

Division News...

Division 1—Organizational Psychology

Alliance for Organizational Psychology: the initiative by IAAP Division 1, SIOP and EAWOP



On the 2nd of April 2009, during the SIOP annual conference opening plenary, Division 1 (Organizational Psychology of the International Association of Applied Psychology), the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology, and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, signed a declaration to initiate an open and collaborative process with the objective of creating and promoting an Alliance for Organizational Psychology.



During the annual 2009 SIOP conference, José M. Peiró, Gary Latham and Franco Fraccaroli signed a declaration of collaboration for the Alliance for Organizational Psychology.

The green light for the creation of this alliance was given by the IAAP Board of Directors at the last meeting in Berlin in 2008. At this meeting, José María Peiró, president of Division 1, asked for approval to start cooperation with SIOP and EAWOP that would lead to a letter of agreement among these associations. After obtaining approval by the IAAP Board of Officers, the Presidents of the three associations signed a declaration to organize an open collaborative process with the objective of founding the Alliance for Organizational Psychology.

The mission of the Alliance for Organizational Psychology (AOP) is envisioned as supporting and advancing the science and practice of organizational psychology in the global world and expanding its scope of application and contribution to society to improve the quality of working life. The Alliance should enhance the contributions of organizational psychology in the global society to advance the science and practice of organizational psychology internationally and to promote cross-national cooperation and more effective communication among the members of the associations taking part in the Alliance. Some task forces will be installed to further progress and develop this initiative.

During 2009 and the first half of 2010, representatives from the three associations will draft articles of incorporation, bylaws, and operational guidelines.



In fact, during the European Congress of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP, held in Santiago de Compostela, the 13-16th of May 2009), the Alliance was presented to the participants of the Congress during the keynote address of Prof. Gary Latham. Moreover, a roundtable was organized to discuss the strategy and content of white papers that the three organizations aim to launch on relevant topics of general interest, such as aging at work.

The current plan is to establish the Alliance formally during the International Congress of Applied Psychology, July 11-16, 2010, in Melbourne, Australia.

For more information regarding this initiative and for the updates and progress, please visit www.allianceorgpsych.org.

Jose M. Peiro, President, Division 1

Organizational Psychology's Role in Poverty Reduction

The Millennium Development Goals are eight imperatives which were articulated at the turn of the century and agreed upon by countries and development institutions throughout the world. These goals pertain to critical global needs and include the objective of substantially reducing extreme poverty by the year 2015 (Millennium Project, 2006). The realization of such goals requires participation from a range of professionals such as economists, anthropologists, and sociologists. Psychology also has a role to play. Indeed, it can be argued that psychology has a social responsibility to contribute to such global development and poverty reduction efforts.

Social responsibility is a complex concept, which may be considered at varying levels of analysis. Broadly, nations and groups of nations engage in policy making and other efforts to promote global wellbeing. More narrowly, "corporate social responsibility" has become a popular catchphrase in recent years. Here, we see businesses increasingly stepping up their efforts to support cancer research, the environment, child adoption programs, and a variety of other initiatives with pro-social and often global implications (Behrend, Baker, & Thompson, in press; David, Kline, & Dai, 2005). At an even more micro level of analysis, the independent efforts of individuals in our society have long contributed to the wellbeing of families, groups, and communities in need.

As psychologists, we have principles and codes of ethics to guide individual members of our profession toward the highest ideals. As each of our careers develops and unfolds, these principles encourage us to behave in ways that benefit the persons and peoples with whom we come into contact. The Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists, which was unanimously adopted by the IAAP Board of Directors on July 26, 2008, provides an excellent, necessary, and useful framework to guide psychologists' efforts as they carry out their work ("Universal Declaration," 2008).

Although principles exist to guide the behavior of individual psychologists, less attention has arguably been paid to how psychology, as a profession, can and should collectively contribute to society's wellbeing. While private sector organizations are busy developing their corporate social responsibility agendas, we might ask ourselves: How well-formed is psychology's professional social responsibility agenda? Relying on the discrete and often disconnected efforts of psychologists guided by a common set of ethical principles is a good start, but this hardly seems sufficient. What's needed is a well-thought-out, proactive, strategic agenda to increase our field's visibility and impact in the global development arena.

