



International Association  
for Suicide Prevention

# ANNUAL REPORT

*'Working together to prevent suicide'*

2020



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# FACTS & FIGURES

79% of global suicides occur in low-and middle-income countries.

**The IASP policy position states that ‘The criminalisation of attempted suicide undermines prevention efforts and restricts access of vulnerable individuals to suicide prevention and mental health services.’**

**“Suicide is illegal in 25 countries which have specific laws for attempted suicide and in an additional 10 countries which follow Sharia law people who attempt suicide may also be punished” (Mishara & Weisstub, 2015)**

**“Communities have an important role to play in suicide prevention. They can provide support to people who are vulnerable and to those who have made an attempt on their life. They can provide comfort to people who have lost someone to suicide and can also help fight stigma” (WHO, 2019 – Suicide prevention: toolkit for engaging communities)**

**“Over 800,000 people die by suicide every year and it is the second leading cause of death in 15-29-year-olds” (WHO, 2019 – Suicide in the world)**

**“Most suicides occur in low-and middle-income countries where resources and services, if they do exist, are often scarce and limited for early identification, treatment and support of people in need. These striking facts and the lack of implemented timely interventions make suicide a serious global public health problem that needs to be tackled urgently” (WHO, 2019 – Suicide Prevention: Toolkit for Engaging Communities)**

**Pesticide poisoning is one of the commonest, and most readily preventable methods of suicide in certain parts of the world. Overall, pesticide poisoning accounts for as many as one in every five of the world’s suicides” (WHO, 2019 – Preventing Suicide: a resource for pesticide registrars and regulators).**

# VOICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The deliverables and outputs of our IASP community this year are particularly commendable given the turbulence of this twelve month period. Together, we have continued to meet our objectives with a great deal of adaptability.

The incorporation of a hybrid conference format in the IASP Asia Pacific Taipei Conference 2020 and the fully virtual Triple i conference ensured that we stay engaged with one another this year and still had opportunities to share our work.

In terms of global policy, our mission to support the decriminalisation of suicidal behaviour globally has advanced with the ramification of our policy position statement by our members and its subsequent publication. This policy statement provides a strong basis to support countries seeking to repeal existing legislation that criminalises suicidal behaviour.

Our Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have expanded with the formation of new groups this year, including 'Suicide in Boys and Men' and 'Suicide Prevention in Primary Care'. Our SIGs provide us with fora to engage with and collaborate with peers on particular topics of interest within the field and the addition of new groups is very much welcomed.

The establishment of the International COVID-19 Suicide Prevention Research Collaboration in response to a need for research focused on the impacts of the pandemic on mental health and suicide demonstrates the functionality of our organisation. The ICSPRC have worked endlessly to meet the immediate, global demand for research by means of hosting webinars, maintaining a COVID-19 suicide research study register of current and ongoing research, and preparing publications including editorials and letters of guidance.

Our annual World Suicide Prevention Month continued to grow in both reach and engagement, incorporating innovative approaches to raise awareness of the importance of suicide prevention with strong global participation in virtual events during the month-long campaign.

On the whole, despite the challenges, it has been a progressive year for IASP.

**Professor Murad Khan**  
**President, International Association for Suicide Prevention**



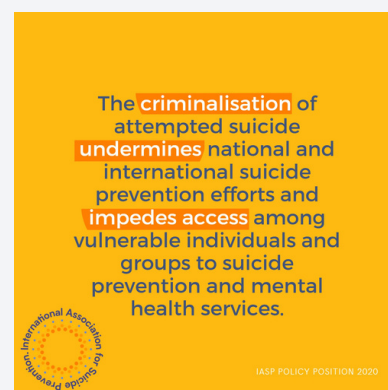


# GLOBAL POLICY

IASP plays a strategic central role that is both proactive and reactive in empowering an effective forum on which evidence-based suicide prevention activities are promoted, implemented, and evaluated. Guiding policy and increasing the visibility of the issue of suicide at a global level continues to be a priority.

## DECRIMINALISATION OF ATTEMPTED SUICIDE & SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR

The decriminalisation of attempted suicide and suicidal behaviour was a key campaign objective in 2020. A Specialist Working Group was selected to firstly develop a policy position for IASP to stand by. This group has the potential to guide organisational advocacy and advise and support on approaches to relevant authorities (governments, professional associations etc) for the decriminalisation of attempted suicide. The IASP membership ratified a policy position statement in June and the dedicated Special Working Group hosted a webinar on the subject in advance of World Suicide Prevention Day.



