

Addressing the Challenges of European Health Psychology: Update from the EC Winter meeting December 2018

Vera Araújo-Soares Hello and welcome!
Newcastle University Since the election of our new executive committee (EC) <https://ehps.net/executive-committee/#>, we have been busy. As a new committee we have met after the Galway conference to develop a strategy and review working procedures. We focused on four main priorities: our membership; documenting the history of the EHPS; knowledge transfer to support impact; legacy and sustainability. Below I will address these issues and convey some of the discussions and decisions made.

Membership

The members of the EHPS, are a community sharing key interest in the area of health psychology. The activities available in the EHPS are plentiful and all are led by EHPS members: a) Create & Synergy; b) EHPS UN sub-committee; c) Fellowship Committee; d) EHP (EHPS newsletter); e) the Practical Health Psychology Blog; f) our societies multiple scientific Journals; g) our conference scientific and local organizing committees and track chairs (crucial to shape our yearly conferences), and last, but not least; h) our special interest groups (SIGs). They say it takes a village to raise a child... it takes a village to run the EHPS and all its buoyant activities. We know we could do more for our SIGs and we are consulting stakeholders on a strategy how these can best be supported in their activities.

Many EHPS members take on key roles in service

of our society. People from all over Europe, and the world, generously engage in the society, to advance the science and the field of Health Psychology. Leading activities within the EHPS (e.g. Create; EHP) provides the opportunity to gather key experiences and establish international networks and relationships. Two recent examples are Antony Montgomery and Konstadina Griva. As editors of the European Health Psychologist they developed a new approach for the EHP and build a strong and innovative editorial team to sustain it. We thank Antony and Konstadina for their work! After five years of dedication, at the end of 2018 they stepped down from their role. A call went out and a new team of editors came forward: Angela Rodrigues and Pamela Rackow. We wish them well in this new role and we are sure that the EHP will go from strength to strength in serving and informing our members.

The editors of Psychology & Health, Mark Conner and Daryl O'Connor have led this journal since 2011. Under their leadership the Journal has substantially increased its profile, and this can be seen when looking at its impact factor, now at 2.45. Psychology & Health is the first Journal of the Society, and Mark and Daryl have made sure that it continuously served as a bastion of scientific quality, transparency and rigour. The EHPS is forever indebted to them and to all those that preceded them. After almost a decade of service Mark and Daryl believe that it is time for another team to take over the direction of the Journal. A call as gone out and we will inform you soon about the new editors-in-chief.

The EC is here to assure that the necessary

conditions are provided for all these services, after all, these and our members are the society 'raison d'être'. For all those members proactively engaged in the society we are planning the organisation of a networking thank you event at our conference. This first event, that will be celebrating EHPS active engagement, will occur on the Wednesday 4th September from 7pm. We will be assessing it, and if successful we hope it continues. I am sure we will see many of you there for some fun! A lot of work goes into what we all do: without you our society would not be as aspirational, proactive, and ambitious as it is! Thank you!

History of our Society

Documenting the history of a society is an endeavor that societies (e.g. BPS-DHP, UK) have engaged in. Considering that our EHPS has reached "adulthood" we would like to engage with such project. We will soon be consulting with our members and fellows to decide on the nature and scope of such a project. The History of our society has many and certainly interesting pages. We believe that it would be important in shaping our identity as a society, to understand the processes involved in the creation, development and maintenance of our society.

As you all know Professor Stan Maes, one of the pioneers of European Health Psychology and co-founder of the EHPS, has sadly passed away. Considering his key role in training and shaping early career researchers we thought that it would be befitting to rename the EHPS Early Career Awards after him. This year the "Stan Maes Early Career Award" will be announced at the Opening Ceremony in Dubrovnik on Tuesday the 2nd of September (<https://2019.ehps.net/>). The Stan Maes ECA will be awarded to four young but already distinguished scientists, by Professor Veronique De Gucht, Stan's beloved wife and collaborator. Also, our eminent member and founder, as well as

Honorary Fellow of our Society, Professor Marie Johnston, will present Stan's contribution to science and the EHPS.

Knowledge transfer for Impact

In the age of anthropocene (current geological age, the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate/environment) evidence shows that environmental conditions shaped through human behaviour are developing into a key determinant of population health, thus making sustainability-related behaviour a clear and important addition to the health psychology repertoire. This will lead to the development of new scientific agendas and highlight the potential for evidence on human behaviour and behaviour change accumulated by EHPS members to be used as a force for transformation. In this context one question emerges as crucial: how can we share the knowledge produced by our members to inform policy?

As a society we have been accredited for the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC) as an expert Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) with consultative status since 2015. The possibilities of a more pro-active contribution to this body requires further engagement and understanding. As a Society we aim at further investing on this process as we understand this will lead to real world Impact. Our UN Sub-committee (led by Lucie Byrne-Davies) as well as the Special Interest Group (SIG) associated to it (led by Jennifer Inauen) will engage members and coordinate efforts for the implementation of this goal.

The United Nations have set 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>) that its nations agreed to pursue by 2030.

