental health services as violations of children's human rights. Also, he called for action from everyone, collaborating to promote and protect the psychosocial well-being of children and youth.

WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob-vt40p6bo)

Personal Reflections

As a teacher working with students of different ages and cultures, to develop their social-emotional learning (SEL), I have encountered pushback from families, administrators, and stakeholders casting doubts on the necessity of this work and criticizing the capital it required. This event refreshed my knowledge and encouraged me to continue my work on different levels. First and foremost, I was reassured that access to mental health services might come across as a privilege, but in fact, it is a human right. I now am confident in voicing for the young students whom I teach that mental health issues should not come after financial or academic issues. It is essentially wrong, and a human right violation, to ignore or understate their mental health problems and to deny their need for quality and timely intervention. In addition, I am hopeful about my professional pathway to develop a culturally sensitive SEL curriculum and implement it in Chinese schools, and that Chinese policymakers and stakeholders would endorse national-level efforts to support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of children and youth in schools and educational settings.

Promoting and Protecting Learners' Mental Health cont.

EVENT OVERVIEW:

TITLE: Promoting and protecting learners' mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments

Date/Time: September 20, 2022, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Location: Danny Kaye Visitor Centre, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

Attendees: Catherine Russell, the 8th Executive Director, UNICEF; H.E. Letizia Ortiz Rocasolano, Queen of Spain; H.E. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand; Dévora Kestel, Director of the department of mental health and substance abuse, WHO; Robert Jenkins, Global Director of Education and Adolescent Development, UNICEF; H.E. María de Lourdes Alcívar, First lady of Ecuador; Dr. Berhanu Nega, Minister of Education, Ethiopia; Heidy Rombouts, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Belgium; Astrid Gillet, Director of the executive office of the education sector, UNESCO.

Flyer for Promoting and protecting learners' mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments

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A Disruptive Dialogue: Ending Violence Against Children

Tanya Sharma[1]

"Leaving violence against children behind"
(Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, 2021)

Introduction

When thinking about how an event hosted by the United Nations is constructed, would you ever imagine the panelists being so impassioned by the topic that they would interrupt their colleagues to make their own point? Or, would you imagine the audience waving their hands vigorously during the dialogue, hoping to be called on to say something?

This behavior certainly isn't typical in UN events.

Yet, that's exactly what happened at the side event ironically focused on UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, entitled, "A disruptive dialogue: Ending violence against children."

Of course, the word "disruptive" in the title is meant in the more currently used definition to imply being "innovative", not unruly. Certainly, the subject matter, which focused specifically on sexual violence, stimulated the audience's enthusiasm.

The event was held in person during the United Nations General Assembly week, on Thursday, September 22, 2022 at the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, hosted by the Swedish Mission with the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO is the UN agency that promotes health and wellbeing on a global scale with the intention of allowing every single individual to achieve the highest level of health through resources, public health education, and interventions (World Health Organization, 2022). Special invited speakers were football legend and activist Mr. Patrice Evra and WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who unfortunately was not able to make it to the event due to traffic that day.

Flyer for the event "A Disruptive Dialogue: Ending Violence Against Children" (UNGA Guide 2022, 2022)

1Reported by Tanya Sharma, a member of the Student Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology, pursuing a master's degree in the Department of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University Teachers College, taking Professor Judy Kuriansky's class on "Psychology and the United Nations which has exposed me to these significant UN meetings and issues. She is also a member of the Student Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology. She has been doing research in the field of childhood and adolescent mental health for the last 4 years.

A Disruptive Dialogue cont.

The resolve towards achieving SDG 16 has become stronger in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the appalling statistics that have risen over the past 4 years, with 1 in 10 children being sexually abused before the age of 18 (Department of Economics – Sustainable Development, 2022). Additionally, child sexual abuse through online predation in different internet sites, like social media, messenger groups, community forums, email, and other online platforms, has grown dramatically from 1 million in the year 2014 to 45 million in 2018, even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit and technology became prevalent (Department of Economics – Sustainable Development, 2022). These statistics are unacceptable and the situation reprehensible, evident in the panelists' presentations and in the event attendees' reactions.

Thus, the goal of this event was to create a **disruptive** dialogue, a dialogue in which the reality of these statistics was not ignored and in which panelists held themselves and others accountable to push for change, even if that meant contradicting their colleagues or jumping into the conversation and displaying some degree of disruption themselves. These disruptions served to highlight just how passionate everyone in that room was about ending violence against children which was an honor to witness first-hand.

The meeting was started by the moderator, Dr. Daniela Ligiero**,** a counseling psychologist and the CEO and Executive Director for *Together for Girls*, a global, public-private partnership dedicated to ending violence against children, especially sexual violence against girls. She drew the attention of the attendees to the flyers placed on all the chairs, which had a name, an age, and a country on it that represented a real child located somewhere in the world who has faced sexual violence. Continuing with this impactful start, she shared three chapters in her life defining the progression from being (1) a scared child who faced sexual violence to (2) eventually being able to speak up about the experience and eventually, (3)

becoming an advocate and leader in this field. Recounting her personal journey, typical of so many girls, was meant to remind everyone that they were not alone.

"It does not have to be that way", she said, especially since there are two decades of research on the topic -- which was mostly spearheaded by the panelists at the event. She then proceeded to report statistics regarding the reality of sexual violence in children today and how interventions can make a difference. For example, while statistics show that 1 out of 2 children still suffer from a form of violence, the INSPIRE technical package, which includes seven strategies for violence prevention, has helped different countries such as Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Australia, China and most of the European countries, just to name a few (World Health Organization, 2020). Their report states that as much as 50% of violence reduction can be achieved by their technique (World Health Organization, 2020).

"Prevention works," Dr, Ligiero emphasized, "Violence against children can be prevented and there can be healing and justice for survivors,"

She also emphasized that involvement of government in reducing violence against children is crucial. Such involvement has increased substantially amongst 155 countries across the world (World Health Organization, 2020). However, the policy and urgency for such action at a governmental level throughout the world has not reached its full potential yet. This is indicated by the Key Findings section in the WHO report (World Health Organization, 2020). While government involvement has improved through the implementation of policies such as banning violent punishment against children and women, the enforcement of said laws of protection, the provision of economic and mental health support to families, etc. (World Health Organization, 2020), there is still a huge gap between what goals have been set to reduce violence against children and what has actually been achieved for these goals.

A Disruptive Dialogue cont.
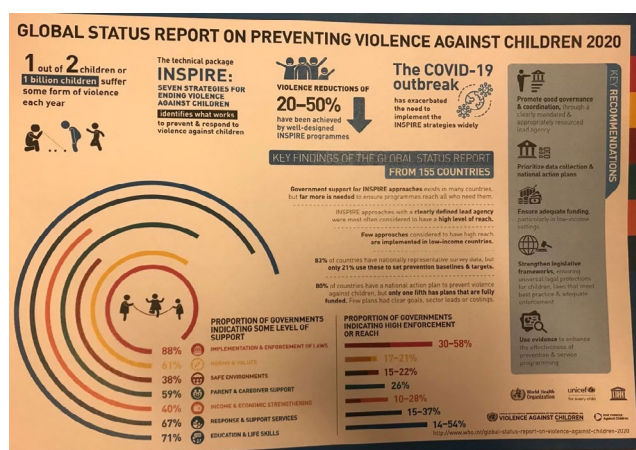
"Key findings from the Global status report on violence against children" (World Health Organization, 2020)

As a result of all these factors, she urged everyone in the room to take part in a "disruptive" dialogue, meaning, to not hold back about the importance of the issue and to push to make this topic a priority.

After this riveting, informative, and very personal introduction, she proceeded to introduce the panelists. The format she followed was posing questions to the panelists:

The panelists:

Mr. A.T. Mitchell, anti-violence activist, recently named co-chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force of New York City (aka the "Gun Violence Czar").

Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid, pediatrician, advocate, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence Against Children.

Dr. Etienne Krug, Director of the Social Determinants of Health at WHO in Geneva, Switzerland, and Director of the Department of Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability and Violence and Injury Prevention, who is leading the work at the agency to end violence against children.

Ms. Jenny Ohlsson, Swedish Diplomat who is State Secretary to the Minister of International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Patrice Evra, a Sexual Violence Advocate who is a Senegalese national and French football coach, formerly a player for the French Soccer national team and for Manchester United.

Panelists (left to right): Patrick Evra, Jenny Ohlsson, Dr. Etienne Krug, Mr. A.T. Mitchell, Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid, moderator Dr. Daniela Ligiero

Question 1: The WHO is playing a catalytic role in ending violence against children. Why is it important that the health sector play a role in this? This question was directed to Dr. Krug, Belgian physician and epidemiologist, who is Director of the Department for Social Determinants of Health at WHO in Geneva and Director of the Department of Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability and Violence and Injury Prevention, who is leading the work at the agency to end violence against children.

Dr. Krug brought up how so many other experts, not just in the health sector, should be playing a role to help end violence against children. He mentioned that the WHO has always had a responsibility for interventions about physical health, but in recent years mental health has also become a strong focus. Statistics on the harm being done towards children regarding violence – both non-sexual and sexual violence – are reported by the health sector; so, it is

A Disruptive Dialogue cont.

imperative that the WHO plays a role in this issue. Dr. Krug concluded that the role of the health sector is "diverse and has many focuses" and because of that, it is important that the health sector focuses on this issue.

Question 2: As an advocate and survivor who has worked in this space for a long time, what gives you hope? What do you have to say about violence against children? This question was directed to Dr. Maala M'jid, pediatrician, advocate, and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence Against Children,

Dr. Maala M'jid stated that she often fluctuates "between despair and hope" in the face of this problem. At her age of 63 years old, she feels that she has been repeating the same things and the same messages since she was 15 years old, leading her to think that there is a lack of translation between the messages being said by the advocates compared to what is being done. As a result, Dr Maalla M'jid strongly stated that, "We are not being accountable to children. We are making promises that we cannot keep." She also distinguished between cooperation and coordination, where coordination does not mean that governments need to work together but that each government should be held accountable to playing their specific role in violence prevention. It is not clear, however, what each government wants to achieve, she said. This lack of communication about what to do, and lack of quick acting on the policy level, is impacting the children right now; meaning that by the time policy against violence is implemented, these children would have already been harmed and not received justice for years. Thus, she said, governments need to do a better job in investing in children. She finds her hope, though, in the children who have survived such horrible circumstances and have the resilience and hope to move forward, heal, and do wonderful things with their lives.

Question 3: It takes a lot of courage to do what you are doing. What you think should be done to shake up this discussion so it can be brought to the forefront as an important topic?

This question was directed to Patrice Evra, an advocate against sexual violence who is a former player for the French Soccer team and then Manchester United. Evra's career as a famous football player in Europe gave him the resources, platform, and courage to speak up about the sexual abuse he faced in his childhood having been sexually abused by a teacher when he was 13 years old, and to transition into being a full-time Sexual Violence Advocate.

As an individual who is very passionate about advocacy for this cause, Evra stated that this topic needs "Action, not talk." Action is important to him because, alongside the empathy he carries for himself and other victims of sexual abuse, he understands that perpetrators were also born from a broken environment, In his view no perpetrator is born to be an abuser, a criminal, or a bad person. Instead, the education system has failed these people. He knows this from personal experience, since it was an educator failed him by sexually abusing him.

The children who are abused have also been failed, as he stated emphatically that, "The voices of people who had been failed by supposed role models (teachers, educators) are important and need to be heard."

"People say I am courageous," he explained. "But I am not. I just happened to be at the right place at the right time." Evra underscored how hard it is for survivors of child sexual abuse – like himself - to open up and speak about what happened to them. He also wants to undo the belief that when survivors of sexual abuse do talk about what happened, it is not because of "strength." These survivors have the ability to speak up about it because they have financial, emotional, and communal support, amongst other resources, while others do not have such resources and support. He recognizes and acknowledges that he was able to overcome the pain and become a

model for others, while most survivors end up being a statistic on a paper, not always overcoming the trauma associated with sexual violence.

Due to this difference between those who can speak up versus those who cannot speak up, Evra concluded by saying that he identifies as an advocate first, before being a soccer player and that he refuses to give up on advocacy. Right now, this is his job.

Question 4: After hearing from everyone so far, I wanted to now turn this next question to you. You really engage with young people, so what do you think needs to happen with engagement with young people to push this agenda to where it needs to be?

This question was directed to Mr. Mitchell, an anti-violence activist, recently named co-chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force of New York City (aka the "Gun Violence Czar").

Mitchell mentioned that he can oftentimes see a correlation between community violence and sexual violence. He explained that a lot of the young people he works with have experienced this and that they were not taught to speak out about the abuse, and felt uncomfortable and afraid about it. Forums as this one, he said, really help the population he focuses on and teaches them how to open up. This can be helpful, he said, because, "in the community [he] works with, when a child goes through [sexual and physical violence], dealing with those emotions comes out through physical violence."

This situation ties back to gun violence, that Mitchell has seen, motivating him to say that, "Youth have a different way of expressing their pain and emotions from being victimized themselves and unfortunately, in these communities, it is through guns and weapons." There needs to also be a focus on why an individual did a crime instead of just what the crime was, because that understanding can help end the violence. Ending violence starts with having conversations with children on a day-to-day basis, he said.

Question 5: Why should governments prioritize this issue amongst the other things that are happening in the world and how do we make more governments prioritize this?

This question was directed to Ms. Jenny Ohlsson, Swedish Diplomat who is State Secretary to the Minister of International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans in the Swedish government Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ohlsson stated that, "It is really important to argue the costs and benefits that come with violence against children and convincing governments that these long-term investments are worth it." According to her, back when Sweden pushed policy to outlaw hitting against children, it was an example of policy workers working at the forefront without general consensus. This was an example of laws changing people's minds instead of vice versa, which she thinks should really be the process. In her view, policymakers should first really push for research, resources, and information in order to make these changes.

At this point in the discussion, the audience became very active – which ironically could be viewed as "disruptive." For example, Dr. Maalla M'jid jumped into the topic right after Ms. Ohlsson finished her point, instead of letting the moderator ask the next question. Dr. M'jid claimed that while the State Secretary made a good point, realistically speaking, arguing for the economic benefits does not necessarily guarantee that money and time will go into these topics. She emphasized that it is important to build in local structures to spread this information, and make changes instead of just relying on the national government. Dr. Krug also jumped in immediately after this point to talk about how there is still ignorance about this issue, how widespread it actually is, and that it is, in fact, preventable.

The moderator and panelists continued to jump in one after another to talk about the importance of pushing for the urgency of this situation and being upfront and honest about why things are not working.

A Disruptive Dialogue cont.

Following this impassioned dialogue among the speakers was participation from the audience, who jumped at the opportunity to wave their raised hands wildly, anxious to share their honest opinions on this issue. The moderator called on some of them, who made points pushing for these changes in different fields and industries. One audience member shared that a close friend had committed suicide a day before this event took place, prompted by the violence the person faced while growing up and not having a support system to cope with the aftermath of it even when getting older. At this point, the panelists, the moderator, and the audience members appeared to be very emotionally moved (e.g., tearing up) and were further invigorated to share solutions and opinions on how to make this issue a priority for the remaining 10 minutes of the event.

The event ended with a standing ovation.

EVENT OVERVIEW:	
TITLE:	A Disruptive Dialogue: Ending Violence Against Children
CONFERENCE:	77th Session of the UN General Assembly
DATE/TIME:	September 22nd, 2022 from 5:30pm EDT – 6:30pm EDT
LOCATION:	One Daga Plaza
MODERATOR:	Dr. Daniela Ligiero
PANELISTS:	Mr. A.T. Mitchell, Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid, Dr. Etienne Krug, Ms. Jenny Ohlsson, and Mr. Patrice Evra

For more information about how to get involved with advocacy and making a difference in ending violence against children, you can reach out to Dr. Ligiero at her office number (202-719-5508) or her email: daniela@togetherforgirls.org.

Personal Reflections

I chose to report on this event because, as a student in the Master's program in Clinical Psychology at Columbia University Teachers College, I have an interest in working with children and adolescents. Similar to what the panelists mentioned during the event, I also believe that violence against children and adolescents is not enough of a priority in policy, although the focus has started to shift considerably in recent years to protect these children; however, there is still much more work to do. Some people in cultures, especially in older generations, and even in my own, have endured abusive suffering. However, the younger generation than my own looks to us (even as young people ourselves) as role models and if we tell them that suffering is inevitable when it is really should not be, we have failed our youth and perpetuated suffering, pain, and sadness, by being complicit in what can be seen as "learned helplessness", a state known in social science where one accepts unacceptable circumstances. This event meant so much to me as it was inspiring to see people who have been advocating for this cause for so many years, as well as refreshing to see them so brutally honest about their disappointment in how these issues have not been fixed, yet, they still push for change. Their persistence and honesty gives me hope and allows me to continue trying to make a difference in this field.

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Inside the Iranian Uprising: Report from the Jewish Policy Center Webinar

Alex Niebaum[1]
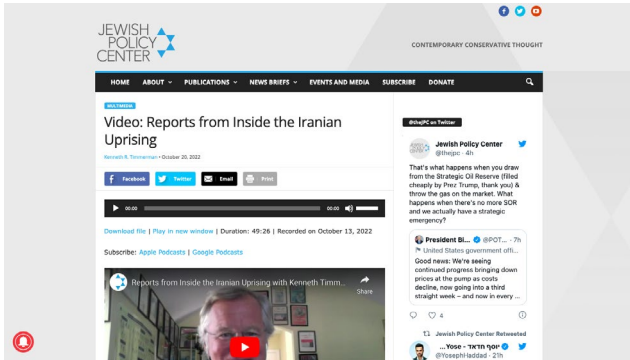
*The Jewish Policy Center Website event posting
(source: https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2022/10/20/
reports-from-inside-the-iranian-uprising/)*

The demonstrations in Iran triggered by the Iranian regime's abusive treatment of young women and girls who cut their hair in protest of the regime have drawn considerable media attention throughout the world. But questions arose: "How effective will these protests be?" "What needs to happen in order to impact real change in Iran?"

To address these issues, a webinar was held by the Jewish Policy Center (JPC), with Shoshana their Senior Director Bryen, moderating a discussion with author and investigative journalist Kenneth Timmerman. The event was held in a webinar format, on October 20, 2022. These two were seen on the webinar screen, while the attendees who had registered to hear the talk were not seen, but were able to record their questions in the chat box. These questions were then answered in a Question and Answer Period later in the Webinar.

The Jewish Policy Center

The JPC, established in 1985, is a 501c(3) non-profit organization, to provide analysis of foreign and domestic policies from a range of scholars and academics, with Senior Director Bryen emphasizing "policies not politics". According to their website, "The JPC passionately supports: a strong American defense capability, U.S.-Israel security cooperation and missile defense" and "We support Israel in its quest for legitimacy and security" *(Mission*, 2017). Further, they support "small government, low taxes, free trade, fiscal responsibility, and energy security, as well as free speech and intellectual diversity".

Mr. Timmeraman's Main Points

Author and international journalist Kenneth Timmerman co-founded the Foundation for Democracy in Iran in 1995, along with colleagues and some Iranian opposition expatriates, to attempt to topple the Iranian government. He now serves as the Executive Director. He was nominated for a Noble Peace Prize for "repeated warnings and documentation of Iran's secret nuclear buildup and revealing Iran's repeated lying and false reports to the International Atomic Energy Agency. His extensive experience in despot-led countries includes as a war correspondent during the Iran-Iraq war, exposing Osama bin Laden trainings camps, and penning a book about the export of high-technology equipment to China.

At the webinar, Timmerman described his theories on what needs to happen for the Iranian protests

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1 Reported by Alex Niebaum a member of the Student Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology, pursuing a masters' degree in the Department of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University Teachers College, and a student in Dr. Judy Kuriansky's class on "Psychology and the United Nations." I have experience educating children and teens about human trafficking and gender equality. I am interested in global mental health and forensic psychology.

Inside the Iranian Uprising cont.

to be successful in overthrowing the regime. He claimed that two things need to happen:

the movement must become a nation-wide movement that includes ethnic minorities (meaning the protesters should not be called separatists) and

the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Basiji (a paramilitary organization used by the regime to suppress dissidents, vote as a bloc, and indoctrinate Iranian citizens**)** must also join the movement to enact a cultural shift in opinion.

Timmerman cited past Iranian demonstrations made by people in 1999, 2009, 2013 and 2019, that all seemed to have gone no farther than "letting off steam". What is different about the demonstrations being made today, he said, is two things:

the utilization of the internet to spread information, and

young people's ability to get around government internet shutdowns.

"Watch out for defectors,' he said, explaining that people defecting from the regime will be a sign of its eventual downfall.

Mr. Timmerman went on to relay his opinions about the United States' relationship with Iran. He said the United States should have responded to the 1983 Marine Barracks Bombings with military action and that the state of the Middle East would look a lot different if the U.S. had done this. He recommended that the U.S. should currently be assisting in the pro-freedom movement in Iran, but the Biden Administration remains lukewarm on the subject. However, private individuals such as Elon Musk are assisting with the Iranian protest movement, like sending Starlink receivers (a satellite constellation system that aims to deliver global internet coverage) to the Iranian people. Even though the Starlink receivers do not seem to be working that well, it is more aid than the United States government has provided so far.

