

## WPA Secretariat: keeping pace with changing times!

The WPA Secretariat is established to facilitate the functioning of the Association in achieving its aims and objectives. It is constantly on the move, keeping pace with changing times and consistent with the requirements of WPA Member Societies. Its registered office is in Geneva, Switzerland and is currently located at the Department of Psychiatry, Geneva University Psychiatric Hospital.

The WPA Secretary General has the governance responsibility to ensure that the Secretariat supports the Executive Committee in carrying out all the administrative tasks required for the work of the Association<sup>1</sup>. This includes the dissemination of reports, minutes and other materials to all WPA components.

As a testimony of change, a new edition (5th) of the WPA Manual of Procedures has been adopted and published in June 2018. As always, it complements the WPA Statutes and By-Laws by describing the procedures for the conduct of all activities of the Association consistent with its constitutional mandate. The increased complexity of the work of the WPA and its global outreach makes it necessary to have a Manual of Procedures which is easily available online to all WPA components. This new edition incorporates the amendments to the Statutes and By-Laws approved by the General Assembly held in Berlin in October 2017.

A Chief Executive Officer has been appointed since 2016 who manages the WPA Secretariat on a day-to-day basis. She reports to the President and the Secretary General and receives guidance from the Executive Committee. She submits proposals concerning the employment of staff, having consulted with the Secretary for Finances regarding budgetary implications. She selects the staff in consultation with the President and Secretary General, ensuring that they have integrity and the relevant skills according to their specific job descriptions. In consultation with the Secretary General, she ensures that the WPA employees are managed according to local employment legislation and procedures. The Secretary General is responsible for

staff complaints and ensures that there is a grievance and appeal procedure, approved by the Executive Committee.

The Secretariat organizes and maintains the WPA archive, including both electronic and paper components. All substantial correspondence (i.e., correspondence relevant to the WPA structure and functioning) and documentation received or issued by any WPA component should be kept in the Secretariat. We have an Archives Room at the WPA Secretariat. Plans are afoot to organize this area more effectively and for electronic archiving of all essential documents stored there. Members of the Executive Committee may request access to any internal document. Members of the Council, Zonal Representatives, Scientific Section officers and Presidents of Member Societies may request copies of documents relevant to their functions. Routine requests will be dealt with by the Chief Executive Officer, who will consult with the Secretary General on more complex requests as necessary.

The Secretariat staff develops and continually updates information on postal addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for all components of the Association and their officers, and provides an electronic directory of WPA components upon request to all individuals listed in that directory.

WPA News used to be prepared every three months and distributed electronically. Now we are planning to have an E-WPA Newsletter every two months. The Newsletter will present recent information on key activities of the Association and on international developments in the field of mental health. Members of the Executive Committee and other WPA components may submit contributions for the Newsletter. The final version is reviewed and edited by the Secretary General in consultation with the President and the Executive Committee.

Internal documents are available from the WPA Cloud at <https://share.wpanet.org> for the WPA components. WPA Cloud access is password protected.

The WPA website ([www.wpanet.org](http://www.wpanet.org)) aims to facilitate the wide international

exchange of WPA and professional information relating to educational initiatives, Scientific Sections, publications, meetings and other WPA activities<sup>2,3</sup>. It can also offer, if the Executive Committee decides that a specific need exists, selected educational information on psychiatry, mental health and related sciences to the general public. Public documents appear on the website: these include the Association's Action Plan<sup>4,5</sup>; application procedures and forms for Member Societies, Affiliated Associations and Individual Members; WPA News (including back issues); Guidelines Concerning Support from External Sources for WPA Activities; WPA Meetings Policy; Consensus Statements<sup>6,7</sup> and Curricula<sup>8</sup>, and Ethical Statements including the Madrid Declaration. These are available for distribution in paper or electronic forms as appropriate. We are now planning to launch a new "state of the art" website shortly.

The WPA Executive Committee has just approved a WPA system of staff appraisals, the format of the appraisal forms, and a document on risk management and business continuity. Undoubtedly, it is good practice in an organization such as the WPA to identify and then review any potential risks faced and to consider how these risks might be mitigated. Similarly, putting in place a business continuity plan is a progressive step.

Thus, changes are taking place at the WPA Secretariat which will definitely enhance the image and the objectives of the WPA, making our Member Societies closer to the organization.

Roy Abraham Kallivayalil  
WPA Secretary General

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