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From the editor

For many of us, the first months of 2010 were dominated by the sequelae of the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Many organisations are preparing relief operations that include attention to mental health and psychosocial support. In the first weeks after the disaster, some have already voiced critical comments on the lack of coordination and cooperation between aid agencies. For those involved in mental health and psychosocial support, the IASC Reference Group *MHPSS in Emergency Settings* has played a central role on outlining the pathways of coordination and cooperation. The reference group has made materials for assessment and training available. These can be found at the website: <http://www.psychosocialnetwork.net> There is a specific section for Haiti. I hope that we, as psychosocial and mental health professionals, can demonstrate that we have learned from the aftermath of other disasters and what went wrong, such as the 2004 Tsunami and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.

This issue of *Intervention* does not, of course, yet contain articles on Haiti, nor other recent emergencies. Those involved in initiatives for mental health and psychosocial support in Haiti, or elsewhere, are encouraged to submit field reports with practical descriptions of work done and that challenges faced. It is important that our experiences are shared, so that we may learn from past experiences.

This issue opens with an article by *Maitane Arnosó Martínez & Francisco José Eiroá-Orosa*. They describe a research project with survivors of political violence in Argentina. In their contribution, they connect the reader to an important body of Spanish language literature on 'action research' in Latin America. This Latin American tradition of psychosocial work, in which intervention and research go hand in hand, provides an interesting and perhaps refreshing outlook for us in the second decade of the twenty first century.

Craig Higson-Smith & Flemming Bro from South Africa describe the challenges they faced in conducting research with tortured exiles living in Johannesburg. It is often difficult to work with this group, because illegal refugees are often marginalised, as well as invisible to assistance groups.

In the next article, *Nina von der Assen* and colleagues provide an overview on the place of disabled children in psychosocial programmes in areas affected by armed conflict. Too often, children with disabilities are not included in psychosocial interventions, or are 'set apart'. The authors argue, convincingly, that it is important to develop 'disability-friendly' psychosocial programmes.

Abdul Kareem Al-Obaidi and colleagues provide an overview of the situation on child and adolescent mental health in Iraq. Their sobering review of the literature makes us realise how much work is still ahead in the (re)construction of a mental health care system in Iraq.

Mark Jordans and his coauthors from the 'Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies Working Group in Nepal' describe how, in Nepal, a group of multiple stakeholders (local nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), international NGOs and UN organisations) have set up a process to use the *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings*. Two and a half years after the publication of the guidelines, and more than a year after the landmark special issue of *Intervention* on those guidelines, it is good to see that this document continues to be useful in the field. The Taskforce that drafted the guidelines has been transformed into the *IASC Reference Group Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings* with dozens of NGOs and UN organisations taking part in a continuous process of knowledge exchange and development of good practices. I am happy that *Intervention* had, and will continue to have, a significant role in this process.

Finally a pertinent field report by *Yoke Rabaia & Viet Nguyen Gillham* describes the project that has been set up as a joint partnership between a Palestinian academic institution, a Palestinian NGO and a community. The paper illustrates how power relations cannot be ignored.

Peter Ventevogel
Editor-in-chief