

Update on News and Activities on Global Issues: The IAAP UN Team Report

By Judy Kuriansky

The IAAP United Nations representatives in New York, Geneva and Vienna continue to be active in diverse issues important on the UN agenda, organize and speak at panels, serve in leadership roles on committees, advocate about the importance of applied psychology issues in the new Sustainable Development Goals and participate in the Psychology Coalition, to which IAAP UN representative Judy Kuriansky was re-elected as Chair. This report is an overview and summary of selected activities.



IAAP team members



Members of the Psychology Coalition of NGOs at the United Nations

Advocacy on the New Global Agenda: The central activity of the IAAP UN team has been advocacy regarding the goals and targets of the Sustainable Development Goals being identified for the years 2015–2030. The important declaration of recommendations for this agenda that was adopted by consensus at the ICAP 2014 meeting in Paris is available at: <http://www.icap2014.com>. A detailed report of the advocacy campaign, scheduled for the next IAAP Bulletin, focuses on meetings with UN member states and high-level UN officials, and alliances made with civil society groups, psychology associations, and other stakeholders. The advocacy led by IAAP UN representative Judy Kuriansky has been extremely successful, with well-being included in the goal about health, and “promote mental health and wellbeing” in a target. This bulletin edition reports on recent activities regarding the focus on monitoring.

Monitoring: Ensuring progress and success in achieving the goals of the global agenda has been a concern for the Millennium Development Goals that will be replaced by the SDGs. Even greater importance is being placed on assessment and monitoring, in light of increasing climate warming and instabilities of the social and economic sectors at global levels. Many UN meetings are focusing on developing a dynamic SDG monitoring system based on comprehensive and differentiated data collection reflecting operational realities at different levels of countries. IAAP UN reps are applying their expertise in this effort, including Geneva reps Raymond Saner and Lichia Yiu, and a Task Force on Monitoring and Assessment of the SDGs that was convened in NY, headed by IAAP UN rep Walter Reichman with members including IAAP UN reps Mary O’Neill Berry and Florence Denmark, and SPSSI UN rep Rachel Ravich. The process requires buy-in of stakeholders and nations, which needs to be perceived as a feedback loop for progress rather than a judgment about failure or success. Interested IAAP members are welcome to join by emailing: Walterreichman@gmail.com.

The following work by the Saners work informs this important effort: (1) Moderated Dialogue on “Means of implementation for sustainable development” on June 30, 2014, see: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&nr=872&type=12&menu=1807&emplate=1042&play=864>; (2) Presentation on the “Implementation of post-2015 development agenda” 30 April at the *Expert Group Meeting on the role of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in post-2015 development framework* (see: http://www.csend.org/images/articles/files/20140504_HLPF_Expert%20Group%20Meeting%20Accountability-30%20April%202014.pdf); (3) APJPA Journal article titled “Sustainable Development Goals and Millennium Development Goals: An analysis of the shaping and negotiation process (see: http://www.csend.org/images/articles/files/20140522_Post_MDG_Negotiation__APJPA_362_June_2014.pdf); (4) Proposal on Monitoring Infrastructure Development Report included in the First “Prototype Sustainable Development Report by the UN-DSD (see: http://www.csend.org/images/articles/files/Monitoring_SDG_Infras); and (5) A special Dialogue session on “Socio-Economic Dimensions of Formalising Informal Economy: Impediments, needs and gender issues” held on 17 July 2014 (see: http://www.csend.org/images/articles/files/20140831_Synthesis_CSEND_DIALOGUE_FORUM_July_2014_socio-economic_dimensions_of_formalisation.pdf), with the message that a

majority of economic activities in least developed countries (LDCs) are in the “informal sector” where workers and micro entrepreneurs are often trapped in conditions of precarious living and poverty.

Panel at the DPI/NGO conference. The annual conference of the United Nations Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations was held in New York at UN headquarters 27–29 August 2014. The panel on “*Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing for Youth in the New Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Psychological Principles, Science and Practices,*” organized and moderated by IAAP UN rep Martin Butler, highlighted escalating stresses and mental health problems faced by youth today worldwide, given alarming statistics about suicide rates and the World Health Organization prediction that by 2030 depression will be the leading global disease.



