Internationalization Committee’s goals and strategic action plan
Agenda 2011-2012

By Roberto González* and David Livert**

* P. Univeridad Católica de Chile, Chair of the Internationalization Committee

** Penn State University Lehigh Valley Co-chair of the Internationalization Committee

Let us introduce in this article the Internationalization Committee’s goals and agenda that the SPSSI’s council has recently approved in its summer council meeting. As we know, SPSSI is by definition an international organization. Our members come from all over the world. SPSSI members are connected by a desire to develop social scientific findings that can be used to improve our world. Though specific regions of the world face different challenges, the underlying dynamics that perpetuate inequality, conflict and other social pathologies have similar roots. Indeed, the research SPSSI members conduct examines underlying causes and applied solutions that are broadly relevant everywhere in the world. Because of its international character, under the presidency and vision of Professor Kay Deaux, SPSSI created its internationalization committee back in 2007, to further broaden SPSSI’s international visibility, participation, and membership outreach.

The new Council of SPSSI (2011-2012) required re-energizing the Internationalization Committee. In reaching this goal, eleven scholars from different regions and countries, with different academic backgrounds, kindly agreed to become members of the internationalization committee: Hartmut Günther (Brazil), Agostino Mazziotta (Germany), Marilyn P. Safir (Israel), Judith Torney-Purta (United States), Rezarta Bilali (United States), Hiroshi Ota (Japan), Samuel Pherson (Northern Ireland), Stefania Paolini (Australia), Colette van Lar (The Netherlands), David Libert (United States, associate Chair of the committee), and Roberto González (Chile, Chairperson of the committee). All of them are very motivated and ought to contribute to the development of SPSSI at their regional and international level (see contact information of each member at the end of this document).

The international nature of the committee is salient to SPSSI efforts and sends a clear message to our current and future members that SPSSI is an organization interested in contributing to the development of social issues around the world by stimulating research, fostering publications and disseminating ideas emerging from a common but broad agenda.

In order to be effective, the Internationalization Committee has identified goals and defines a strategic action plan to pursue them in the long term. Thus, our aspirations and desires to contribute to the development of SPSSI as a whole requires every member to understand the need of transforming ideas into action at the international level. In addition, the effectiveness of this committee will also rely on the capacity of our group to collaborate with other committees of SPSSI, particularly those which coordinate communication with our members and link their academic work with our institution (publications, conferences, small group meetings, grants, awards, etc.)
**SPSSI Mission and strategic plan**

Since its foundation back in 1936, SPSSI has sought to generate, disseminate, and apply social science knowledge to address the problems of society. In doing so, the society has defined its identity and a number of values that inspired it. As such SPSSI members are socially conscious empiricists and empirically minded social activists. SPSSI is distinct from other social scientific associations in its commitment to translating science into action and distinct from other social advocacy organizations in its commitment to basing action on science. It is important to indicate that the following main goals and the strategic plan of the internationalization committee are connected to SPSSI identity and its associated values. In addition, the current goals and actions associated with the strategic plan are also based on the great contribution that Colette van Laar, Michael Zarate and former members did in the previous Internationalization Committee. Thanks to them for making SPSSI a better social science international organization.

**The main goals of the Internationalization Committee**

The SPSSI's Internationalization Committee, in accordance with Council, defines and implements the international agenda. The agenda aims to strengthen the international character of SPSSI, and therefore is oriented to increase the value of each of its programs (grants, awards, conferences, distinctions, newsletter, webpage, etc) to current and future members. In doing so, the internationalization committee aims to:

