



Founded 1966

International Association For Counselling (IAC)

Activity Report: September 2018 – April 2019

Summary

The period between the IAC Rome conference (September 2018), and the CCPA/IAC conference (May 2019), has been a busy and productive one. During this time we have seen a number of noteworthy developments including: Increased engagement with United Nations agencies; the extension of IAC's global outreach programme; positive signs of increased counselling practice in African countries, a tailored membership agreement for counsellors working within the Malaysian civil service, and an increase in membership.

Significant progress has also been made in the following areas: Member management and administration; Conference planning (2019, 2020, and 2021) and beyond; rejuvenation of the Research and Projects Roundtable, Volunteer recruitment; and the strengthening of IAC governance through review of Bye-laws, the elections process and role descriptions.

Although these are positive developments IAC still faces a serious challenge as a result of our income levels remaining low, and presenting a risk to the sustainability of this activity. We make no secret of the fact that we need resources – human, financial, and technological and that we encourage any person or group who feel they can help with their ideas or direct support to get in touch with us.

Finally, at the end of this period we must sadly say goodbye to some great individuals who have served on the IAC Executive Council. It has been an honour and privilege for me to work with the council members and to see their dedication to seeing the profession develop worldwide. I will miss them all and thank them for all that they have done to help us develop. The association recognises their wonderful contributions. Their commitment and that shown by the wider IAC Executive Council (EC), Members, Mapping Volunteers, and other IAC Supporters, has been a source of encouragement and motivation.

The information below encompasses the main IAC developments between September 2018 and April 2019, arranged under the IAC strategic goal areas (2016-2021).

Goal 1: Development of Counselling

This is IAC's central goal and directly relates to our overall purpose: *'We will advance the field of counselling through Practice, Education, Advocacy, Policy and Research initiatives'*.

- **Global Outreach:** Over 140 counselling groups (Associations, Universities, Institutes and Services), in 38 countries, have been contacted and informed of IAC activity since September 2018.
- **African Counselling Network:** A small but notable increase in counselling activity, and interest in IAC, from African countries, has been seen. We have been in communication with counsellors from Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, Malawi, Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. A volunteer from Kigali has agreed to start gathering information on counselling activity in Rwanda and some of the surrounding East-African countries. These and other indicators of the widespread development of the counselling profession on the African continent, highlight the sense in IAC now facilitating the establishment of an African counselling network.
- **Malaysia: Sarawak Civil Service Community of Practice (SCS-CoP) and IAC:** have come to a tailored arrangement whereby all (115) of the state employed counsellors will become IAC members. Specifically, in this instance, it is government employed counsellors from Sarawak (the largest state of 13 states) in Malaysia that are being fully subsidised. This project has mutually beneficial components and represents a meaningful way in which IAC can connect and contribute to the counselling profession worldwide.
- **World Mapping:** The aim of the overall project is to compile data and information about the scale, standards and contexts of counselling activity in each of the world's 196 countries. The mapping of the pilot-region (carried out in partnership with the American Counselling Association) answered fundamentally important quantitative and qualitative questions about counselling and its status, availability, education, and development in the following countries: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and

Venezuela. We look forward to working on further regions. We require the assistance of Associations to carry out this important work, and ask for your support.

- **World Health Organization (WHO):** IAC was pleased to attend the 2018 WHO mhGAP Forum (11-12th October 2018). This two days of intensive activity provided an opportunity for us to engage with a diverse group of mental health stakeholders to discuss a variety of issues, mostly related to the implementation of WHO's Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020. The Forum's theme and focus was – **Accelerating Country Action on Mental Health** – reflecting the vision of WHO's 13th General Programme of Work. The Forum was attended by participants from over 50 Member States and included participants from other UN organizations, from WHO Collaborating Centres, Ambassadors, and participants from more than 100 civil society organizations.
- **WHO EQUIP Workshop:** IAC continues to participate in the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance EQUIP project. "EQUIP: Ensuring Quality Psychological Support - A WHO workforce development package for psychological interventions".
- **IAC Certification:** We continued to validate commitment to international learning and exchange, respect for diversity, and the promotion of cross-cultural awareness in counselling – through the IAC certification programme. Many thanks to our team of assessors for carrying out this work.
- **UNESCO Grant:** After securing a *UNESCO* Participation Programme Grant for the 2017 IAC/AAC conference, a funding application for the 2019 conference was submitted to UNESCO. However, unfortunately, we were to learn that Canada is not part of the Participation Programme grant process and, therefore, no subsidised travel for those from low income, and least developed, countries, was possible for the 2019 conference.
- **UNESCO Visit:** In December 2019, IAC participated in the '*International Conference of NGOs*'. This event created an opportunity for NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO to discuss the new UNESCO programmes of work .The International Conference elected its new Chairperson and an NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee. Its main role is to

represent the interests of all the NGO partners with regard to UNESCO between conferences and ensure the proper functioning and efficiency of the partnership between the community of NGO partners and UNESCO. More details can be seen at the related [website](#). A meeting was also held with Ms Intissare Ibn Mokrane (Senior administrative Assistant for Arab States, international NGOs and for Europe and North America). This meeting concerned the participation programme applications and the programme in general.

