

International Association for Counselling (IAC)

Strategy 2016 - 2021



Connecting Counsellors Worldwide

IAC Strategy 2016 – 2021

Development of Counselling

We will advance the field of counselling through practice, education, research and policy initiatives.

Strengthening Partnerships

We will strengthen and build the connections with our International, National, Institutional and Project Partners.

Members and Services

We will increase and support our membership base, offering our members enhanced services through our roundtables, webinars, newsletters, journal and conferences.

Our Vision

A world where counselling is available to all

Our Mission

To advance counselling worldwide through Practice, Education and Research

Our Values

Respect
Integrity
Excellence
Service
Commitment
Partnership

Enhancing our Infrastructure

We will enhance IAC's structure to ensure equal and global representation from all world regions and cultures. As a team, we will professionally deliver our aims and services.

Enhancing the Profile of Counselling

We will raise the profile of counselling internationally by utilising our global connections, technology, and relationships. IAC will become the leading voice for counselling worldwide.

Connecting Our Members

We will serve as a platform for counsellors and organisations worldwide to share ideas and expertise, and enable them to act together to advance counselling practice, education and research.

Introduction

Dear Members,

As we celebrate 50 years of the International Association for Counselling (IAC), I am very pleased to introduce the IAC strategic plan 2016-2021. In 2016, many countries and people are at a time of unprecedented strain. As a global community of counsellors it is crucial that we come together and work towards the IAC vision of “a world where counselling is available to all”. Counselling is growing worldwide and it is important that counsellors have a leading, unifying voice that represents them internationally. Through our strategy, we have committed IAC to playing our part in advancing the field of counselling worldwide and promoting health, well-being, respect, social justice and peace. As counsellors and responsible individuals of the international community we have an unparalleled opportunity to succeed by working together through common principles and goals.

The IAC strategic planning process took place over the past year. In essence, the strategy was formulated by asking basic questions about where IAC has come from, where we are now, and where we want to be in the future. A crucial element of the process was the IAC member survey. Through this, we received a large volume of honest and heartfelt views about the current state of IAC and recommendations for the future. Following analysis of the responses, we reviewed the IAC mission, vision and values and examined the relevant internal and external factors. We derived inspiration from kindred international organisations that successfully achieve their aims, and considered the wider political, economic, social and technological environment that impacts IAC. Following identification of our goals and objectives, we reviewed and adjusted the plan to ensure a match with our capacity and resources.

I would like to thank the *Strategy and Re-visioning Group* for their dedication to the future of counselling. I am confident that by remaining focused on our mission, we will meet the commitments of this ambitious, yet achievable, strategy and build on the excellent history and strengths of IAC.

Dione Mifsud
President of IAC

International Association for Counselling Strategy

Vision: A world where counselling is available to all.

Mission: To serve as an international leader and catalyst for counsellors and counselling associations by advancing culturally relevant counselling practice, research and policy to promote well-being, respect, social justice and peace worldwide.

Core Values:

- **Respect:** For the dignity, value and human rights of individuals and communities.
- **Integrity:** Honesty, accountability and ethical behaviour.
- **Excellence:** Demonstrated by the quality and professionalism of IAC's work.
- **Service:** To our membership and wider society.
- **Commitment:** To benefit humanity and improve people's lives.
- **Collaboration:** An inclusive culture that values diverse perspectives, the power of common vision, and equality among peers.

IAC seeks to advance counselling by uniting counsellors globally, serving as an international resource to individuals and associations in the following six Goal Areas:

Goal Areas:

- 1. Development of Counselling**
- 2. Strengthening Partnership and Collaboration**
- 3. Members and Services**
- 4. Enhancing our Infrastructure**
- 5. Enhancing the Profile of Counselling Internationally**
- 6. Connecting our Members**

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.

Objectives (4): Practice, Education, Advocacy, Research.

Practice: To improve and communicate best practices in the application of counselling. As a leader and partner, IAC will promote the application of counselling knowledge and skills to enable the resolution of personal, societal and global challenges. To do this we will:

- Promote the practical application of counselling research findings to daily living.
- Ensure a specific information sharing programme about counselling practice is available to members and a wider audience.
- Promote and develop the IAC Practitioners' Round Table.
- Encourage the utilisation of counselling best-practice within a wide range of healthcare and education settings.
- Create an online practitioners' forum where all aspects of practitioner experiences, challenges, conditions and successes can be explored.
- Develop practical tools to enhance counselling practice internationally.
- Support the global expansion of counselling practice.

