

The Affiliates Council with WAIMH moves forward

Affiliates Corner

June 2012

WAIMH really takes to heart its Affiliates and the Affiliates provide a strong dynamic energy for moving WAIMH increasingly out into the world. The Cape Town Affiliates Council meeting was attended by 30 Affiliate representatives, several groups interested to develop new Affiliates, and several WAIMH Board members. The meeting by all accounts was successful and presented the Affiliates and the Board with an important opportunity for developing a shared direction and action plan for the next two years.

The agenda was based on the findings from the two Affiliate Council surveys conducted over 2011 which provided descriptions from each Affiliate in regard to their current activities and their needs. As a result, three main themes emerged from the Affiliates Council meeting: 1. The facilitation of interactions between Affiliates; 2. The expansion of WAIMH benefits for Affiliates and; 3. The facilitation of input of Affiliates to the various WAIMH scientific and advocacy activities.

First, in nearly 30 countries, Affiliates work hard to meet the needs of their members, their Affiliates' supporters and their broader communities in the domain of infant mental health. Affiliates expressed the need to expand their communication with one another in order to support their actions and to facilitate the development of new Affiliates in under-served areas of the world. It was decided that the social media Facebook would be trialed as way to support Affiliates. An initial exploratory team of Lynn Priddis and Catarina Furmak was established with the intention to run a WAIMH Affiliates Facebook trial beginning in the latter part of 2012.

Further, as a way to increase our formal sharing of resources across the Affiliates, it was agreed that a working party would continue what had been begun on the development of a WAIMH resource on infant mental health matters, in the response to disasters. A work group was established including: Maree Foley, Nese Erol, Hisako Watanabe and Martin St-André. Other initiatives to be explored included: fundraising to support affiliates; "adopt an affiliate" programme; and developing a global lens on infant mental health.

Second, Affiliates voiced that they wanted to be nurtured by WAIMH. As a result the new open access format for Signal will allow Affiliates to broaden the dissemination of infant mental health news within their communities and will contribute as an incentive for Affiliates members to join WAIMH. Similarly, the WAIMH Board approved an initiative to explore the possibility of recording some of the scientific content at the Edinburgh 2014 congress. This in turn would enable Affiliates to have access to the content of WAIMH congress plenary conferences creating an opportunity to go over this precious scientific material within their own local scientific programming.

In addition, Affiliates also wanted to have access to the names of potential clinical consultants or trainers. In response, the WAIMH Board discussed the possibility of specifying alongside the "WAIMH membership profiles" (within the WAIMH website), an individual member's availability to provide clinical advice or training; including what specialties of consultation they might offer. Further, to support the dual thriving of our WAIMH-Affiliates relationship, a sub-committee chaired by Kai von Klitzing will investigate the feasibility of piloting modalities for facilitating and for creating incentives for Affiliate members to become also WAIMH members.





Third, the WAIMH Board and the Affiliates voiced the wish for Affiliates to provide a broader input in WAIMH's scientific contents. In response, the Affiliates Council responded with interest two initiatives: 1. The creation of an Affiliates Council-driven event for the Edinburgh congress, coordinated by Maree Foley, Martin St-André, Julie Ribaud, Nese Erol and Pamela Segel; and 2. A survey distributed to the Affiliates regarding their input for the development of a statement regarding infant rights initiated by the Board and chaired by Miri Keren.

Finally, a well-functioning Affiliates Council operates with the Affiliate presidents continuing to be accountable to the Council and to WAIMH with reference to the WAIMH bylaws. For this purpose, council members responded positively to two propositions: 1. That a survey be sent to all Affiliate presidents regarding a finer grained role definition of the roles and responsibilities of Affiliate presidents, and of the Affiliates Council Chair and Representative. 2. That a consultation process be started in preparation for meeting in 2014 regarding the current Affiliates Council election process by-laws. When we gather again in Edinburgh, it will have been four years since the initial election process was trialed, with this time creating a potential space to consider if the current by-laws regarding the voting process need to be revisited or not. We agreed that the current voting system provides a solid base from which to enable this issue to unfold in an unhurried way, until any clear alternatives arise.

The creation of the Affiliates Council provides a rich opportunity for the Affiliates to have a real input in WAIMH's activities and projects. All WAIMH members and presidents are invited to continue partaking in making the Affiliates Council a lively place for generating actions impacting infant mental groups across the WAIMH family.

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Photos (page 10-11) from Affiliate Council meetings in Cape Town in April 2012 by Minna Sorsa, WAIMH Central Office.