Goal 2: Strengthening Partnership and Collaboration

We will strengthen and build connections with our International, National and Organisational partners

- **Associations' Round-Table:** The Associations' Round-Table meeting – due to take place in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, on Monday the 13th of May 2019 – is the sixth such meeting. It will provide an opportunity for the leaders of Member Associations to meet during IAC conferences to discuss and advance counselling matters worldwide. The 2018 Round-Table in Rome was a highly productive and informative event with approximately thirty Associations in attendance. We conservatively estimated the combined represented memberships to be 185,000 counsellors.
- **German Counselling Conference:** The counselling profession is growing in Germany and the German Association for Counselling (DGfB) is an umbrella body representing Associations -- with a combined total of over 25,000 counsellors. In November 2018, both IAC President, Dione Mifsud, and IAC CEO Naoise Kelly, were invited to deliver keynote addresses to the Cologne Counselling Conference. The conference was organised by the University of Cologne, the German Association for Counselling (DGfB), and the European Association for Counselling. This was a highly successful and impressive event.
- **Meeting NBCC International:** During the UNESCO conference (December 2019) IAC met with senior NBCC personnel – Carl J. Sheperis, the interim President and CEO of the National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. and Affiliates (NBCC) and its division, NBCC

International (NBCC-I), and Wendi K. Schweiger, Director of NBCC-I. NBCC-I are interested in collaborating with counselors and counseling organizations outside the United States that are taking steps to professionalize. Carl and Wendi (who are both IAC members) spoke of wishing to work with IAC and we agreed to think about potential project before returning to discussion in February.

- **ACA and BACP Conferences & Invitations:** BACP have offered complimentary invitations to the IAC President, and the IAC CEO, for their upcoming event. We are very grateful for such kind offers. ACA also offer complimentary tickets for their events and these are equally appreciated.

- **Conference Planning:** Conference planning for the 2019, 2020, and 2021 IAC conferences has been systematically taking place since April 2017. We are grateful to all those involved in preparing the way for the Moncton, Canada (2019), and Kuching (Malaysia 2020) conferences. In particular, Dr. Blythe Shepard, has been representing IAC at regular conference planning meetings and working extremely hard to ensure the event's success. We are very grateful to Blythe for giving so much time and effort to IAC.

- **Conference Hosting:** IAC welcomes proposals from a wide range of organisations (e.g. Counselling associations, institutes, universities, and groups) interested in organising an IAC Event. There are three types of IAC event:
 - **IAC Annual International Conference:** Large, annual event, minimum of 400 participants, lasting 2-4 days.
 - **Regional Conferences:** May also be large (200+ participants) events, but mainly focus on counselling issues in the specific world region. IAC has eight world regions: Africa; Asia; North America; Latin America; the Middle-East; Europe; Caribbean; and Oceania.
 - **Country Events:** Workshops, Symposia, One-day conferences. These vary in participant numbers, and are normally one-day events. Whilst organised 'Under the auspices of', or 'In Conjunction With' IAC, some country events may have less direct input by IAC.

There are multiple educational, cultural, economic, and social benefits of hosting such events. Hosting an IAC event can bring your organisation an expanded network of both global and regional counsellors, and creates a major opportunity to place a spotlight on specific regional, or thematic, issues related to counselling. Hosting such events also raises the profile of your organisation, and counselling activity in your country. This is of interest to all those concerned about counselling's development including practitioner's, educators, and government departments (e.g. of health, education, and social affairs), as well as many other stakeholders. International events create enthusiasm and excitement from association's members, students and partners. For those interested in hosting an IAC event, full details can be seen on [our related webpage](#).

Goal 3: Members and Services

We will increase our individual and organisational membership base across all world regions.

We will enhance the representation, support and services provided to members.

- **Newsletter:** IAC e-Newsletters are produced and distributed every few months. We wish to thank our members who contributed to them. The e-Newsletter aims to keep members updated on IAC activity and creates an opportunity to share items of interest (e.g. counselling stories, articles, news) from around the globe. If you would like to contribute an item of interest from your country, or advertise in future issues, please email the details (email ceo@iac-irtac.org). A volunteer is also being sought to take on the editor position for the e-Newsletter. Members are encouraged to spread the news about the IAC e-Newsletter advertising opportunity to people they know (colleagues and contacts) who may wish to reach an international audience.
- **IAC General Assembly:** In line with IAC Bye-Laws, IAC's Secretary, Dr. John Prysor-Jones, gave three months in advance (by email and on the website) -- to IAC members of the upcoming IAC General Assembly (**15th May 2019, 16:30 – 18:00**, during the CCPA/IAC conference).
- **2020 IAC Conference:** Discussion of the details of the 2020 Kuching conference are in progress. The proposed dates for 'ICC2020' will be on **10th - 13th August 2020**

(Monday - Thursday) at the Hilton Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The conference theme is 'Contemporary Issues in Counselling'. We are greatly looking forward to this event.