Education: To promote quality counselling education and lifelong learning for every counsellor. To do this we will:

- Support the increased availability of quality counselling education worldwide.
- Increase professional education opportunities and resources for IAC members.
- Develop the IAC website to serve as an international clearinghouse for counselling information and counsellor education resources.
- Ensure that counselling education is culturally sensitive and competent.
- Ensure broader recognition of IAC continuing education opportunities and their endorsement by national and international associations and education institutes.
- Promote expansion of interdisciplinary educational exchange to optimise learning and partnership in the fields of healthcare and education.
- Encourage and develop *evidence-based practice* and *practice-based evidence* in counselling internationally.
- Explore opportunities for multiple learning pathways in counselling worldwide.

Advocacy: IAC seeks to influence international and national policy for the advancement of counselling. To do this we will:

- Work with intergovernmental organisations (e.g. UNESCO, WHO, ILO, ECOSOC, UNICEF).
- Engage with international NGOs to support counselling.
- Systematically advocate for counselling in each world region and ensure it is sensitive to local cultural and traditional practices.
- Provide practical assistance (e.g. letters of support, official meetings with government) to national associations to advance their counselling recognition aims.
- Advocate for the inclusion of counselling in a wide range of national and international healthcare and education policies.
- Support the right to counselling for people whose lives have been disrupted by crime, trauma, or displacement.
- Campaign to raise awareness of the efficacy and value of counselling.

Research: IAC aims to support the advancement of counselling research in order to impact counselling policy and practice. We aim to promote and disseminate up-to-date national and international counselling research. To do this we will:

- Promote the exchange and dissemination of counselling research knowledge internationally.
- Connect counselling-related researchers worldwide through the IAC website and network.
- Promote and develop the IAC research roundtable.
- Compile data on counselling worldwide, including: demographics, types of counselling, best practices, counselling efficacy and employment trends.
- Increase the level of research dissemination from the IAC annual conference.
- Generate and disseminate interdisciplinary research and develop new knowledge and practice.
- Upgrade the profile and increase the circulation of IAC's quarterly journal: International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling.
- Identify and seek funding for collaborative international counselling research.
- Encourage practitioners to critically reflect on their own practice.
- Identify and promote research which addresses cultural issues in counselling.

Goal 2: Strengthening Partnership and Collaboration

We will strengthen and build connections with our International, National and Organisational partners. To do this we will:

- Strengthen connections with national and regional associations to increase capacity and sustainable partnership.
- Utilise the IAC network, expertise, and resources to facilitate joint counselling projects worldwide.
- Support our national association partners in the development and enhancement of counselling in their home countries.
- Encourage members to initiate transnational educational, practice and research exchanges.
- Actively engage counselling organisations, national associations, universities, colleges, education institutes, agencies, and counselling services as potential partner and member associations.
- Collaborate with kindred and overlapping professions including: psychotherapy, guidance, psychology, psychiatry, nursing, social work and allied mental health professions.
- Explore opportunities to develop counselling's contribution to multi-disciplinary response teams following traumatic humanitarian crises.
- Utilise technology to facilitate increased communication between partners.

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. To do this we will:

- Partner and collaborate with national associations across all world regions, to encourage involvement by their members in counselling internationally.
- Increase membership by raising awareness of the relevance and value of IAC membership and promote the new low-cost membership categories.
- Enhance services to all member categories through the delivery of new professional and educational benefits (listed on website).
- Seek to reduce language and accessibility barriers.
- List international counselling opportunities on our website.
- Expand and enhance the delivery of webinars, roundtables, webcasts and newsletters.
- Encourage those from kindred and overlapping professions (e.g. psychotherapy, social work, guidance, psychology, psychiatry, nursing) to join IAC.
- Pro-actively welcome and encourage student participation in IAC, thereby attracting a new generation of counselling leaders internationally.
- Improve the IAC website and utilise it as a platform for connectivity and the delivery of information.
- Regularly survey IAC members to ensure satisfaction with direction and services.
- Monitor and increase retention and engagement of members.