EHPS members produce knowledge and skills that would be of particular interest for SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing) but also for other SDGs as they relate to health and, more generally, to human behavior. For example:

SDG 2 - end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;

SDG 6 - ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;

SDG 12 - ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, and;

SDG 13 - take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

To understand what research EHPS members are doing that could support SDGs implementation we have initiated a process to collect this information. Our conference abstract submission system now asks people to select two relevant SDGs the submitted research is targeting. Mapping what knowledge we are creating that targets distinct SD goals is one first step. Our aim is to use this information to plan future white papers that we can submit as an expert NGO, assuring that our knowledge is shared and increasing its potential of transferability. There is a lot of work that needs to be done on the path to impact, it will take many years, but nothing is achieved without hard work.

As we realise more and more that the health of our populations is indelibly dependent on the health of our planet, with recent studies linking climate change brought by human activity with food in security and armed conflict (just to name a few), knowledge on behaviour change can be put to good use in supporting policy change in the pursuit of sustainable development goals. As a society we hope that we can support our members in harnessing this knowledge and sharing it with those that can make a difference: our policy and practice partners.

To further support knowledge transfer and increase the scope of our impact we are piloting an exciting new funding stream 'Bring a Stakeholder

Grant'. In order to optimise the understanding, reach and impact of health psychology research this grant will enable applicants to bring a non-academic collaborator or partner, for example a practitioner, policy maker, charitable worker, industrial partner. For this pilot a maximum of 1000 euro is available to go towards the Stakeholder conference fee, accommodation, travel and subsistence. Applications must be led by the academic collaborator, with the stakeholder as a named co-applicant. Involving stakeholders in research and dissemination is crucial to assure impact (see <https://ehps.net/grants/>). We will be assessing this grant and consult with our members in order to refine this by, for instance, adding a role/function for these people at the conference.

We are also considering other forms of knowledge transfer. We have discussed sponsoring 'Café Science' events taking place on the cities where we organise our conferences, targeting stakeholders (practice partners, health care professionals, health commissioners as well as policy makers) and occurring in parallel with the conference (an out of hours event). The idea is to implement symbiosis in the scientific field. Having so many experts present in any specific city, coming together to attend the conference, could be harnessed to deliver scientific knowledge (without scientific jargon) to those interested. Where language is an issue we might need to think about translators. This would increase the visibility of EHPS, facilitate local networks, and open avenues for knowledge transfer and impact down the line.

Legacy and Sustainability

As a society we invest in conference grant funding schemes to support conference and/or workshop or expert meeting attendance at the EHPS Conferences. The purpose of these grants is to encourage talented researchers and graduate

students who do not otherwise have access to funding to attend the conference and/or CREATE workshops or Synergy Expert meetings. These grants will hopefully support and nurture EHPS researchers of the future, our next generation: our future, our legacy.

In order to consider strategic initiatives, and assuring that the society gains from engaging the accumulated knowledge of our more distinguished members, our fellows, we aim also to further engage them.

We also believe that part of our legacy can occur through our engagement with other societies like the European Federation of Psychology Associations (EFPA). EFPA is currently overseeing a Europe wide initiative that could have an impact on the training standards for Health Psychology, and one of our members, Maria Karekla is liaising between EFPA and the EHPS. We will keep you posted as we know more ourselves. Linking with other international society's (e.g. the Psychology Coalition of the United Nations, EFIC) allows us to better understand how the EHPS can collaborate in order to influence the international agenda through joint actions.

The way sustainability is assured relies also on our conferences. The 2020 EHPS conference dates are now fixed for August 25 - August 29, 2020 in Bratislava, Slovakia. Soon a call will be issued for 2021. If you are interested please contact admin@ehps.net. With the dedicated support of the event management company that provides the EHPS with its main technology platforms as well as with clear conference organisation procedures and clear contracts, it has never been easier for local organisers to bring the conference to their city/country.

For sustainability investing in our infrastructures is crucial. Over the past few months we have successfully migrated the membership database to Easy Conferences. Now it is easy to register as a member, view your account details, make payments, access journals and much more.

Our website has also received a new facelift check it out here <https://ehps.net/>, we are continually updating our website and appreciate suggestions for update by email to our Administrator admin@ehps.net. EasyConferences is not only supporting the EHPS with key professional conference services but also with general web based services and knowledge. This collaboration is paramount to run a society in the 21st century. As our society grows, the number of services provided increases as well as the technological requirements. Having a dedicated company that services our needs by providing and updating the necessary IT 'ecosystem' is crucial.

Finally, we are always looking for new ideas to improve the society and would welcome any comments; drop an email to our Administrator, Sharon admin@ehps.net, she is always there to support us. Thank you Sharon, what would be of us without you?!

Hope to see you all soon in Dubrovnik for what I am sure will be a very exciting conference!!

On behalf of the EHPS EC,

Vera Araujo-Soares

14th EHPS President

EHPS Executive Committee 2018-2020

Vera Araujo-Soares (President), Evangelos Karademas (President Elect), Karen Morgan (Past President), Benjamin Schuez (Secretary), Gudrun Sproesser (Treasurer), Sabrina Cipolletta (National Delegates Officer), Marta Marques (Membership Officer), Val Morrison (Grants Officer), Sharon Cahill (Administrator)



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