Improving organizational identity: latest activities of the WPA Secretariat

LEVENT KÜEY

WPA Secretary General

WPA is in the process of improving its organizational identity. The activities of the WPA Secretary General and of the WPA Secretariat have been reorganized during the last six months. This brief article summarizes some of the main latest activities aiming to improve the identity, image and the work of WPA as the international umbrella organization of its Member Societies and of the psychiatrists across the world.

WPA MEDIA CHANNELS

WPA media channels are playing an important role in this process of revitalization. Lately, these channels have improved in this perspective to raise their efficiency, both at inter-organizational and intra-organizational levels. WPA media channels (*WPA News*, the official quarterly newsletter of WPA; *WPA E-Bulletin*, the monthly electronic bulletin of WPA; *WPA Online*, the weekly revised website of WPA) aim to mirror the voice of the WPA Member Societies, WPA Sections and the Affiliated Associations on one hand and of the WPA Executive Committee, the WPA Board, the WPA Council, and the WPA Standing and Operational Committees on the other, in a harmonized manner. Most importantly, all these three media channels are in concert now, as far as their contents and aesthetics are concerned. The Secretary General, as the editor of these media channels, is facilitating this process with a great support of the EC members and of our administrator Anna Engström, deputy administrator Pamela Atiase, and the co-webmaster Kathleen Sauer.

WPA NEWS

Not only being a mere channel for the transfer of information, *WPA News* is al-

so reflecting and motivating the improvements in the association. Its content is fully changed to give a greater space to the voice of all the WPA components in a balanced way. The December 2008 issue consisted of 20 pages and was printed in 700 copies, whereas the March 2009 issue consisted of 32 pages and was printed in 2500 copies. The electronic version is also distributed to the Member Society officers and the personal e-mail addresses of our members. The printed version is produced using re-cycled paper, taking environmental concerns into consideration.

WPA ONLINE

WPA Online has been upgraded and renewed. Detailed revisions, including an "add/drop/leave" procedure are in process weekly, where the collaboration of all of the WPA components is highly appreciated. The website infrastructure is made ready for a project named WPA CME Online, which is being developed in collaboration with the Secretary of Education. Videos and slide sets of prominent scientific lectures and presentations from the WPA Congresses will be uploaded. This project has started with the Florence WPA 2009 Congress.

WPA E-BULLETIN

The monthly *WPA E-Bulletin* conveys the highlights of the developments in world psychiatry and in the WPA directly to the psychiatrists across the world to their personal e-mail addresses. The Bulletin has been revised along with the other WPA media channels. Its distribution has been re-organized. Member Societies and Zonal Representatives are highly appreciated for their cooperation in enhancing its dissemination, so that the Bulletin can reach more individual members, especially working in the underprivileged areas of the world.

WPA BOARD (ZONAL REPRESENTATIVES) AND WPA COUNCIL

The WPA Secretary General and the WPA Secretariat have been in close collaboration with the WPA Board and the WPA Council providing any support needed. All the action plans of Zonal Representatives have been prepared, with three priorities identified within each of them. The highly appreciated work of the Representatives will be enhanced in the yearly meetings of the WPA Board, the first of which took place in Florence on March 31, 2009. The new structure of the WPA Board and Council meetings is giving these components a greater initiative for their inputs.

WPA MEMBER SOCIETIES

Correspondence of the WPA Secretariat with the WPA Member Societies is improved. Besides updating their contact information, they were also motivated to submit news to the WPA media channels regularly, where they have been very responsive and cooperative.

ROUTINE SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES

Minutes of the WPA General Assembly Prague 2008

The draft of the minutes of the WPA General Assembly held in Prague on September 22, 2008 has been prepared by the Secretary General, on January 28, 2009, taking into consideration the notes of the previous Secretary General and the WPA secretariat, and was circulated by the WPA Secretariat on January 30, 2009. The WPA Member Societies had two months to submit comments to the Secretariat, according to the WPA Statutes and By-Laws. No comments received from the Member Societies were deemed pertinent for inclusion in the fi-

nal version of the minutes. The minutes have been signed and sent to the Member Society Presidents and posted on the WPA website, hence the legal procedures on the finalization of the WPA General Assembly Prague 2008 minutes, according to the WPA Statutes and By-Laws, are now fulfilled completely.

Meetings of the WPA components

Coordination of the WPA Executive Committee, Board, Council, and the Standing and Operational Committee meetings and preparation of related folders and minutes has been undertaken. The Secretariat has been actively supporting the organization of all these meetings.

WPA Database and Directory

Updating contact information of WPA components, particularly the Board, Member Societies, Affiliated Associations, Scientific Sections, and Standing and Operational Committee members, is in process as an ongoing activity. Accordingly, revised versions of the WPA Informational Leaflet and the WPA Directory are planned to be printed in the middle of this triennium.

WPA archives

During a recent visit of the Secretary General to the Secretariat in Geneva, it was noticed that the WPA archives are in serious need of thorough classification and re-organization. Plans, including the possibility of hiring a professional archivist, are in process in this regard.

Timetable and planning

General work line, job descriptions and timetable for the activities of the WPA Secretariat for this triennium are prepared in close collaboration with the Secretariat staff and in consultation with the WPA Executive Committee members.

WPA booth at WPA Meetings

All the WPA Member Societies and the Affiliated Associations which are organizing scientific activities were invited to bring their announcements to be placed and disseminated at the WPA booth during the Florence WPA 2009 Congress. This activity will be practiced in future major WPA scientific events.

2010: 60 YEARS OF WPA

The WPA Secretary General, in collaboration with the WPA Executive Committee, is preparing plans to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of WPA in 2010. An art exhibition organized by the Section on

Psychiatry and Art in collaboration with the Geneva University Hospital, an international photo contest on “improving mental health for a better world”, printing some promotional material for WPA as bookmarks and yearly WPA Agenda are among some of the activities in the process of further detailing.

It is our shared opinion that the work of the WPA Secretary General and the WPA Secretariat could be improved further with the suggestions and contributions of all of the WPA Components. A more efficient WPA, aiming at high scientific quality and high ethical standards in psychiatry for the benefit of people with mental disorders, along with a solid professional solidarity across the world, is possible.