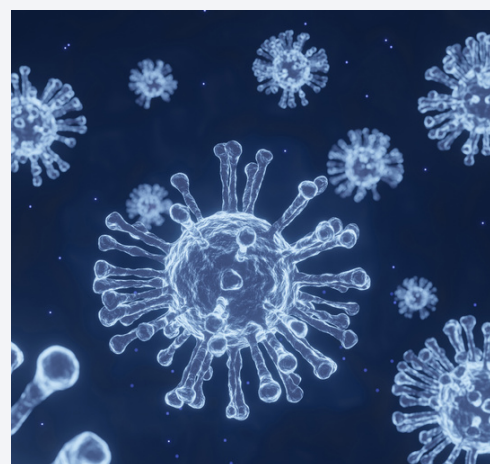
The statement was produced by the Special Working Group on the Decriminalisation of Attempted Suicide for the purpose of serving advocates for decriminalisation, policymakers, other international organisations, NGOs, and governments where attempted suicide is currently criminalized to advance the decriminalisation of attempted suicide in their country.

## COVID-19 IMPACT ON SUICIDE PREVENTION WORK PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL TASK FORCE ON COVID-19

In April 2020 the President and Executive Committee (EC) highlighted the important role that the IASP should play in coordinating and guiding the development of global suicide prevention efforts in the wake of COVID-19. In recognition of the urgency of the situation, the EC agreed to establish a Presidential Special Task Force on COVID-19 (PSTFC).

The overarching aim of the PSTFC was to develop IASP's strategic response to the potential global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on suicidal behaviour.

As the assignment evolved, the remit was extended to encompass all emergency crises but not man-made disaster. The resulting protocol delivered to the EC in December covered a wider brief than COVID-19 and specifies all emergency crises.



# THE IASP COVID-19 RESPONSE & RESOURCE CENTRE

As the leading global suicide prevention organisation, IASP's COVID-19 Resource Centre, set up in April 2020, aims to provide information for those seeking resources related to the pandemic and suicidal behaviour, suicidal ideation, and self-harm.



Throughout 2020 the resource centre regularly published briefs on various topics including, reporting on suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic, and helping workplaces and professional associations.



Published resources and tools for inter and non-governmental agencies. As well as collating external publications and research.

## SURVEY

To help develop and implement a strategic plan to reduce COVID-19 related suicidal behaviour IASP encouraged global experts to share details from their country about the impact of the pandemic on suicidal behaviour. This information from members, crisis centres, external stakeholders and wherever possible, from governments was then collectively integrated as sources of key information and insights.

## THE INTERNATIONAL COVID-19 SUICIDE PREVENTION RESEARCH COLLABORATION (ICSPRC)

In response to widespread concerns about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on suicide and suicidal behaviour an international group of suicide prevention researchers from around 40 countries formed the ICSPRC with the aim of sharing knowledge about the impact of COVID-19 on suicide and suicidal behaviour and prevention measures in different countries. In order to maximise the societal impact of research the ICSPRC is working in partnership and collaboration with IASP. By the close of 2020, the number of collaborators had doubled to over 100 and the included members from 39 nations.



Established a COVID-19 suicide research study register – held on the IASP COVID-19 Resource Centre site with details of over 30 studies worldwide.



Published an editorial in, Crisis, summarising research considerations in relation to COVID-19 and distributed 'Advice on questions/survey tools relevant to suicide prevention research in relation to COVID-19



Provided newsletters and hosted monthly webinars; webinars hosted global experts to present and discuss their findings. Presentations included research presentations from Japan, Ecuador, Taiwan, Czechia, UK, India, Australia, Malaysia and the USA.

## MENTUPP



IASP is one of the 17 partners of MENTUPP – Mental Health Promotion and Intervention in Occupational Settings, a 4-year EU-funded project. IASP supports the European Alliance Against Depression in the communication and dissemination tasks of the project.

The primary aim of MENTUPP is to improve mental health in the workplace by developing, implementing, and evaluating a multilevel intervention targeting mental health difficulties in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the construction, health and ICT sectors. Its secondary aim is to reduce depression and suicidal behaviour.

