

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Daniela Cechova**

**Presented at Delegates' Assembly on July 10th 2021**

Dear Delegates and Adlerian friends

I will start my report with the activity of our organisation at the point of my election. Although I was not present, I received information about the great discussion that animated the elections which resulted in introducing a new person into the structures of the Board of the IAIP. Some people actually called it a "revolution".

If a revolution is needed, there must first be a desire for change.

With that in mind, I brought my vision into my presidency as well as my leadership.

**MY VISION WAS:**

- to create a new, modern and effective organisation
- that is open to its members
- that is a living dynamic entity, where growth is a normal stage
- that is on good terms financially. As a third sector organisation, there should be no concerns. We can create income and then use it for the benefits of our organisation.

I will refer in my report to what I brought to the life of the Board and the entire organisation and to what turned out well. I will also talk about what it was not feasible to put into practice. I will name some procedural irregularities that I see as needing to be corrected.

**1. ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SUCCESSES**

1.1. Regular Board meetings with minutes written and checked at the start of each new meeting.

You might think that holding these meetings is an obvious requirement for the executive members of the Board. I can confirm that it was not. In the past, the custom was to meet just before the Congresses and much more infrequently. I invited the Board members to Bratislava and/or to Vienna but the invitations were not accepted; subsequently, on account of the pandemic, these meetings have been held online. The first Board meeting was held in

November 2018, almost a year and half after the Congress. Since then we have had thirteen Board meetings.

#### 1.2. Financial situation

At the outset, I found that all the income of the IAIP derives from the membership. And 60 % of that entire income goes to Alfred Adler Center International. Personally, I am satisfied that we have such a center and thanks should go to the former president of the IAIP, Dr. Datler, who along with his team helped create the Center. On the other hand, it was not reasonable or expedient as a business matter to pay 500 Euro per month for it. Because there was a readiness on the part of the other Board members, this fee was reduced to 300 Euro per month, although it took us two years.

#### 1.3. Publication grant

At the first Board meeting in 2018, a new initiative was established to reward one publication from the Adlerian field of work every year. By the end of 2020 the Board had received three applications, and in January 2021 we were able for the first time to award one publication, which was Zivit Abramson's book: *Basic Concepts of Adlerian Theory*. I strongly believe that this initiative should continue with the next Board, since we have great new publications in the field which deserve our support.

#### 1.4. President's travel fund

This was established to support the president in travelling to members and spreading the ideas of IAIP and Individual Psychology. It was only used in one year. But it is something that should continue and I would very much recommend it to the new Board.

#### 1.5. Website

A new modern website has been created and new materials have been posted without any delay.

#### 1.6. Travelling and lecturing activities of Board members

The first Board meeting was held in November 2018 in Lviv. Part of the trip included meetings with local adlerian group members and helping them with the organisation of the 28th Congress.

In November 2019, another trip to Lviv was made by myself and the General Secretary with the purpose of settling more details of the organisation of the Congress. As part of the trip, I gave a lecture at the main Lviv University entitled *Understanding Theory and Applications of Individual Psychology*.

General Secretary made more trips to Lviv for teaching purposes.

Treasurer made at least one trip to Vienna.

My Vice-president has been active in travelling and lecturing. I feature just some of her trips in person or virtually: Taiwan, Lithuania, France, Russia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Austria, Japan, Belarus, Canada, Slovakia, Romania, India, Israel and China.

I attended the NASAP conference in Toronto in 2018 where I, with the then IAIP vice-president John Newbauer, introduced our International association to a large crowd of NASAP Conference participants. I also introduced our organisation during ICASSI in Bonn in 2018. Vice-president and I organised a presentation about IAIP during ICASSI in Romania in 2019.

I was invited to present papers in November 2017 in Budapest, in 2018 in Gyor, in 2019 in Vilnius, in 2019 in Sibiu, where discussions were held about the initiatives of the IAIP.

### 1. 7. Other activities

*Café Central.* This is the café in Vienna that every Adlerian visits. But there was no mention of Adler in Café Central. I communicated with the manager and created a text about Alfred Adler. A colleague from Vienna, Barbara Neudecker, helped with the translation into German. Both texts with a picture of Alfred Adler were sent to the Cafe manager and since November 2018 you have been able to read information about Adler there.

*Central Cemetery in Vienna.* I took my students to see where Adler's ashes are in the Central Cemetery in Vienna and I found that there was no reference in wikipedia to the presence of Adler's grave there. So I wrote it into wikipedia and, because his name starts with the letter A, his is now the first name in the list of notable interments, given as AA – psychiatrist and psychologist – founder of Individual Psychology.