- Promote an international perspective in the process of understanding and impacting social issues from psychology and other social science.
- Promote the inclusion of relevant social issues with international relevance onto SPSSI's agenda.
- Foster the development of successful international collaboration (research networks) in psychological and other behavioral science research that has social applications and identify ways to overcome the difficulties that sometimes exist in effective collaboration (see relevant report referring to this issue in “International Psychological Research that Matters for Policy and Practice,” *American Psychologist*, November 2009 by Judith Torney-Purta).
- Make SPSSI attractive to international scholars and postgraduate students by making its values visible: its dual interest in theoretical and applied aspects related to relevant social issues.
- Stimulate international contributions (special issues) to disseminate the study social issues through SPSSI's various outlets (*Journal Of Social Issues, Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* and *Social Issues and Policy Review*).
- Stimulate participation of social scientists from different countries in the SPSSI biannual conference (with an international section) and in the small group meetings organized by SPSSI and the European Association of Social Psychology (EASP) held alternately in a European and a North American venue.

---

1 Mission and Values were obtained from the Strategic Plan of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Adopted by Council on February 1, 2009
• Stimulate participation of social scientists from different countries in SPSSI’s grant-funding, awards and recognition systems.

• Promote formal links with organizations (networking with psychological associations, universities, research Institutes and NGOs) from different regions interested in promoting research and the dissemination of research findings in social issues.

• Promote active participation in the newsletter and web page of SPSSI to give visibility to the work conducted by international scholars (international scholar interviews, articles, etc).

• Increase the number of new members from different regions of the world by stimulating postgraduates and scholars to join SPSSI. In doing so, visibility of SPSSI values and benefits are key aspects to address when promoting it.

**Organization and action plan**

The internationalization committee is bringing about the international agenda of SPSSI. As such, it requires permanent connection and active collaboration with most committees that operate in SPSSI (the Graduate Student Committee, the Early Career Scholars Committee, Membership Committee, Social Issues Dissertation Award Committee, Editors of different outlets, conference committee, just to mention some of them). In doing so, a protocol will be defined and followed by each subsection of the internationalization committee. This will help them to track down all the necessary actions to be implemented in coordination with other SPSSI committees. We need to be vigilant of these issues and connect with key players leading different SPPSI committees. The protocol will help everybody to be aware of the need of keeping the international identity of SPSSI salient on each possible action. Depending on the agenda, some actions will require thinking of potential resources to be allocated to these committees in order to accommodate the internationalization committee’s goal.

Different roles will be allocated to the 11 members of the Internationalization Committee. The roles will be organized in such a way that members sharing a role (subsection of the committee) will be in charge of building ideas and leading some projects and actions of the committee. Other functions will include preparing reports and systematizing information in their regions. It would also be easier for all of us as well as SPSSI members to identify who is leading the specific actions. We invite you to learn about them and identify which one you might be interested in contributing to.

In the near future we will present in our SPSSI’s web page a section dedicated to disseminate the internationalization committee’s agenda with all sub-committees in charge of fostering it. Here are the major areas in which a set of actions have been identified (see full information in [http://www.spssi.org/internationalization](http://www.spssi.org/internationalization))

- **Making salient SPSSI’s interest in both theoretical and applied research:** a special effort needs to be made to clearly make salient that SPSSI cares about both dimensions; and that theory-driven research guides social research and interventions to address doubt about SPSSI as an applied only /political only organization). New
theoretical frameworks need to take the socially broader context into account. Thus enhancing attention to theories that take context into account in applying psychological research to social issues is a central topic to address.

- **Attracting new members is one of the major goals** (gift memberships by well-known scholars disseminated around the world; representation of international members and social issues in the topics that SPSSI covers in its correspondence, publications and programs; recruiting members at conferences or through other programs that require membership (various grants and awards etc). Particularly relevant is to recruit junior international scholars to the Graduate Student Committee and the Early Career Scholars Committee.

- **Promoting members’ active participation in different SPSSI’ programs** (Awards and recognition programs; international members publishing in the several outlets of SPSSI; Linking our editorial board members with international research perspectives;

- **International section biannual meeting**: Set up an Invited Symposium on Social Issues Around the World sponsored by the Internationalization Committee for the upcoming SPSSI conference. The primary goal of the symposium is to highlight SPSSI-relevant work and issues from regions around the world and how our members are addressing those issues. It could be stimulated by the presentation of a thematic section or a symposium format by bringing together research conducted on a certain main topic. Also to organize a Happy Hour reception at upcoming SPSSI conference.