Investigative Journalist and Author Kenneth Timmerman speaking on the Iranian uprising (source: screenshot, Alex Niebaum)

Questions and Answer Period

JPC Senior Director Bryen read aloud questions the audience asked in the chat box for Timmerman to answer. On occasion, she summarized questions from the audience which seemed to be on a similar topic, to ask Mr. Timmerman.
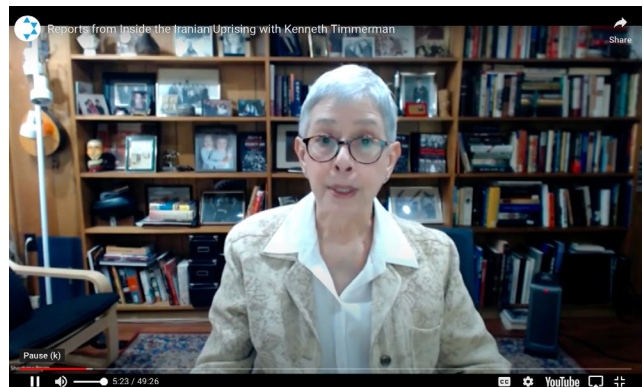
Moderator JPC Senior Director Shoshana Bryen (source: screenshot, Alex Niebaum)

Question: What could the United States government do that would be helpful for the Iranian protests?

Answer: Timmerman said he predicted that the U.S. will go to the United Nations about the Iranian protests, but believes little will be accomplished there.

Inside the Iranian Uprising cont.

He believes the U.S. should give the Iranian people a voice through Radio Farda (the Iranian branch of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty external broadcast service to provide "factual, objective and professional journalism" to its audiences) so the world can hear from more people in Iran and what they are experiencing. Also, he called for the U.S. to delegitimize the regime by not negotiating with them and maybe putting an embargo on Iranian oil.

Question: Are the demonstrations getting bigger or smaller? What about the fire in Evin prison, one of the most hated places in Tehran?

Answer: The fire in Tehran is suspicious to Timmerman. Even though it is a notorious prison, Timmerman says, "Careful what you wish for" and is suspicious of the fire's origin. It may have been a convenient way to get rid of unwanted prisoners.

Question: Iran and Russia are forming a new relationship including drones, which violates UN sanctions on both Russia and Iran. What does this tell us about what the United States will do about Russia? What does this say about Iran's willingness to "poke its nose in things outside its area of influence in the Middle East" in opposition to the United States' interest? Are the Iranian's "gaining confidence to play on the international stage"?

Answer: Timmerman, a Christian convert, quoted Ezekiel 38 in the Bible describing a coalition between the kings of the north, the kings of the east, and Persia, and that this relationship could mimic this. Russian, Iran and China have strategic relationships and he went on to say that Iran has been able to grow and build these relationships because of its focus on niche products.

Question: How good would you say U.S., Israeli and other Western Intelligence sources inside Iran are? How good are they at bringing out information about the demonstrations? What about long term relations and what Iran is doing with its weapons programs?

Answer: "CNN is better than the CIA these days," Timmerman responded. He notes how the CIA has lost sources in Iran or has historically not helped their sources if they got arrested. On the other hand, CNN has done stories on Iranian young women guerilla fighters in Iraq training at the border. He also notes the Israeli operation that extracted the nuclear archive from Tehran to be one of the best intelligence operations carried out in Iran.

The United Nations Involvement

This webinar addresses SDGs 5, 10 and 15, on, respectively, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The Iranian protests are largely centered around women feeling oppressed – and abused --by the regime. The protesters are fueled by the murders of women by law enforcement, particularly the death of Ms. Mahsa Amini who was arrested by Iran's morality police for allegedly violating the dress rules (Fassihi, 2022) and then died in their custody. This injustice emphasized the brutality of the regime and fueled the need for peace in Iran. The United Nations has condemned Iran's violent response to the protests. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres released a statement saying, "We underline the need for prompt, impartial and effective investigation into Ms. Amini's death by an independent competent authority" (United Nations, 2022). In November of 2022, the United Nations Human Rights chief Volker Türk called for an independent investigation into the violence Iranian protesters have been facing from the police since the death of Amini, citing the beatings and deaths of these protesters (United Nations, 2022). In addition, Iran has been removed from the Commission on the Status of Women, whose role is to promote and protect women's rights globally (Fassihi, 2022).

Personal Reflections

I picked this event to report on because I wanted a deeper understanding of the Iranian uprising and what will ultimately help the people of Iran promote a more equal and safe environment for women. Mr.

Inside the Iranian Uprising cont.

Timmerman believes major shifts need to happen for an Iranian uprising to be successful and that this is blocked by Iran's close relationship with Russia, which is strategic and long-standing. While there is a lot to be said about the political aspects of the relationship of the Iranian government to other nations, these uprisings in Iran have clearly demonstrated the attitudes of the Iranian people themselves, particularly of the Iranian women who have demonstrated much courage to protest despite many dangers to themselves. One might hope that as these protesting attitudes of people begin to escalate, the government might have to adapt in one way or another; although this is unlikely. Iran's close relationships with other despot nations such as Russia and China complicate any possibility for a shift. However, for a while, these uprisings received a lot of attention on social media which has prompted many to show their support for these brave Iranian women. I choose to remain optimistic that the Iranian people's demonstration of their ability to use their voices and to utilize the internet, could lead to a cultural shift and an eventual government shift that promotes gender equality within Iran.

Event Overview:

TITLE: Reports from Inside the Iranian Uprising

CONFERENCE: Jewish Policy Center

DATE/TIME: Oct 20, 2022at 12:00pm EST

LOCATION: Online (https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2022/10/20/reports-from-inside-the-iranian-uprising/)

MODERATOR: Senior Director Shoshana Bryen

PANELIST: Mr. Kenneth Timmerman

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Digital Therapeutics in Mental Health Care: Recommendations for the eMental Health Collaborative and Digital Mental Health Stakeholders in a Post-Pandemic World

Ananya Raghuram[1]

The COVID-19 pandemic and its ensuring mental health challenges have dramatically increased interest in the field of digital mental health and services being developed and offered by academia but also by the private sector. This review focuses on digital mental health applications available through private companies such as Alma, Ginger, BetterHelp, Wysa, and Headspace, which provide mental health services through digital technologies in partnership with providers and developers, and additionally through implementing artificial intelligence (AI) interfaces.

A pertinent question remains: Do communities need additional private digital mental health (DMH) platforms when current applications in the market face issues with access, lack of culturally diverse clinicians, and major paywalls which are barriers to help-seeking? The current paper explores gaps in mental health care through the lens of the current state of digital mental health applications on the market. This trend is additionally viewed through the lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 3 - Good Health & Wellbeing, and Goal 10 - Reduce Inequalities, of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Additionally, this analysis makes recommendations for digital mental health stakeholders and global groups, such as the eMental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC), to consider regarding the development, validation, and effectiveness of DMH platforms in a post-Sars-CoV-2 world.

Advantages in the area of digital mental health

The demand for digital therapeutic applications for mental health has been increasing over the last few years, especially in light of restrictions imposed by the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic, consistent with findings that going even back about five years ago, the market for digital mental health applications was reported to be in high demand, with the number of DMH applications exceeding 10,000 (Torous & Roberts, 2017). These applications pertained to cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness-based, mood-monitoring, and mental health counselling formats among others (Torous et al., 2020). Now, five years later, as we enter the third year of the current Sars-CoV-2 pandemic, it is highly likely that this number far surpasses this statistic. In a paper exploring the challenges that mobile health tools (mHealth) face when developing an online community and

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1 Ananya Raghuram is a second-year international student in the Master of Arts Clinical Psychology program in the Department of Counselling and Clinical Psychology at Teachers College Columbia University, taking the course on "Psychology and the United Nations" taught by Professor Judy Kuriansky. She is also a member of the Student Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology. Her current concentrations focus on Global Mental Health and Neuropsychology, notably the need for accessible mental health care coverage across diverse populations. She earned her B.A. degree at New York University in New York, New York, USA, in Psychology with joint areas of focus in Clinical Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience and a minor in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Studies. She is an international student from Chennai, India, brought up in Singapore. She enjoys creating and weaving elements of both visual and fibre arts with neuroscience and psychology through prints that map out her mental health journey and interest in visual perception.

Digital Therapeutics in Mental Health Care cont.

"ecosystem," Spadaro et al. (2021) note that mHealth applications allow for adaptive diagnostic technologies to diagnose, treat, and offer recommendations based on "self-administered symptom reporting." Therefore, one of the challenges that DMH applications and mHealth platforms face, among several others, is ensuring that mental health care is provided to users through novel and unconventional formats of the traditional therapeutic alliance between a patient and clinician.

In exploring the progress and types of DMH applications during the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic, Srivastava et al. (2020) notes that one of the most studied areas of digital interventions in mental health care is that of internet-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy (ICBT). ICBT involves the use of a virtual, internet-based delivery of cognitive behavioural therapy and does not involve traditional in-person interactions between the clinician and patient (Gratzer & Khalid-Khan, 2015). Moreover, researchers found that more than half of patients treated for affective disorders using ICBT displayed improved symptomology (Srivastava et al., 2020).

The intersection between artificial intelligence (AI) and cognitive behavioural therapy continues to grow. For example, the private company Wysa has revolutionised artificial intelligence (AI)-administered cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), showing that this modality can be effective in replacing the traditional role of a mental health care provider (Wysa, 2022). However, it remains that a CBT AI mode of treatment lacks the one-on-one traditional patient-clinician relationship and rapport; as a result, Wysa revolutionised the mode of therapy by developing a joint model consisting of an affable AI penguin mascot alongside the guidance of licensed mental health care professionals (Wysa, 2022). This hybrid approach has since been recognised by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the U.S. Food and Drug Association (FDA). Additionally, Wysa has partnered with the National Health Service (NHS), Mindline.sg and Aetna among others (Wysa, 2022)

in collaboration with private sector and government stakeholders, to expand the scope of access to their technology among several demographic groups.

In a session of the course "Psychology and the United Nations," taught by professor of psychology Dr. Judy Kuriansky in the Department of Clinical Psychology of Teachers College, Columbia University, Kuriansky invited her colleague Mr. Anil Thapliyal, Executive Director of the eMental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC) to discuss the trend of e-mental health and the eMHIC network he founded, as well as to present a new forum on his website for her students to participate in. The class took place on Zoom, from Thapliyal's office as Kuriansky was in his headquarters in Auckland, New Zealand for the annual Congress of eMHIC, organised by Mr. Thapliyal

Thapliyal described the aims of eMHIC and their diverse network of experts in countries around the world. He also invited several colleagues to participate in the class to elaborate on their adaptations of e-mental health.

This included Ms. Chaitali Sinha, Head of Clinical Development and Research at Wysa, who discussed concerns about culturally sensitive and adaptive AI within the company's existing model. One concern pertains to whether Wysa's CBT AI chatbot has the ability to adapt to culturally specific identifiers and experiences that include different languages, and culture-specific terminology of symptoms in mental health conditions. Ms. Sinha said:

> *"Our attempt to understand and listen to the user rests more deeply on the fundamental notions of distress, and the core emotions that constitute experiences. The attempt for a machine to understand a human begins from Ekman's work before it moves to idioms of distress. It's definitely a challenge, and one we are thinking deeply about."*

The fundamental notions of distress and core emotions that constitute experiences stated by Ms. Sinha conform with Wysa's CBT AI model in that it

encourages users to engage with the tripartite model engrained in CBT that comprises emotions, thoughts, and behaviours (Benjamin et al., 2012). Furthermore, Wysa's popularity and effectiveness among users have been demonstrated in studies highlighting the application's utility, usefulness, and acceptability (Malik et al., 2022). Specifically, Wysa's employment of traditional CBT modules such as cognitive restructuring in conjunction with guided mindfulness activities contributes to its growing user engagement (Malik et al., 2022).

Moreover, Wysa's model has been shown to provide users with a safe space, that is "nonjudgmental," to encourage them to interact with the interface, resulting in improved symptomology of affective disorders (Malik et al., 2022). However, similar to other DMH platforms, the scope of mental health conditions covered in terms of assessment and treatment is limited and will be discussed further in this paper.

Also in the class session, speakers included Ms. Tania Seivwright, a strategy and implementation lead at HealthTRx, a company focused on producing digital therapeutic technologies for mental health care with a focus in the area of addiction; Ms. Kirsty Cardy, founder of the mental health online community Talk Mental, based in New Zealand, and eMHIC Membership Manager, who described more about the eMHIC network and the new student forum offer; and Ms. Niki Legge, a social worker and program manager with the Division of Mental Health and Addictions, Department of Health and Community Services, based in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada.

The purpose of the panel discussion was for the speakers to confer with graduate students at Teachers College Columbia University about their work within their respective organisations and their continued collaboration with eMHIC, with a specific focus on encouraging students to take part in the 2022 eMHIC Congress virtually as eMHIC student members.

Ms. Sievwright directed students who were interested in how digital mental health applications and services remain effective to the Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Apps (ORCHA), providing examples of accredited DMH platforms from Germany, the Netherlands and Norway through the chat function. She briefly explained that the purpose of ORCHA is to evaluate digital mental health services and platforms that are currently or in preparation for accreditation.

Ms. Legge outlined prior work by the Division of Mental Health and Addictions, notably the "Bridge the gapp" project, a website which pairs mental health care resources to adults and children amidst the current Sars-CoV-2 pandemic, to reduce the time taken between seeking and receiving quality mental health care.

Ms. Kirsty Cardy informed students about the student membership offer within eMHIC and encouraged students to contribute to the creation of new discussion boards within the eMHIC global platform pertaining to "Cultural Appropriation in AI" and "Columbia University Students" among several others. Discourse among mental health experts and students alike can be found within forums about AI, ethics, and mindfulness, a benefit for members of the eMHIC community to network and share existing knowledge in the aforementioned areas.

Disadvantages in the area of digital mental health and narrowing the "digital divide"

With the number of users of DMH platforms increasing as we enter the third year of the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic, with some countries in recovery yet other variants of the virus still plaguing communities worldwide, DMH companies continue to escalate their work yet run the risk of prioritising the need to move in the direction of other competitors rather than to develop "faster and more robust evaluation methods" (Hollis et al., 2018). Moreover, the danger of applications which are not effectively regulated or grounded in rigorous evaluation methods for

effectiveness run the risk of having low generalisability among individuals on a global scale, leading to a disjointed and fractured translation of research findings into "real-world clinical settings" (Hollis et al., 2018). This in turn leads to subsequent inequities in accessing and receiving mental health care through digital therapeutics.

The concept of the "digital divide" is the equivalent of the treatment gap in mental healthcare services within public and private healthcare facilities, specifically concerning how DMH technology runs the risk of creating larger health disparities (Skorburg & Yam, 2022) - the essence of SDG 10 about reducing inequalities. Three areas of the "digital divide" (Skorburg & Yam, 2022) pertain to:

1. The binary between individuals who can access the internet and mobile technologies;

2. Disparities that exist between digitally literate individuals and those who are not; and

3. Lack of resources available to a digital mental health start-up or organization to develop their model and an unequal distribution of wealth towards organizations who do have the opportunity to develop their model.

As we progress in an increasingly digital world, digital mental health care modalities have the opportunity to close the treatment gap related to the time it takes to foster a patient-clinician relationship and therapeutic timeline (Skorburg & Yam, 2022). However, with "resource-effective alternatives" that utilize AI, this poses a threat to the interpersonal communication between clinicians and patients which would potentially shift the demand to live, in-person psychologists and mental health care providers (Skorburg & Yam, 2022). If AI will be able to leverage mental health care more efficiently, then more studies which are thorough, robust and provide stronger empirical evidence are required to effectively improve health outcomes (Skorburg & Yam, 2022).

With the rise of digital mental health applications that target specific populations, like adolescents and individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds, several subgroups of society have not benefitted from existing DMH applications, again relevant to SDG 10 about reducing inequalities. While platforms like Charlie Health serve adolescent populations, elderly individuals who might have suffered "high rates of social isolation and loneliness" amidst the pandemic might be "less likely to benefit from advances in DMH" (Charlie Health, 2022; Skorburg & Yam, 2022). To counteract this inequality, governments such as Singapore have implemented private digital mental health care models on public, government-endorsed platforms. An example is Mindline.sg by the Ministry of Health Office of Healthcare Transformation (MOHT) in partnership with the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSFD). As of 2022, Mindline.sg utilizes the CBT AI interface developed by Wysa to assist individuals with self-assessment and provide information on support and care for the self and loved ones (MOHT, 2022). While Mindline.sg is new in its conception, they intend to eventually target specific age-related groups such as senior citizens, to eventually help lower rates of social isolation among digitally literate elderly individuals (MOHT, 2022).

A majority of applications available are mostly structured around digital treatments for mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, even though less than 5% of such applications have been tested for their long-term efficacy (Marshall et al., 2019). We can infer that individuals with severe mental health conditions, outside the scope of affective mental health conditions such as generalized anxiety disorder and depression, are less likely to benefit from existing digital therapeutics. This "digital exclusion" of some members of society from DMH platforms continues to escalate the digital divide, accentuated by factors such as lack of digital literacy, financial barriers, lack of internet access and insurance, and cognitive deficits as happens in the cases of intellectual disabilities or psychoses (Greer et al., 2019).

Recommendations for apps in their development and conceptualization processes

Experts recommend that current and in-development DMH applications should employ, task, and implement first-hand experiences of people with lived experiences (PWLEs) to modify existing DMH models that otherwise exclude the perspective of all members of civil society (Hollis et al., 2018). In a positive example, the Lancet Commission on Ending Stigma and Discrimination of Mental Health highlighted the perspectives and first-hand accounts of PWLEs to inform better social sectors, the media, governments of respective member states, and other stakeholders including digital mental health firms and organizations (Thornicroft et al., 2022; Raghuram & Kuriansky, 2023). Furthermore, DMH firms could implement perspectives from and by PWLEs to better understand the needs of target populations rather than exclude individuals from the development process of digital therapeutic platforms.

In a study investigating areas for prioritization in DMH companies, Hollis et al. (2018) refer to the Lancet Commission on the Future of Psychiatry (2017), published in partnership with the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), to outline the importance of DMH firms to resolve the treatment gap "by offering more-accessible, potentially less-stigmatizing, flexible, and tailored approaches to mental health care." The study expressed concern that issues of accessibility with regard to digital therapeutics for mental health care are far more expansive than simply the monetary barriers to care such as paywalls. Reduced rates of utilization of outpatient services among youth and adolescents, who are enrolled in private health insurance, are especially prevalent among individuals with severe mental health conditions (Hugunin et al., 2022). Moreover, by simply isolating the efficacy of treatment of individuals with physical and mental health conditions with private health insurance coverage, western healthcare systems disregard and "reinforce existing inequities" that exist among individuals who attempt to and fail to receive mental health care assistance without insurance coverage (Martinez-Martin, 2022). Therefore, based on the research mentioned prior, one recommendation would be to better incentivize developers at private DMH firms for them to remain profitable but to reduce the barrier of paywalls for younger populations, such as youth and adolescents.

Recommendations for digital mental health firms amidst the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic

Individuals with moderate to serious psychological distress have been found to be twice as likely to utilize mHealth platforms amidst the current pandemic compared to normal controls, and to have a "more positive attitude" with regard to the use of mHealth platforms, according to research by Rauschenberg et al. (2021). Through the lens of social interaction, these researchers assert that mHealth platforms had the potential to assuage negative health and social experiences of individuals during the pandemic (Rauschenberg et al., 2021). Pre-existing mental health care systems were considered to be less structured prior to the pandemic, indicating urgency for DMH platforms to be developed that are thoroughly validated and measured for their effectiveness among several populations.

In a study conducted during the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic, Lu et al. (2022) highlight the trajectory of long-term symptomology of COVID-19 and accessibility to mental health care applications by the public. The study had four targets, to:

1. Highlight and estimate how accessibility to DMH technology has changed throughout the pandemic,

2. Investigate and recognize subsets of the population that had difficulties in utilizing DMH technology,

3. Allocate and categorize individuals into groups based on their ability to access DMHs and highlight demographic characteristics within said groups, and

4. Call attention to how accessibility or the lack of accessibility to DMH technology influences long-term symptoms of COVID-19 concerning mental health conditions (Lu et al., 2022).

Employing the use of an observational, longitudinal model, four conclusions were derived from the findings:

1. Throughout the year, individuals had difficulties with the accessibility of digital mental health platforms,

2. Demographic populations who were most affected by the previous finding were men, individuals with low socioeconomic status, and individuals who were severely affected by the pandemic,

3. Diversity in the direction in which DMHs can improve their accessibility was evident, and

4. When individuals were able to access DMHs more easily and effectively, there stood a lower risk of long-term symptomology of mental health conditions "suggesting the probably social benefits of facilitating DMHs access" (Lu et al., 2022).

Confirming results by other studies, reported above, the researchers concluded that populations excluded from using digital mental health platforms based on accessibility, age, digital literacy, and specific symptomology of mental health conditions would benefit from being included in the process of developing DMH platforms, especially amidst the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Prescott et al. (2022) highlight the importance and demand for more research to be conducted in the sphere of digital mental health. These researchers conducted a retrospective data analysis of individuals utilising a DMH platform called Modern Health, during a one-year period amidst the current Sars-Cov-2 pandemic (Prescott et al., 2022). Participants in the present study rated their well-being using the WHO-5, a self-report scale measuring an individual's well-being, to observe changes in well-being over one year (Prescott et al., 2022). Participants

demonstrated an improvement in WHO-5 scores, highlighting that when individuals had access to providers from one of three modalities offered by the application, researchers were able to affirm that the symptom severity of depression had improved (Prescott et al., 2022). While improvements in symptom severity can be observed through the use of digital therapeutics for mental health care, a gap still exists between assessment and treatment within DMH platforms; Prescott et al. (2022) note a study from Titov et al. (2020) wherein over half of the users of a national DMH care clinic reported having used the service for "assessments and information" compared to a quarter of the participants who reported using the service for treatment.

In a study exploring the demographic differences between users of two DMH modalities before and after the Sars-Cov-2 pandemic, adult users were more likely to utilize mHealth platforms but less likely to regularly engage with these platforms (Aziz et al., 2022).