We managed to establish the *formal address* of our organisation as an address of AACI – previously we did not have a proper formal address.

*IAIP flyers* for the purposes of advertisement have been created and printed as an initiative of the treasurer.

## **2. ISSUES WAITING TO BE RESOLVED**

### 2.1. International Conference of Individual Psychology

I had a lot of ideas for bringing life into the international Adlerian community. One of them was to organise **The International Conference of Individual Psychology** in Vienna in the years between the Congresses.

However, although I almost begged the IAIP board members to organise the International Conference of IP as part of the activities of the Board, and even though I promised to bear all the financial responsibility myself, it was rejected several times.

With the support of just one, but one very important person, my dear colleague and friend Kristina, we organised the first International Conference of IP in November 2018. The venue was Alfred Adler Center International in Vienna. There was such great interest in this Conference that we had to turn participants away because space is very limited in Alfred Adler Center International. Ultimately, we hosted 57 people from 16 countries.

The Board was not at all keen to recognise the second year of this Conference, either.

The following year, in October 2019, with a larger group of people we organised the second year of The International Conference of Individual Psychology. The Conference was held over two days on the premises of Vienna University (with the help of Dr. Datler who helped save us some financial outlay by taking us under his wing as a dean at University of Vienna). We had 76 participants from 18 countries that year, 21 of whom had attended the first year of the International Conference of Individual Psychology in the previous year. Among our guests was a son of a former president of the IAIP Dr. Shulman, Dr. Robert Shulman. We had eight plenary sessions, a poster session, a discussion about an International Adlerian Certificate. We had a

great dinner in Rathaus Cafe, sightseeing in Vienna, coffee in Cafe Central. This was the first conference in the sequence celebrating the upcoming 150th anniversary of the birth of Alfred Adler. Maybe, because of the pandemic, the only one where Adlerians actually met in person.

Even though the Conference was supported by IAIP in principle, the Board of IAIP as a whole was unwilling to bear the organisational and financial burden of such an undertaking.

I think the Board made a mistake in refusing to support my initiative to meet regularly in beautiful Vienna. If the new Board will not commit to continuing this Conference, I think that, after the third wave of the pandemic when it is safe to travel again, I will keep the idea alive by myself because I fervently believe in it.

## 2.2. International Certificate

With my colleague, Kristina, we have investigated the professional education of psychologists and professionals in related disciplines within the Adlerian framework. The survey's key objective was to identify long-term Adlerian training courses for professionals and to map out the various organisations that provide professional education in individual psychology. A research sample of 98 participants from 27 countries was formed, out of more than 900 people initially approached.

The survey identified 19 professional adlerian training programmes in 11 different countries and summarised their extent, as well as the conditions for admission and completion. The survey identified 73 educational and professional institutions of individual psychology in different countries, as well as 38 universities in 15 countries where individual psychology is taught either as a separate academic course or for at least 12 lessons within another course.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the situation in the training courses in Individual Psychology, with the aim of using the findings as part of the process of creating The Minimal Standards for Adlerian Professionals. My vision is to have a map showing where Individual Psychology Professionals work, so we can provide accurate and responsible information to clients seeking therapists and counsellors.

In defining a long-term training course, we considered at least a three-year programme of systematic education in Individual Psychology which is an extension of pre-graduate study. Many of the participants took long-term to mean self-study research, close collaboration with a well-known personality from the field of Individual Psychology, or participation in Adlerian lectures and various courses. The survey also explored a number of programmes that formed part of gaining a Master's or Doctoral degree. These programmes were less demanding as regards the full extent, the application requirements as well as completion of the study. In addition, we found that practical training in psychotherapy skills and techniques, self-disclosure and experiential techniques was often missing. We found that in the USA, especially, there is no active long-term training. Our American colleagues have been learning Adlerian psychology via the small number of courses offered by ICASSI, NASAP etc.

We discovered that, currently, there are 19 long-term training programmes in 11 countries: the UK, USA, France, Israel, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Switzerland, Italy and Uruguay. In addition, there is a wonderful Adlerian training programme in Spanish that started after the survey was completed. The average duration of a long-term training programme in

Individual Psychology is = 3.72 years (SD = 0.77). The average extent of a long-term training programme in Individual Psychology is = 540.52 hours (SD = 206.10). For acceptance onto the training programmes, 13 of them follow a selection process and 11 accept only those who hold a Master's degree. For successful completion, all the training programmes require the submission of a final case study, and have clearly defined requirements for minimal participation and supervision; 13 of them require individual training therapy and 10 of them a final exam and the submission of a final thesis. With regard to the content, all the training programmes cover the theory of Individual Psychology. However, some of them are without practical training in psychotherapy skills.