- **Fostering links between international scientific associations and SPSSI.** We have approved to explore the possibility of identifying scientific organizations in different regions that might be interested in joining efforts to discuss social issues at the academic level. Thus, it could be the case that important conferences around the world might benefit from this collaboration. By all means this implies supporting the academic program and maybe creating a small section in which SPSSI sponsors some activities. In return, we can introduce information about SPSSI’s mission and goals, as well as relevant information regarding all the outlets that SPSSI produces.

- **SPSSI international agenda in the Newsletter and web page** (information in the current SPSSI Newsletter; create the Internationalization Committee section in the newsletter; Include in the newsletter news about international activities and relevant programs of SPSSI; Use the listserv as a low cost way to interest those who are less involved currently; Set up a SPSSI country contact network for inclusion on SPSSI website

- **Linking SPSSI to other Social Organizations and scientific institutions**: Continue to set up a SPSSI country contact network; Scientific institutions that might be interested in joining forces with SPSSI to pursuing their goals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nº</th>
<th>Internationalization Committee</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>País</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Roberto González</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rgonzale@uc.cl">rgonzale@uc.cl</a></td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>P. Universidad Católica de Chile</td>
<td>Professor of Social Psychology</td>
<td>+ 56 2 354 2391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hartmut Günther</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hartmut.gunther@me.com">hartmut.gunther@me.com</a></td>
<td>Brasil</td>
<td>Universidade de Brasília</td>
<td>Professor of Psychology</td>
<td>+ 61 3 307 2625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agostino Mazziotta</td>
<td><a href="mailto:agostino.mazziotta@gmail.com">agostino.mazziotta@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena</td>
<td>Ph.D. Candidate.</td>
<td>+ 49 (0) 3641 94 1710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Marilyn P. Safir</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marilyn.safir@gmail.com">marilyn.safir@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>University of Haifa</td>
<td>Professor of Clinical and Social Psychology</td>
<td>+ 972 54 4949147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Judith Torney-Purta</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jtpurta@umd.edu">jtpurta@umd.edu</a></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>Professor, Human Development</td>
<td>+ 1 301 405 2806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rezarta Bilali</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Rezarta.Bilali@umb.edu">Rezarta.Bilali@umb.edu</a></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>University of Massachusetts Boston</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>+ 1 617 287 7165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hiroshi Ota</td>
<td><a href="mailto:giants@asu.aasa.ac.jp">giants@asu.aasa.ac.jp</a></td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Aichi Shukutoku University</td>
<td>Professor of Psychology</td>
<td>+ 81 52 781 1151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Samuel Pherson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.pehrson@qub.ac.uk">s.pehrson@qub.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Northern Ireland, United Kingdom</td>
<td>Queens’s University</td>
<td>Lecturer (Assistant Professor)</td>
<td>+ 44 (0)28 9097 4333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Stefania Paolini</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Stefania.Paolini@newcastle.edu.au">Stefania.Paolini@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>The University of Newcastle</td>
<td>Lecturer (Assistant Professor)</td>
<td>+ 61 (0) 2 49215938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Colette van Lar</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cvlaar@fsw.leidenuniv.nl">cvlaar@fsw.leidenuniv.nl</a></td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Leiden University</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>+ 31 (0) 71 527 3923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>David Livert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:del11@psu.edu">del11@psu.edu</a></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Penn State University Lehigh Valley</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Psychology</td>
<td>+ 1 (610) 285-5127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dominic Abrams</td>
<td><a href="mailto:D.Abrams@kent.ac.uk">D.Abrams@kent.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>The University of Kent at Canterbury</td>
<td>Professor of Social Psychology</td>
<td>+ 44 (1227) 82 7475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>