Psychology, of course, is a multifaceted science consisting of diverse sub-disciplines including, but certainly not limited to, the likes of school psychology, developmental psychology, community psychology, and organizational psychology. Although psychology, as a parent discipline, has attended to the ethical responsibilities of its individual members, it has arguably paid less attention to its collective ethical obligations – that is, our sub-disciplines' duty to contribute to worldwide needs. In this regard, one might reason that our sub-disciplines have had a level of analysis that has received insufficient consideration in discussions of social responsibility.

Each area of psychology has the potential to provide unique and important contributions to global development. Fulfilling this potential, however, requires each sub-discipline to engage in strategic dialogue designed to articulate, plan, promote, and advance efforts to collectively address global needs. Thus far, some areas of psychology have done a better job than others at carving out a role in the global poverty arena. For example, clinical and counseling psychologists have a history of involvement in the aftermath of natural and man-made disasters (Carr, 2007). Meanwhile, other domains of psychology have been less engaged in poverty reduction, despite their tremendous capacity to contribute.

Organizational psychology, for instance, has not been at the forefront of poverty reduction discussions and initiatives. Meanwhile, there is a wide range of areas where the science and practice of organizational psychology is desperately needed. These include, for example, recruiting online volunteers; matching online and on-site volunteers to humanitarian work assignments; selecting, funding, and training would-be entrepreneurs from developing countries; dealing with conflict stemming from discrepancies in pay which occur when personnel from different parts of the world work side-by-side on a common aid project; and fine-tuning the development of health workers' skills to enable the provision of health care at an economically sustainable level to the poorest of the poor (Atkins, Thompson, & Baker, 2009; Carr, 2007, 2008). While there are certainly individual organizational psychologists doing important work in these and related areas, organizational psychology has not historically demonstrated a strong, collective, strategic track record of participation in the global poverty and development domain. It's time to change this state of affairs.

Efforts to address this deficiency are underway. Some examples include the following: On June 24-25, 2009, a global task force on Humanitarian Work Psychology convened for the first time to discuss ways to increase the role of organizational psychology in the global development domain. Participants included work and organizational psychologists from a range of countries including New Zealand, Ireland, England, the United States, Norway, and Uganda. Representatives from other regions including China and Papua New Guinea are also actively involved with this task force group. Graduate courses in Humanitarian Work Psychology are being planned for the summer of 2010. The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)'s quarterly publication, *TIP*,

now features a regular column on “Pro-Social I-O.” In addition, a listserve, known as Povio, has been created to virtually connect organizational psychologists interested in the topic of poverty reduction.

Lefkowitz (2008) maintains that organizational psychology needs to expand its values to match the quality of its ethics. Certainly, there is still a long way to go before organizational psychology’s potential to contribute to poverty reduction is fully realized. However, the initiatives highlighted above appear to be steps in the right direction. They can help advance an agenda for professional social responsibility in the days to come.

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Division 2—Psychological Assessment and Evaluation

The Resurgence of Tests and Testing in Russia

Few psychologists outside of Russia know the history of Russian psychodiagnostics (i.e., test) development. Its history is intricate and being written now. G. Rossolimo published *Psychological Profiles* in 1909, one of the first tests developed in Russia before the revolution. Test development and use increased from 1917 to 1936. The new scientific line, paedology, appeared, one that focused on educational testing.

Research results showed children from peasant and proletariat families scored lower than children from middle class families (e.g., the *Intelligentsia*). This finding made the federal authorities angry as it was inconsistent with prevailing political beliefs of the Bolshevik government. Thus, in 1936, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued a decree that resulted in the destruction of all books that carried this message together with a ban on tests and their development. Scientists and others engaged in testing were sent into exile where many perished.

For 35 years Russian psychologists could not speak positively about tests and instead had to describe them as if they were non-scientific bourgeois methods.

In the 1970s, a period characterized by government indulgence was ushered in, and someone (nobody knows who) brought about 20 foreign tests to Russia (including the WAIS, WISC, MMPI, CPI, 16PF, Raven etc). There was increasing tolerance of the use of tests. From then to now, many people continue to use these original Russian versions of these old tests.