It can be concluded that attempts at sustained engagement and interaction with DMH applications have remained challenging and should be explored by future research. This inequality between DMH usage for assessment versus treatment is likely due to high rates of attrition based on socio-behavioural factors. Prior studies investigating rates of attrition in digital mental health care have highlighted the quality of user engagement; intrinsic motivation; fears about one's privacy; and security of data as contributing factors (Nwosu et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the risk of high rates of attrition, or drop-outs, to digital mental health platforms can be detrimental in validation studies of randomised control trials of DMH platforms (Torous et al., 2020).

Therefore, future studies should highlight social perceptions and perspectives of digital mental health firms and rates of attrition with regard to the function of treatment. This should additionally focus on the current population who have experienced detrimental life events as a result of the Sars-CoV-2

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pandemic. Longitudinal studies would improve the way research can be generalised to a more diverse population. This might, however, result in conflicting findings in research about whether more randomised controlled trials or longitudinal/observational studies in the context of the pandemic are needed for DMH platforms to establish or re-establish existing models of care.

Involvement from stakeholders and future directions

The e-Mental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC) is an organisation comprised of global stakeholders in the fields of psychology, medicine, and public health - areas pertinent to the field of digital mental health - to "improve mental health and addiction outcomes for all populations" (eMHIC, 2022; Thapliyal, 2023). eMHIC, headquartered in Auckland New Zealand, was founded in 2019 by Anil Thapliyal, its Executive Director, who is also an adjunct professor at the Centre for eHealth at Auckland University of Technology. With board members and general membership from countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, among others, members of eMHIC foster collaborative relationships with like-minded professionals in the field of mental health and related fields, to encourage governments to improve their existing mental health and public health care. Members of eMHIC have the opportunity to participate in the discourse around digital mental health and have done so through member portal discussion boards, and their knowledge bank on digital tools and solutions (eMHIC, 2022). Future directions within eMHIC include encouraging discourse around ways forward for digital therapeutics in mental health care and could involve panel discussions at the upcoming 2023 eMHIC Congress. These panels would include members from private DMH companies in addition to stakeholders from member states such as the Ministry of Healthcare Office of Healthcare Transformation

(MOHT) - Singapore, and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) - India, among others. Moreover, the discourse would encourage private sector stakeholders to collaborate with members of eMHIC, government stakeholders, and students to take part in forums and develop a series of recommendations for future directions in digital mental health.

Conclusion

The field of e-mental health is clearly expanding, offering increased access to general populations worldwide, through professional and private sector initiatives. Many further steps and development need to be made. For example, the inclusion of the voice of PWLEs in the development stages of DMH models would parallel collaborative efforts between members of the eMHIC community and DMH stakeholders in the private sector such as Headspace, Calm, Betterhelp and Ginger, among others. Furthermore, the inclusion of the authors of the 2022 Lancet Commission on Ending Stigma and Discrimination at the 2023 Congress would encourage members of eMHIC and DMH companies to collaborate.

Highlighting how reducing stigma and discrimination about mental health, with a specific focus on severe mental health conditions, can better inform the way digital mental health applications provide modes of treatment, assessment, and care. For DMH platforms to continue to be successful, stakeholders must invest in more efficacy trials; expand coverage of digital mental health care free of cost to younger and older populations; strengthen digital literacy among demographically diverse populations; and develop DMH platforms inclusive of mental health conditions. This would in turn result in equitable mental health care, related to SDG 10 about reducing inequities, across the lifespan, and achieve SDG 3 target 3.4 about promoting mental health and well-being, as we progress into a post-COVID world.

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Transformative Learning, Pathways to Achieve Gender Equality Through Digital Innovation: Theme of the NGO CSW/NY Forum 2023

Tiffany Johnson[1]

Announcement of meeting of NGO CSW/NY meeting

With an increasingly globalizing society in the year 2022, gender equality is more urgent than ever, and the additional focus on collaborative efforts show that regardless of a person's role in society, everyone can contribute to moving the needle on the empowerment of women in the world. These foci on the empowerment of women, and on multilateralism (working together) are emphasized in the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and in many meetings and conferences by UN bodies.

Another major trend is the increase in digital innovation for connection, especially in response to lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Building on these trends, the October monthly meeting NGO Commission on the Status of Women New York (NGO CSW/NY focused on how to leverage transformative learning to achieve gender equality through digital innovation. This meeting served as a precursor to the CSW67 meeting, which will be held from March 6 to March 17, 2023 with the main theme of innovation, technological change and education in the digital age (*CSW67 (2023)*, n.d.). In committing to advancing gender equality, the NGO CSW/NY committee is educating others on how to contribute to the cause from their respective contexts.

The event, which was held virtually via YouTube and also shared via Facebook, brought together leaders and citizens from around the world who are at the helm of the effort to bolster gender equality through digital innovation. At the opening, NGO CSW/NY Chairperson Ms. Houry Geudelekian took a moment to acknowledge the women of Iran who are risking their lives for equality right now in the fact of the Iranian government's violence against women, and in further acknowledgment that, unfortunately, at this time, the women in Iran are prevented from accessing digital tools to support their efforts given strict government restrictions and control over media and communication.

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1 Reported by Tiffany A. Johnson, a member of the Student Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology pursuing a masters' degree in the Department of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University Teachers College, and a student in Professor Judy Kuriansky's class on "Psychology and the United Nations." In addition to her scholastic work, she has 11 years of experience as a spiritual advisor, coach, educator and facilitator. She has committed her life and energy to uplifting marginalized people, particularly women and young people of color and in the African diaspora. She is interested in supporting people to develop self-sovereignty in order to improve their mental health and ultimately the quality of their lives. She wants to build wellness centers to support people in healing themselves communally and hopes to expand her work to the continent of Africa, particularly Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa.

Moderator Pamela Morgan opened the panel discussion by referencing The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report [sic: suggestion] "that education should be relevant and respond to the technological advances, helping children youth and adults to develop the flexible skills and competencies they need to live and work in a technology-driven society" (NGO CSW/NY, 2022).

Each subsequent panelist provided concrete examples from their unique roles for how to ensure that all people, particularly women and girls, have equitable access to the necessary skills and competencies.

The first speaker, Alejandra Ceja, Vice President of the Office of Social Impact and Inclusion, and Executive Director of the Panasonic Foundation at the Panasonic Corporation of North America, shared her work at the Panasonic Foundation and in the community. Her presentation, which represented a perspective from the global North, was rooted in data that she has gathered to demonstrate disparities that exist for women, people of color, and those living in low-income communities. She cited data from American College Testing (ACT) scores, and class offerings from schools related to women's confidence in math, in order to demonstrate barriers to women entering the STEM field. Three Panasonic Foundation initiatives, in particular, invest in innovative programming to help inspire young women and introduce them to a career path in the field of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). All of the initiatives are conducted in collaboration with the communities that the young women come from. These are:

- *Million Girls Moonshot's National Girls Collaborative Project,* which makes inclusion frameworks adaptable in all 50 states by striving to inspire and prepare the next generation of innovators, by engaging one million more girls in STEM learning through afterschool and summer programs (*Million Girls Moonshot,* n.d.).

- *Girls Inc.'s STEM fair* partners with private sector electric company Georgia Power that teaches about circuits, solar power and electricity.

- *LA Promise Fund*, a nonprofit that partners with the Los Angeles California, USA, Unified School District and conducts social impact projects focused on Black, Indigenous and People of Color girls who come from low-income communities to prepare students for success in college, career and life through various skill-based and community programming (Support@citrusstudios.com 2022).

Speakers at the meeting

The next speaker, Honorable Isata Kabia from the African country of Sierra Leone, provided a perspective from the global South by highlighting her work as the Founder and Director of *Voice of Women of Africa,* an organization working to increase women's political participation and leadership, to encourage women to vote and to support a record number of women running for office in Sierra Leone (Vital Voices, 2021). She also spoke in her capacity as CEO of AFRiLOSOPHY, a social enterprise that teaches skills to women to build sustainable businesses and increase their financial access. Their work is innovative for two reasons, in particular:

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1. They use a combination of existing low-tech access opportunities alongside high-tech to make sure that they are training, upgrading and building capacity for women and girls

2. Sierra Leone does not yet have universal access to education, although the government is pushing for free education for all; therefore, most women and girls they currently work with are uneducated or undereducated, which presents a unique set of challenges.

In addition to providing technological skills, AFRiLOS-OPHY empowers minds and builds self-confidence in women and girls. Some technical and business skills they provide are related to small-scale manufacturing and a village savings and loan scheme in which groups of 30 women engage in peer-to-peer financing. The ultimate goal of the programming is to grow into a federation and later a women-owned bank, so that women can fund each others' businesses and leadership. Working on the ground, they are progressing the program steadily, woman by woman, village by village.

The next speaker, Ms. Antara Ganguli, Director and Head of the Secretariat at the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), a global partnership dedicated to advancing gender equality in and through education, immediately challenged the other women in the space, exclaiming, "We do not do enough for girls!" (UNGEI). Her message was that activists tend to focus their energy on women and too often leave girls, who are far more vulnerable, out of the conversations.

She made an impassioned plea for women's rights activists to participate in conversations about digital technology, citing statistics from the UNICEF *Brief on the Gender Digital Divide* (Tyers-Chowdhury & Binder, 2022) for girls to support her point. These statistics show that women are 8% less likely to own a phone than men; 20% less likely to own a smartphone; more intimidated by smartphones; and less likely to use the features of the phones. In addition, 40% of boys use the internet on phones compared to 27% of girls.

She went on to highlight that digital violence to girls is a major problem in that XXXX, and highlighted the importance of education as a tool for prevention of such digital violence toward girls, citing many reasons that families are prohibiting their daughters from using phones, including the threat of child sexual abuse and the child being targeted by predators via technology.

The main points that Ganguli drove home were:

1. Girls' issues will not be solved by those who do not understand the complexities of global gender dynamics because girls are too vulnerable and patriarchy is too rampant.

2. Women's rights activists must connect mothers to their daughters, so mothers can champion the rights of their daughters.

After these individual presentations, the moderator and panelists fielded questions from the (virtual) audience about digital technology and gender equality. The panelists spoke about the revolution in education that has occurred in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the most resonant points was surfaced by The Honorable Isata Kabia, who shared: "Relevant education enables women to have dignified work and the goal is to ensure women are okay and that their daughters can be supported," (NGO CSW/NY, 2022).

The speakers spent a significant amount of time discussing the importance of forming collaboration and strategic partnerships, including among nonprofits, NGOs, governmental organizations and corporations, to leverage their respective tools and expertise to advance gender equality. Collaboration was underscored through emphasizing the need for listening to, and building and maintaining connections with, communities most directly impacted by gender inequity.

This powerful event merged advocacy efforts embodied in the United Naions Agenda 2030 for

Sustainble Development, namely, SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). Each participant modeled different approaches to the many pathways for advocacy, innovation and education necessary to facilitate gender equality throughout the world.

Personal reflection

I chose to report on this event because I am an educator and have a passion for women's empowerment and education. I am also very interested in improving my own technological literacy and leveraging technology as a tool to increase global connectivity and the mental health and well-being of women around the world. Watching this event provided me with tremendous insight into how to expand the scope of my nonprofit work – by continuing to leverage online platforms to host, promote and uplift the courses that I facilitate for women of color. As such, I intend to reach out to the panelists in hopes that I can connect with them, learn more and potentially contribute to their efforts. I feel very much called to action and inspired to ensure that I reach a global audience through the work that I believe I have been called to contribute to the world.

Event Overview

NGO Commission on the Status of Women New York Monthly Meeting; *Overview:* Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights confirms everyone's right to education. The CSW67 priority theme focuses on: "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and a review theme "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls".

Title: Transformative Learning: Pathways to achieve gender equality through digital innovation

Date/Time: October 20, 2022 1:30pm - 3:00pm (EST)

Location: Zoom

Moderator: Pamela Morgan, NGO CSW/NY Member-At-Large and Co-Chair of NGO CSW67 Forum

Panelists: Alejandra Ceja: Vice President, Office of Social Impact and Inclusion & Executive Director, Panasonic Foundation at Panasonic Corporation of North America

Antara Ganguli: Director, Head of the UNGEI Secretariat at UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)

Isata Kabia, Founder and Director of Voice of Women Africa

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Integrating a Gender Perspective into Mental Health Approaches for UN Peacekeeping

Sarah Ingraham[1]

Source: https://bit.ly/3X020th

News Update

An initiative started by Mexico to support the mental health of UN Peace Operations Personnel resulted in a first stand-alone mental health resolution in the Security Council. Resolution 2668 (2022) *passed unanimously* on December 21, 2022 (United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2022). Countries present at the Security Council meeting for this resolution included Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and Turkey.

Introduction

The resolution calls for building a culture of well-being and care that includes support during pre-deployment training and deployment, ensures a gender-responsive approach, and encourages troop- and police-contributing countries, including Member States and the UN Secretariat, to provide mental health services. The Council recognizes the dignity and well-being "to which all people working for peace in the world have the right" (United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2022).

H.E. Ambassador Juan Ramón de la Fuente, Permanent representative of the Mission of Mexico to the UN, welcomed the adoption and spoke about the persistent stigma surrounding mental health, a matter that should be deemed as important as physical health. He mentioned that post-traumatic stress rates, among other mental health issues, are higher for deployed United Nations personnel than for the general public. Thus, the goal of the resolution is to accord appropriate attention to the mental health of peacekeeping personnel before, during, and after deployment.

Report on Event for Integrating a Gender Perspective into Mental Health Approaches for UN Peacekeeping

This article reports on an event held virtually at the United Nations on October 27, 2022, on the importance of seeking gender equality to improve mental health in peacekeeping missions. This topic has been

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1 Reported by Sarah Ingraham, a member of the Student Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology, a doctoral student in the Department of International and Comparative Education, Columbia University Teachers College, and a student in Professor Judy Kuriansky's course on "Psychology and the United Nations." In addition to her scholastic work, she has 20 years of experience working internationally to support equity, sustainability, and scholarship and to advance peace in countries including Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, and France. She is interested in well-being, development, empowerment of women, diversity, and national happiness.

getting increased attention at the UN given that mental health of personnel involved in peacekeeping missions is a concern while it is paramount to the success of these missions. The purpose of the meeting was to collaborate and raise awareness surrounding current issues and protocols so that the UN can have a better understanding and consideration of uniformed personnel mental health needs in peace operations.

The event focused on the role of gender in peacekeeping missions and how improving the status of women can enhance the overall functionality of these operations. Women's subjugated roles in peacekeeping missions demands improved mental health infrastructure and gender equality to leverage the potential impact that women and these missions can have on generating peace worldwide. The event was sponsored by the United Nations Department of Operational Support and the permanent missions to the UN of Canada, Germany, Ghana, Israel, and Mexico to the United Nations on October 27, 2022, by Zoom.

Background

Given Sustainable Development Goal #5 of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which calls for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, this event fit into the broader goals of the UN for human rights and dignity of women worldwide. In addition, Sustainable Development Goal #3 prioritizes good health and well-being, specifically in target 3.4, which states the agreement "to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" (United Nations, 2022).

This effort is also part of the UN's new Mental Health Strategy for Uniformed Personnel that covers wellness, prevention, and mitigation during pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases of peacekeeping (Concept Note, 2022) and aligns with the UN's Mental Health and Well-being Strategy (UN Healthy Workforce, 2023) to:

1. Create a workplace that enhances mental and physical health and wellbeing

2. Develop, deliver, and evaluate high-quality psychosocial services everywhere that UN personnel work

3. Welcome and support staff who live with mental health challenges

4. Ensure sustainable funding for mental health and wellbeing services.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into the new strategy is vital for making the approach inclusive of all peacekeepers.

Furthermore, the effort to improve mental health support in peacekeeping missions also aligns with the International Peace Institute (IPI), an independent think tank that promotes prevention and settlement of conflicts between and within states by strengthening peace and security (IPI, 2023). The IPI strives to help the UN and its partners to improve safety in the world through policy research and dialogue. The latest IPI report of 2020 addresses mental health in UN peace operations and analyzes stressors and psychological factors that lead to the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues in peace operations. The IPI report of 2020 also recommends strategies for the UN to care for field personnel including the following:

Raise the profile of mental health in UN peace operations

- Provide more deployment support

- Strengthen support during deployment

- Continue to provide support post-deployment (IPI, 2020).

In addition, Mexico's effort to promote mental health in the security council began with a Call to Action and statement from Ambassador Dr. Ramón de la Fuente, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Mexico to the United Nations, on September 6, 2022 (Misión de Mexico ONU, 2022). Ambassador de

Integrating a Gender Perspective into Mental Health Approaches for UN Peacekeeping cont.

la Fuente announced that recent studies show the rate of mental health problems in peacekeeping operations are significant which has consequences on the performance of the agency, but above all for the health and well-being of personnel who offer their lives for peacekeeping operations. Ambassador Dr. Ramón de la Fuente spoke about Mexico's Call to Action proposing four recommendations: 1. To give greater visibility to mental health issues in peacekeeping operations 2. To provide better training for early recognition of conditions that may be affecting the health of peacekeepers. 3. To foster a culture of psychosocial care and support during deployments to all operations and 4. To ensure that deployed personnel receive the psychosocial support they require (Misión de Mexico ONU, 2022).
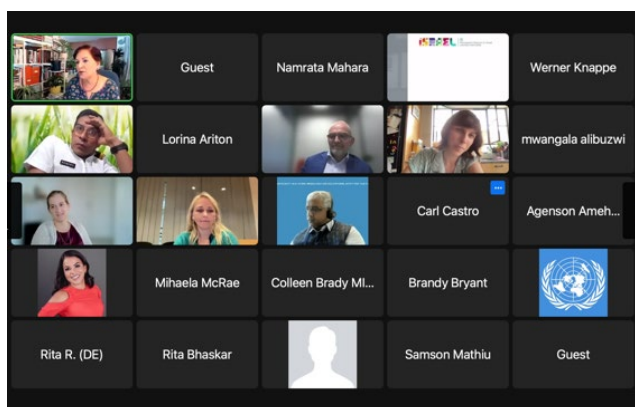
Over 100 attendees at the UN webinar on mental health and peacekeeping (source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

The Event

The event, held virtually, consisted of three parts: opening statements, a panel discussion, and questions and answers. The meeting was opened at 9:00am (EDT) by the moderator Dr. Adarsh Tiwathia, Deputy Director of the Clinical Governance Section of the Division of Healthcare Management and

Moderator Dr. Adarsh Tiwathia
(source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

Occupational Safety and Health/Office Support Operations at the UN. She introduced the topic and the need for integrating a gender perspective into approaches for UN Peacekeeping. She announced that the event was co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions to the UN of Canada, Germany, Ghana, Israel, and Mexico to the UN.

A joint opening statement on behalf of the co-sponsors was made by Mr. Werner Obermeyer, Director of the World Health Organization office at the United Nations, who asserted the importance for Member States to keep the conversation going surrounding mental health and peacekeeping while mainstreaming a gender approach to make mental health inclusive and accessible to all. He emphasized that differences in exposure and response to stressors have been recorded between genders, that gender norms affect the way individuals treat and approach mental health, and that lack of gender infrastructure could create further barriers to peacekeeping. To conclude, he invited all member states and stakeholders to join Mexico's Call to Action on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support launched on World Mental Health Day, October 10th, 2022. This Call to Action invites UN Member States and all relevant stakeholders to commit to improving access to mental health

and psychosocial support services, strengthening a comprehensive health and social protection system, and ensuring that universal health coverage includes these services (Untied for Global Mental Health, 2023).

In opening remarks, Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support in the UN Department of Operational Support, presented data collected by two healthcare experts from his department who visited four peacekeeping missions in Africa (South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, and Central Africa). The Department of Operational Support (DOS) provides support to all UN Secretariat entities, including advisory, and operational and transactional services and supports the entire UN Secretariat, consisting of almost 100 entities located around the globe (United Nations Department of Operational Support, 2023). The findings showed that peacekeeping missions are marked by multiple factors leading to stress and anxiety, such as difficulty in communication with family, living in a difficult conflict environment, exposure to human suffering, and disturbed sleep. Furthermore, these healthcare experts found that unit cohesion protects against the stress and strain of serving in peacekeeping missions. Mr. Khare highlighted the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusivity and the importance of considering gender when it comes to stress and mental wellbeing.

The introduction was also joined by Dr. Bernard Lennartz, Director of the UN Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health/Department of Support (DHMOSH/DOS). This division provides Human Resources and advisory services to managers and business partners in the UN Secretariat worldwide (UN Department of Operational Support, 2023). Dr. Lennartz reiterated the importance of gender perspectives in mental health and introduced the keynote speaker.

Overall, these opening remarks posed a range of issues to be addressed by a panel of diverse perspectives from around the globe, including professors whose research sheds light on mental health of women in peacekeeping missions along with women who share firsthand accounts of their experiences serving in peacekeeping missions. The overarching theme of the panel focused on: What are the different challenges women find themselves in when deployed in peacekeeping missions? How can we look through the lens of equity and diversity and apply lessons learned to create more inclusive environments that ultimately benefit the success of these missions?

Panel Discussion

The panel opened with a keynote speaker, Professor Carl Andrew Castro, Professor of Social Work and Psychology at the University of Southern California in the USA, who is also a retired colonel in the United States Army. In a PowerPoint presentation, Professor Castro introduced stereotypes that women on deployment typically face, for example, that "They lack physical and psychological strength to perform effectively in combat", "They disrupt the natural cohesion that forms among male soldiers", and "They adversely impact the morale of soldiers". Counter to these fallacies, he pointed out that women are highly effective leaders, that most militaries throughout the world could not be fully staffed without including women, and that women provide vital skills that increase combat effectiveness.

