

From the Central Office: Introducing the people working in the WAIMH Central Office

By Minna Sorsa, Sari Miettinen and Reija Latva, Finland

This year we were pleased to work with the Local Organizing Committee and Program Committee of the Rome World Congress. Another big project for the Central Office has been working on our new website. At the end of 2017 we started with the redesigning of the WAIMH Brand. With the extremely supportive and helpful specialists from Differo (in Tampere, Finland), content strategist Santeri Niemi has collaborated with us in creating a much more vivid graphic design. As we also changed our website software, we have been very busy. Luckily Administrative Assistant Sari Miettinen has started to work at the Office.

WAIMH is more visible in the social media. We invite you to like WAIMH on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @WAIMHorg. You are welcome to join the conversation online in social media using the following hashtags: @WAIMHorg #WAIMH #WorldInWaimh #IMH #WAIMH2020 (the Brisbane World Congress).

In the last Issue of Perspectives the new Executive Director Kaija Puura [told you more about herself](#). Now we want to introduce the other people at the World Association for Infant Mental Health you can connect and work with. Minna Sorsa is working as Senior Administrator, Sari Miettinen as Administrative Assistant and Reija Latva as Associate Executive Director.

Minna Sorsa



I started to work with WAIMH in 2006, when we started the transfer of the WAIMH Central Office from East Lansing in Michigan to Tampere in Finland. It was good to get to know the wonderful people behind WAIMH –Hiram and Dee Fitzgerald and Tina Houghton working at Michigan State University. One memorable moment was the biking tour along Red Cedar (the river running through East Lansing), as well as attending a spectacular Spartans football game at their stadium. WAIMH creates unforgettable memories.

The Office was officially transferred from the USA (Michigan State University) to Finland (University of Tampere) after the 2008 Yokohama congress. In the beginning the President of WAIMH was Tuula Tamminen. The subsequent Presidents were Antoine Guedeny, Miri Keren and currently Kai von Klitzing. It has been a privilege to work with all WAIMH Board members and Affiliates during the past years. Many of the WAIMH members have become my good friends

As ten years has since passed, we are now at a new development phase, with technological changes swinging WAIMH into the swift social media times, and thus our website also has to fill the requirements of current times. We are about to open a new website with Yourmembership. We have modernized Perspectives in Infant Mental Health, with weekly releases. Our members have chosen to keep the “old format” of Perspectives (formerly the Signal). In the future you will be able to browse past issues more easily, and share them openly.

In the Central Office I work on general

questions, social media, WAIMH World Congresses and different administrative tasks. I have worked with Perspectives in Infant Mental Health (formerly the Signal) since 2006, with Miri Keren as the Editor until 2012, when Deborah Weatherston commenced as Editor with 3-4/2012 issue. I am in deep gratitude for the outstanding collaboration.

As regards my background, I was trained as a Psychiatric Nurse, and have had many types of work experience, also as a reporter. I have been involved in local community volunteer work in my hometown, which has meant that I have worked together with people striving to preserve our historical and cultural heritage (which exists visibly as architecture and invisibly as traditions). My interest in volunteering arises from my belief in communities and active participation as the basis of societies. I strive to create communities where everybody can experience belonging, instead of exclusion. In my volunteer work I am interested particularly in the meaning of inclusion, a focus which may come from my interest in Mental Health Policies.

As my colleague Professor Kaija Puura [wrote in her previous article](#), I think that an optimistic approach is needed in current times. As WAIMH has the intention of continuing with the important work for infants and families all around the world, we also need to be aware of the huge importance of our network. We need the support of others and we need to be supportive ourselves, for example by asking each other how we are doing, being helpful and supporting each other, and sharing the experienced burdens together. In WAIMH we meet at biannual congresses, and in between on the web and in social media.

During the past years I completed my [PhD studies on mothers living in complicated life situations \(dual diagnosis\) as help-seekers](#). I am interested in qualitative methodology, and currently I am seeking research funding. This means that I will occasionally work part-time in WAIMH.

