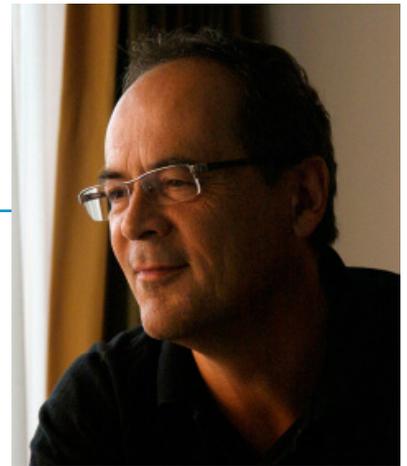


President's Perspective

By Antoine Guedeney



What's new since our last WAIMH Congress that was held in Leipzig in July 2010? Well, the news is that the Congress was a scientific success as well as a financial one, thanks to the efficacy of the local organizing committee (LOC) headed by Kai Von Klitzing. Kai was able to obtain financial support from the City of Leipzig, as well as from other sponsors. Thus, he kept expenses under control and made a profit for WAIMH, which is the first time that a congress made money in many years. In fact every congress brings WAIMH 50 USD per registered participant. Then the profit- if there is any- is divided between the LOC and WAIMH. In 1989, the Lugano Congress made a profit, thanks to a large contribution from the city, and the Stockholm Congress was a great success, due to Peter de Chateau, even though it occurred in the middle of a petrol crisis. The Chicago Congress lost money. The Tampere Congress made quite a good profit, but the following Congress in Montreal was a loss for WAIMH. The Paris Congress brought no extra money to WAIMH nor did the Yokohama Congress. Therefore, the Leipzig Congress is the first one to bring extra money to the organization in a very long time. The success in Leipzig makes WAIMH financially secure. This is crucial to the stability of our organization since our next Congress is- as stated in our by-laws- outside Europe, i.e. in Cape Town, South Africa, a smaller affiliate organization. There is greater fiscal risk in hosting a Congress in a smaller infant mental health community.

We have asked every participant about his or her feelings about the Leipzig congress. The analysis of the feedback will be sent to you in the near future. What we already know is a general feeling of satisfaction with the scientific content, the ambiance and the organization.

One reason for the success of the Leipzig Congress was the leadership of Kai von Klitzing, with strong teamwork from the (LOC) and WAIMH Program Committee (PC), along with an excellent conference organizing company, Interplan.

Over the years, the WAIMH Central Office has gained experience in organizing and running world congresses. We can help the LOC with budgeting, sponsoring and abstract handling. Still, there are clear advantages in having a long-term contract with one conference organizing company that gets to know the structure and goals of our organization. This is the reason why we have launched a bid for a long term contract between WAIMH and an international Conference Organizer. The WAIMH Board will make a choice within a month from now between the bids received and this will be applicable to the WAIMH Congress in Scotland, 2014 that follows the Capetown Congress in 2012.

We have the first results of the major changes we made in the structure of our WAIMH Board by including two delegates who represent the affiliates, Martin St André and Maree Foley. They have initiated a survey of all the affiliates, as described in this issue of the Signal, so that we know much better "Who is Who and Where" in WAIMH and that every affiliate delegate can be in direct contact with another affiliate. This is a major step and I thank Martin, Maree and our office staff for accomplishing this task effectively and in due time.

As one of our major goals of sharing knowledge and experience, our next step is to launch another survey among all the affiliates in order to define local needs and wishes in terms of training. This will be the basis on which we will organize Training Institutes, in the format of one or two preconference days of world and regional congresses. For instance, our first Training Institute will be held in June 2011, just before the ESCAP conference in Helsinki, Finland. This will be the occasion for local professionals who come to the ESCAP conference to have a training day about infant mental health assessment and intervention. We will do the same in September 2011 in Buenos Aires around the dates of the World Psychiatry Association conference, and again at the WAIMH Congress in Capetown in 2012.

Last but not least, plans for the Capetown Congress are under way. We will have a site visit there in April, with minimal costs to WAIMH. The Program Committee has already started to work, with Kai von Klitzing as chair, Neil Boris, Mark Tomlinson and Kaija Puura as committee members, together with the Local Organizing committee with Astrid Berg as chair.

So start preparing your presentations for the 2012 WAIMH Congress in Capetown!

With best wishes Antoine Guedeney, President

Last minute note: The earthquake in Christchurch devastated parts of the city. WAIMH is a family and every board member, as it seems, has spontaneously sent an email to Maree Foley, representative of the Affiliates societies on the Board. She gave news the day after, but was still worried about her in-mother- in-law's fate. She described how some local WAIMH members very courageous as they tried to help many young children. The WAIMH network provided an immediate resource of existing programs to help infants in traumatizing situations, such as those that have been developed in New Orleans, New York, Haiti, and more. This is what is great about WAIMH...