Furthermore, while military service and peacekeeping deployments can be stressful, he said, women have successfully participated in several peacekeeping, humanitarian, and combat deployments. However, the common stressors experienced by women and men in peacekeeping missions are different, and Professor Castro depicts this with two graphs. Additionally, he emphasized differences in how men and women respond to and cope with stress, for example, women are more likely to seek care for physical and mental health issues than men, and these differences must be acknowledged to understand common differences in gender perspectives. In conclusion, Professor Castro asserted that women perform effectively and possess the required mental toughness to
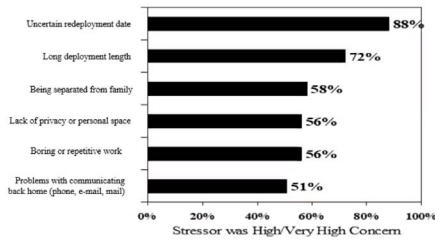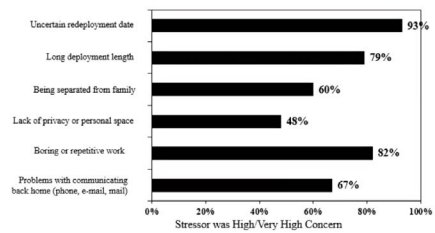
Image depicting common stressors for Women in peacekeeping from Professor Carl Andrew Castro PowerPoint presentation (source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

Image depicting common stressors for Men in peacekeeping from Professor Carl Andrew Castro PowerPoint presentation (source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

serve in peacekeeping missions, but inequality degrades the effectiveness of the military, and women need more support. Furthermore, leaders at all levels need to focus on integrating women into the mission of peacekeeping service.

The first panelist, Professor Rivka Tuval-Mashiach, Clinical Psychologist and Faculty Member of Bar-Ilan University and Academic Director at NATAL the Israel Center for Trauma and Resilience, and Member of the UN Advisory Committee of Mental Health Experts presented about why a gender perspective is

crucial for understanding wellbeing in peacekeeping forces. She defined gender mainstreaming as a strategy towards realizing gender equality. She asserted that gender mainstreaming involves the integration of gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures, and spending programs. She further stated that we need to change the unconscious process, or biases, for the reality to change; for example, the stereotypes that "women are more hysterical" and "men are more emotionally resilient" need to change. Since there is a significant representation of women in peacekeeping missions, we need to acknowledge that men are not the default anymore because when a woman comes into a masculine environment, she must do a lot more to adapt, and it is harder for her to cope in a society that doesn't view her needs.

Posing a provocative question, she asked, "What happens when you search 'peacekeeping forces' in google images?" The results are shown in Figure 1 of the slide from her PowerPoint presentation. As the slide shows, the answer is: images of only men come up, and to find images of women, you must search for "peacekeeping forces *women*", as shown in figure 2. She commented that this reveals a default conception of peacekeeping forces as related to only men.
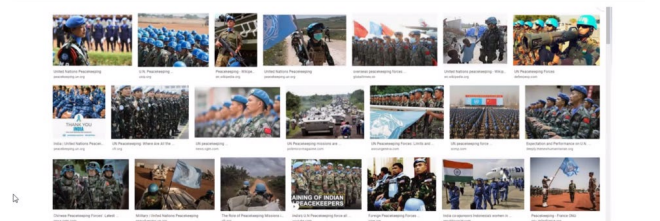
Images depicting google search for "peacekeeping forces" slide from Professor Rivka Tuval-Mashiach's PowerPoint presentation (source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

Professor Tuval-Mashiach went on to explain that stereotypes shape our thinking and if men are the default in the search, women are the "other". Furthermore, when a woman comes into a masculine environment, she needs to adapt much more than if she
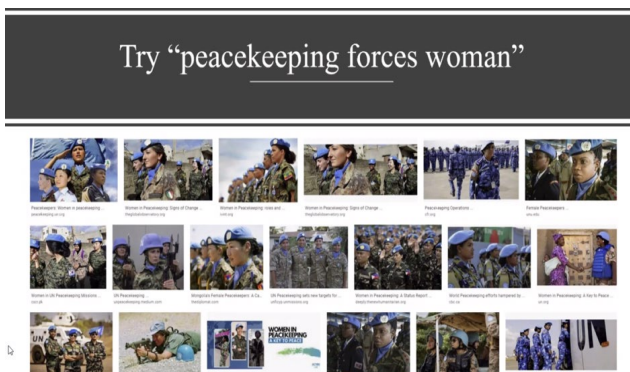
Images depicting google search for "peacekeeping forces woman" slide from Professor Rivka Tuval-Mashiach's PowerPoint presentation (Source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

were a man, both from a physical and a mental point of view. It is harder for women to come into a place where she is considered the outsider, or where the environment does not consider her needs. This means that in such masculine-structured organizations, women need to cope with extra stressors that men do not need to cope with.

She then posed another provocative question: "Are there gender differences in mental illnesses?" Her answer was that society views women as likely to be more "hysterical" (a psychological term indicating emotionally lability) while men are considered more emotionally resilient or stable). In fact, women suffer more from internalizing mental health disorders, such as depression, whereas men suffer from externalizing disorders, such as substance abuse. She also stated that the sources of PTSD are different for men and women, and that female military personnel experience three main types of trauma: trauma induced by combat, sexual trauma, and environmental trauma. Therefore, since women experience trauma differently than men, she asked, "What can be done to create equitable instruments for women in a male- constructed environment?" She suggested an answer that we need to reach out to women, make services accessible to women and to LGBTQ populations, raise awareness about gender inequality, and fight stigma about mental health.

The second panelist, Dr. José Manuel Romero, Psychiatrist at the Regional Military Hospital in La Paz, Mexico, and a Member of the UN Advisory Committee of Mental Health Experts at the UN, presented about the work in Mexico to support survivors of gender violence in the Mexican army. He reported that 1 in 2 women in the world are subjected to physical or sexual violence and the most prevalent disorders that arise for women are anxiety, depression, sleep deprivation, and PTSD. Dr. Romero represents the Center for Comprehensive Care and Treatment with a Gender Perspective in Mexico City, which treats 50

Panelist Dr. José Manuel Romero (source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

patients per month, and provides psychiatric care, continuous education around sexual violence and harassment, and enhanced psychological skills and abilities for survivors to regain autonomy. In addition, the center advises the Mexican Army's General for Human Rights and General Director of Health among other initiatives to support victims of physical or sexual violence.

The third panelist, Professor Nina Wilén, Associate Professor at Lund University in Sweden, presented on the risks related to instrumentalizing female participation in peace operations. Her three main points were the following: 1. When we instrumentalize women's participation, we also risk confusing normative agendas and evidence-based research 2. Instrumentalizing women's participation means putting high expectations on women peacekeepers that

we are not putting on male peacekeepers 3. One way to avoid these challenges is to switch the focus away from the women to the environment in which they are meant to be integrated.

Professor Wilén argues that since female soldiers are caught in unrealistic gender-stereotyped expectations, they tend to work extra hard in an already challenging situation as minorities. For instance, female peacekeepers often work a second shift, for example in orphanages, while men do not. Research has shown that women are trying to live up to expectations by proving they are adding something that only
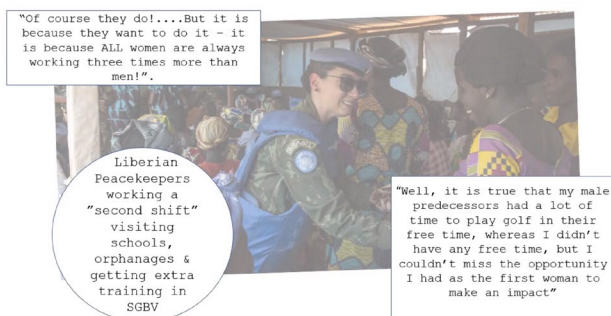
Image of Liberian peacekeepers working overtime and quotes depicting expectations felt by women peacekeepers in slide from Professor Nina Wilén PowerPoint presentation (Source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

they can add. Also, it is difficult to measure women's added value since they represent only 5% of the military workforce and arguments about women's added value come more from expectations rather than what they actually add. Thus, higher expectations for women, that are often gender-stereotyped expectations, increase the burden they take on in an already male-dominated environment.

Panelist Professor Nina Wilén (source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

Given these problematic situations, Professor Wilén calls for a shift from focusing on women to focusing on the environment in which women are working, which is constructed for and by men. This is evidenced by, for example, the fact that there is no gynecologist available to serve their medical needs, and that uniform sizes are made for men. Professor Wilén argues that we must develop a more positive masculinity that promotes diversity and inclusion rather than homogeneity and exclusion.
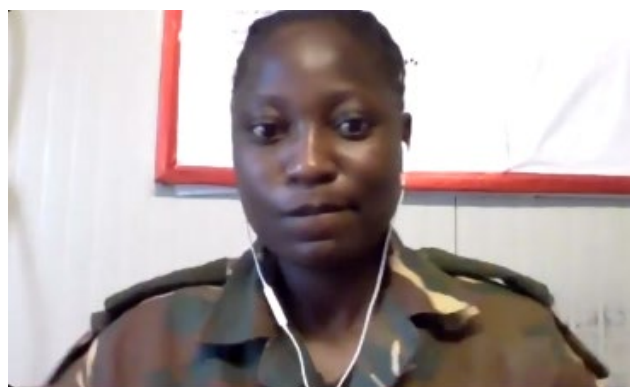
Panelist Professor Lt. Mwangala Alibuzwi (source: screenshot by Sarah Ingraham)

The fourth panelist, Lt. Mwangala Alibuzwi, represents a "voice from the field", a woman who has served in peacekeeping missions. Lt. Alibuzwi is deployed as a psychologist in the Central African Republic with the Zambian Battalion. She presented

on the positive impact that women have in Zambia's peacekeeping missions, including Zambian female personnel's ability to gain trust of local women and girls through health, peace, and productivity education talks. Women face challenges, including being left out of many tasks, causing loss in motivation, depressive moods, and suicidal thoughts. Women also face stressors due to difficulties in communicating with their families at home, which leads to panic and negative thoughts. Thus, she suggested that women should receive adequate training to undertake all tasks in the Zambian Mission, and that they should be provided with adequate facilities to communicate with family at home, allowed room for creativity, and routinely screened for stress.

The fifth panelist, Brigadier General Dr. Namrata Mahara Rawal of Nepal, also a "woman's voice from the field" served in South Sudan and Congo as a medical officer. She presented about the importance of women in peacekeeping missions since women play a major positive role, in that women de-escalate tensions between their male colleagues and local populations; can foster confidence and trust among local populations; and enhance local outreach. Further, women are good negotiators and form a "soft posture", which leads to less violence.

General Rawal presented the following anonymous quote from a woman's perspective in the field:

"There is often a lack of female healthcare services and safe living conditions, and women can feel threatened and intimidated and even are sexually assaulted. Often women do not want to complain because they feel they are proving a man's point that `they are not tough enough to deploy'."

In conclusion, she offered several recommendations: broadly integrate diverse roles and ranks for women; prioritize women's safety; introduce gender-mainstreaming; and set equitable policies.

Moderator Dr. Tiwathia wrapped up the panel with final words on the UN plan to enhance mental health of peacekeeping missions. The current project involves drafting and implementing a Mental Health Strategy for UN Uniformed Personnel. This endeavor is supported by a committee of experts on mental health from various member states, as well as WHO, NGOs, and academic institutions. This strategy includes learning about what contributing countries are already doing regarding mental health and support and is also open to other Member States to join these efforts. Additionally, the strategy focuses on building online platforms and training, training religious teachers who are turned to in times of distress, and reducing stigma associated with seeking help. The expected outcomes are to have a better understanding of best practices for preventing and mitigating mental health issues in uniformed personnel, pre- and post-deployment.

Expected outcomes on concept note

Questions and Answer Segment

Attendee to the event Colonel Henney Snellen Milad posed a question to Professor Castro, whose presentation focused on the effectiveness of women, especially in peacekeeping operations, and asked, "Why are women especially effective UN peacekeeping operations?" In answer to this question, Professor Castro stated that first and foremost, women have been successful on all missions. Women are better at forming relationships with other women and children and forming inclusivity. On the other hand, the focus of training for men is on killing and combat; thus, the skills of women allow them to make mental shifts from violence to peace more easily. Overall, he added, the skills and aptitude that women can contribute and the role that women can play has been largely underutilized.

Next, Dr. Samson Mathiu, Chief Medical Officer at the United Nations, asked, "Are there better coping and

Integrating a Gender Perspective into Mental Health Approaches for UN Peacekeeping cont.

resilience mechanisms in women based on natural (hormonal and genetic) or acquired/adaptive (functional, cultural) factors?" Professor Tuval-Mashiach answered that there is lots of environmental involvement with the way we cope. Society really shapes the way we develop our coping mechanisms, evidenced by the differences between societies and time periods, and the different coping mechanisms that have been utilized and changed over time.

In final remarks, Professor Wilén stated that we need more peacekeeping diversity, including ethnicity, age, *and* gender; but we should not overemphasize gender stereotypes. In addition, local communities are generally 50% men, so both men and women in peacekeeping operations need adequate training to communicate with local populations.

Lastly, Professor Tuval-Mashiach stated that the condition of PTSD is important to mental health, but it is only one of the disorders that has a starting (trigger) point, since traumatic events provide a clear window to intervene at any (early) level, without having a severe clinical diagnosis. In other disorders that have no clear window, the need for intervention is less explicitly obvious and may happen in later stages when stress and depression are already formed; thus, training for early recognition and intervention is important.

Personal Reflections

This event was important to me personally and relates to my field of study in International and Comparative Education. I firmly believe that gender equality is a fundamental steppingstone to a more peaceful and just world. This meeting offered many diverse voices, both male and female, covering several professional roles and expert perspectives from around the world. Furthermore, this event was an excellent example of how a high-level meeting at the UN is organized, precise in every way, and representing the professionalism with which the UN operates.

Gender equality is further personally important to me as a female who has faced gender discrimination in my life in various settings, within my family, in school, and the workforce. My grandmother was one of the first four women to graduate from Columbia University Medical School and practice medicine during a time when this was not at all common. I aim to follow in her footsteps by blazing trails to create more opportunities and dignified and just lives for young women of this world.

Event Overview

Title: Integrating a Gender Perspective into Mental Health Approaches for UN Peacekeeping

Date/Time: Thursday, October 27, 2022, 9:00 – 10:30 am (EST)

Location: Zoom

Moderator: Dr. Adarsh Tiwathia, Deputy Director, Clinical Governance Section, Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health/ Office Support Operations

Joint Statement on behalf of the Co-sponsors: Mr. Werner Obermeyer, Director, WHO office at the United Nations

Opening Remarks: Atul Khare, USG for Operational Support Atul Khare, Department of Operational Support, UN

Introduction: Dr. Bernhard Lennartz, Director, DH-MOSH/DOS

Keynote Speaker: Professor Carl Andrew Castro, Professor of Social Work and Psychology, Director, Military and Veteran Programs, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, University of Southern California, Colonel (Retired), U.S. Army (U.S.) Panelists: Professor Rivka Tuval-Mashiach, Head of Community Services Unit, NATAL, (Israel, Member of the Advisory Committee); José Manuel Romero,

Integrating a Gender Perspective into Mental Health Approaches for UN Peacekeeping cont.

Psychiatrist, Regional Military Hospital, La Paz, (Mexico, Member of the Advisory Committee); Professor Nina Wilén, Director Africa Program, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, (Located in Belgium); Lt Mwangala Alibuzwi, Psychologist with Zambatt Battalion (Zambia); Brig Gen Dr. Namrata Mahara Rawal, Division Head and Associate Professor, Commandant, Western Division Hospital (Nepal)

Contact: Clinicalgovernance@un.org

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Source: https://bit.ly/3QueUxj

"Girls Speak out": Minding the Girls' Rights Gap highlighted on the International Day of the Girl

Dionne R. Regis[1]

Artist Ipsita Divedi's graphic recording of the transformative conversations between the girl activists and UN representative during this event

"Keep dreaming even if it breaks your heart". These words were shared from a girl in Afghanistan determined to change the culture of her society in which she lived—to create change in a society that sees women as second class, nameless, and insignificant without dependency. We will hear more from her story later.[1]

The International Day of the Girl Child (IDG) recognizes girls' rights in areas not limited to equity in education, healthcare, mental healthcare, bodily autonomy, and independence to make individual choices in the gendered system. The Day acknowledges unique challenges faced by girls around the world.

The blueprint to IDG was established in 1995 at the World Conference on Women in Beijing where countries unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It was the most progressive plan ever created for advancing women's rights and the first document to specifically call out girl's rights. Sixteen years later, on December 19, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170, declaring October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, recognizing girls' rights and the path to change.

The United Nations takes IDG very seriously as it is heavily related to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals which were adopted by world leaders at the UN General Assembly in 2015. SDG 5 is inherent to International Day of the Girl Child because of its goal towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. According to the UN website (n.d.)

1 Reported by Dionne R. Regis, a member of IAAP as well as of the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students, pursuing a masters' degree in the Department of Counseling Psychology, Columbia University Teachers College, and a student in Professor Judy Kuriansky's class on "Psychology and the United Nations." In addition to her scholastic work, she has 6 years of experience mentoring young girls of color, instilling confidence and building future leaders. She is am interested in furthering research surrounding the onset and diagnosis of anxiety and depression in late adolescents and emerging adults (age 17-29), including minoritized populations, especially within the Afro-Diaspora. She would like to explore the influence/effects of media, during and post-covid, on adolescents and emerging adults presenting with social anxiety, GAD, and depression, with self-esteem/self-worth (self-image, motivation, imposter syndrome) and stress being some of the moderators. She would also like to further research treatment using CBT and Strengths-based therapy and certain areas of positive psychology. Lastly, it is important for her that her work comes from a multicultural approach. She hopes to be an influential advocate on a larger media scale.

"Girls Speak out" cont.

"The International Day of the Girl Child focuses attention on the need to address the challenges girls face and to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights. Adolescent girls have the right to a safe, educated, and healthy life, not only during these critical formative years, but also as they mature into women. If effectively supported during the adolescent years, girls have the potential to change the world – both as the empowered girls of today and as tomorrow's workers, mothers, entrepreneurs, mentors, household heads, and political leaders" (1).

The 10th year anniversary of the IDG was celebrated with a focused theme on: ***"IDG+10: Minding the Girls' Rights Gap–Active, Accountable Participants of IDG"***, hosted by "The Working Group on Girls", a non-profit organization that challenges the systemic discrimination of girls, with UN-Women and co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Canada, Peru, and Turkey to the United Nations. This event took

Flyer for the "Girls Speak Out" event

place in a hybrid format, both in person on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, at UN Headquarters in New York City and virtually through Zoom.

The IDG provides girl activists the space to advocate for change on a local, national, and global level, and to influence policy, while also sharing impactful and painful stories that affect girls all around the world.

The programming commenced with the first segment of "Girls Speak Out", consisting of a few words about the late noted American memoirist, popular poet, and civil rights activist Maya Angelou, delivered by the first of three moderators, a girl activist of India, Kashvi Agarwal, representing the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Those words set the tone for the rest of program, permitting the emotion, hope and perseverance to speak for others who cannot speak, and to inspire change. The second moderator Alexia, a teen currently living and studying in Senegal under the US Department of State Kennedy Lugar "Yes Abroad" program, shared more words from Maya Angelou: "We need to offer space to offer new steps of change for girls worldwide to be able to thrive".

In a recorded message, Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres spoke about the need to educate girls so they can create a better society not only for themselves but for others, leading healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives. Gaining the right healthcare leads to greater self-esteem and confidence, and bodily autonomy, he said. Girls have the right to leave situations of violence and to be safe. He spoke about the need to let girls learn, specifically in countries such as Afghanistan and made a specific piea to the Taliban. His message ended with an impactful statement: "Investing in girls is investing in our common future".

Opening Remarks were shared by the Permanent Representative of the Mission of Canada to the United Nations, H.E. Robert Rae. Ambassador Rae shared his personal experience, speaking about being a father to three young women and now having grandchildren, two which are girls. He talked about the

important of including women in grassroots gender equality movements. He referenced the hardships of Iran and Afghanistan and how the cause of freedom and equality is being led by women in various parts of the world, referring to the current revolution in Iran by young people to protect girls' and women's choice to wear or not wear the hijab. Women's rights and usage of morality police has always been an unsteady debate, he said, clarifying that it was the death of 22-year-old Kurdish woman, Masha Amini, who was visiting Tehran and detained by the morality police and subsequently died in custody, that ignited protests among women and young people (Farnaz Fassihi, Sept. 16, 2022). Lastly, Ambassador Rae spoke about October being women's history month in Canada, and the radical work they do creates change, especially with the increase in threats to women's rights across the globe, which is alarming.

During the next segment of "Girls Speak Out", artwork was shared from different girl activists from around the world (only first names released) —signifying both pain and triumph. Ishika and Arshia from India created painfully striking pieces that represent the silencing of girls, as shown in the figure.
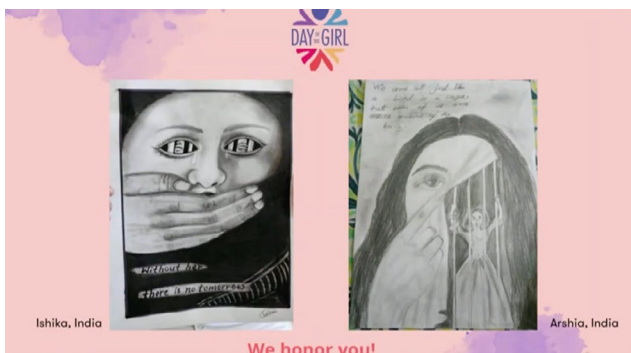
Artwork from two girls expressing pain being silenced

The third youth moderator, Demetria, representative of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, reminded the attendees about the Lenape, a Native American tribe that was forcibly displaced from their home that subsequently became New York City, and emphasized the need for fighting for Lenape girls. She offered specific honor to indigenous girls, girls in war zones, all girls affected by climate change and natural disaster, and all girls who cannot join this event for various reasons. She called for a moment of silence for Amanda Zulu, a high-achieving high school girl who was killed, along with her friend, in South Africa, by a 20-year-old man who broke into their house, and for other girls who have lost their lives to violence. Demetria spoke about the meaning of the International Day of the Girl Child and its founding roots 10 years ago. She mentioned the Beijing Declaration, quoting Section L: "All Children including girl children have the right to live without discrimination based on their or their families' race, skin color, language, religion, national, or ethnic identity, political or other opinion, property, ability, or status" (pg. 165) (3). She called out the "stillness"—that despite this article being written in 1995, the hardships that women and girls faced still persist and are exacerbated more than ever before.

