

Hi everyone!

I had a blast at the first IOA Council of Management (COM) Meeting in early June in Liverpool in the UK. I attended both the Strategic Planning Session and the General Meeting. First order of business was to honour former members of the Council. Usually this happens in person, but as the congress was virtual this year, I was asked to pass the Order of Mary Maddox on to Sayeh.



In the **Strategic Planning Session**, we mapped out the Strategic Plan for the IOA to take course over the next four years. I didn't know about the different programs the COM has on their agenda, so further down an oversight will follow. I picked out a few programs within the programs that might be important to some of us. The three main goals of the IOA are to promote the profession, to foster the science and to support the education and the practice of orthoptics. The programs help to achieve these goals:

- The Board of Executives (elected, not country delegates)
  - President
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Deputy President
- Programs (program coordinators should be country delegates and therefore members of the COM)
  - Operations Management (OM) – Deputy President Kyle Arnoldi
  - International Cooperation (IC) – proposed: Daisy Godts (BEL) & Sheila Chamberlin (USA)
    - Mentor Program
    - Volunteer Program
    - International Paediatric Eyecare Training Committee (IPET)
    - Information Development Program (mini lectures)
  - Education & Research (E&R) – proposed: Jignasa Mehta (GBR&IRE)
    - Continuing Education
    - Guidelines for Writing Scientific Papers
    - Mentor Program
    - Scientific Journal Contracts
  - Standards & Quality (S&Q) – proposed: Susan Silveira (AUS) & Sonja Vrugt (NED)
    - IOA Professional Role Document “Scope of Practice”
    - S&Q Documents (i.e. title protection, registration, ...)
  - Promotion and Development (P&D) – proposed: Eva Strasser (Scandinavia) and Lisa Schneebauer (AUT)

- World Orthoptic Day (WOD) Committee
- Website and Social Media
- Terminology
- “IOA Corner” (i.e. at ISA meetings)
- Promote membership in the IOA
- Promote membership to orthoptic students

The proposed Program Coordinators (PCo) are to be elected in the autumn. I was asked to co-chair the P&D program with Lisa Schneebeauer from Austria and I will act as interim chair until the election.

To run the different programs and therefore the IOA requires work and active participation of IOA members. Some programs require more, other programs require less work. Any member of the IOA can contribute to a program and is welcomed to do so. It doesn't matter if you have expertise, want to expand your horizon, or want to learn something new.

The Volunteer Program will open again for registration shortly. After a lot of uncertainty during the pandemic things will start to roll again. If you're interested in volunteering don't hesitate to fill out the form on the IOA website or contact Sheila Chamberlin, Karen McCain or me with any questions. Both seasoned and new volunteers are welcome. The current Volunteer Program is in Serekunda in The Gambia and fully funded for the next two years.

A collaboration between the R&E program and the OM will be the Mentor Program for scientific work. In short it is like an exchange program but targeted on the production of scientific work. The thought behind this program is to get orthoptist to publish more studies. Practically, orthoptists who sit on expertise can help supervise the scientific work and study of other orthoptists.

The IOA strongly encourages national associations to invite IOA member orthoptists from other countries to participate in their (yearly) meetings by offering the member fee for all IOA members. We already have that system in place in Scandinavia where SOA members pay the same fee as the national association's members.

### **General Meeting:**

There's a lot of friction between orthoptists and optometrists. This is a very serious problem in almost every part of the globe: Countries who have an ongoing conflict and do not have an authorisation or title protection include: Brazil, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Sweden and the USA. The IOA wants to help by establishing guidelines for national associations who want to get the title orthoptist protected. The IOA advises that national orthoptists and orthoptic associations seek help not only from ophthalmologists, but also from paediatricians. They need to establish a dialogue with national governments in order to get an authorisation as a health professional and a title protection motion going. The IOA can help with supporting letters and the knowledge about which countries have successfully a registry or authorisation office. The IOA can further help in conversations with government authorities if needed.

The recently published EDORTH (European Diploma for Orthoptists) document is published on the OCE (Orthoptistes de la Communauté Européenne) website: <https://euro-orthoptics.com> This document can be of help in establishing a national title protection.

Scandinavia proud, the launch has been in Göteborg in November '21. You can watch the launch event video and the speech of the OCE president Maria-Luise Lenk-Schaefer on the website as well.

Due to the interruptions and to guarantee continuity both president JR Polling and secretary Kathy Frey stood for re-election. The president will be re-elected in 2026, the secretary in 2025.

The Virtual XIV<sup>th</sup> IOA Congress in Liverpool was a success. Even though it got delayed by two years the scientific program was wonderful. The proceedings of the 2020 International Orthoptic Congress were published in the summer of '21 in the Journal Strabismus under the name "a congress that never took place".

The XV<sup>th</sup> IOA Congress will take place in Australia. Though originally planned to be in Brisbane in 2024, another location in the country is likely. The Congress will be held in 2025. The next Congress after 2025 will be held in 2028. The location is not yet set.

Wish you all a pleasant summer and see you hopefully soon. Maybe at the NPOG NSA meeting in Stockholm in September!

Best wishes

Eva

Oslo, 14.07.22