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International Play Association: Promoting the Child's Right to Play ANNUAL REPORT 2008

Overview:

The year began with IPA's **Triennial Conference in Hong Kong**, our first international conference in Asia. Another 'first' was the adoption of a broad ranging **Strategic Plan**, built 'from the ground up' involving hundreds of members worldwide. During the year a detailed **Communications Plan** was added to the Master Plan giving it further strength and making it truly comprehensive. With the establishment of **seven Working Groups**, as well as a Constitution Review Committee, the implementation phase made good progress. Another highlight was IPA's official involvement in the **first Child Games and Toys International Conference** in held in Hangzhou, China.

It was a year of "firsts" for IPA. The Board, Council, Working Groups and members worldwide ended the year with a sense of accomplishment and renewed commitment to the organization and its goals.

The following is a very brief summary of IPA World's progress this year.*

1. **Meetings and Conferences**

- a) **Triennial Conference, Hong Kong** January 8 – 11. With the title "Play in a Changing World" this four-day conference provided stimulating key-note addresses, a broad range of workshops and discussion groups, a play day, a variety of field trips, and of course multidisciplinary networking opportunities. Thirty countries were represented and IPA was particularly pleased to welcome delegates from Greater China and East Asia. There was a total of over 400 participants.
Awards: IPA's *Right to Play Award* for outstanding projects; a new *IPA Globe Award* honoring valuable service to IPA; and *IPA Life Membership Awards* were presented. (Details can be found in the March edition of PlayRights.)
- b) **General Meeting**, held triennially, was held during the above conference.
- c) **Board Meetings** In addition to two meetings in Hong Kong in January, the Board met in Faringdon, UK, in October 2008. Two informal electronic meetings were also held during the year.
- d) **Conference in Mainland China** IPA accepted an invitation to play a key role in this first Asian Child Games and Toys conference. IPA's President, Regional Vice President for SE Asia and our Hong Kong representative attended. Pre-school education was the main focus.

*This does not include the many national and regional-based projects and activities



2. **Financial Report 2008** (Attached)

3. **Constitution Review**

A Working Group, under the direction of the President, prepared material for presentation to a Special General Meeting planned for late 2009. The material is based on the Constitution Review which took place in 2006/7. (www.ipaworld.org. “Constitution Review”)

4. **Communications**

a) **Communications Plan:** A comprehensive review of all potential communications strategies was conducted by the newly formed Communications Committee as recommended in the Strategic Plan. The resulting Communications Plan was accepted by the Council in December 2008.

b) **Website:** was updated on a regular basis through the year.

c) **PlayRights Magazine:** This year’s editions focused on the keynote addresses of the Hong Kong conference, and the need for risk-taking in children’s play.

d) **Promotional Material:**

* **IPA brochure** was updated and a distribution plan developed for a print run of 5,000, agreed upon at the October Board meeting.

* **Promotional Folder** Work began on this, in conjunction with the Finance/FR Committee. The intention is that it be tailored for a variety of uses.

* **IPA Poster** This was produced last year for the triennial conference, but efforts are underway to have it translated into many languages. The first, in November, was Mandarin.

5. **Strategic Plan Implementation** Thirty-six members were engaged in the first implementation phase of IPA’s newly adopted Strategic Plan. Following is a very brief summary of activity during 2008. A more detailed report is available from ipacommunications@shaw.ca A list of committee members is attached.

a) **Article 31 General Comment Project** In May 2008 IPA requested that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child authorize a General Comment on article 31 of the UN Convention - the article concerning the child’s right to play. (General Comments aim to increase state accountability by elaborating on the meaning of an aspect of the Convention where ‘states parties’ are seen to be falling short in compliance. General Comments, when issued, are delivered to all nations who signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.)

To strengthen its request, IPA gained the support of seven international organizations:

Right to Play International
World Leisure Association
International Pediatrics Association
International Council on Children’s Play



*World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)
International Toy Library Association
European Child Friendly Cities Network*

Receipt of IPA's letter was acknowledged by the Chair of the UN Committee on Children's Rights but a decision on our request has not yet been made. (The letter to the UN Committee was reproduced in the September 2008 edition of PlayRights.)

Worldwide Consultations: During 2008, in relation to the above, IPA began planning a series of consultations on article 31. The main purpose of these will be to raise awareness of the importance of article 31 within the UN Convention:

- to mobilize a worldwide network of article 31 advocates and to harness their expertise to raise awareness of the importance of play in children's lives
- to gather specific material demonstrating the infringement of the child's right to play throughout the world (actual cases where children's right to play has been violated) which can inform a UN Day of Discussion in Geneva and/or the development of a General Comment.
- To formulate practical recommendations for governments with regard to compliance with article 31.

A meeting to plan the format for the consultations was held in Rotterdam in November 2008.

A Steering Committee for the consultation project is being formed which will include representatives of our partner organizations.

Board Committee: Working group Theresa Casey, Valerie Fronczek and Roger Hart

b) **Standing Committees**

* **Communications** A comprehensive plan was developed during 2008 and the committee is now poised for the implementation phase.

Committee led by Valerie Fronczek and Kim Sanderson.

* **Finance/Fundraising** During the year the committee conducted an overview of potential sources of income, taking into consideration IPA's ethics guidelines, and produced a report for October's Board meeting. This included components of a preparation phase, the possible establishment of an IPA Trust Fund and identification of specific funding needs (projects) of IPA.

Committee chair: Anna-Marie Millbank

* **Membership** The committee worked on a framework for a recruitment master plan which included a toolkit for branches, social networking, improving membership



materials and a members' only section for the website. The relative merits/success of the various strategies will be assessed.

Committee chair: Susan McIntyre

c) **Working Groups**

- * **Analysis of UNCRC Reports** University students from the Netherlands were engaged to help with this project, the purpose of which is to record "play" content of national reports to the UN, and identify reports which do not address the topic.

Chair: Froukje Hajer

- * **Development of Position Papers**

A list of potential topics was prepared which included play and public health, and play and children in difficult circumstances as first priorities. Format, style, and potential authors are under consideration.

Chair: Jeanette Jespersen

- * **Development of International Playwork Exchange Program**

This group is collecting information on professional playwork around the world with a view to assessing the viability of an IPA international exchange. It is realized that this is a long-term project (and the main purpose, possibly, for the establishment of a Trust Fund).

Chair: Brian Ashley

- * **IPA's Celebration of its 50th Anniversary**

A number of ideas are being contemplated which will include members around the world in the celebration. The main celebration will of course take place at the Triennial World Conference in Cardiff in July, 2011.

A special edition of PlayRights, describing the history of IPA, is being proposed for circulation in early 2011.

Chair: Carlos Neto

6. **ICCP/IPA Book Project**

IPA and the International Council on Children's Play produced their first joint book which had been planned for some years. "*Several Perspectives on Children's Play: Scientific Reflections for Practitioners*" was launched at the Hong Kong Conference. Plans for a second book were explored during the year.

7. **Liaison with Other International Organizations**

This year IPA's activity was related to the General Comment Project (item 2). IPA President and Communications Officer had the pleasure of meeting the President of the International Toy Libraries Association in the UK in October.



International Play Association: Promoting the Child's Right to Play
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