"It is now that we need to work harder than ever before to address these still prominent inequities," she said.

Demetria's call to action led into the first segment of the event on the topic of "Girl's Access to Education". This topic is aligned with Article 28th of the UN Convention on the Rights of A Child which establishes that: "Girls have the right to free education and the opportunity to go to school for as long as they want to" (4), yet millions of girls are out of school. A personal experience of a Malawian girl about a sexual assault was shared from a previously recorded IDG. She was walking through the streets of her village when a man told her to buy him some ice, upon which he pulled her into his house and raped her. When she told him that she would tell her mom, he told her, "What is *she* going to do?" She tried telling her grandmother who was home at the time, but the grandmother called her story "nonsense". Therefore, the girl tried her best to forget about it, as she knew that her school wouldn't allow her to continue going if they knew she wasn't a virgin. Five years later, she found

a school for orphans with her grandmother, and they asked her, "what her story was", a question so simple and personal but which was never asked of her before. When they accepted her into the school after hearing her story, she realized that her story about being raped didn't have to define who she is as a person. Now, she is speaking openly at the UN about her experience.

In the next section of the program, the first girl activist speaker was Maka, founder and President of MTC: Educated Girl Inc., a non-profit supporting rural communities in Zimbabwe, where she is from. More than 62 million girls in the country are out of school (5). In Zimbabwe, an extra hurdle is that families must be able to afford, and be willing to pay, tuition. There is also pressure about whether to educate boys or girls. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many girls lost their ability to go to school and it was harder to keep them out of forced early child marriages. According to the organization *Girls Not Brides,* 12 million girls globally are being raped under the guise of child marriages. The organization has followed and brought back many girls who were pledged to be married. MTC hosts a communal International Day of the Girl Child to celebrate themselves, where they also invite traditional, political, and religious leaders to be part of the day's events and help them re-amplify the message of redesigning girl spaces. Maka and MTC also use sports to spread awareness about the situation of Zimbabwean girls. Through their soccer initiatives, they provide psychosocial support, mental health support, and drug abuse awareness programs to thousands of girls a week. Their advocacy was successful in that in March 2020, the government of Zimbabwe passed a bill to prohibit child marriages. Maka continues to help girls become educated and future leaders, by having created a free library used by many local communities in rural Zimbabwe.

Next to speak was Ms. Sima Bahous, UN-Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women. She talked about wanting to decrease early childhood marriages, about making sure that all girls can get a secondary education as that reduces risk of factors such as HIV, and about wanting women to use their voices to keep fighting for their rights and to never stop believing in their goals to advocate needed change.

The conversation was continued by Permanent Representative of the Mission of Turkey to the United Nation, H.E. Feridun Sinirlioğlu who noted that he felt pride to mark this 10th anniversary with the Missions of Canada and Peru. He spoke about his personal endearment to seeing girls in STEM, because due to climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, and technological advancement, "We need more women and girls to help rebuild our future".

The program transitioned to the next set of girl activist speakers. Isabella, a girl activist from the 2019 Speak Out told the story of a book she created. "Menil in her Heart" tells the story of issues surrounding missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Isabella shared that more than 80% of native women endure violence in their lifetime. The rates of murder and missing women are ten times higher than the national average in the United States, yet more than 90% of these tragedies go undocumented by media. She referenced her own story about her grandpa saying that the further away they are from their Indian heritage, the closer to God they will be to show the negative impact of Western civilization and colonialism has caused on indigenous cultures and the negative influence it has done on the erasure of culture.

Next, Samantha, a girl activist from Nigeria shared about Nigerian girls being molested and forced into silence, in "baby-making factories", where women and girls are held captive to deliver babies who are then sold illegally to adoptive parents. She started an organization called "Whisper a Code", which encourages girls to open up to trusted allies, and helps girls in their communities so they also don't become victims.

Then, H.E. Ambassador Manuel Rodríguez Cuadros, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Peru to

the United Nations, shared a few words in Spanish to introduce girl activist Vivian from Ecuador. She spoke about the harsh realities women face in Ecuador—high levels of rape in all areas: at the park, on the bus, on the street—and the urgency to tell this story to all around the world who will listen.

Ann Maria, activist for gender-based violence and women's health especially for victims of domestic violence, and representative for Girl Scouts USA spoke about how she started "Allies against Abused", a non-profit started in California in women's shelters. She also started a project in Namungo, Uganda, raising money to start a clinic called St. Sebastian Hospital where women can go to get aid.

UNICEF Deputy Sheriff of Partnerships, Karin Hulshof, summed up the messages of the girl activists by reiterating the necessity of creating safe spaces mentally and physically for girls and women to speak out and get the help they need.

Closing remarks began with a impactful and heart-wrenching story and message submitted anonymously by an Afghani girl in 2014 which was shared in the 2014 International Day of the Girl event:

"I want to change the ways girls are looked at in my society. In Afghanistan I was not a good girl. I was supposed to wear a headscarf but did not wear one until I was 13. In Afghanistan, a good girl is a good girl when she wears a big, long dress and huge scarf, sits at home, doesn't talk much and does what her family says. They tell her when something is good or bad for her. A good girl is one that doesn't ask for rights, doesn't ask for inheritance, serves her brothers and her bosses, cooks well, and doesn't have her own name, but gets called by her brothers' or father's name. She always prays five times a day and reads the Qur'an instead of going to school. She doesn't choose her husband or her future and keeps her father proud by doing all these things…."

"Even facing these hardships," she said, "we must push through for the greater good—to see that girls and women are liberated. We must keep going even if we don't see the end in sight". Her words were inspiring, as she added: "Keep on dreaming, even if it breaks your heart".

Lastly, Ipsita Divedi's graphic recording of the transformative conversations between the girl activists and UN representative during this event was unveiled. It is the first drawing spotlighted in this article.

Deputy Permanent Representative of the Mission of Canada to the UN, Ambassador Richard Arbeiter, concluded this event with final remarks, sharing gratitude towards the powerful and influential work that these girls are doing and reiterating the call for action.

Personal Reflection

I chose this event to cover because of my passion about working with adolescents and emerging adults, especially young girls. Professionally, I want to look at how environmental factors impact self-esteem and self-worth and how that leads to anxiety, depression, and suicide. Some of the environmental factors involve media and bullying, but also involves harsher realities such as violence, sexual abuse, and lack of resources such as basic needs, and education. I wanted to attend this event to hear more from girl activists on how we can stop silencing their voices which leads to not only physical but mental constraints.

Event Overview:

TITLE: *IDG+10: Minding the Girls' Rights Gap–Active, Accountable Participants of IDG*

CONFERENCE: Girls Speak Out

Date/Time: 11 October 2022

Location: United Nations Headquarters, New York City

Zoom Location: https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1n/k1nb0k9ry7

Moderators: Mackenzie, Kashvi, Alexia, and Demetra (girl activists)

"Girls Speak out" cont.

Panelists: Girl Activist Maka, founder and president of MTC Educate A Girl Inc; Girl Activist Vivian, from Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Buen Pastor, Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd; UN-Under-Secretary-General Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN Women; H.E. Robert Rae, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Canada to the United Nations; H.E. Manuel Rodríguez Cuadros, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Peru to the United Nations: H.E. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Turkey to the United Nations; Ann Maria, activist for gender based violence and women's health especially for victims of domestic violence; Karin Hulshof, UNICEF Deputy Sheriff of Partnerships.

This day could not have been made possible without the collective sponsors, both allies and advocates, who help such important work as International Day of the Girl Child continue to prosper and make influential changes globally. Allies are Girls Learn International, International Presentation Association, NGO CSW, Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA), and the Salvation Army. Advocates are Decisions in Democracy, Girl Rising, Future Rising, and Just Like You Foundation (6).

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Post-Traumatic Growth in Parents of Children with Autism: A training with specific strategies

Kirsten Richburg[1]

EVENT OVERVIEW:

Title: Post-Traumatic Growth In Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Date/Time: Post-Traumatic Growth In Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Location: December 15th, 2022/12:00 PM EST

Moderator: Hudson Valley Professional Development

Panelist: Dr. Victoria Grinman

Logo for Growing Kind Minds LLC. (source: https://growingkindminds.com/).

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) refers to positive changes that can occur after an individual faces a traumatic event. When this term is mentioned in connection with parents with children with autism, given the stresses of that situation, one may not immediately understand the association. A training course made this connection clear and hopeful by providing helpful techniques to help such parents cope in a healthy and thriving way.

The term Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) describes children and adults with developmental deficits characterized by restrictive and repetitive behaviors, emotions, and thoughts that impact social communication and interactions, with variabilities for each individual. Such individuals typically require additional support to help them communicate and interact with the world around them. Since parents -- and those responsible for the care of those with ASD -- are responsible for the holistic environment in which the child is raised, they need to be emotionally prepared as well as physically capable. However, these caregivers' needs and challenges tend to be overlooked. If caregivers' mental health and well-being go unnoticed and unheeded, it can lead to detrimental effects on the caregiver and the child.

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1 Reported by Kirsten Richburg, a member of the Student Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology pursing a masters' degree in the Department of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University Teachers College, and a student of Professor Judy Kuriansky's class on "Psychology and the United Nations." She is interested in working with children diagnosed with ASD to determine how this neurological disorder manifests and if there is a way to mitigate symptoms after onset and ensure the family dynamic is strong and healthy for the child's development.

Post-Traumatic Growth in Parents of Children with Autism cont.

To address these concerns, the Hudson Valley Professional Development held an online training course on December 15, 2022, entitled *Post-Traumatic Growth In Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. This four-hour training cost USD$120 and offered 4 CEs (continuing education credits) for professionals interested in furthering their education in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and family therapy, including for varied New York State Licensed professionals, e.g., Mental Health Counselors, Licensed Master Social Workers, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Creative Arts Therapists, psychologists, and psychoanalysts. The course was taught by Dr. Victoria Grinman, who highlighted the struggles and challenges faced by parents of children with ASD who were identified, evaluated, treated and researched by her in her clinical practice. The training further included how parents' experiences their child's development. Upon completion of the course, attendees received the CE credits and a certificate of completion.

The author of this paper notes that this topic relates to the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda in terms of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), which cover, respectively, the mental and physical health of all individuals, which includes parents of and children with autism, and the inequalities that these two generations face in terms of opportunity and education. This relationship with the UN Agenda is important since this paper is related to my participation and requirements in the course on "Psychology and the United Nations" given at Columbia University Teachers College by Professor Dr. Judy Kuriansky, who represents NGOs at the UN and has 20-yeard experience advocating at the UN about mental health and well-being.

Dr. Grinman, referred to as the "parent whisperer," a person in whom parents can confide and can use as a resource for information and relief, has decades of experience as a dual-licensed psychologist and aromatherapist, is a clinical social worker in New York and Massachusetts, and is the founder of Growing Kind Minds LLC, a private practice and global community platform that helps individuals achieve joy and overcome trauma-related challenges (Growing Kind Minds, 2022). Her aim of this training was to offer an understanding of the "multilayered compounding parenthood experience of parents of children with ASD." The 38 professionals in attendance were given information on how these parents uniquely cope, the markers of post-traumatic growth (PTG), and how to help facilitate PTG in this population. Dr. Grinman also presented some of her most recent research on this topic and shared her insights from her ongoing qualitative study examining the PTG experience of parents of children with ASD.

Dr. Victoria Grinman (https://growingkindminds.com/, 2020).

Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)

Psychological trauma occurs when individuals are unable to naturally cope or navigate an overwhelming and unforeseen event or circumstance (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1995). In contrast, PTG represents the

positive psychological change in individuals who have suffered from some trauma; a concept developed and promoted by Calhoun & Tedeschi (1995). According to Calhoun & Tedeschi (1996), individuals who have achieved PTG are characterized by five factors. They:

1. find they relate more to others with greater compassion

2. have discovered new possibilities in life (new roles and people)

3. appreciate their own personal strengths

4. undergo a spiritual or belief system change (connection to a greater good)

5. have a deeper appreciation of life and its meaning.

PTG is measurable through the PTG Inventory (PTGI), a 21-item self-report scale used to help clinicians assess for growth in these five domains. The 21 statements listed in the questionnaire are rated on a 5-point scale, with 0 indicating the client "did not experience this change as a result of [their] crisis" and 5 showing the client "experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of [their crisis]" (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1995). The scores are added to provide information on any growth the client has experienced since the traumatic occurrence.

How does PTG relate to parents of children with ASD?

In the training session, Dr. Grinman made a point of distinguishing between parenthood and parenting. Parenthood is "a state of being a mother or father, with all of its positive and negative experiences related to raising a child, and all the constant changes and boundaries established," while parenting is more simply described as "the art of raising that child."

In the early stages of her research, when Dr. Grinman asked parents of children with ASD to describe their experiences with parenthood, she found that parents

would often "talk exclusively about their child's experiences, what the child might think or feel," neglecting their own experience. Raising a child on the spectrum in a connected and balanced environment makes it more common – understandably – that parents would describe their experiences through their child, who is the main focal point of their lives. But Dr. Grinman's research was intended to get th parents to speak about themselves, and therefore to separate the parent's own experiences from that of their child, and to delve into the effects their child's condition has on the parent's mental and physical state.

ASD is a complex developmental and neurological disability that appears in the first few years of a child's life. Thus, parenting such a child can be very challenging. Parents of children invariably have assumptions about how their parenthood journey will be and how their children will develop, expecting a "normal" child. Thus, when professionals tell them that their child is on the Spectrum, this can be traumatic news, which significantly shocks parents' assumptions and expectations that even get "demolished by the stark reality of this condition." The new, unexpected situation and required adjustment trigger a range of emotions, including confusion, frustration, insecurity, feeling overwhelmed, and unable to cope with this new reality. According to Dr. Grinman's qualitative study and research on parents of children with ASD, the source of parental trauma is not necessarily the diagnosis itself but the effects of the diagnosis on their personal and professional lives going forward, as they immediately know they must make accommodations and adjustments for the child and themselves.

The nature and also the point of trauma varies from parent to parent, meaning that trauma can develop immediately upon knowing the child's condition, or can emerge later in the parenthood journey. Also, the behavioral issues of the child can manifest early or later in the child's development, causing parents to drastically change their life. Also, in some situations, the stress of raising a child with ASD can lead to such

Post-Traumatic Growth in Parents of Children with Autism cont.

Post Traumatic Growth Inventory

Client Name:_____ Today's Date:_____

Indicate for each of the statements below the degree to which this change occurred in your life as a result of the crisis/disaster, using the following scale.

0 = I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis.
1 = I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my crisis.
2 = I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my crisis.
3 = I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my crisis.
4 = I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my crisis.
5 = I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis.

Possible Areas of Growth and Change	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. I changed my priorities about what is important in life.						
2. I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life.						
3. I developed new interests.						
4. I have a greater feeling of self-reliance.						
5. I have a better understanding of spiritual matters.						
6. I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble.						
7. I established a new path for my life.						
8. I have a greater sense of closeness with others.						
9. I am more willing to express my emotions.						
10. I know better that I can handle difficulties.						
11. I am able to do better things with my life.						
12. I am better able to accept the way things work out.						
13. I can better appreciate each day.						
14. New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise.						
15. I have more compassion for others.						
16. I put more effort into my relationships.						
17. I am more likely to try to change things which need changing.						
18. I have a stronger religious faith.						
19. I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was.						
20. I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are.						
21. I better accept needing others.						

Post-traumatic Growth Inventory (source: Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999).

extreme parental discord that ends in divorce. These varied situations and reactions are important when determining how best to help parents respond to this trauma and to help them build resilience, recover, and eventually thrive in their new reality.

As Dr. Grinman points out, PTG for parents of children with ASD "happens in the context of, and due to, the struggle of processing pain and loss." It is the reaction to the trauma, the "spectrum between emphasizing loss only to reassessing the meaning of what's present and possible." It is the "experience of growth or benefits that an individual receives due to the post-traumatic struggle.

How parents of children with ASD can cope

Parents of children with ASD typically experience stress in parenthood to varying degrees, which can be multilayered and compounding. Overall, parents have diverse and specific challenges and stressors that depend on the severity of their child's symptoms, their immediate environment, and the parents' resources to cope with the child's condition.

According to Dr. Grinman, the parenthood journey is comprised of three layers. The first layer is parenthood in general and all those common challenges. The second layer involves coming to terms with having a child with a chronic disability that requires additional and unique support/resources. The final layer deals with societal judgments and potential ostracization by the community, other family members, and often other parents who do not have children with ASD or understand the neurological disorder. Parents at the third stage tend to experience what Dr. Grinman calls "ambiguous loss," which is the feeling of loss experienced when parents find out they do not have the child they expected, and must come to terms with the realization that they will be dealing with many unknowns.

Despite the multilayered stress and negative outcomes that parents of a child with ASD may experience, there can be benefits and growth produced in the journey of parenthood. "These benefits reflect

five domains of PTG; new possibilities, appreciation of life, personal strength, relating to others, and spiritual change."

Three strategies/activities for clinicians helping to facilitate PTG with parents of children with ASD, were introduced by Dr. Grinman.

1. One strategy is a two-handed writing activity in which parents use white, non-lined paper (to give the parent freedom and less restrictive access to the page), colored pens/pencils, and a timer to engage in a freestyle writing exercise. During this exercise, the clinician invites the parent to converse with two different parts of themselves: one part feels alone and unable to rely/lean on anyone for support (the "traumatized" part), and the other "wise" part of themselves can focus on growth. The parent is instructed to divide the paper in half and choose a different colored pen/pencil to represent both sides and decide which hand will describe each part (i.e., whether the dominant hand will represent the wise part or the part feeling inadequate). The parent then begins writing, and alternates between the two halves of the paper. The "traumatized part" can write whatever thoughts or feelings need to be expressed, while the "wise" part identifies how they can cope with their new reality, for example, including others they can lean on. If, during the exercise, the parent is feeling ambivalent or "stuck," they are instructed to let both voices be heard by using a stream of consciousness, to let the ideas and thoughts come out naturally and sort them out later. At the end of the activity, the parent and clinician review and reflect on everything the parent wrote down.

2. The second strategy is aimed at helping parents change their outlook on parenthood and is based on a "dialectical thinking collage" meant to facilitate new possibilities. In the activity, parents select paper, colored utensils, and other art supplies, such as magazine pictures or images, to represent how they feel. This activity can also be done online via PowerPoint, SmartArt, or Google Workspace, whereby, instead of using a sheet of paper, the software would act as the blank canvas

on which pictures or images will be placed. After selecting a canvas, the parents are asked to divide the canvas in half; one side is supposed to represent/depict the now and past, while the other side represents/shows the future. The parents should select images that portray aspects of their past and present life, for example, hobbies, sports they played when they were younger, or pictures related to their current profession or status. The images reflecting the future should portray the parents' hopes and desires; how they envision their lives going forward. When looking at both parts of this canvas, the images can often reflect contradictory representations - which shows the varied feelings that can exist within the same space, and normalizes them. Creating this collage helps parents see the challenges they are facing. Through discussions with the clinician, in which the representations are dissected and evaluated, they can work through these challenges to create a functional life where they can still find joy amongst the stress they are undergoing. After utilizing this activity with patients in her practice, Dr. Grinman noted that some parents were observed to have developed new interests "that related to having a child with ASD, took healthy risks, and created new opportunities for themselves that were more aligned with their circumstances" after completing this activity.

Both exercises outlined above are meant to give parents a new perspective on their child, self, and life; to help them find benefits and positive meaning in ASD.

3. The third strategy/activity Dr. Grinman introduced for helping to facilitate PTG with parents of children with ASD involves journaling or what she calls "bullet journaling," which is an organization sheet that outlines what needs to be done and what short/long-term goals have been established. This activity helps integrate what is going on in the parent's heads and hearts and is meant to help them recognize their inner strength and offer solace in stressful times. When beginning this journaling process, parents are

asked to write down three positive adjectives to describe themselves, three positive adjectives another person would use to describe them, and one thing they feel proud of about themselves. As the parents continue to journal, they are asked to write narratives assessing these internal and external strengths, which are discussed in depth with the clinician. The activities are intended to give parents a sense of empowerment, courage, self-confidence, and patience.

All three strategies help parents of children with ASD have increased self-reliance and recognition of their internal strength, given the challenges and judgments they will face in their parenthood journey.

For most of the 38 professionals in attendance in this training, this was the first time post-traumatic growth (PTG) was discussed for parents of children with autism. The attendees had prior knowledge of ASD and, some had worked directly with children diagnosed with this condition, but rarely had they focused on the parent's perspective and stress of dealing with this disorder. By the end of the training course, all trainees expressed interest in studying this field more closely and learning more about how these PTG factors can affect positive development and health in the family unit.

Personal Reflections

The Hudson Valley Professional Development training on post-traumatic growth in parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder provided attendees with a valuable overview of PTG and how it pertains to parents of children with such children. When I finish graduate school, I want to work with children diagnosed with ASD to determine how this neurological disorder manifests and ways to mitigate the symptoms after onset. Since parents are the environment in which children grow and develop, it is equally important to understand their challenges and struggles when raising a child diagnosed with ASD. Parents' mentality and view of their child's diagnoses, and their role in supporting and nourishing that child's development, will be vital components in

my research and practice. I took this training to gain a better understanding of PTG and to learn how, as a clinician, I will be able to both assess my patients (children diagnosed with ASD) as well as provide additional support for their parents to ensure the child has a secure family unit and dynamic. This training was very insightful and informative, providing very specific tools I can immediately use to nurture post-traumatic growth for parents. Attending this training gave me insights into the parent's perspective on how different and challenging it is to raise a child with ASD and introduced me to strategies I can incorporate into my practice that will benefit the entire family.