Panel at the DPI/NGO conference

IAAP UN rep Judy Kuriansky presented advances in ensuring youth mental health at the United Nations, and showed the DVD she recently produced on the topic with comments by several Ambassadors including Dr. Caleb Otto from the mission of Palau to the UN who was also a panelist. H.E. Otto explained the silver lining of the crisis for youth in his country as the reduction of stigma and discrimination about mental illness; underscored the need to support parents and teachers to help children youth deal with problems of stress in school, bullying, unemployment, and drugs; and acknowledged that governments will now attend to youth well-being for sustainable development given the inclusion of this issue in the SDGs. Panelists Maria Pia Belloni and youth representative Amber Eriksson from the Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire (OMEP) presented their project addressing the mental well-being of young children as well as support for volunteers and caregivers, in refugee camps in Jordan (the Za'Atari Intervention Project) and in Kenya (the Kenya Intervention Project). Courtney White of the UN NGO Committee on Education discussed notable approaches for youth attention

to climate change and self-efficacy for youth pro-conservation action through use of a mobile app called Habitat the Game, school-based assembly presentations used by Alliance for Climate Education, and collaborative learning through teleconferencing classrooms by Global Nomads. The workshop concluded with a vocal performance by IAAP professional affiliate Russell Daisey of an original song inspired by the UN Secretary General's campaign about "Every Woman Every Child" that involves audience participation (see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh9bMf7nML4>).

The UN International Day of Youth: Celebrated annually at the United Nations, the event this year on 12 August was on the theme of "Mental Health Matters." Organized by the department of Social Affairs (DESA) and the office of the UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, panelists included Assistant Secretary General, DESA, Thomas Gass; SG Youth Envoy Ahmed Alhendawi; Ambassador of Palau to the UN, Dr. Caleb Otto; and two youth advocates for mental health, sharing their experiences overcoming serious depression. (see: [http://undesadspd.org/Youth/ InternationalYouthDay/2014.aspx](http://undesadspd.org/Youth/InternationalYouthDay/2014.aspx)).

To highlight the issue, IAAP rep Kuriansky produced a video about mental health and youth, with assistance of IAAP UN intern Joel Zinsou, a psychology major at the City University of New York and son of Ambassador Jean-Francis R. Zinsou, Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations and chair of the group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) at the UN. The video highlights young people talking about their mental health challenges and interviews with many United Nations Ambassadors about the importance governments need to place on this issue, including with Ambassador of Palau Caleb Otto (partner in the advocacy with IAAP UN rep Kuriansky) as well as co-chair of the UN Member States' Open working Group drafting the SDG document, Ambassador of Kenya Macharia Kamau (<http://psychologycoalitionun.org/video-youth-and-mental-health-in-the-global-agenda-un-ambassadors-and-youth-speak-out/>).

Another DVD on the issue, produced by IAAP UN rep Mahroo Moshari, features interviews with professionals and members of the public (see: <https://vimeo.com/101559212>).

Other news and activities

Walter Reichman's new edited book, *Industrial and Organizational Psychology Help The Vulnerable: Serving the Underserved*, which was announced at ICAP2014, is now published (by Palgrave Macmillan). Chapters in the edited volume describe how I-O psychologists can valuably help populations most in need around the world, from survivors of a devastating hurricane in the United States to those involved in tribal murders in the Rift Valley in Kenya. The chapter by three IAAP UN team members, Mary O'Neill Berry, Judy Kuriansky and Martin Butler, describes the process, contributions, and value of collaboration between psychologists of 3 different orientations (I/O, clinical and educational) to solve global problems of poverty and health crisis (in Africa).

IAAP UN rep Berry presented at the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) Special Event, Alliance Invited Session on "I-O's Alignment with the International Labour Organization's Decent Work Agenda;" and was co-chair of the

Panel Discussion on “Careers for I-O Psychologists in Humanitarian Work Psychology” held at the SIOP conference in Honolulu Hawaii in May 2014.

IAAP intern Meaghan LeMay presented a poster at the 2014 APA conference about the IAAP UN team collaboration on the program for girls’ empowerment in Africa, reported in a previous bulletin.

IAAP UN rep Father Wismick Jean-Charles organized the fourth conference of the Centre de Spiritualité, d’Evangélisation, et de Santé Mentale (CESSA) in Port-au-Prince Haiti 13–14 June. Founded in 2010 to help communities recover from the devastating 12 January 2010 earthquake (see previous IAAP Bulletins in 2011), international presentations and trainings were held for hundreds of local health professionals. During with the conference, IAAP UN reps Kuriansky and professional affiliate Russell Daisey conducted a training of students in the Global Kids Connect Project, which they then facilitated with a group of children from a local church community.

The 25th Annual International Day of Older Persons was celebrated at the UN on October 1st. The theme of “Leaving No One Behind: Promoting a Society for All,” highlights the Secretary- General’s guiding principle of “Leaving No-One Behind” which asserts that demography and population dynamics will influence sustainable development in the 21st century. The world’s population over 60 years old is expected to reach 1.4 billion by 2030. The event was co-sponsored by the UN Permanent Missions of Argentina, El Salvador, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand and the USA, as well as Pfizer, Inc., and the NGO Committee on Aging, of which IAAP UN rep Florence Denmark is Past Chair and Programming Committee member. Denmark is also co-chair of the NGO Committee on the Family.