- **IAC Webinar Series:** EC Members are invited to consider suitable topics and presenters for the next IAC webinar.

Goal 4: Enhancing our Infrastructure

We will optimise IAC's structures and systems to ensure equal and inclusive representation from all world regions and cultures. As an Executive Council, our committee, sub-committees, and personnel will professionally deliver our services and aims.

- **Expanding our Regional Representation:** IAC has few members in, and relatively low levels of contact with, the two most populated nations – China and India. Also, IAC engagement with Russia is low. A priority this year was to increase contact with all three countries and to seek to have IAC representatives (e.g. EC members, 'Ambassadors', or 'Consultants') to those countries. Should any member wish to volunteer to participate in this specific initiative please email us.
- **Languages:** On an ongoing basis, we are seeking to reduce language and accessibility barriers. On a voluntary basis, IAC materials have been translated into Spanish. However, funding and additional translation volunteers are sought for this important area of IAC communications.
- **Governance Input:** Recent work has included planning for the IAC General Meeting -- taking place on the 15th of May 2019 – at the conference in Moncton, NB, Canada. The proposed bye-laws (which were not passed in 2018 due to a lack of a meeting quorum) will be voted on in Moncton.
- **IAC Elections:** Work on an improved elections process, for the elections in Moncton, has been ongoing since Rome 2018 with Courtland Lee leading the Nominations and

Elections Committee. We are grateful for all of this work, the outcome of which (and the elections details) can be seen [HERE](#).

- **IAC Incorporation Status:** IAC's status as a legal entity/company, and registered charity (number 0408258845), in Belgium, Europe, continues to be in good standing with "Active with normal judicial status".
- **Finances:** During 2018, and 2019, the IAC CEO has worked to assist the IAC Treasurer, where possible, with IAC accounts and financial matters. The next audit will take place in July/August 2019 and a financial report will be delivered to the General Meeting in Kuching, Malaysia.
- **Service Providers:** Regular meetings take place with all IAC service providers to optimise IAC services. These useful meetings have brought us closer to our aim (with all suppliers), of having the best services provided to IAC at the most reasonable price.

Goal 5: Enhancing the Profile of Counselling Internationally

We will raise the profile of counselling by utilising our global connections, technology and relationships. IAC will serve as a strong and uniting global voice for counselling.

- **Social Media:** IAC's social media profile has been steadily increasing and in May 2019, we have approximately 1510 Facebook 'likes'. Although, overall, this is a modest number, the rate of increase is notable and continuing. We encourage all IAC supporters to 'like' the Facebook page and to retweet our 'Tweets'. Some of our posts have had over 1,000 views. This is strongly helped by the 'sharing' of posts. Many thanks to IAC EC Member, Valentina Chichinova, for her hard work in promoting IAC through social media.
- **IAC at Conferences:** IAC EC members plan in advance to promote IAC at their national conferences. IAC can be promoted by:

1. Advertising in the conference programme.
2. Addressing conference attendees about IAC.
3. Having an information stand in exhibition areas.
4. Meeting with the Conference/Association leadership.
5. Distributing promotion leaflets at the conference.

IAC Promotion at CCPA: IAC has an information desk in the Foyer of the Mocton conference Hotel (complete with IAC roll-up banner and information sheets). From there we will assist all visitors with any IAC queries. Our esteemed Malaysian colleagues will also promote the IAC/ICC2020 conference from that location. IAC have also donated a free IAC membership, to a CCPA conference attendee who will be randomly selected during one of the sessions.

Goal 6: Connecting Our Members

We will serve as a platform for counsellors worldwide to connect and share ideas on counselling, education and research with individuals, experts and organisations.

- **IAC Counselling Practitioner's Round Table:** This is the most active of all IAC RoundTable's and its Chairperson, Dr. Nate Perron, aims to provide a forum within the international community of counsellors for practitioners to share and discuss matters arising from their practice for celebration or concern. This creates mutual support and encouragement across international and multi-cultural contexts around the world using skype, e-mail and text. It is also designed to combat isolation and to address the wider professional and research community, with matters of interest or concern. Congratulations to Nate on this successful activity.
- **Research Roundtable Rejuvenation:** An initiative by Blythe Shepard to generate more interest in international research collaboration in the lead up to the Moncton conference, saw over twenty IAC members participate in an online meeting in December 2018, and others in a follow-up meeting will be held in February 2019, and in Moncton.

- **IAC Web Forum:** The forum has been open for over a year. Usage has been lower than expected so please consider participation and invite others. In particular, Roundtable Chairpersons are encouraged to use the Forum between meetings.
- **IAC Partnership and Collaboration:** For over 50 years, IAC has partnered and worked with National, Regional, and Inter-governmental Organisations and Institutes. IAC greatly values these relationships. For enquiries relating to partnership, hosting an IAC event, sponsorship, organisational membership, or project collaboration, please contact the IAC CEO. **Email:** ceo@iac-irtac.org

Naoise Kelly, IAC Chief Executive Officer – May 2019



IAC – Connecting Counsellors Worldwide