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. To do this we will:

- Update our governance documents to solidify pan-global contribution.
- Re-structure the executive council to ensure representation from each world region.
- Review and update IAC's incorporation provisions.
- Strengthen and expand our formal links with international organisations.
- Maximize organisational effectiveness through strategic planning and implementation.
- Develop an e-voting system and process.
- Generate revenue through sponsorship, grant application and fundraising initiatives.
- Clearly define executive and committee member functions and responsibilities.
- Apply good governance principles for an international NGO at all levels of IAC.
- Maintain financial integrity through prudent and accountable financial processes.
- Develop resources (human, financial and technological) that support growth and development of the individual counsellor and the profession globally.

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. To do this we will:

- Increase IAC presence on digital and social media.
- Advocate for counselling through attendance at international events and conferences run by intergovernmental organisations, international NGOs and partner organisations.
- Distribute IAC information to a broader global audience within the fields of health and education.
- Widely distribute the IAC logo to members, encouraging its display as support for the development of counselling worldwide.
- Continually highlight the value and importance of counselling in the promotion of wellbeing, mental health, education and human rights.
- Disseminate IAC's journal (*International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*) to a wider audience.
- Support the network of IAC members in their work to raise the profile of counselling in their nations and world regions.
- Increase IAC engagement with international media.
- Enhance the IAC website as resource and tool for anyone seeking to learn more about counselling.
- Contribute to, and advertise in, relevant national and international publications.
- Increase awareness of IAC among student counsellors worldwide.
- Increase awareness of counselling and IAC among individuals working in the field of counselling and allied professions.

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. To do this we will:

- Build a successful online counselling community by utilising networking technology to improve communication, collaboration, and support for counsellors.
- Create and maintain an interactive digital venue that encourages the exchange of ideas and resources pertinent to counselling worldwide.
- Develop and promote the IAC projects roundtable
- Enable counsellors to gain equitable access to human and information resources that may not be available in their locality.
- Reduce isolation and disconnectedness that counsellors can experience.
- Support the online development of the IAC roundtables (Ethics, International Projects, International Research, Counselling Practitioners, Student Practitioners, Presidents and Chairpersons, Peace and Social Justice).
- Build IAC's capacity as an integrated technology environment.
- Improve member communication by encouraging collaboration on transnational research, education projects, and exchanges.
- Facilitate counsellors who wish to make contact with counsellors in other countries.
- Consider real-time communication possibilities for a variety of counselling groups.
- Bringing together members from across the world to meet face-to-face at our annual conference.
- Encourage the sharing of counselling ideas, research, and practices.
- Explore the idea of an online conference.

Implementation and Measurement

An important element of our strategy is having ways to ensure that we are moving in the right direction - towards achieving our mission and vision. Each goal area will be considered in the following terms:

- What has to happen in this area for successful outcomes?
- How can we measure progress in this area?

Each year, an annual plan and budget will detail the priorities and related actions. These plans will include timeframes, outcomes and personnel involved. The plans will be evaluated across each goal area and selected criteria. Implementation will be monitored by the Executive Council.

This process will ensure that more is achieved, and that the strategy is implemented through a systematic, accountable process that entails assessment, reporting and revision.

Sample measurement criteria include:

- Number of transnational projects initiated.
- Representation on council from each world region.
- Number of professional education opportunities offered by IAC.
- Number of new and retained members in all categories.
- Feedback from membership (all categories).
- Figures for organisational income and expenditure.
- Quantity of practical assistance provided to national counselling associations.
- Number of roundtable and online meetings held.
- Number of meetings with intergovernmental organisations (UN, WHO, ILO, EU).
- Number of CEU endorsements by national associations for IAC activities.
- Qualitative feedback from roundtable participants.
- Level of circulation of IAC's quarterly journal.
- Quantity of research disseminated.
- Number of project collaborations with kindred and overlapping professions.
- IAC activity levels in each world region.
- Quantity of new services offered to members.
- Number of formal links established with international organisations.
- Quantifiable IAC presence on digital and social media.