

President's Perspective

By Miri Keren

It is with great humility and honor that I am stepping into the position of WAIMH President. It is the kind of thing I did not even dare to dream about, when, 19 years ago, I started my fellowship in Infant Psychiatry at Brown University (Rhode Island, USA). I have special thanks to give to Tuula Tamminen and Antoine Guedeney who have played very significant roles in my career. As long ago as 1995, at the WAIMH Congress in Tampere, Antoine said to me, in his special semi-nonchalant way, "You know, Miri, it would be a good idea to create an Israel WAIMH Affiliate." (I did this, of course!) In 2002, at the WAIMH Congress gala dinner in Melbourne, Tuula said to me, in her characteristic way of conveying ideas, "We women have important things to do for WAIMH," and I wondered what she meant...

This is exactly how Tuula says and does things... and indeed, in recognition for her extraordinary service on behalf of babies, families and infant mental health professionals, she received in Cape Town the title of Honorary President of WAIMH. Bob Emde, one of the pioneers in the field of infant mental health, and himself a very active Honorary President, transformed the formal awards and honors ceremony into a creative, loving and humoristic (exactly the way a "real" infant mental health person should be!) event by composing this song and singing it to Tuula:

"So Tuula, Thanks",

(To be sung by all with beautiful, joyful, well-known melody by Jean Sibelius)

So Tuula, thanks

For helping us... to grow.

Your high ideals

Have been an inspiration

To guide us on

For infants, and beyond

(repeat)

Your high ideals

Have been an inspiration

To guide us on



For infants, and beyond.

(Poem): "Tuula Leading ...
Sensible"

More than 'almost breeze'

More than that.

Being alive

And sensible.

Take a deep breath

Inspiration.

Open eyes and look

Vision.

Open ears to the world

Listen.

You are a surface

Be touched.

Smell and taste

What's meant to be

And not to be.

Feel.

Feel the music around you

The chords of harmony and
dissonance.

Feel the hopes of others and their
pain

Feel the love of children and their
cries

Feel the drum beats of Africa

And yes ...

Feel playfulness and wonder.

Sharing and caring

Living is giving...

Tuula:

Being alive and sensible

Leading...

Thank you.

Antoine's presidency has been for me the opportunity to learn not only the tasks embedded in the WAIMH presidency, but also the ways to do things...of course with the continuous help and support from Palvi Kaukonen, WAIMH Executive Director, and from Kaija Puura, WAIMH co-executive director, at the WAIMH office in Tampere. I wish to take this opportunity to let our members know that these



functions require a huge amount of work hours inbetween, as well as during, our congresses. It is important to know that Palvi and Kaija do all of this on a voluntary basis, in addition to their heavy clinical and administrative duties in Tampere. THANK YOU!

I feel very privileged to be at the head of our new WAIMH Board of Directors who are, in my eyes, the optimal "mix" of highly skilled clinicians and scholars. Kai von Klitzing has been elected President-Elect (and has already started to share with us his wisdom and experience in replicating the successful conference we had in Leiptzig in 2010 as we look ahead to the 2014 conference in Edinburgh), Karlen Lyons-Ruth has been nominated as the President's Executive-at-Large, and Astrid Berg will serve as the President's Special Advisor. Campbell Paul has agreed to continue in the role of Secretary-Treasurer. Debbie Weatherson will be in charge of The Signal editorship. Martin St Andre and Maree Foley continue their great jobs respectively as Affiliate Council Chair and Affiliates Council Representative. Finally, Antoine Guedeney will remain my mentor, in his new position of Past President!

The way I see my role over the next 4 years of my presidency, is based on the belief that we do have, as mental health, health, and early care and education professionals, the very special role of "talking for the baby" in our societies, including, and maybe especially, in societies in conflict

(as in Israel where I live myself). Our main goals, tasks and actions that have been targeted by the Board during our first meeting at the end of the 2012 Cape Town Congress, include the following:

To continue to push forward the process of composing an Infant's Rights Declaration. We will summarize the discussion of infant's rights/values that took place at the WAIMH pre-congress meeting in Cape Town in a draft proposal that will be sent out to all WAIMH members and Affiliates for review and comment. We will then finalize the document and initiate collaboration with other organizations that have already dealt with rights declarations. The goal is to reach the 2014 WAIMH Congress in Edinburgh with a clear WAIMH statement in collaboration with others.

To continue and expand our "interactive trainings" in the context of WAIMH pre-congresses, regional congresses that we would encourage our Affiliates to organize, and in collaboration with other World Associations' congresses (IACAPAP, ISAP, WPA) that might become interested in infant mental health. Karlen Lyons-Ruth will be in charge of putting in place a research training institute. Affiliate to Affiliate trainings will be encouraged by the WAIMH Board.

To expand WAIMH to Eastern Europe (for instance Hungary, with a very big Roma community that is poor, has no access to education, and are socially isolated),

Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, through "interactive training institutes"; and mutual invitations to congresses (such as WAIMH invited representatives from India). For each place, we need to have a "mediator" colleague, such as Zack Boukydis in Hungary, Savita in India, Wenhong Chen in Shanghai, Corean and Taiwan colleagues, and myself with the Palestinian and Arab Israeli (with the help of Astrid Berg and Elizabeth Tuters).

To continue the work started by the DC 0-3R Task Force, under the leadership of Bob Emde and Helen Egger, and compile a DC 0-3R Casebook with the help of experienced clinicians from different countries and cultures.

This list shows that we have plenty of work ahead...and we like it!

Finally, I wish to thank Astrid Berg and Mark Tomlinson for having put together such a very special WAIMH Congress in South Africa. Indeed, in addition to the scientific quality of the congress, they gave a special touch, with a unique cultural and societal dimension, that made the conference become a real and powerful event, important personally and professionally to all of us.

With gratitude and in celebration of the work of WAIMH,

Miri Keren

Renew you WAIMH 2012 membership now! Note, that there are two types of memberships:

1) Professional and 2) Student. As a WAIMH member you may also subscribe to the Infant Mental Health Journal (IMHJ) at a reduced rate. Go online www.waimh.org for both membership and subscription to the IMHJ.