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Advancing Health and Well-being of Older Persons at the United Nations and Beyond: An integrated and multi-stakeholder perspective

Camille Khallouf[1]

Promotional video for the 2021-2030 UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (screenshot from event recording)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in six people in the world will be aged 60 years or older by the year 2030 (WHO, 2022). Fueled by the rapid ageing of the global population, demand is escalating for robust programs, policies, and activities to improve the lives of older persons. While health generally continues to improve at the global level with achievements being made in targeting communicable and noncommunicable diseases, individuals worldwide are living longer than ever before; yet, research shows that the portion of life in good health has remained constant (GBD, 2019; WHO, 2022). Today, it is essential that public health initiatives increase their focus on extending healthy life expectancy.

Older adults were disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with higher rates reported of environmental, social, economic, and healthcare inequalities (Barth et al., 2021; Group of Friends of Older Persons, 2020). The unknown landscape of the pandemic and shifting standards of care produced significant levels of psychological distress, isolation, and anxiety in older individuals (Vahia et al., 2020). All combined, the COVID-19 pandemic amplified the challenges and discriminations faced by older adults, which are critically important for all stakeholders to address. Thus, in the ongoing recovery period from the pandemic, it is all the more essential to reduce health inequities and improve the lives of older persons (Seale et al., 2022; Vahia et al., 2020).

This report first provides an overview of historical achievements and challenges to include the needs of older people on the United Nations (UN) agenda since 1982, and its development into a significant UN-wide initiative called the Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030). Subsequently, it covers a hybrid side-event held on September 22nd, 2022, during the 77th General Assembly (GA) of the UN, entitled, "UN Decade of Healthy Ageing: Doing business differently".

Historical Background

Ensuring the healthy ageing of older adults has been at the forefront of the UN agenda since 1982, with the formulation of the *Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing* (UN, 1982). During the World Assembly on Ageing in 1982, the international framework of action was adopted for "guaranteeing economic and social security to older persons, as well as opportunities to contribute to national development» (UN,

1 Reported by Camille Khallouf, a masters degree student in the Department of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University, Teachers College, and a student in Professor Dr. Judy Kuriansky's class on "Psychology and the United Nations". In addition to her scholastic work, she has experience in mental health research studying the effects of mindfulness-based interventions for cancer patients and their formal caregivers. She is committed to advancing the international standard of patient care and cultivating resilience under long-term survivorship and end-of-life care.

1982). Subsequently, the UN General Assembly adopted the *United Nations Principles for Older Persons* in 1991, which sets forth 18 rights of older adults "relating to independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity" (UN, 1991; UN, 2022). Within a year, the *Proclamation on Ageing* was adopted during the *International Conference on Ageing* (UN, 1992). The UN declared 1999 the *International Year of Older Persons* and instigated the annual celebration of the *International Day of Older Person*s every October 1st (UN, 2002). At the turn of the 21st century, in 2002, the *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (MIPAA) confirmed the UN's commitment to advancing quality of life and healthy ageing (UN, 2002). The MIPAA became the first guiding framework and landmark achievement outlining the nexus of health, development, and justice for empowering older persons and setting the foundation that to foster longer and healthier lives, development-centered, rights-based approaches to population ageing are needed.

Despite collective achievements in recognizing and advancing the rights of older adults, the pressing need for improving the health and well-being of older persons was not central in the conception of the multilateral *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. This international agreement was adopted by all the Member state governments of the UN in 2015 as a blueprint to achieve 17 global goals, including ending poverty and hunger, ensuring health, gender equality, peace, economic prosperity and environmental protection for all peoples particularly the most vulnerable groups, which includes older adults (UN, 2015). While older persons are a cross-cutting issue, meaning they apply like other vulnerable groups in all goals, some specific mentions to this group are made in the *Agenda for Sustainable Development*. For example, the "nutritional needs" of older persons are directly acknowledged in the mandate of the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2): Zero Hunger and SDG 11, on Sustainable Cities and Communities, underscores the necessity to provide accessible transport and green space for vulnerable groups, including older adults. Given the inter-connectedness

of the goals, protecting and improving the lives of older persons across all the goals needs to be prioritized by every country.

The Decade of Healthy Ageing

Building on the earlier achievements of the MIPAA and UN 2030 Agenda, on December 12th, 2020, the UN GA declared the decade of 2021-2030 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing (UN, 2020). This Decade of Healthy Ageing is a political declaration for countries' unilateral commitment and collaboration to guarantee independence, security, and continued productivity for those in later years of life, essentially to advance the health and well-being of older people.

Confirming and celebrating this Decade of Healthy Ageing, a hybrid side-event was held on September 22nd, 2022, during the 77th session of the General Assembly at the United Nations, entitled, "UN Decade of Healthy Ageing: Doing business differently." The event was co-sponsored by the United Nations Group of Friends of Older Persons (GOFOP) headed by the Mission of Chile to the UN. The GOFOP was founded in 2013 to promote and develop initiatives within the UN to advance the rights of older persons. The hybrid event was held at the UN Headquarters (UNHQ) in New York City, with panelists attending in-person and participants online via Zoom.

Flyer for the event on the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing
(source: screenshot from The Decade of Healthy Ageing Platform)

Event Objectives

The objectives of the event were to:

- Combat ageism by changing negative age stereotypes

Advancing Health and Well-being of Older Persons at the United Nations and Beyond cont.

- Expand communities that allow older persons to flourish and thrive
- Provide integrative and accessible health services responsive to older adults
- Widen access to quality long-term care

Speakers and attendees in person at the healthy ageing side event of the 77th UN General Assembly (source: screenshot from event recording). Left to right: Dr. Shyam Bishen, Head of Health and Healthcare, World Economic Forum; H.E. Ms. Kira Christianne Azucena, Chargé d'affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative, Mission of the Philippines to the UN;, Mr. Tomás Pascual, Human Rights Director, Foreign Ministry, Chile; Mr. Werner Obermeyer, Director, World Health Organization New York Office at the UN; Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization; H.E. Ms. Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad, Minister of Social Development and Family, Qatar;, Dr. Eiji Hinoshita, Assistant Minister for Global Health and Welfare, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan; Dr. Jane Barratt, Secretary-General, International Federation on Ageing.

A promotional video, entitled "Adding life to years", produced by the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, was played at the start of the event to introduce participants to the goals of the UN-wide initiative. The

Slogan for Video on The Decade of Healthy (source: screenshot from event recording)

video highlighted how humans need a supportive physical and social environment to nourish their development through all stages of life.

During the event, speakers from governments and international organizations first took the floor, followed by civil society and private sector speakers.

Key Developments and Innovations
International Organizations: Leading the Way

Opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. Dr. Tedros began by stating that ageing of the global population demonstrates our collective successes in targeting and decreasing global rates of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Despite this positive trend, he underlined the unprecedented challenges we must confront to ensure older people thrive to their fullest potential while ageing with dignity and care: "ageing in today's world bring its own set of challenges". To reach the goals of The Decade of Healthy Ageing, he stressed the need for collaboration from international organizations, communities, civil society, academia, businesses, and governments. To protect and promote the health of older people, he said, the WHO has made striking advances by launching a multilingual platform with all available data on ageing and publishing a baseline report and the first Global Report on Ageism.

Subsequently, Dr. Tedros introduced the "Healthy Ageing 50", an "advocacy initiative" which recognizes 50 stakeholders protecting and transforming the lives of older adults (Healthy ageing 50, 2022). This initiative identifies a diverse pool of innovators leading the change who have been honored, including 36 women, and 29 people from low- or middle-income countries. To extend the current successes, Dr. Tedros listed three priorities:

Advancing Health and Well-being of Older Persons at the United Nations and Beyond cont.

1. Unilateral and collaborative action through the new Healthy Ageing Collaborative, a recently developed network of change agents to advance the Decade Plan of Action;

2. Addressing the health inequities revealed by the COVID-19 Pandemic;

3. Amplifying the voices of older adults to engage them as active participants in the Decade of Healthy Ageing.

Government-Supported Local Initiatives: Building Community

The moderator, Mr. Werner Obermeyer, Director of the World Health Organization New York Office at the UN, introduced Mr. Tomás Pascual, Human Rights Director in the Foreign Ministry of Chile who was representing the GOFOP at the event. The new administration of the Ministry of Social Development in Chile, Mr. Tomás Pascual noted, is deeply committed to advancing the healthy ageing platform in UN headquarters in both New York and Geneva, and in other "multilateral spheres".

His intervention was followed by a recorded video from Mr. Giorgio Jackson, Minister of Social Development in Chile. "The rights of older persons are not only to be respected because of the so-called 'vulnerable stage' they are in life", he asserted, "but because they have acquired rights throughout their life which still need to be promoted and protected". The ageist discriminations against older adults, he underscored, are part of multiple and intersecting societal discriminations that intensify at the end of life. He called for a multi-stakeholder approach including older adults as active participants, to address the continuous demographic shift, structural barriers, and lack of normative protections that perpetuate prejudice against older persons.

Thereafter, Her Excellency Ms. Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad, Minister of Social Development and Family in Qatar, introduced how Qatar is collecting internationally comparable statistics on healthy ageing and the country's experience in improving the lives of older adults. Foremost, H.E. Al Misnad shared that caring for older persons is historically deeply rooted in Qatar religion and culture. To achieve the healthy ageing goals, five initiatives and social programs have been developed:

1. Collecting valuable data to design effective and targeted programs;

2. Launch of the Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) program, following the WHO guidelines for evidence-based projects for healthcare professionals to reverse decline in the elderly;

3. Joining forces with the Ministry of Public Health to ensure that needs of older persons are fully covered;

4. Built the "Center Hassan" to serve senior citizens and directly learn from their wisdom and experiences;

5. Reinforcement of the social security system of Qatar to allow older adults to benefit from "an adequate social pension and fully sponsored housing".

Following her address, the moderator Mr. Obermeyer emphasized the nexus of health and development with other sectors, such as education, social protection, housing, technology and transport. He then gave the floor to H.E. Ms. Kira Christianne Azucena, Chargé d'affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Mission of the Philippines to the UN, who discussed the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC), a national initiative that provides older persons with governmental assistance and discounts on goods and services. While protecting the elderly is also part of the culture in the Philippines, as was described about Qatar, H.E. Azucena underlined that commitment to healthy ageing is further "enshrined in the country's constitution," in Article 3 and Article 13 on social justice and human rights. To ensure the country's constitutional provisions are adhered to, important legislations and policies have been adopted, such as:

1. The Philippines Plan of Action for Senior Citizens (PPASC), which outlines the "strategic actions for the well-being and development of older persons";

2. Universal Healthcare, which confers necessary and timely access to healthcare for older adults;

3. Implementation of offices of Senior Citizens Affairs in cities and local governments;

4. Long-term care programs for those most disadvantaged;

5. Enactment of the anti-age discrimination and employment law to ensure older adults remain "active members of society".

Subsequently, Dr. Eiji Hinoshita, Assistant Minister for Global Health and Welfare at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, took the floor to address Japan's unique situation as one of the "most ancient societies in the world" and a "forerunner in this area (of ageing)". The goal of their "Healthy Life Expectancy Extension Plan", he said, is to reduce health disparity, guarantee the quality of life of older adults, and ensure that "everyone can play an active role in good health for a longer period of time". Safeguards have been put in place by obligating business owners to secure employment opportunities for older adults up to 65 years old and to give subsidies to those who hire individuals above 65 years old. Additionally, over 300 nation-wide "lifetime active support counters" have been opened by the public employment security office to assist older persons above 65 years old with finding employment.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Dr. Hinoshita explained, recognizes the demographic challenges faced by Japan's rapidly ageing population, and holds yearly meetings to examine regional measures and initiatives. Since 2017, countries in the Southeast Asian region have been sharing scientific evidence and research to "promote the active and healthy ageing of the population" and to encourage collaboration between regional healthcare professions.

Civil Society: Bridging the gap between stakeholders

After these interventions from governments and international organizations, Dr. Jane Barrett, Secretary-General of the International Federation on Ageing (IFA), was invited to take the floor as the representative of a large civil society association with official consultative status at the UN and WHO. She highlighted the nexus of the Decade of Healthy Ageing with the "Immunization Agenda of 2030", a global health program for all individuals to access vaccine services; the "13th General Program of Work", a strategic framework to best mobilize resources and record critical global health advances; The "World Report on Hearing", a "guidance for Member States to integrate ear and hearing care into their national health plans" and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which all together creates "a very rich tapestry that is a work in progress" (UN, 2020; WHO, 2018; WHO, 2020; WHO, 2021).

Also, Dr. Barrett introduced the IFA's "Vanishing Project", an initiative to amplify and weave the "collective voice" of older persons on resilience, pain, courage, and optimism. She concluded by underlining civil society's significant and distinctive role for strengthening and creating partnerships among the multi-stakeholders.

Private Sector: Essential Support

Finally, Dr. Shyam Bishen, Head of Health and Healthcare from the World Economic Forum (WEF), spoke on behalf of public-private partnerships to advance the collective effort on healthy ageing. He noted that a collaborative platform is being designed by WEF

to facilitate further cooperation between healthcare leaders and to scale-up access to resources for older persons. Furthermore, ongoing initiatives from the WEF include the "Digital Health Action Alliance" in order to "rethink the way we screen, diagnose and treat chronic diseases that occur primarily in older adults", and the Davos "Alzheimer's Collaborative" aimed at strengthening the international response to combat Alzheimer's disease by uniting stakeholders in the field and encouraging investment in research innovations.

Conclusion: Collaboration and Engagement

To conclude the session, the moderator Mr. Obermeyer, paid tribute to remarkable leaders from international organizations, governments, civil society, private sector, and communities striving to "make society a better place for all". He added that the launch of the Healthy Ageing Collaborative announced by Dr. Tedros during the meeting constitutes a formidable opportunity to collaborate and join efforts with academia and all stakeholders in reducing health disparities globally, and ensuring that older adults are engaged by "adding life to years".

Event Overview

Title: The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing: Doing Business Differently – UN General Assembly Side Event

Date/Time: September 22nd, 2022

Location: United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA (Hybrid event)

Moderator: Mr. Werner Obermeyer (Deputy Executive Director, World Health Organization office at the UN)

Panelists: Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Keynote - Director-General, World Health Organization), Mr. Tomás Pascual (Human Rights Director, Foreign Ministry, Chile), Mr. Giorgio Jackson (Minister of Social Development, Chile), H.E. Ms. Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad (Minister of Social Development

and Family, Qatar), H.E. Ms. Kira Christianne Azucena (Chargé d'affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative, Mission of the Philippines to the UN, Philippines), Dr. Eiji Hinoshita (Assistant Minister for Global Health and Welfare, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan), Dr. Jane Barratt (Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing), Dr. Shyam Bishen (Head of Health and Healthcare, World Economic Forum)

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Transforming Mental Health for All:
A Call to Action for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support at the United Nations

Camille Khallouf[1] and Judy Kuriansky[2]

The Preamble of the *2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development,* envisions a world where "physical, mental and social well-being are assured" (UN, 2015). By pledging that "no one will be left behind", this historic, multilateral, far-reaching international agreement was adopted in 2015 by all Member States of the United Nations (UN) to mobilize global efforts to end poverty and hunger, ensure health, gender equality, peace, economic prosperity, and environmental protection for all peoples, particularly the most vulnerable groups. At its core, the "universal call to action" champions principles of equality and non-discrimination anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), international human rights treaties, as well as the Declaration on the Right to Development (OHCHR, 2015). [12]

Prioritizing access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is of utmost importance in the promotion and protection of human rights (UN, 2015). Through a human rights-based approach, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, calling for Good Health and Well-being, seeks to ensure "healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages". Mental health impacts all areas of life and can contribute to "poor health, premature death, human rights violations and substantial economic loss" (WHO, 2022). While global mental health needs are critical, there continues to be high levels of stigma and substantial barriers to accessing services. On average, only 2% of national health budgets account for mental health, out of which 66% is allocated to psychiatric hospitals (WHO, 2022). Globally, the financial loss from mental health conditions is estimated at $1 trillion each year (The Lancet Global Health, 2020).

In another important international agreement which further reaffirms the need for equitable mental health to guarantee the overall health of all individuals and communities, UN Member States asserted in the 2019 Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, their "strong commitment to achieve universal health coverage by 2030" and "the right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health" and their engagement towards "measures (that) promote and improve mental health and care" as an fundamental component of universal health coverage" (UN, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic raised the discourse on the need for MHPSS at all levels, including in political

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2 Dr. Judy Kuriansky, NGO representative of the International Association of Applied Psychology accredited at the United Nations; Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University, Teachers College co-founder and expert member, UN Group of Friends of Mental Health and Wellbeing.

and policy settings. According to a report by the WHO (2020), increased concern for the mental health needs of citizens caused by the pandemic prompted 89% of countries worldwide to include MHPSS as part of their policy responses. A subsequent report found that fueled by social isolation, loneliness, fear of infection, financial worries, and other unprecedented stressors, the prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide increased by 25% in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2022). As the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared, this is a "wake-up call to all countries to pay more attention to mental health and do a better job of supporting their populations' mental health" (WHO, 2022). While the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated breaking down barriers around destructive mental health stigma, the need was highlighted for continued action and funding to address systemic discriminations that hinder the development of accessible and sustainable mental health services (WHO, 2020; WHO, 2022).

In advance of the 2023 High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage to take place in September at the UN New York City headquarters, this report provides an overview of the importance for adequate and accessible MHPSS and its development into a significant UN-wide *Call to Action for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support*. Also, it covers an event held at the UN Headquarters in New York City on October 24, 2022 entitled, "Transforming Mental Health for All."

Call to Action for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

During the 66th World Mental Health Assembly in May 2013, the WHO announced its Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030 (WHO, 2013). By "recognizing the essential role of mental health in achieving health for all people", it outlines ambitious objectives to encourage stakeholders to:

Ensure more effective leadership and governance for mental health;

Provide comprehensive, integrated mental health and social care services in community-based settings;

Implement strategies for promotion and prevention;

Strengthen information systems, evidence, and research.

Cover of the WHO's Mental Health Action Plan and the WHO's World Mental Health Report (source: WHO, 2013; WHO, 2022)

In June 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) published its first major global report on mental health since 2001, entitled *Transforming Mental Health for All*, to encourage all 194 WHO Member States who adhered to the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030 to strengthen their commitments (WHO, 2022). Thanks to evidence from around the globe with examples of good practice and lived experiences, this historical report highlights how change can be achieved through a necessary transformation and strengthening of health systems and communities at large (WHO, 2022). To achieve the global targets set out in the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030 and the SDGs, collective efforts must strive to achieve a world where:

· Mental health is valued, promoted and protected;

· Mental health conditions are prevented;

Transforming Mental Health for All cont.

- Anyone can exercise their human rights and access affordable, quality mental health care;
- Everyone can participate fully in society free from stigma and discrimination.

World Mental Health Day and subsequent events on MHPSS "Call to Action"

During the commemoration of the 2022 World Mental Health Day, celebrated annually on October 10, the Mission of Mexico to the United Nations circulated a *Call to Action on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support,* to "strengthen health and social care systems, improve access to MHPSS and ensure that universal health coverage includes those services and supports" (Mission of Mexico UN, 2022; United for Global Mental Health, 2022). The Mission of Mexico is resolute to bringing mental health to the forefront of the international agenda to further incorporate MHPSS in emergency responses, protect vulnerable groups such as women, children and adolescents and develop long-term funding models. Mexico's initiative builds on their broader strategy to bring the issue of mental health to the forefront of the UN Security Council.

During its 2021-2022 Security Council term, the Mission of Mexico sought "the inclusion of language on mental health in Council products, including resolutions on the mandates of UN peace operations" (Security Council Report, 2022; de la Fuente et al., 2023). Mexico's three-pronged strategy includes:

- Raising the visibility of MPSS at all levels and in all for a and bodies of the UN;
- Including strong language on action of MHPSS services in all UN statement and resolutions
- Organizing and participating in events that focus on this topic.

The *Call to Action to MHPSS* builds on a Security Council Arria-formula meeting held on March 20, 2022, convened by the Mission of Mexico on the topic of "ensuring access to mental health and psychosocial support in conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian settings" (Security Council Report, 2022). The report from that meeting included recommendations from civil society experts, including the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and the International Association of Applied Psychology (inputted by this co-author), among others. The success of this effort was reflected in the fact that by December 2022, 80 member and observer states, international organisations and civil society organisations had endorsed the Call to Action.

The event to introduce the *Call to Action for MHPSS* and the WHO *World Mental Health Report* was held in a conference room at the at the UN Headquarters in New York City on October 24, 2022, entitled, *"Transforming Mental Health for All"*. Intended to further advance MHPSS, it was organized by a number of organizations committed to the issue, with their representatives as speakers. These included: the UN Group of Friends of Universal Health Coverage, represented by the Mission of Japan that co-hosts this Group at the UN; the UN Group of Friends of Mental Health and Well-Being, represented by a co-president from the Mission of Bahrain to the UN; the Permanent Mission of Mexico, that is championing this issue now; the World Health Organization high-level representatives in New York and Geneva, the UN Agency promoting mental health equity with physical health; and the UN Agency UNICEF. These representatives served as panelists. Also, a representative from the IFRC and from United for Global Mental Health, a civil society mental health advocacy network, from Denmark and London respectively, participated as speakers by Zoom.

