



Bulletin

IUPsyS' Global Footprint

Year-end Message from IUPsyS President Professor
Germán Gutiérrez

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The IUPsyS Monthly Bulletin is for IUPsyS National Members, Affiliates, and related organizations, and their members. It provides brief updates on the work of the Union and related regional and international matters.

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YEAR-END MESSAGE FROM IUPSY'S PRESIDENT PROFESSOR GERMÁN GUTIÉRREZ



Dear Colleagues,

Recent crises, some resulting from natural disasters, and others produced directly or indirectly by humans, have reinforced the growing role of psychology in understanding the nature of those crises and minimizing their negative consequences on humans, other species, and the planet. These crises also remind us how much injustice, inequality, and extreme uncertainty are still part of life for most humans. We are appalled at the humanitarian crises resulting from geopolitical conflict, internal political struggles, forced migration, hunger, climate change, racism, women abuse and discrimination, and COVID-19. International humanitarian organizations indicate that nearly 275 million people worldwide remain in urgent need of assistance and protection. Some of the most critical conditions are currently observed in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. A few of them are active members of the Union. Nevertheless, we feel compelled to promote conditions to help psychologists in those countries to address critical psychological issues affecting their populations.

Throughout its history, IUPsyS has responded to human-made crises and natural disasters through solidarity, capacity building, scientific understanding, and identification of benchmark processes.

We recognize, however, the need for a more systematic and well-organized response based on core principles of respect for human rights, commitment to promoting well-being, and actions based on scientific evidence. During this year, we consulted with our membership, requested statements and suggestions, and organized an open meeting to identify essential ideas to develop a policy for action in crises. The response of our membership has been very positive, and a task force will use their contributions to draft such a policy. They will also allow us to propose earlier actions to address current humanitarian crises worldwide.

In developing our policy and actions, we must keep in mind the mission of the Union to tend bridges and use science for the common good, as they were essential driving principles of the creation of our and other scientific Unions post-World War II. While seeking accountability, careful consideration must be given to scientific diplomatic efforts to avoid using science as an instrument for political action, no matter how just a cause might be. We also must recognize our capacity for action, which includes understanding the level of action to more effectively promote the development of psychology and its capacity to influence society.

New public demands on the behavioral sciences are encouraging and require from our discipline a clear and robust connection between scientific evidence and solutions to all sorts of behavioral problems. Following our purpose to improve our influence in society, we are beginning work with some of our affiliate organizations in developing strategic policy-making on issues of common concern to many of our members.

Public recognition of psychology, however, is far from universal. In some regions of the globe, psychology is still seen as a subsidiary profession to the health sciences, particularly medicine, with a limited role in promoting mental health. We must support efforts to change this situation positively. Changes in psychology's legal recognition and social status are aided by more vital scientific and guild organizations. In recent years, our Capacity Building program has promoted actions at regional and national levels to build more substantial organizations



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and leadership in Africa, the Arab region, the Asia Pacific region, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The results are, by all accounts, a success. The level of organizing activity in all these regions is high. For example, in Central America, leaders from six countries created the Central American Union of Colleges and Associations of Psychology. In the larger region of Latin America, a coordinating body has agreed on a working agenda for the region. The Observatory of Psychology in Latin America (OPAL) has been created to collect and analyze information on the development of psychology. Collectively, those actions have created a very dynamic environment in that region. IUPsyS has been instrumental in each of those initiatives, continues to provide support, and uses its capacity to encourage and inform related initiatives in other parts of the globe.

IUPsyS is in a privileged position to identify common problems in different countries or even regions. I had the opportunity to represent the Union in a recent event organized by an agency of the Philippine government to develop a regulatory system for psychology. Within that context, I realized that despite some unique characteristics of professional psychology in that country, many issues are common to other countries in the region and elsewhere. Regulation and quality assurance of psychological services are critical issues of common interest to most members. IUPsyS has supported initiatives addressing this important area and will continue to explore with its members how to improve psychological services and the legal status of psychologists.

We have met with national and regional organizations to understand their needs directly. We appreciate the constructive nature of these meetings and their leaders' great desire to serve their local communities and the larger community of psychologists worldwide. In 2023 we will continue with this initiative that improves communication with our membership and facilitates synergic planning. We continue working with the World Health Organization, UNESCO, and other higher-level organizations. We are currently working closely with the International Science Council in initiatives to promote psychology's role within the larger scientific leadership context.

The International Journal of Psychology (IJP) continues its successful path as one of the most influential general psychology journals at the international level (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/1464066x>). Dr. Abigail H. Gewirtz has done an outstanding job leading the journal. I thank her and her team of Associate Editors and collaborators. I invite you to consider IJP as a venue for your vigorous research. I especially invite our colleagues from the Global South to submit their finest work to the journal, achieve high visibility, and at the same time, contribute to making IJP even stronger.

I also want to extend an early invitation to make plans to participate in the International Congress of Psychology to be held in Prague in 2024 (<https://icp2024.com>). A great team from the Czech Republic is working hard to organize a very successful conference.

I want to thank the IUPsyS leadership for their continued work on behalf of global psychology. Dr. Pam Maras, our Past President continues to contribute to the Union in multiple tasks and projects. Our Executive Committee (<https://www.iupsys.net/about/governance/executive-committee/>), with members from Australia (S. Crowe), the Bahamas (A. Thompson), the Czech Republic (M. Klicperová), France (G. Borst), India (P. Padakannaya), Japan (H. Susuki), Lebanon (B. Khoury), Lithuania (R. Povilaitis), Malaysia (R. Khairudin), Nigeria (A. Zamani), Puerto Rico (M. Sánchez-Cesáreo), the USA (A. Clinton), and South Africa (K. Swain, ex-officio) is a permanent source of ideas and dedicated work, intended to benefit psychology worldwide.

Despite our many challenges, I am confident about the growing influence of psychology on society and its positive role in humanity based on a robust scientific body of knowledge.

I wish all of you the best for the New Year.