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Sari Miettinen



My first WAIMH congress was in beautiful Cape Town South Africa in 2012, where I gave my first oral presentation in English. I was thrilled with the WAIMH atmosphere and all the enthusiastic and inspiring WAIMH members and leaders. So I was really honored when I was offered the opportunity to work at the WAIMH Central Office. I started as a part-time Administrative Assistant in the WAIMH Central Office last fall, in October 2017.

I trained as a mental health nurse and pediatric nurse (RN) and now work as a Nurse Practitioner (NP). I have been working at the Department of Child Psychiatry in Tampere University Hospital nearly two decades and in the field of psychiatry and mental health overall for a quarter of a century.

Besides my work as a Nurse Practitioner, I have worked as a research nurse for two doctoral dissertations (doctor of medicine). My interest is in developing mental health services and over the years I have been involved in many research and development projects here in Finland. Besides our clinical work at Tampere University Hospital, I have been working with our former Executive Director Pälvi Kaukonen and new Executive Director Kaija Puura and with our Senior Administrator Minna Sorsa within these projects. The latest project has been working as a part-time project coordinator in 2017-2018, in the Finnish government's key project: a national program to address reform in child and family services. The program contains four themes: a family center model, development of services at specialized and the most demanding levels, a new operational culture to strengthen children's rights and access to basic information, and early childhood education, schools and other educational institutions to support the wellbeing

of children and youth. I have been coordinating the development of services at specialized levels and the integration of services in the Pirkanmaa Hospital District.

Outside my work I am a mother of two young adults just starting their own lives, still living at home with me and my husband. We love to travel and our hobby is sailing. I also adore cats, and I breed gorgeous Siberian cats.

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Reija Latva



My first memory of WAIMH is the 6th WAIMH World Congress in Tampere. At that time, I was a medical student at Tampere University. In spring 1996, I had just started to do research with Professor Tuula Tamminen. She told me about the upcoming congress and there I was, one of the blue and white striped medical students helping the congress participants, and I could not imagine what a wonderful path I had just started.

In 2006, at the 10th WAIMH World Congress in Paris, I had my first WAIMH congress presentation in a poster workshop. The atmosphere of the congress enthralled me and since then I have participated in every WAIMH congress. When the WAIMH Central Office was transferred to Finland the President of WAIMH Tuula Tamminen and Executive Director Pälvi Kaukonen gave me the great opportunity to start little by little working in the Central Office. During these years, I have also had the privilege to get to know the next presidents of WAIMH Antoine Guedeney, Miri Keren and Kai von Klitzing, board members and members of program committees when they visited the Kauppi Campus in Tampere.

During recent years, WAIMH has started to use more and more opportunities provided by social media. Social media also gave me my first official task in the association

in 2014 when I started to work as WAIMH Social Media Co-ordinator. In 2016, I started to work for the program committee of the Prague congress. Working on the program committee gave me a new and interesting perspective on WAIMH congresses.

In August this year I started working as an Associate Executive Director. In the Central Office, I will be organizing the next world congresses together with Kaija Puura, Minna Sorsa, Sari Miettinen, members of the Program Committee and the Local Organizing Committees of the congresses. We already started organizing the 18th World Congress in Brisbane 2020 this autumn. It is a great honor to serve the organization as an Associate Executive Director and I promise to do my best in this important task.

In addition, let me tell you something about myself. I am a child psychiatrist and I have worked at the Department of Child Psychiatry in Tampere University Hospital since 1999. Infant psychiatry has been my special interest for many years. I have done research in the field of infant psychiatry and done my PhD on premature infants. As a child psychiatrist I have had the opportunity to work in the Family and Infant Psychiatry Unit of Tampere University Hospital for the last ten years, first as infant psychiatrist and for the last five years as deputy chief of the unit. This autumn I received a new challenge in my clinical work starting as head of the Child Psychiatry Department of Tampere University Hospital.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2019!

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