Event Objectives

The event consisted of three parts: opening statements, a panel discussion, and questions and answers. The objectives were to:

- Deepen the value and commitment given to mental health;
- Reshape the environments that influence mental health;
- Strengthen the systems that care for mental health.

Transforming Mental Health for All cont.

The Event

Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Shu Nakagawa, Minister of the Mission of Japan to the United Nations, on behalf of the co-chairs of the UN Group of Friends of Universal Health Coverage. Mr. Nakagawa expressed gratitude for the Mission of Mexico's timely *Call to Action for MHPSS* launched on World Mental Health Day. He asserted the importance of reaching the goals of SDG 3 'Good Health and Well-being' by improving access to MHPSS and strengthening a comprehensive health and social protection system through universal health coverage. He announced that Japan has created a platform for UN Member States and Observers, international organizations, civil society, and all relevant stakeholders to further discuss these issues and to ensure that universal health coverage includes MHPSS. Mr. Nakagawa concluded his remarks by honoring the Mission of Mexico's durable imprint and legacy at the Security Council to include mental health in all deliberations.

On behalf of the co-chairs of the Group of Friends on Mental Health and Well-Being, Mr. Hatem Abdulhameed Hatem, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the UN, reiterated the importance of joining the *Call to Action*

Panelists and attendees at the event "Transforming Mental Health for All" (source: picture Camille Khallouf)

for MHPSS to promote a whole-of-society approach to mental health and psychosocial wellbeing and leverage change at the UN and beyond.

Presentations

The moderator, Mr. Werner Obermeyer, Director of the World Health Organization New York Office at the UN, introduced H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Mexico to the UN who emphasized that actions must be taken at the global, regional, and national levels to strengthen health and social care systems, and to improve access to mental health and psychosocial support. He invited all stakeholders to commit to the *Call to Action for MHPSS*, being championed by the Mission of Mexico, including UN Member States and Observers, international organizations, and civil society. Civil society organizations, Ambassador de la Fuente insisted, must have a seat at the table to guarantee durable actions and sustainable change.

In addition to outlining Mexico's continuous actions to promote MHPSS, described above in this report, Ambassador de la Fuente elaborated on the Call to Action and characterized 11 tangible actions in which all stakeholders can engage, in recognition of MHPSS and UHC. These include joint commitment rooted in empirical evidence-based and culturally adapted measures and policies, with particular attention to the prevention of problems for children and adolescents. He then announced the next major step in their strategy; the Mission of Mexico will present a draft resolution on the importance of Mental Health and Sustainable Development during the 78th UN General Assembly to be held in September 2023, for consideration and adoption by all Member States. Ambassador.de la Fuente encouraged all panelists and participants to endorse the *Call to Action,* reminding them that mental health should be deemed as important as physical health, as affirmed in the Political Declaration of UHC.

Panel (left to right): Moderator WHO Director UN Office, Mr. Werner Obermeyer; DPR of the Kingdom of Bahrain at the UN, Mr. Hatem Abdulhameed Hatem; H.E. Ambassador Juan Ramon de la Fuente, UN Mission of Mexico; Minister of the Mission of Japan to the UN, Mr. Shu Nakagawa (missing: UNICEF's Dr. Zeinab Hijazi) (source: picture Judy Kuriansky)

Subsequently, the moderator Mr. Werner Obermeyer took the floor to underscore the widening gap in mental health and psychosocial support since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the intensification in mental health problems from psychological distress, isolation, and anxiety triggered during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Obermeyer noted that health disparities continue to drastically increase worldwide. He contended that health inequities in mental health and psychosocial support must be mitigated through mental health reform.

His intervention was followed by a virtual presentation by Dr. Devora Kestel, psychologist and Director of the Mental Health and Substance Use Department at the WHO Office in Geneva. She introduced results from the recent WHO *World Mental Health Report* entitled *Transforming Mental Health for All,* significantly the first such report in 21 years, namely, since 2001 (WHO, 2022; Yoon & Kuriansky, 2023). She noted

that the Mental Health Atlas in 2020 had pointed out that progress is slow and, in fact, mental health needs worldwide are now at a record high. Dr. Kestel asserted that the treatment gap is widening given that responses and resources are insufficient and inadequate. Yet, now is the time, she emphasized, to "build on momentum from growing interest in mental health."

The WHO Blueprint for MHPSS: Paths to Transformation (source: picture Camille Khallouf) Key messages in the WHO World Mental Health Report, (source: picture Judy Kuriansky)

Drawing on evidence in the WHO *World Mental Health Report*, Dr. Kestel presented the blueprint for transforming mental health and psychosocial support by deepening the value and commitment given to mental health, reshaping the environments that influence mental health and strengthening systems that care for people's mental health.

The Report showcases examples of best practices in transforming mental health mostly from low- and middle-income countries, with narratives of people

with lived experience of mental health conditions, and analyses of key issues in promoting, protecting and caring for mental health (e.g., related to COVID-19, digital technologies and multisectoral action). The key messages are that: mental health is important to everyone; mental health needs are high but responses are insufficient and inadequate; and commitment to mental health is an investment in a better life and future for all. Dr. Kessel highlighted how change can best be achieved by breaking down mental health stigma, making mental health and psychosocial support accessible and focusing efforts beyond mental health systems.

Panelists

After these introductory presentations, the moderator Mr. Obermeyer introduced the first panelist, psychologist Dr. Zeinab Hijazi, who is the Senior Mental Health Technical Adviser at UNICEF at their New York City headquarters. Dr. Hijazi highlighted three pressing issues for MHPSS:

- Members of the youth need to be included and considered throughout these discussions;

- Mental health only accounts for up to 2% of governmental budgets worldwide and as such, governments must commit greater finances to achieve universal health coverage; and

- Individuals must have access to MHPSS without any risks of financial hardship, which is currently not the case as mental health and health needs are driving people into poverty.

Subsequently, Ms. Zara Elaine Sejberg, MHPSS Coordinator for the Danish Red Cross, reported about the advances that her organization has been accomplishing with regard to providing such services in countries that they serve, their resolutions and road map ahead, as well as recommendations for what governments can do.

The Danish Red Cross is a national society that is part of the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network, reaching 150 million people each year

through its 192 member National Societies. Together, the IFRC acts before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions. The report by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Project (2020) on *The importance of mental health and psychosocial support during COVID-19: Experiences and recommendations from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,* focused on a number of countries, including Yemen, Nairobi, Kenya, Philippines, Colombia and Italy as well as Bangladesh.

In the dramatic example of Bangladesh, she showed two slides demonstrating the vast improvements in services from 2017 to 2022. In 2017, close to 700,00 people from the Rakhine State of Myanmar crossed into Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. While psychosocial support (PSS) was identified as an urgent and unmet need of the affected population, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Cox Bazar Branch had only 15 available volunteers. This effort was impressively scaled up to the point where, by 2022, 20 trainers in Community-Based Psychosocial Support (CBPSS) trained 47 community volunteers to work in 3 camps; 380 volunteers were trained to provide Psychological First Aid (PFA) which was integrated into First Aid training; 19 branches with PSS teams were ready to respond to disasters and other crises; and MHPSS was made part of the BDRCS Strategic Plan of 2021-2025.
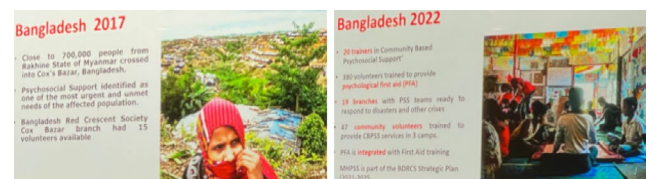
IFRC actions boosting MHPSS in Bangladesh 2017-2022 (source: Sejberg presentation slides)

She also briefly mentioned their valuable intervention after the explosion in Beirut, Lebanon, which occurred on August 4, 2020.

Transforming Mental Health for All cont.

The importance of prioritizing and scaling up MHPSS for the IFRC, Sejberg said, is evident in:

· The landmark resolution adopted in 2019 by the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, "Addressing MHPSS Needs of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies", which "calls upon States, National Societies, IFRC and ICRC to increase efforts to ensure early and sustained access to MHPSS services" by people affected by these events;

· The MHPSS Policy and Road Map, 2020-2023 (IFRC, 2019);

· The fact that 146 countries (86% of WHO Member States) reported having a mental health policy or plan in place.

Ms. Zara Elain Sejberg making a virtual presentation (source: photo by Camille Khallouf)

Ms. Sejberg proceeded to describe the IFRC's MHPSS framework, consisting of four layers of psychosocial support (from basic to more intensive) and a protective circle of treatment, prevention and training of competencies with a focus on skills and supervision. All National societies, the IFRC and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) need to be able to assess needs, advocate for MHPSS, and refer to suitable services.

The Roadmap for Implementation 2020-2023 outlines priority action areas, including to:

· Guarantee a basic level of psychosocial support and integrate MHPSS across sectors;

· Develop a holistic MHPSS approach between Movement components and in collaboration with other actors;

· Protect and promote MH and psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers;

· Demonstrate the impact of MHPSS interventions through research, evidence, monitoring and evaluation;

· Strengthen resource mobilization for MHPSS in humanitarian response;

· Mobilize political support for MHPSS – humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy

By the end of 2023, the expected outcomes are:

· A basic level of PSS is established in National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC, and MHPSs considerations are integrated into other key humanitarian services;

· Access to quality MHPSS services across the Movement's MHPSS framework has increased in selected operational contexts;

· A supportive and caring working environment is achieved and sustained across the Movement;
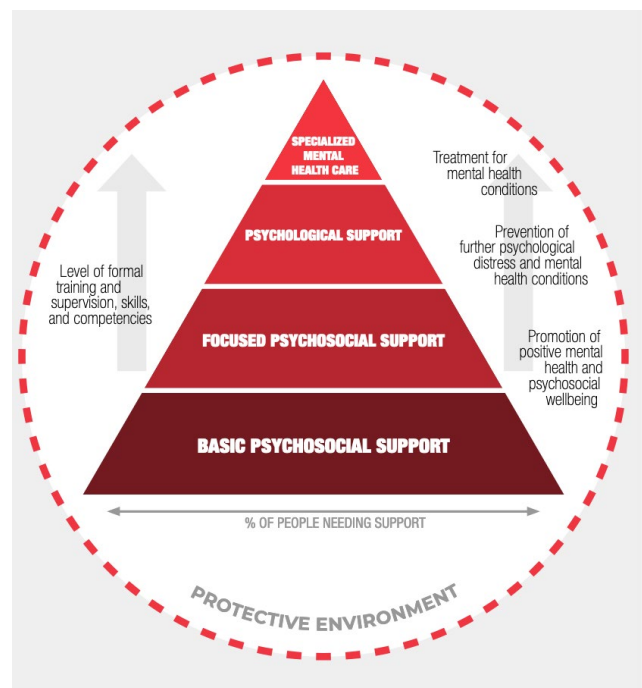
The IFRC's MHPSS framework (source: IFRC, 2021)

- The impact of MHPSS interventions and innovative approaches is documented more widely;

- The Movement's financial resources for MHPSS have increased in line with finding targets defined in a Movement resource mobilization strategy for MHPSS;

- Commitments set out in the resolution are reflected in national and international policy and legal frameworks.

- Their recommendations for government action include to:

- Invest in providing the full spectrum of MHPSS services;

- Ensure affected populations and staff and volunteers have access to MHPSS services;

- Integrate MHPSS services into broader Health Systems Strengthening strategies;

- Ensure that MHPSS services for the most vulnerable feature as part of commitments made at the UHC High Level Meeting (to occur in September, 2023);

- Work with 19 National Societies and the almost 15 million volunteers with unique humanitarian access and auxiliary role to the pubis authorities in the humanitarian field.

Following her address, Ms. Sarah Kline was invited to speak in her capacity as the CEO and co-founder of United for Global Mental Health, a civil society organization that raises awareness, reduces stigma, and seeks to increase global engagement for mental health and psychosocial services (United for Global Mental Health, 2022). She emphasized that existing global, regional, national, and humanitarian budgets must be reformed to address mental health needs given the exceptional small amount of funds currently allocated to mental health, estimated worldwide at less than 2% for government spending for health (Kline et al, 2023). By re-allocating more funds towards mental health, Ms. Kline maintained that overall disease prevention and treatment I expected to improve. Concrete ongoing efforts by United for Global Mental Health and their extensive network

and advocacy efforts has led to the fact that mental health is now a key facet of the 2023-2028 strategy for the Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB and Malaria.

Questions and Answer Period

After the formal presentations, the moderator Mr. Obermeyer opened the floor to reactions, statements, or questions, first from Member States and then from Civil Society. A representative from the Mission of Italy to the UN took the floor to express their support for the *Call to Action for MHPSS*, stressing the need to continue to address pervasive mental health stigma through community interventions, and emphasizing the relationship between mental health and human rights violations.

Next, a representative from the Mission of Israel to the UN spoke on the importance of seeking gender equality to improve mental health in UN peacekeeping missions. The Mission of Israel is co-sponsoring an event on October 27, 2022 with the UN Permanent Missions of Mexico, Canada, Germany, and Ghana to support the mental health of UN Peace Operations Personnel.

Dr. Judy Kuriansky (in blue) speaking (source: picture Camille Khallouf)

Finally, the moderator Mr. Obermeyer invited Dr. Judy Kuriansky to take the floor. Kuriansky has been a leader in successful advocacy in negotiations at the

Transforming Mental Health for All cont.

UN for over 20 years for inclusion of mental health and wellbeing in international agreements, including Universal Health Coverage and the UN 2030 Agenda, in her role as a representative of NGOs accredited at the UN and as a co-founder with Ambassador Otto of the Mission of Palau of the *UN Group of Friends of Mental Health and Well-being.* At this important meeting on MHPSS, Kuriansky challenged the panelists to describe concrete evidence-based interventions for MHPSS worldwide and pointed out the need for global regional inclusion, given the lack of presence at this meeting of representatives and programs from Africa, a region of the world where she has provided considerable psychosocial support and training for communities facing crises and emergencies (Kuriansky, 2016). This led to energetic exchange among the panelists, ultimately with all agreeing on her point.

Conclusion

This meeting was an exceptional example of multilateral and multi-organizational cooperation called for at the UN, with voices of representatives and speakers from UN Mission governments, UN agencies, and civil society international NGOs. Also impressive is the regional diversity of the champions; for example, on the civil society level as well as on the government level including panelists from the Missions of Mexico, Japan and Bahrain and attendee statement from Italy and Israel. Further, the event demonstrates how the priority of mental health and wellbeing has accelerated dramatically in recent times. Varied stakeholders and international bodies are increasingly committing to advancing progress on mental health, significantly ahead of the September 2023 High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, synchronized with the release of the WHO first major Global Report on Mental Health since 2001, entitled *Transforming Mental Health for All,* and capitalizing on the *Call to Action for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support* initiated by the UN Mission of Mexico. This *Call to Action* is paving the way for UN Member States and Observers, international organizations, civil society, and all relevant stakeholders to step up

their commitment and action to strengthen MHPSS. These initiatives are long overdue and welcome for the achievement of health and mental health for all.

Event Overview

Title: Transforming Mental Health for All

Date/Time: October 24, 2022

Location: United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 9, New York City, USA (Hybrid event)

Moderator: Mr. Werner Obermeyer, Deputy Executive Director, World Health Organization office at the UN

Opening Remarks: Mr. Shu Nakagawa, Minister of the Mission of Japan to the UN; Mr. Hatem Abdulhameed Hatem, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the UN

Presenters: H.E. Dr. Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Mexico to the UN; Dr. Devora Kestel, Director of the Mental Health and Substance Use Department at WHO

Panelists: Dr. Zeinab Hijazi: Senior Mental Health Technical Adviser at UNICEF NYHQ; Ms. Zara Elaine Sejberg, MHPSS Coordinator for the Danish Red Cross; Ms. Sarah Kline, CEO and co-founder of United for Global Mental Health

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APPENDIX 1

Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists

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Adopted by the Assembly of the International Union of Psychological Science in Berlin on July 22nd, 2008.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the International Association of Applied Psychology in Berlin on July 26, 2008.

Preamble

Principle I: Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples

Principle II: Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples

Principle III: Integrity

Principle IV: Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society

Preamble

Ethics is at the core of every discipline. The Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists speaks to the common moral framework that guides and inspires psychologists worldwide toward the highest ethical ideals in their professional and scientific work. Psychologists recognize that they carry out their activities within a larger social context. They recognize that the lives and identities of human beings both individually and collectively are connected across generations, and that there is a reciprocal relationship between human beings and their natural and social environments. Psychologists are committed to placing the welfare of society and its members above the self-interest of the discipline and its members. They recognize that adherence to ethical principles in the context of their work contributes to a stable society that enhances the quality of life for all human beings.

The objectives of the Universal Declaration are to provide a moral framework and generic set of ethical principles for psychology organizations worldwide:

1.   to evaluate the ethical and moral relevance of their codes of ethics;
2.   to use as a template to guide the development or evolution of their codes of ethics;
3.   to encourage global thinking about ethics, while also encouraging action that is sensitive and responsive to local needs and values; and
4.   to speak with a collective voice on matters of ethical concern.

The Universal Declaration describes those ethical principles that are based on shared human values. It reaffirms the commitment of the psychology community to help build a better world where peace, freedom, responsibility, justice, humanity,

and morality prevail. The description of each principle is followed by the presentation of a list of values that are related to the principle. These lists of values highlight ethical concepts that are valuable for promoting each ethical principle.

The Universal Declaration articulates principles and related values that are general and aspirational rather than specific and prescriptive. Application of the principles and values to the development of specific standards of conduct will vary across cultures, and must occur locally or regionally in order to ensure their relevance to local or regional cultures, customs, beliefs, and laws.

The significance of the Universal Declaration depends on its recognition and promotion by psychology organizations at national, regional and international levels. Every psychology organization is encouraged to keep this Declaration in mind and, through teaching, education, and other measures to promote respect for, and observance of, the Declaration's principles and related values in the various activities of its members.

Principle I

Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples

Respect for the dignity of persons is the most fundamental and universally found ethical principle across geographical and cultural boundaries, and across professional disciplines. It provides the philosophical foundation for many of the other ethical principles put forward by professions. Respect for dignity recognizes the inherent worth of all human beings, regardless of perceived or real differences in social status, ethnic origin, gender, capacities, or other such characteristics. This inherent worth means that all human beings are worthy of equal moral consideration.

All human beings, as well as being individuals, are interdependent social beings that are born into, live in, and are a part of the history and ongoing evolution of their peoples. The different cultures, ethnicities, religions, histories, social structures and other such characteristics of peoples are integral to the identity of their members and give meaning to their lives. The continuity of peoples and cultures over time connects the peoples of today with the peoples of past generations and the need to nurture future generations. As such, respect for the dignity of persons includes moral consideration of and respect for the dignity of peoples.

Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples is expressed in different ways in different communities and cultures. It is important to acknowledge and respect such differences. On the other hand, it also is important that all communities and cultures adhere to moral values that respect and protect their members both as individual persons and as collective peoples.

THEREFORE, psychologists accept as fundamental the Principle of Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples. In so doing, they accept the following related values:

1. respect for the unique worth and inherent dignity of all human beings;
2. respect for the diversity among persons and peoples;
3. respect for the customs and beliefs of cultures, to be limited only when a custom or a belief seriously contravenes the principle of respect for the dignity

of persons or peoples or causes serious harm to their well-being;

4. free and informed consent, as culturally defined and relevant for individuals, families, groups, and communities;
5. privacy for individuals, families, groups, and communities;
6. protection of confidentiality of personal information, as culturally defined and relevant for individuals, families, groups, and communities;
7. fairness and justice in the treatment of persons and peoples.

Principle II

Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples

Competent caring for the well-being of persons and peoples involves working for their benefit and, above all, doing no harm. It includes maximizing benefits, minimizing potential harm, and offsetting or correcting harm. Competent caring requires the application of knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the nature of a situation as well as the social and cultural context. It also requires the ability to establish interpersonal relationships that enhance potential benefits and reduce potential harm. Another requirement is adequate self-knowledge of how one's values, experiences, culture, and social context might influence one's actions and interpretations.

THEREFORE, psychologists accept as fundamental the Principle of Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples. In so doing, they accept the following related values:

1. active concern for the well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities;
2. taking care to do no harm to individuals, families, groups, and communities;
3. maximizing benefits and minimizing potential harm to individuals, families, groups, and communities;
4. correcting or offsetting harmful effects that have occurred as a result of their activities;
5. developing and maintaining competence;
6. self-knowledge regarding how their own values, attitudes, experiences, and social contexts influence their actions, interpretations, choices, and recommendations;
7. respect for the ability of individuals, families, groups, and communities to make decisions for themselves and to care for themselves and each other.

Principle III

Integrity

Integrity is vital to the advancement of scientific knowledge and to the maintenance of public confidence in the discipline of psychology. Integrity is based on honesty, and on truthful, open and accurate communications. It includes recognizing, monitoring, and managing potential biases, multiple relationships, and other conflicts of interest that could result in harm and exploitation of persons or peoples.

Complete openness and disclosure of information must be balanced with other ethical considerations, including the need to protect the safety or confidentiality of

persons and peoples, and the need to respect cultural expectations.

Cultural differences exist regarding appropriate professional boundaries, multiple relationships, and conflicts of interest. However, regardless of such differences, monitoring and management are needed to ensure that self-interest does not interfere with acting in the best interests of persons and peoples.

THEREFORE, psychologists accept as fundamental the Principle of Integrity. In so doing, they accept the following related values:

1.   honesty, and truthful, open and accurate communications;
2.   avoiding incomplete disclosure of information unless complete disclosure is culturally inappropriate, or violates confidentiality, or carries the potential to do serious harm to individuals, families, groups, or communities;
3.   maximizing impartiality and minimizing biases;
4.   not exploiting persons or peoples for personal, professional, or financial gain;
5.   avoiding conflicts of interest and declaring them when they cannot be avoided or are inappropriate to avoid.