IAAP’s Grace Charrier is a strong advocate about the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). In this regard, she has been having various meetings, including in New York with Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador Usman Sarki at the Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations, and on the ground for several months in Nigeria, meeting with Emirs, NGOs, government representatives and other stakeholders. She participated in grassroots advocacy efforts that led successfully to legislation, the Bill of Persons with Disabilities, passed by the Senate in Abuja that legally protects persons with disability from discrimination, and establishes an Implementation Commission to serve as the platform for the enforcement of all provisions of the Disability Act. In an interview in the Nigerian Guardian newspaper, Charrier commended the Senate and President Goodluck Johnathan for the bill, thereby ensuring that PWDs are “given equity, dignity and equal opportunities as stated in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”



In Nigeria, Grace Charrier (center) meets disability advocacy stakeholders including Emirs and board members of Federal Civil Service Staff with Disabilities Multipurpose Cooperative Society

IAAP DPI rep Mahroo Moshari, also executive director of Manhattan Multicultural Counseling, Inc., who focuses on advocacy about multi-cultural issues and youth, conducted her annual summer youth program that educates adolescents about tolerance and diversity, with visits to the United Nations (see: <https://vimeo.com/104213632>). She also attended the Sixth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations “Unity in Diversity: Celebrating Diversity for Common and Shared Values” held in Bali, 28–30 August 2014.

IAAP UN rep Judy Kuriansky was selected as one of the two civil society representatives invited by the President of the UN General Assembly to address the United Nations High-level Interactive Dialogue on Harmony with Nature held at the UN on 22 April 2014 where she discussed psychological research about the positive effects of pro-environmental behavior. She also presented an invited plenary about “Psychology at the United Nations: Importance and Benefits for Iberoamerican Psychologists in the New Global Agenda” at the IX Iberoamerican Congress of Psychology/2nd Congress of the Order of Portuguese Psychologists held in Lisbon 9–13 September, organized by its president Telmo Baptista, who has participated in member state advocacy meetings for the post 2015 agenda with Kuriansky. She also met with members of the newly formed organization of Portuguese speaking psychologists worldwide to discuss collaborative projects. Since it was 9/11– the anniversary of the terrorist attacks on New York’s World Trade Towers – she was interviewed about the psychological impact of this event, by television, radio and print reporters (see: <http://observador.pt/topico/judy-kuriansky/>).



IAAP UN rep Judy Kuriansky presenting about the UN at the FIAP/OPP conference in Portugal 12 September 2014



Members of the newly formed organization of Portuguese speaking Psychologists worldwide (PsiPLP) met at the OPP/ FIAP Congress in Lisbon, with designated president Telmo Baptista (on far right) and Judy Kuriansky (front row, in red)



Members of PsiPLP from Mozambique, Portugal, Angola and Cape Verde talk with Dr. Judy Kuriansky (center) about projects at the OPP/FIAP meeting in Lisbon

UN team liaison to the IAAP Executive Board and past IAAP President José Maria Piero gave several presentations at the FIAP/OPP conference about models of happiness and helplessness and work productivity.

In conjunction with the side event she organized at the Commission on the Status of Women, Kuriansky produced a DVD about First Ladies of Africa achieving the MDGs, a video of which is now available (see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oO7ZojYJido&feature=em-upload_owner). At a recent High Level Forum on 23 September on this topic, the First Lady of Belize presented her country's progress achieving "O" maternal deaths in 2013, insuring sexual and reproductive rights for girls; and attacking "stubborn" teen pregnancy rates by using entertainment to appeal to youth.



IAAP rep Kuriansky talks with First Lady of Belize

In her role as Chair of the Psychology Coalition, Judy Kuriansky convened a Task Force on Ebola, chaired by IAAP member and Founding Coalition Chair Corann Okorodudu, who is a SPSSI UN representative. Kuriansky was invited to the Congressional hearings in Washington DC on 17 September where panelist Ted Alemayhu, founder of U.S. Doctors for Africa, acknowledged her and the important role of psychologists and indigenous healers in helping West Africa and the world deal with emotional issues of the epidemic.



Meetings with Chair of the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and International Organizations Congressman Chris Smith; Liberian government officials; Dr. Judy Kuriansky; US Doctors for Africa founder Ted Alemayhu; and other stakeholders.

Important Alert about upcoming UN events: the Commission on the Status of Women annual meeting this March 2015 will celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action (Beijing+20) about gender equality for women and girls. All IAAP members are encouraged to keep informed – on the website for UN Women (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015>) – and are invited to come to NY UN headquarters for the meeting, that will review progress and identify opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda. Stakeholders are urged to undertake reviews at their local, regional and national levels in anticipation of the conference.

Other important meetings are the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to take place in Sendai, Japan in March 2015, just after the March 11 anniversary of the tragic tsunami-earthquake; and two UN Climate Change Conferences – in Lima Peru in December 2014 and in Paris France in December 2015 – to achieve a binding and universal agreement on climate, from all nations.