The International Certificate would make it possible to identify Adlerian professionals who are properly qualified and would serve as a guarantee of an adequate level of professional skills, which is nowadays, in the era of globalisation, needed more than ever. The biggest challenge in the process of creating international criteria is considered to be the legislative differences in psychological services pertaining in different countries. But this does not constitute an obstacle to establishing the International Certificate of Individual Psychology. The obstacle seems to me that individuals in those countries that do not meet the minimal criteria reject the concept out of hand because their country or institution is ineligible. In my view, the IAIP should be the organisation that issues the Certificate. The main function of IAIP is to initiate international dialogue and support for international collaboration.

I believe that Adlerians deserve to have the International Certificate of Individual Psychology. I was unpleasantly surprised that the Board refused to recognise it. Other international schools of psychology have understood the importance of collaborating internationally, but we Adlerians, whose major terms of reference are collaboration and social interest, are opposed to it. Even if Adlerians in one country need it and fulfil the criteria for Minimal Standards, it would cost a great deal of effort to achieve it. This will be another task for the next Board.

### 2.3. Inviting IAIP members into the collaboration

I was communicating with member organisations from the very beginning. Shortly after I was elected I introduced myself and then wrote to them twice a year. I believe it desirable to pursue this further.

## **3. PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITIES**

### 3.1. Voting System

In accordance with the Constitution, *all nominations should be communicated to the member organisations at least two months prior to the elections.* There still remains the possibility to nominate someone during the Delegates' Assembly. This year, the nominations were announced on June 21st, even though there was a will on the part of three members of the Board to send them at least a month prior to the delegates' assembly date.

The Board was *not informed of the names of the nominees.* This information was available to the Vice-president and General Secretary only.

*Nominees are entitled to know who nominated them.*

To open up possibilities for new people, for those who are interested in the work as executives of the Board of the IAIP, they *should have the opportunity to present themselves* to the delegates through the IAIP website and/or emailing lists.

In the future, the *elections should be organised by an electoral committee*, as in all democratic communities. Although the Board organises the elections, no nominee should have any part in the voting system.

### 3.2. Finance

I must offer thanks to Horst Gruener who has served as Treasurer for many years. But, as a matter of fact, not a personal matter - I am of the opinion that in the future there needs to be some person and/or committee who serves *as a supervisory board*, or at the beginning of each new election period *a financial audit* should be performed.

The account of the IAIP should be named as the *"IAIP account"*, not as a personal account.

### 3.3. Congress venue selection and other issues

I would strongly recommend that *procedural issues be opened up for discussion* by the member associations. One of them is selection of the congress venue. Since the International Congress is so important for us, IAIP members should be encouraged to apply for organisation of the Congress and there should be full transparency in this.

New members: *applications should be assessed thoroughly and strictly in accordance with the Constitution*. I received an email saying: *"There is the letter of the constitution and there is the spirit of it."* . This I, as head of our association, do not and will not accept.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

At the beginning, people voted for change. According to the theory of change, the time prior to my election was like a status quo which is a sort of balance. Any status quo system could be good or bad. People are drawn to the status quo as if to a magnet because it is something familiar to them, it is predictable and they feel safe.

My arrival was like adding a new element to the system. I entered the status quo of the IAIP Board.

I would state that new opinions, in the present case, mine, should be accorded priority over the opinions that have been there for twenty or thirty years. Even out of courtesy towards the new opinion, it should be tried out.

If no opinions had arrived, no conflict would have arisen.

When a new element is added, chaos automatically ensues. Even if the change is good, the magnet is very strong and draws us toward the status quo.

This chaos is a normal part of the change, this chaos has been planned. It is an integral part of the transformation.

So the fourth stage is practising new behaviours. It was tough, although things were accomplished.

The final phase is integration.

This is the phase when the new stage of functioning becomes the status quo. We all know that these stages do not happen in a linear progression; rather, we go back and forth until the new way of being becomes the normal way of functioning.

Let me express the wish that I may influence the activity of the IAIP Board toward this change and a good transformation.

The new Board will set new goals. But without resolving the issues with procedural irregularities and the open problems to be dealt with, I firmly believe that the functioning of the Board and the whole association will stagnate.

Because only with changes can we grow.

I would like to offer thanks to three people on the Board for their contribution. Namely:

- Horst Groner who has been a Board member for 31 years,
- Gianni Mazzoli who has been on the Board for 21 years and
- Marina Bluvstein who was coopted in 2018 after the former vice-president gave up his post.

Thank you.

Dr. Daniela Cechova

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