Principle IV

Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society

Psychology functions as a discipline within the context of human society. As a science and a profession, it has responsibilities to society. These responsibilities include contributing to the knowledge about human behavior and to persons' understanding of themselves and others, and using such knowledge to improve the condition of individuals, families, groups, communities, and society. They also include conducting its affairs within society in accordance with the highest ethical standards, and encouraging the development of social structures and policies that benefit all persons and peoples.

Differences exist in the way these responsibilities are interpreted by psychologists in different cultures. However, they need to be considered in a way that is culturally appropriate and consistent with the ethical principles and related values of this Declaration.

THEREFORE, psychologists accept as fundamental the Principle of Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society. In so doing, they accept the following related values:

1.   the discipline's responsibility to increase scientific and professional knowledge in ways that allow the promotion of the well-being of society and all its members;
2.   the discipline's responsibility to use psychological knowledge for beneficial purposes and to protect such knowledge from being misused, used incompetently, or made useless;
3.   the discipline's responsibility to conduct its affairs in ways that are ethical and consistent with the promotion of the well-being of society and all its members;
4.   the discipline's responsibility to promote the highest ethical ideals in the scientific, professional and educational activities of its members;

5.   the discipline's responsibility to adequately train its members in their ethical responsibilities and required competencies;
6.   the discipline's responsibility to develop its ethical awareness and sensitivity, and to be as self-correcting as possible.

International Declaration on Core Competences in Professional Psychology

Adopted by

International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) 15. June 2016

International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) 25. July 2016

INTRODUCTION

This International Declaration of Core Competences in Professional Psychology seeks to identify a set of internationally recognized and endorsed competences that can serve as the foundation for a coherent global professional identity and possibly an international recognition system for equating professional preparation systems, program accreditation, professional credentialing, and regulation of professional competence and conduct. The rationale and methods used to develop the Declaration are described in this Introduction while the uses, need for local adaptation, and potential impact of having this Declaration are described in Preamble to the Declaration itself.

"Competence" was the theme selected by the Organizing Committee in planning the 5th International Congress on Licensure, Certification and Credentialing, Stockholm, July 2013. The Congress' goal was to start a process "To promote the development of a global agreement on identifying the benchmark competencies that define professional psychology". The Congress was unusual in being by invitation only. 150 invitations were issued and 75 people participated in the Congress from 18 countries and 5 continents. International associations such as (in alphabetic order) the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), the International Test Commission (ITC) and the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) were represented. The Congress also differed from previous ones in operating as an extended series of workshops. Most of the time was spent in highly productive small group discussions interspersed with plenary feedback and agenda-setting sessions.

Prior to the Congress a "Foundation Document", a "Statement", and documents on existing models on competence for psychologists had been distributed to delegates. A draft summary competence model had also been produced prior to the Congress through content analysis of a range of current national models. This was used as a stimulus for the group discussions. Through a subsequent series of iterative consultations, this summary model has formed the basis for the final "International Declaration on Core Competences in Professional Psychology" (hereafter called the Declaration). These documents, the Congress Report, a list of Work Group and Reference Group members, and other documents referred to later in this Declaration can all be downloaded from http://www.psykologforeningen.no/foreningen/english/ipcp.

The Congress was a great success as an opening conversation about the guiding concept and the intended goal, and it ended in an agreement to establish "The International Project on Competence in Psychology" (IPCP) as a multi-stakeholder international project. There was a willingness of all the planners and participants to move beyond discussing regional and national differences and to begin exploring areas of common understanding and agreement that inspire the belief that this effort can be successful. A Work Group was established consisting of persons from Norway, United Kingdom, Romania, South Africa, China, New Zealand, Colombia, Canada, and the United States. In addition a network (Reference Group) was established, and at present consists of 275 persons from 77 countries.

The Work Group has held five face-to-face multiple-day meetings and produced three Progress Reports since the Stockholm Congress. Each Progress Report was sent out as a draft for comment to the Reference Group. In addition, members of the Work Group held open discussion meetings at two international congresses (ICAP2014 in Paris & ECP2015 in Milan) and at four regional conferences (Kampala, Durban, Armenia-Colombia, and Beirut). In the last round of consultations (December 2015) national and international psychological associations were also invited to comment. Special attention was given to the comments from IAAP and IUPsyS in this last round of consultations.

The Declaration itself contains four parts:

1. **Introduction**
   Describes the history and process of development.

2. **Glossary of terms**
   Provides the intended meaning of words used to promote a common understanding across an international audience.

3. **Preamble**
   Describes the purpose, scope, limitations, and potential applications of the Declaration.

4. **Core Competences in Professional Psychology**
   Presents the core competences.

The competences articulated in the Declaration are general, not specific. The Declaration is not a "standard", and not meant to be one. This document has no authority over any national or regional established standards. Meeting these competences does not qualify anyone to be a psychologist. However, the Declaration may provide a useful framework to support the development of standards or to support accreditation, education and training, or certification. Different organizations, communities, nations, and regions may use and adapt these competences to better fit their local context. The expression, demonstration, or application of a universally endorsed competence could be quite different in a specific national or cultural context. The development of local or regional translations of these competences into specific education and training requirements is encouraged. Such outcomes may vary across cultures, thus capturing the variety of expression and richness of a diverse and international professional community.

The significance of the Declaration depends on its endorsement by organizations that have a mission in the practice of psychology at the international, regional, or national level. All such organizations are encouraged to explicitly endorse, adopt, and/or ratify this Declaration, to promote awareness, respect and understanding thereof, to absorb its principles in their own documents and practices, and to expand and adapt the scope of the Declaration to their own particular contexts.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

In this Declaration the following definitions apply:

Assessment: See Psychological Assessment.

Best practice: A method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is accepted as a quality benchmark for correct or accepted practice within a given socio-cultural setting.

Client: An individual, group, community, or organization using or receiving the professional services of a psychologist.

Competence: A combination of practical and theoretical *knowledge*, cognitive *skills*, *behaviour*, and values used to perform a specific behaviour or set of behaviours to a standard, in professional practice settings associated with a professional role. In some regions of the world, the term competency (pl. competencies) is used with the same meaning as the term competence (pl. competences).

Competency: Confusingly, the terms 'competence' and 'competency' (and their plurals: 'competences' and competencies') are used somewhat interchangeably in the literature. However, there are important differences in terms of nuances of meaning in the way these terms are used in some areas of practice. Because of this the term 'competence' is preferred in this document when referring to performance in relation to some standard. That is, in relation to whether someone is deemed competent or not. 'Competency' can have a broader more inclusive meaning than 'competence'. While 'competency' is often used, particularly in the USA, to have the same meaning, 'competency' is also used to refer to behavioural attributes (e.g., listening, decisiveness, attention to detail etc.) which are not related to some performance standard. Much of the use of 'competency' in the work and organizational psychology literature and in human resource management relates to the notion of a competency as a personal attribute. Competency models describe the desirable qualities people should have rather than the competence they have demonstrated through their performance.

Competences: Clusters of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes that enable a person to act effectively and to a defined standard in a professional practice situation.

Competencies: See Competency.

Constructs: Explanatory variables which are not directly observable; they form the building blocks of scientific theories and models and lie at the heart of psychological explanations and interventions.

Core (competence): A competence the possession of which is critical to the overall ability of a person to practise to an acceptable professional standard. Core competences are expected to be possessed by all those who claim competence in professional practice. It should be noted that additional competences may also be required, depending upon areas of specialism and socio-cultural settings, to ensure overall competence as a practitioner.

Cultural competence: Competent professional behaviour based on awareness of, knowledge about, and understanding of the cultural influences on psychological work. These qualities are necessary to perform professional psychological services which recognize the diverse worldviews and practices of both oneself and of clients from different cultural backgrounds. Cultural competence is focused on the understanding of self and other as bearers of culture that is influenced by historical, social, economic, and political determinants and the impact of that culture on how these factors influence psychological theories, models, and practices.

Cultural humility: Cultural humility requires that psychologists strive to achieve humbleness in their interactions with clients; recognize that they are not the expert, and that they actively commit to being self-reflective and self-critiquing. Cultural humility entails the active inclusion of others' cultural worldviews to develop authentic and respectful relationships; reflection on ones thoughts, feelings and behaviour about their client's cultural worldview, and commitment to engaging in a life-long learning process towards humility and respect for others.[1]

Culture: A collectively-learned repertoire consisting of intangible (e.g., worldviews, beliefs, symbols, ideas, values, codes of behaviour) and tangible elements (e.g., artefacts, tools, language, literature), characteristic for a human society, community, or group, which helps members of that society, community, or group to communicate, understand, and interpret expressions of that society, community, or group.

Diversity: An attribute similar to heterogeneity, signifying the presence and inclusion of individuals, groups, and cultures which are different from each other, but also including respect for and appreciation of those variables which define the differences.

Evaluation: A process describing in a structured manner some aspect of the quality of an entity or procedure. Depending on the approach, the process describes the presence or level of

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[1] The term was developed initially by Tervalon, and Murray-Garcia in 1998. The definition above includes the original term with additions. Tervalon, M. & Murray-Garcia, J. M. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 9(2), 117-125.

development of specific characteristics of the entity or procedures and compares these characteristics against a pre-specified standard.

Evidence: The available body of information indicating whether a particular professional action or professional decision in a particular context for a particular use has quality and relevance.

Evidence-based: Any concept or strategy derived from or informed by evidence from research or practical experience, that supports the quality and the relevance of a particular action or decision in a particular context for a particular use.

Intervention: A deliberate and structured process usually based on a theoretical or practice-based model and having an expected outcome. The process is one in which some action is taken through which it is expected that the individual or group of individuals involved will be changed.

Knowledge, Foundational: Facts and information, which are acquired through education and experience, which form the theoretical and practical understanding of a subject. In psychology, foundational knowledge refers to knowledge about psychological concepts, constructs, methods, and their limitations, both as theory and as practice; this knowledge refers to psychology in general and not as applied to specific practice areas of psychology. (See also Knowledge, Specialized.)

Knowledge, Specialized: Facts and information, acquired through education and experience, which form the theoretical and practical understanding of a subject. In psychology, specialized knowledge builds on and expands Foundational knowledge, and refers to specific areas of psychology, such as clinical, educational, work and organizational or others (i.e., to concepts, constructs, methods which are typical of or involve specific particularities when applied in those contexts). (See also Knowledge, Foundational)

Needs analysis: An analytic process run by a psychologist in order to understand or elicit from his/her client the actual or desired needs for the psychological service to be provided. Needs analysis informs the psychological service and guides it to goals which are relevant to the client or the client's problem.

Practitioner: An individual who as a result of qualification (oftentimes there is a requirement also for registration) practises a profession. When used in the context of Psychology, a practitioner is a person who is not only qualified (and, if needed, registered), but also practises the profession in applied settings, as opposed to adopting only such roles as administration, teaching, or research.

Professionalism: The level of excellence or competence, especially with respect to ethics and values, reflected in conduct, aims, and qualities, that is characteristic and expected from a practitioner.

Psychologist: A professional practitioner who is competent to carry out assessment and intervention related to psychological and behavioural variables, in order to improve the well-being or performance of individuals, groups, communities, organizations, systems, or society.

Psychological assessment: A systematic process that uses a combination of techniques and methods (such as tests, inventories, interview, observation) in order to evaluate various psychological and behavioural characteristics (e.g., traits, capabilities) of an individual or group of individuals.

Psychological evaluation: A systematic evaluation (see also Evaluation) of constructs (see also Constructs) which are psychological in nature.

Psychological intervention: An intervention (see also Intervention) developed through psychological methods and based on psychological theories or models in order to facilitate change in an individual, group, community, organization, system, or society.

Professional activities: Activities which are performed by a psychologist as part of his/her service to a client.

Professional behaviour: Professional conduct of a psychologist that conforms to the principles defined by a body of regulations to which psychologists are expected to abide. Professional conduct (or professional behaviour) is usually defined by professional bodies, but in some countries or regions it may be also defined by law. It refers not to activities per se, but to the underlying principles and values behind any professional activity, such as (but not exclusively related to) ethics, effective service, self-reflection, and self-development and others.

Psychological practice: The sum of professional activities undertaken by a psychologist. Psychological practice is done by a psychologist through a formal contractual relationship with clients with the psychologist acting as a service provider, and may in some countries and regions be regulated (e.g., subject to licensure or certification).

Professional psychology: An organized community of psychologists representing applied psychological best practice. These psychologists offer professional services to clients, focusing on the practical application of psychology.

Research: The systematic investigation of phenomena with the aim of increasing the body of knowledge or applying the current body of knowledge in new ways.

Skills, Basic: Learned abilities which enable a professional to carry out professional tasks with a certain minimum amount of proficiency, when applied to psychology in general. Basic skills are domain-general and refer to psychology in general and not as applied to specific practice areas of psychology. (See also Skills, Specialized.)

Skills, Specialized: Learned abilities which enable a professional to carry out professional tasks with a certain minimum amount of proficiency, when applied to own chosen area of specialization within psychology, such as clinical, educational, work and organizational, or others. Specialized skills build on basic skills, and use them in particular ways, as needed in those specific professional contexts. (See also Skills, Basic.)

Stakeholder: An individual, group, or organization that has an interest or a concern in a process or its outcome.

PREAMBLE

Psychology as a profession is practised around the world within the social, cultural, educational, political, and legal context of each country. Increasingly, psychologists study, practise, consult, collaborate, and communicate across international boundaries. Such changes have resulted in many benefits for clients, for societies, and for the profession itself. These benefits include the ability to determine the applicability of psychological knowledge and techniques with diverse populations, the ability to share different approaches and strategies for addressing common problems, and the ability to identify areas of unmet need and to deploy appropriate resources to these areas. However, given the unique cultural and legal contexts in which psychologists practise around the world and the expansion of their activities beyond national boundaries, new issues and challenges have emerged and created the need to develop a coherent international professional identity for psychologists.

Professional competences play a critical role in the professional work of psychologists and the quality of services provided by them. The global professional identity of psychologists may be enhanced by identifying a broadly recognized and internationally accepted set of core competences that define appropriate professional practice. Some of these competences may be obvious and are explicitly recognized worldwide, such as the competence for being an ethical psychologist. Others may be less explicit but still equally important.

Currently there are many different models for psychology education and training and multiple models for professional regulation in different countries and regions of the world. The timing and amount of focus on discipline-specific studies can vary by many years in different educational systems, as can the academic degree required for entry into the profession. The International Declaration of Core Competences in Professional Psychology identifies a set of internationally recognized and endorsed competences that serve as the foundation for a coherent global professional identity and possibly an international recognition system for equating professional preparation systems, program accreditation, professional credentialing, and regulation of professional competence and conduct.

The core competences presented in this Declaration are those expected of all psychologists providing services to clients at the time of entry to the profession. It is recognized and acknowledged that while these core competences serve as the basis for entry to the profession, the practising psychologist is expected to maintain continuing competence as the profession changes and practice evolves. It is also acknowledged that this Declaration describes the core competences related to the professional practice of applied psychologists. Some psychologists

work exclusively as scientists and academicians while others work as practitioners with a variety of client populations (including individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, schools, etc.). This Declaration describes the internationally agreed upon core competences related to the practice of psychology with any of these client populations and is not intended to describe or apply to psychologists engaged in teaching or research.

The competences articulated in the Declaration are general and not specific. Different organizations, communities, nations, and regions are recognized and encouraged to adapt these competences to better fit their local context. The expression, demonstration or application of a universally endorsed competence may be quite different in a specific national or cultural context. The development of local or regional translations of these competences into specific education and training requirements is encouraged. Such adaptations of these competences will likely produce variations across cultures, thus capturing the variety of expression and richness of a diverse and international professional community.

The significance of the Declaration depends on its recognition and promotion by organizations that have a mission in the practice of psychology at the international, regional, or national level. All such organizations are encouraged to explicitly endorse, adopt, and/or ratify this Declaration, to promote awareness, respect, and understanding thereof, to absorb its principles in their own documents and practices, and to translate, adapt, and expand the scope of the Declaration to their own particular contexts.

CORE COMPETENCES IN PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS UNDERPINNING THE CORE COMPETENCES		DESCRIPTIONS
KN	**Possesses the necessary knowledge**	
	KN1	Has the necessary foundational knowledge of psychological concepts, constructs, theories, methods, practice, and research methodology to support competence
	KN2	Has the necessary specialised knowledge of psychological concepts, constructs, theory, methods, practice, and research methodology relating to own areas to support competence
SK	**Possesses the necessary skills**	
	SK1	Has the necessary basic skills to support competence in psychological practice
	SK2	Has the necessary specialised skills to operate in own areas of psychological practice to support competence

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR COMPETENCES		DESCRIPTIONS
PE	**Practices ethically**	
	PE1	Applies relevant ethics codes in one's professional practice and conduct
	PE2	Adheres to relevant laws and rules in one's professional practice and conduct
	PE3	Resolves ethical dilemmas in one's professional practice using an appropriate approach

AP	**Acts professionally**		
		AP1	Follows accepted best practice in psychology
		AP2	Maintains competence as a psychologist
		AP3	Operates within the boundaries of one's own competence
		AP4	Consults peers, supervisors, or other relevant sources when appropriate
		AP5	Makes referrals to relevant others when appropriate
		AP6	Chooses appropriate courses of action in response to unpredictable and complex events
ER	**Relates appropriately to clients and others**		
		ER1	Establishes, maintains, and develops appropriate working relationships with clients and relevant others
		ER2	Establishes, maintains, and develops appropriate working relationships with colleagues in psychology and other professions
WD	**Works with diversity and demonstrates cultural competence**		
		WD1	Works with knowledge and understanding of the historical, political, social, and cultural context of clients, colleagues, and relevant others
		WD2	Demonstrates cultural humility
		WD3	Identifies, acknowledges, and respects diversity in relevant others
		WD4	Recognizes the impact of one's own values, beliefs, and experiences on one's professional behaviour, clients, and relevant others
		WD5	Works and communicates effectively with all forms of diversity in clients, colleagues, and relevant others
		WD6	Is inclusive of all forms of diversity in working with clients, colleagues, and relevant others

EP	**Operates as an evidence-based practitioner**		
		EP1	Adopts an evidence-based orientation to the provision of assessments, interventions, service delivery, and other psychological activities
		EP2	Consults psychological and other relevant research to inform practice
		EP3	Recognizes the limitations of the evidence available to inform practice
SR	**Reflects on own work**		
		SR1	Evaluates the efficacy of one's activities and service provision
		SR2	Reflects on and implements areas for improvement in one's practice
		SR3	Reflects on one's own values and beliefs and the impact they may have on one's practice
		SR4	Validates reflections with peers or supervisors, when appropriate

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES COMPETENCES			DESCRIPTIONS
SG	**Sets relevant goals**		
		SG1	Develops goals based on needs analysis
		SG2	Aligns goals with those of clients and others
PA	**Conducts psychological assessments and evaluations**		
		PA1	Identifies assessment or evaluation needs in individuals, groups, communities, organizations, systems, or society
		PA2	Selects, designs, or develops assessments or evaluations, using methods appropriate for the goals and purposes of the activity
		PA3	Delivers assessments or evaluations, including administration, scoring, interpretation, feedback, and reporting of results

PI	Conducts psychological interventions		
		PI1	Plans and carries out psychological interventions with individuals, groups, communities, organizations, systems, or society
		PI2	Designs, develops, and evaluates the potential usefulness and effectiveness of psychological interventions, using methods appropriate for the goals and purposes of the intervention
		PI3	Integrates assessment and other information with psychological knowledge to guide and develop psychological interventions
		PI4	Evaluates the usefulness and effectiveness of one's own interventions
		PI5	Uses evaluation results to review and revise interventions as necessary
		PI6	Provides guidance and advice to other relevant parties involved in the psychological intervention

CO	Communicates effectively and appropriately		
		CO1	Communicates with diverse audiences as necessary for the effective conduct of one's professional activities
		CO2	Provides relevant and clear feedback, reporting and guidance to clients and relevant others
		CO3	Provides clear and objective information on psychological matters to relevant audiences

APAW Mission Statement

Applied Psychology Around the World (APAW) is one of the official publications of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP). We also have two academic journals - *Applied Psychology: An International Journal* and *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*. Our e-News is published once a month with a series of regular information about Applied Psychology and our community.

Applied Psychology Around the World (APAW) is our newest publication; APAW ISSN registration number is: 26939-6521. The APAW is only distributed online, with three to four thematic issues per year.

The purpose of APAW is to share news and reports about applied psychology, through theme-based articles.

APAW welcome submissions of thematic issues; these can include include scientific research projects, data analysis, information of various kinds (books on the topic, conferences, etc.), and practice related to applied psychology around the world.

Submissions are encouraged from members in all regions of the world. Articles should be written to be understood by a diverse range of readers with differing levels of expertise in psychology (undergraduate students, postgraduate students, practitioners or Professors), in correct English (using the US spell check). Do not hesitiate to propose a thematic issue based on a topic related to applied psychology in the world!

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Authors may correspond with the Chief-Editor, Christine Roland-Lévy at pastpresident@iaapsy.org. In the subject line of your email, enter the subject: *"Submission for Publication in APAW".* All articles and news items for consideration should be submitted in electronic form only in a Word compatible file. Short papers are preferred.

Requirements:

- Written in North American English (use US spell check)
- A short title
- Authors and their e-mail address and institutions
- An abstract of no more than 200 words and up to five keywords
- References should follow the style of the American Psychological Association
- All works cited should be listed alphabetically by author after the main body of the text.
- Single space between paragraphs, no indentation, font should be Arial, size 10, section heads/subhead should be bold.
- Figures (including photos), should be at least 300 dpi resolution, and saved as a TIF, EPS, PNG, JPG, or PDF

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