The multilevel intervention that the MENTUPP consortium has been developing, known as MENTUPP Hub, goes beyond existing mental health promotion and suicide prevention programmes. The intervention tackles:

- non-clinical aspects, such as stress, burnout, poor wellbeing, and depressive symptoms;
- clinical aspects, such as depression and co-morbid anxiety; and
- destigmatisation of mental (ill-)health in SME settings to create mentally healthy workplaces.

To ensure that the intervention is fit-for-purpose and feasible, a Pilot Study will be conducted in eight SMEs in Europe and Australia, including qualitative implementation research into barriers and facilitators. Once optimised, the MENTUPP Hub will be rigorously tested in a Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial (cRCT) in 24 SMEs across Europe and Australia, looking at mental health outcomes, cost-effectiveness (including absenteeism, higher work performance) and implementation factors to establish a robust evidence base. This evidence base will support continued use of the MENTUPP Hub in the SMEs involved in the project, as well as wider replication in new SMEs, new countries, and new sectors.

The MENTUPP project began at the start of 2020. IASP's role as a project partner is in the communication and dissemination of project reports and programme implementation, and resulting guidelines and recommendations to relevant stakeholders at both the European and global level. 2020 involved operational and strategic planning, gathering partner assessments for communication mapping as well as putting systems in place for both internal and external dissemination and communication throughout the project.

# CONFERENCES

## TAIPEI

In association with the Taiwanese Society of Suicidology, we were delighted to have hosted IASP 2020. We were thrilled to offer this conference to our members and supporters across the globe as a truly hybrid event. On Monday November 23, Professor Jane Pirkis, IASP Vice President alongside Professor Ming-Been Lee President of the TSOS, welcomed to the stage our Keynote speaker Venerable SIK Hin Hung to present 'Two Buddhist-inspired Psychosocial Interventions: The Dharma Therapy and Awareness Training Program'.

Our programme reflected a blend of physical and virtual presentations, all of which were recorded and have been made available post-conference to registered delegates. With more than 80 presentations from 45 speakers from over 20 countries and 40 plus posters, this was a truly engaging 2 days.



## TRIPLE I

TRIPLE i is an international annual conference organised by the Slovene Centre for Suicide Research (Andrej Marušič Institute, University of Primorska, Slovenia) in memory of the late Prof. Andrej Marušič (around the time of his birthday) with the aim of promoting intuition, imagination and innovation in research and prevention of suicide and suicidal behaviour. Due to the epidemiological situation regarding the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus, the traditional (face to face) TRIPLE i conference was canceled in March 2020. However, with the desire to still offer an opportunity for interaction and fruitful discussions between distinguished suicidologists and perspective early career researchers, IASP joined the Slovene Centre for Suicide Research and the De Leo Fund Onlus to host a virtual conference from 16 to 19 June 2020.

The programme included topics of suicide research and clinical work with suicidal patients, including early considerations of the impact of COVID-19. Thus, theory, research, prevention, and interventions in suicidology were addressed. Existing difficulties in both research and clinical work were also specifically addressed.







# WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) has continued to gain momentum in the past two years. Year on year it reaches more people and it provides a global platform for suicide prevention messaging. Not only has it obtained inter-organisational prestige but importantly this global event reaches villages and urban communities in remote communities as well as reaching the desks of heads of governments.

The World Suicide Prevention Day awareness film, 'Step Closer' headlined the 2020 campaign around the final year of the 'Working Together to Prevent Suicide' theme.

The film aimed to highlight that working together was essential in preventing suicide. The 2020 World Suicide Prevention Day campaign exceeded all expectations in terms of awareness, reach and visibility online. The simplistic message within the film worked to destigmatise language, myths and actions around suicide and encourage discussions and connections. The implications of COVID-19 meant that many WSPD events and activities that would have previously taken place in person, had to be moved online. COVID-19 has also resulted in increased discussion around the importance of good mental health and wellbeing including suicide prevention.



- This year over **half a million** people participated in the global conversation around World Suicide Prevention Day awareness on Twitter.
- The hashtags #WorldSuicidePreventionDay, #WSPD, #WSPD2020, #SuicidePrevention, and #StepCloser were tweeted over **553K times** leading up to WSPD, including **377K times** on Sept 10.
- #WorldSuicidePreventionDay reached **#2 trend** on Twitter in the USA on 10th September.
- With the support of a collaboration with Twitter's Public Policy Team, the Step Closer film gained **71 million** impressions and **33.7 million** views on Twitter.

# WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

World Mental Health Day (WMHD) 2020 endeavoured to make mental health care a reality for all, with key emphasis on awareness, advocacy, accessibility and action. IASP focused on advocacy and awareness around suicide and suicide prevention by continuing the visibility and success of the Step Closer film with messaging towards the 2020 theme of 'Mental Health for All: Greater Investment, Greater Access'. This included renewed focus on;

- Stigma reduction;
- Access to mental health care, universal health coverage and the SDGs;
- COVID-19 and mental health care.

“The time to act is now to empower communities and individuals to attain the highest standard of health, which can only be achieved when their mental health and well-being is ensured, and their rights respected.” #WorldSuicidePreventionDay, #SuicidePrevention, #WSPD2020, #WSPD #StepCloser #WMHD

“We're already seeing consequences of COVID-19 on people's mental well-being. #WorldMentalHealthDay is an opportunity for the world to come together and begin redressing the historic neglect of mental health. #SuicidePrevention, #WMHD2020, #WSPD #StepCloser #WMHD



Collaboration was a key element in IASP's WMHD activities. Working with the World Federation for Mental Health and United for Global Mental Health, IASP provided the content for one hour of coverage on the Speak Your Mind Campaigns first virtual 'March for Mental Health'.

In support of the membership ratified a policy position statement in June, IASP also took the opportunity to increase the coverage and communications on the decriminalisation of attempted suicide and suicidal behaviour.

The combined reach of all the World Mental Health Day online activities was more than 235 million and growing, and engagements with the campaign over 18 million. Between 8-10 October social media posts with the # or phrase "Move for Mental Health" generated over 98k engagements and had a reach of over 98 million proving that World Mental Health Day is increasingly recognised globally.

# MEMBERSHIP & EARLY CAREER GROUP

## MEMBERSHIP

Our membership is the foundation of IASP and it remains the focus for all IASP deliverables. 2020 saw a total of 596 members, 61 of whom were new. Thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of our members, the Special Interest Groups continue to flourish. These multi-disciplinary networks are a vital part of IASP, as members pursue a shared interest in a specific suicide prevention topic with a view to making a substantive contribution to improved understanding, practice or policy relating to that topic.

Member Type 2020	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Totals
Individual	321	41	25	6	393
Organisation	88	10	4	3	105
Advanced Organisation	9		1		10
Student	36	1	1	1	39
Volunteer	1	2			3
Retiree	11	1			12
Associate	6	7	5	5	23
Associate Organisation	2	2	3	2	9
Honorary	1				1
AE	1				1
596**	476	64	39	17	596

## EARLY CAREER GROUP

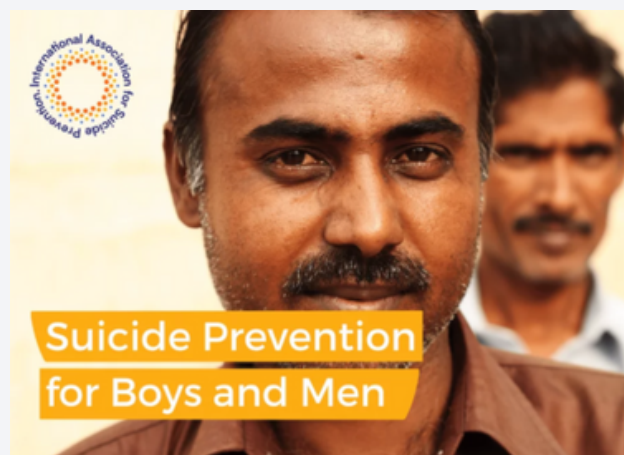
The early career group (ECG) provides a forum for members to network with peers and experts alike, engaging in international research and interventions in the area of suicide prevention. Continuing with the theme of mental health and wellbeing among early career researchers (ECRs), during this year's World Suicide Prevention Month, the ECG organised an online hackathon entitled 'Reshape your research and reset your mind: Tips for ECRs during COVID-19'. A small group of ECGs worked collaboratively to identify the key challenges facing ECRs during COVID-19 and to consider potential solutions to these. Plans are currently underway to take these discussions further and produce support resources for ECRs.

# SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

IASP Special Interest Groups offer the opportunity for our community of members, researchers, professionals, lay people and volunteers to focus deeply on a specific aspect of suicide and suicide prevention. In 2020 several new SIGs were set up.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION IN BOYS & MEN

The new SIG suicide in boys and men aims to progress meaningful conversations and research and build collaborations in the field to seek out men's voice and experiences and help create interventions and services that men want and need. This SIG brings together researchers, practitioners and people with lived experience who have a common interest and expertise in suicide prevention for boys and men with the goal of expanding the evidence base and informing future suicide prevention efforts.



Men account for three-quarters of deaths by suicide in many countries. A gendered approach to suicide prevention is needed that considers the sociocultural context of suicide by men and boys. However, few suicide prevention interventions do so, and this work is hampered by a lack of knowledge regarding the key ingredients needed for successful suicide prevention for boys and men.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION IN PRIMARY CARE

Primary care is the bedrock of any health system. As such, it has a vital role to play in a system-wide approach to suicide prevention. General practitioners, community pharmacists, occupational therapists are situated at the heart of communities and are therefore attuned to the physical, mental health, and psychosocial care needs of the local population. The newly formed SIG on Suicide Prevention in Primary Care will provide the platform for bringing together a cross-disciplinary network of researchers, clinicians,



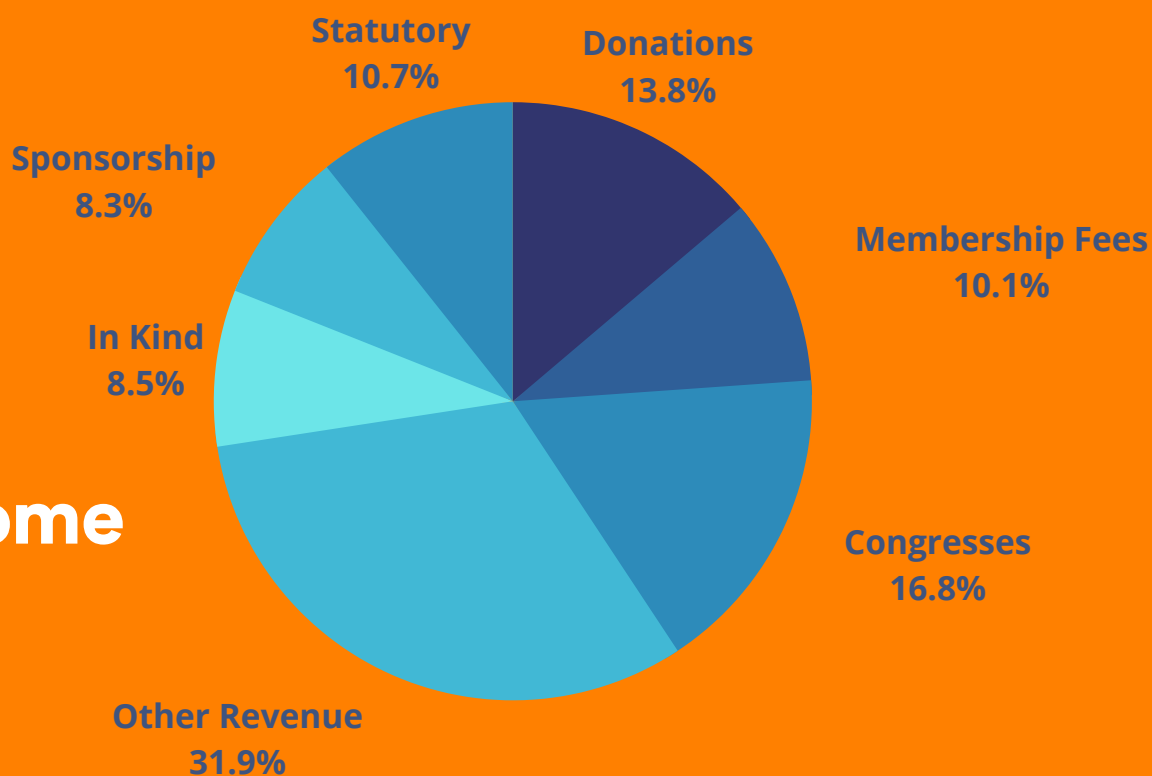
people with lived experience, commissioners, and policymakers across the world to identify opportunities for optimising the role of primary care and community-based services in suicide prevention. Their aim is to work in collaboration with a network of members to identify research and policy priorities that will inform the work of the SIG and act as an expert reference group to deliver on those priorities, guided by input from those with lived experience.



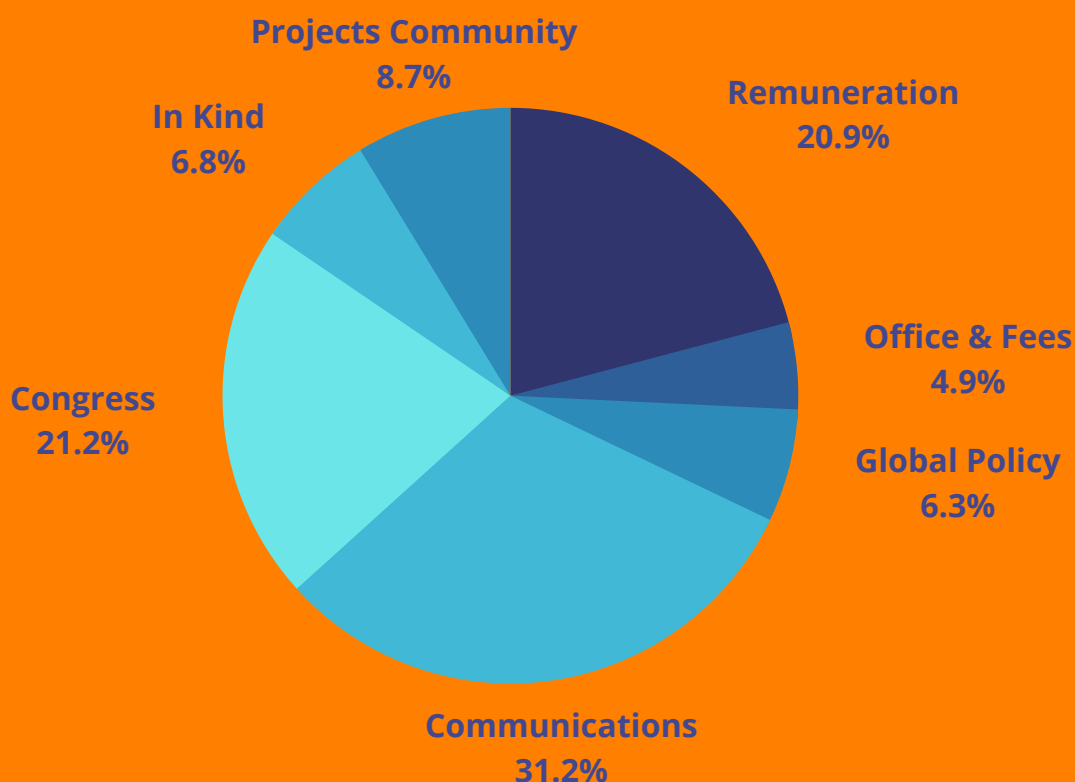
# RESOURCES

2020 INCOME	\$472,913
2020 EXPENDITURE	\$359,337
2020 ASSETS	\$480,317

## Income



## Expenditure





# THE CAO TEAM

IASP has experienced, along with our global partners, uncertain times, constraints, restrictions and many challenges. The Association is thankful that it had established the Central Administrative Office as a virtual office 5 years ago as this continued to ensure extremely low infrastructure costs and an extraordinary, committed team who worked seamlessly and economically from their personal space in 5 countries, geographically.

The successes of IASP are due in large part to the dedicated team of staff who make up our CAO. While the Board and membership provide ongoing and critical subject matter expertise, the Central Office really handles all of our daily operations. Full time employees at the close of 2020: 4.2.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Our Funders;** the Facebook community, Twitter (in kind), Cycle Around the Globe participants and other donations.

**World Suicide Prevention Day assets** were made possible thanks to the support from H. Lundbeck A/S.

**IASP Taipei 2020 & Triple i Sponsors:** LivingWorks, Taiwanese Society of Suicidology, Taiwan Medical Association & Zero Suicide Alliance.

**Our Pro-Bono Consultants,**

our trainers, organisational consultants, mentors and past presidents who continue to give their professional time and knowledge.

**The IASP Trustees,**

who give their time and leadership in kind.

**The Central Administrative Office Team,**

who work across many geographical locations.



**We thank you for your continued support  
in our suicide prevention efforts.**



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