

# President's Perspective

By Antoine Guedeney



Cape Town, WAIMH 13 th World Congress: It's tomorrow! Plans for the Congress, the first ever in Africa, are on track. We have many submissions and expect around 600 participants in this outstanding venue, with full view of Table Mountain.

Some features of the Congress will be familiar and others will be new. The structure of the 2012 Congress will be the same as in years past. It has worked well to have fewer symposia, a lot of poster workshops and interface plenaries which allow us to discuss video taped clinical material from different points of view in front of larger audiences. The newest idea is the offering of our first Training Village which will take place just before the pre-congress activities. In one day at the Red Cross War Memorial hospital, a leading university hospital dedicated to children, there will be parallel presentations by Palvi Kaukonen, Kaija Puura, Deborah Weatherston and by myself. Astrid Berg and the South African WAIMH affiliate organized such a meeting last spring as a warm up for the 2012 WAIMH Congress. More than a hundred people attended from all over the country. The idea for the Training Village is to attract people from Africa who may not attend the Congress but who are working with babies and families in a variety of ways and eager to know more about infant mental health practice.

There are key issues for WAIMH to address: training, the development of interest in infant mental health among new groups of professionals around the world and the development of new affiliates. I have worked closely with Miri Keren, our next president, to expand WAIMH's reach across disciplines and in many places. I was invited to participate in Ankara, Turkey at the Mualla Ozuk annual symposium, organized by Nese Erol and the Turkish affiliate group. The affiliate is very lively and

hard working and clearly ready to organize a World Congress in the future in Istanbul.

Miri and I attended the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) Congress in Buenos Aires (BA) in October 2011. We boosted the WPA infancy group, renamed parent and infant group, and participated in two very well attended symposia on infancy. We were both invited as key note speakers to participate in an Argentinean affiliate meeting that took place in the famous and impressive Medicine Academy, with more than 400 people attending and coming from several South American countries as Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Peru. We covered our own travel expenses to Argentina (not on WAIMH's finances) as the local affiliate could not afford it. The success of the day will help the affiliate to develop. Our coming to BA as President and President-elect of WAIMH has stirred up a discussion regarding the opportunity to rebuild a South American Affiliate group. Let us remember that such a consortium had already organized a regional congress in Punta del Este. Such a group could easily organize a World Congress as well, be it in Argentina or in Brazil. Of additional interest, Deborah Weatherston, WAIMH At-Large Board Member, was invited by members of Four Winds to give several lectures about infant mental health in Tokyo and Yokohama in November, 2011, building on the successful WAIMH Congress in Yokohama in 2009. There is great interest in formalizing a WAIMH affiliate for professionals working in many different ways with infants, young children and families in Japan.

Therefore, one of the tasks of the WAIMH Board Members is to act as *missi dominici* for infant mental health, going to countries where we are not yet well established and giving talks to affiliate groups for minimum costs. Many prominent WAIMH Board members have done so in the past, and I

hope that this tradition will continue in future years. Our main goals for the future are countries like India, China and Japan. We have been invited to organize a WAIMH symposium during the next Indian Child Psychiatry Congress in Delhi. This will be an opportunity to help the Indian infancy professionals group to gather into an affiliate.

Reducing costs for WAIMH is a constant issue. The Executive Committee (EC) held its first electronic video conference to reduce the expense of meeting face to face. It is an expedient and far less expensive way for the EC to meet and discuss issues important to the governance of WAIMH, although perhaps not quite as much fun.

With very warm wishes for you and your families, and for our work with infants and families throughout the world.

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Salvador Celia had organized several WAIMH meetings in South America, along with Argentinean colleagues (Miguel Hoffman) and Uruguayan colleagues (Miguel Cherro). To my knowledge, Salvador is the first WAIMH member and figure to have his statue, in the very city where he used to organize the yearly



13th World Congress

of the World Association for Infant Mental Health

Babies in Mind – the Minds of Babies: A View from Africa

*Cape Town, South Africa*

Cape Town International Convention Centre 17 - 21 April 2012



WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR  
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH