WPA ECP SECTION ACTION PLAN 2025-2028
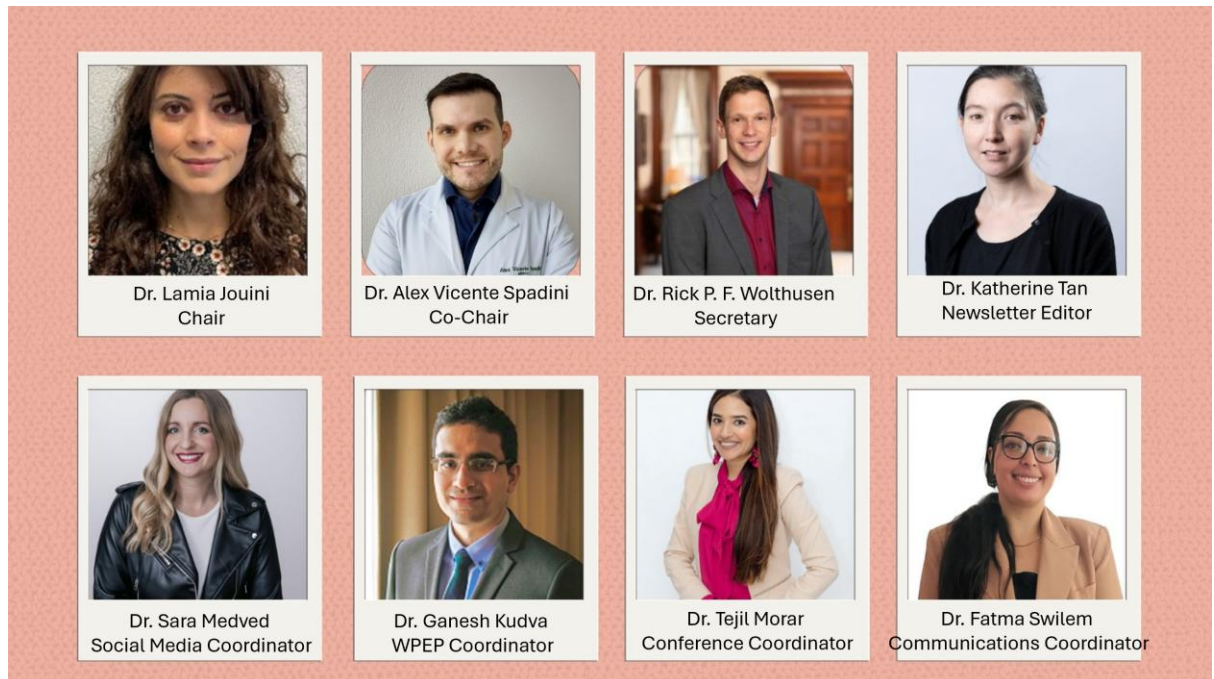
1- **Introduction**:

The Section of Early Career Psychiatrists (ECPs) under the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) represents a dynamic and diverse group of early-career professionals dedicated to advancing global mental health care. Recognising the challenges and opportunities faced by ECPs, the section has served as a crucial platform for professional growth, collaboration, and innovation. With a strong foundation of zonal representation, an active network, and a history of engaging sessions and initiatives, the ECP Section is well-positioned to enhance its impact.

This action plan addresses identified gaps and strengthens the section's organisational structure, visibility, and member engagement. It establishes clear objectives and key actionable steps to enhance the quality of ECP activities, streamline membership processes, foster meaningful collaborations, and expand the section's outreach on both national and international levels. By implementing these measures, the ECP Section aims to empower its members, facilitate impactful contributions, and ensure sustained excellence in psychiatric practice worldwide. It outlines a strategic roadmap from 2025 to 2028 to transform these aspirations into measurable and impactful outcomes.

This action plan aligns with global mental health priorities, including the World Health Organisation's Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2030, which urges the strengthening of mental health services, the promotion of human rights, and the empowerment of service users and professionals. It is also in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, which includes targets for the promotion of mental health and well-being across the lifespan. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global mental health landscape has undergone a profound transformation. The crisis emphasises the urgent need for scalable, accessible, and equitable mental health services. This evolving context has amplified the relevance of digital psychiatry, tele-mental health solutions, and an equity-focused approach, particularly for underserved populations.

By anchoring our activities in these global frameworks, the WPA ECP Section reaffirms its commitment to making a significant contribution to the advancement of mental health care worldwide.

2- **WPA ECP Section Committee 2025–2028**:

Dr. Lamia Jouini
Chair

Dr. Alex Vicente Spadini
Co-Chair

Dr. Rick P. F. Wolthusen
Secretary

Dr. Katherine Tan
Newsletter Editor

Dr. Sara Medved
Social Media Coordinator

Dr. Ganesh Kudva
WPEP Coordinator

Dr. Tejil Morar
Conference Coordinator

Dr. Fatma Swilem
Communications Coordinator

- **Lamia Jouini (Chair)** – *North Africa & Middle East (Zones 11–12)*
  Leads the section, chairs meetings, and oversees strategic direction.
- **Alex Vicente Spadini (Co-Chair)** – *South America (Zones 4–5)*
  Supports coordination and decision-making.
- **Rick P. F. Wolthusen (Secretary**) – *North America (Zones 1–3)*
  Manages records, meeting minutes, and membership.
- **Katherine Tan (Newsletter Editor)** – *Australia & New Zealand (Zone 18)*
  Oversees content and publication of the section's newsletter.
- **Sara Medved (Social Media Coordinator)** – *Eastern Europe (Zones 9–10)*
  Manages online presence and social media engagement.
- **Ganesh Kudva (WPEP Coordinator**) – *Asia (Zones 15–17)*
  Oversees the World Psychiatry Exchange Program.
- **Tejil Morar (Conference Coordinator)** – *Southern Africa (Zones 13–14)*
  Coordinates ECP events at WPA conferences.
- **Fatma Swilem (Communications Coordinator**) – *Western Europe (Zones 6–8)*
  Facilitates internal and external communication.

3- **<u>Goal</u>**:

To position the WPA Section of ECPs as a globally recognised, inclusive, and innovative platform that empowers early-career psychiatrists to lead advances in mental health care through professional development, collaboration, and sustainable excellence.

4- **<u>Core working principles:</u>**

- Inclusivity
- Diversity
- Gender balance
- Equal access to opportunities
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Curiosity
- Mental health equity
- Mental health parity

5- **<u>Objectives</u>**:

- **Enhance Member Engagement:** Increase active participation in ECP activities by 50% by the end of 2026.
- **Capacity Building:** Deliver at least one webinar or workshop per region and per year focused on leadership, research, and innovation.
- **Strengthen Representation:** Ensure each WPA zone has at least two active ECP members in contact with the Committee by mid-2025.
- **Improve Communication & Visibility:** Launch a quarterly newsletter and social media campaign by Q4 2025.
- **Expand Collaborations:** Establish formal partnerships with at least five national psychiatry associations by 2028.

6- **Key Actions and Tasks**:

Objective/Key action/Task	Key action	Responsible for	Timeline
Objective 1: Strengthen the Visibility and Communication of the ECP Section			
o Key action 1: Develop a communication strategy, including newsletters and active social media engagement			
Task 1.1.1:	Regular publication of the ECP activities and updates on the ECP social media accounts (Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, WhatsApp) and through the ECP mailing list	Social media coordinator/ Board	All mandate
Task 1.1.2:	Quarterly publication of the WPA ECP newsletter	Newsletter coordinator/ Board	All mandate
Task 1.1.3:	Regular publication of the ECPs activities and updates in the WPA newsletter	Newsletter coordinator + Communication coordinator/ Board	All mandate
o Key action 2: Regularly update the dedicated section page on the WPA website, showcasing achievements and ongoing projects			
Task 1.2.1:	Ensure that the ECP section page on the WPA website is updated	Newsletter coordinator/ Board	All mandate
o Key action 3: Collaborate with national ECP chapters to promote the section through newsletters and events			
Task 1.3.2:	Invite national and regional ECP chapters to promote the section's activities through their newsletters, social media platforms, and events	All Zonal Representatives/ Board	All mandate
Objective 2: Optimise Membership and Participation Processes for the ECP Section			
o Key action 1: Identify and organise current membership composition			
Task 2.1.1:	Update the current membership registry	Secretary/ Chair & Co-Chair	Q2 2025
Task 2.1.2:	Update and maintain an accurate member database	Secretary/ chair & co-chair	All mandate
Task 2.1.3:	Review membership criteria	Secretary/ Chair & Co-Chair	Q2 2025
Task 2.1.4:	Create a user-friendly system for membership applications	Secretary/ Chair & co-chair	Q2 2025
Task 2.1.5:	Define and organise the ECP mailing list(s)	Secretary/ Chair & Co-Chair	Q2 2025
o Key action 2: Boost membership applications and foster active engagement among new members			

Task 2.2.1:	Identify gaps and barriers to participation and engagement	All zonal Representatives/ Board	Q4 2025
Task 2.2.2:	Address regional disparities by tailoring activities to different geographic zones	All Zonal Representatives/ board	All mandate
Task 2.2.3:	Proactively reach out to national and regional ECP chapters to encourage their members to apply for membership in the ECP section.	All Zonal Representatives/ board	All mandate
Task 2.2.4:	Engage annual fellowship winners and WPEP participants in the section's activities	Conference coordinator (fellowship winners) & WPEP Coordinator (WPEP participants)/ Board	All mandate
o Key action 3: Support ECPs in countries without official representation to benefit from ECP section activities			
Task 2.3.1:	Understand the process of including ECPs in sections that are not members of a national psychiatric association/WPA members through their national psychiatric organisation	Secretary/ Chair & Co-Chair	Q1 2025
Task 2.3.2:	Support ECPs from countries without official representation to enhance ECP membership in their country	All zonal representatives/ Board	All mandate
Objective 3: Strengthen governance, administrative organisation, and accountability of the ECP Section			
o Key action 1: Establish a clear governance structure with well-defined roles			
Task 3.1.1:	Draft and implement the section Action Plan	All committee members/ Board	Q2 2025
Task 3.1.2:	Draft and implement an updated Terms of Reference	All committee members/ Board	Q2 2025
Task 3.1.3:	Draft and implement a code of conduct for the Committee.	All committee members/ Board	Q2 2025
Task 3.1.4:	Draft and implement election guidelines and rules	All committee members/ Board	Q3 2025
o Key action 2: Optimise Administrative Organisation for Enhanced Efficiency			
Task 3.2.2:	Create and regularly update a structured archive system to store historical records, databases, and ongoing projects, ensuring their preservation and accessibility	Secretary/ chair & co-chair	All mandate

Task 3.2.3:	Conduct bi-monthly meetings for the Section Committee members	Secretary/chair & co-chair	All mandate
o Key action 3: Enhance transparency, inclusivity, and accountability of the ECP section activities			
Task 3.3.1:	Conduct biennial meetings for ECP Section members: - One hybrid and, - One hybrid/in-person meeting at the World Congress of Psychiatry (WCP) for the Section Committee members	Secretary/chair & co-chair	Q2 2025/2026/2027 Q4 2025/2026/2027
Task 3.3.2:	Allocate monthly office hours by the ECP Committee members to receive regular feedback, concerns and ideas from the ECP section members	Zonal Representatives/ Board	All mandate
Task 3.3.4:	Develop and disseminate an annual report on the key action plan, progress, and activities in the ECP section	All section Committee Members/Board	Q4 2025/2026/2027
Objective 4: Foster networking, collaboration, and capacity building among the ECP Members			
o Key action 1: Organise networking events and enhance connection platforms for ECP members			
Task 4.1.1:	Organise at least two online networking events and one in-person event at WCP per year	Conference coordinator/Board	Q2 2025/2026/2027 Q4 2025/2026/2027
Task 4.1.2:	Deliver at least one webinar or workshop per region and per year focused on leadership, research, and innovation.	All Committee members/ Board	All mandate
Task 4.1.3:	Encourage ECPs' first-person narratives to boost connections and collaborations.	All Committee members/Board	All mandate
o Key action 2: Facilitate research opportunities, collaborations, and co-authorship among members			
Task 4.2.1:	Develop an ECP online resource hub with career guidance, research opportunities, and training materials	Communication coordinator+ Secretary/ chair & co-chair	Q4 2026

Task 4.2.2:	Create an online platform to facilitate collaborations (e.g., WhatsApp community, forums or Slack groups).	Communication coordinator/ Board	Q1 2026
Task 4.2.3:	Facilitate and promote research collaboration opportunities via the ECP Section Platform	Social Media Coordinator/ Board	All mandate
o Key action 3: Promote ECPs' training, professional development and mental health and wellbeing			
Task 4.3.1	Organise one WPA ECP conference in partnership with a national ECP chapter	All Committee members/ Board	2026 or 2027
Task 4.3.2:	Host ECP online and onsite courses on soft skills (leadership, advocacy, management, policy-making, career development, etc)	Conference coordinator/ Board	All mandate
Task 4.3.3:	Expand original session formats, such as the 3-minute competition and WPA Quiz.	All Committee members/ Board	All mandate
Task 4.3.4:	Establish an ECP-centered pre-congress course according to their needs	Conference+chair/ Co-chair and secretary	2026 and/or 2027
Task 4.3.5:	Promote and support ECPs' mental health and wellbeing while planning activities.	All Committee members	All mandate
o Key action 4: Develop a structured World Psychiatry Exchange Program (WPEP)			
Task 4.4.1:	Develop clear guidelines and certification for WPEP	WPEP coordinator/ Board	Q3 2025
Task 4.4.2:	Increase the number of institutions and countries participating in the WPEP	WPEP/ Board	All mandate
Task 4.4.3:	Develop an evaluation system for the effectiveness of the WPEP	WPEP/ Board	Q3 2025
Task 4.4.4:	Promote cross-cultural learning and ethical considerations during WPEP	WPEP/ Board	All mandate
Task 4.4.5:	Create an online community for previous, current, and prospective WPEP participants	WPEP/Board	Q1 2026
Objective 5: Increase Interkey action and partnerships with National and International Bodies			
o Key action 1: Strengthen partnerships and connections with national ECP chapters, national psychiatric associations, and academic institutions			
Task 5.1.1:	4Ws mapping of ECP associations, national	All section members/ Board	All mandate

	psychiatric associations, and academic institutions (who is doing what, where, and when)		
Task 5.1.2:	Establish contact with ECP chapters, national psychiatric associations, and academic institutions	All section members/ Board	All mandate
Task 5.1.3:	Promote projects of common interest and mutual support	All section members/ Board	All mandate
○ Key action 2: Strengthen partnerships and connections with the WPA bodies			
Task 5.2.1:	Arrange joint initiatives with other WPA sections	Communication coordinator/ Board	All mandate
Task 5.2.2:	Increase ECP participation in international and regional conferences with dedicated panels	Conference co+ communication coordinator/Board	All mandate
○ Key action 3: Strengthen partnerships and connections with external bodies and partners			
Task 5.3.1:	Identify and connect with external bodies and partners with common interests	Communication Co/Board	All mandate
Objective 6: Improve Quality and Quantity of ECP Events			
○ Key action 1: Develop standardised guidelines for conference presentations and sessions			
Task 6.1.1:	Prepare and coordinate ECP Section Sessions during WCP	Conference coordinator/Board	All mandate
Task 6.1.2:	Offer preparatory sessions for conference contributions	Conference coordinator/Board	Q3 2025/2026/2027
Task 6.1.3:	Create an evaluation form & regularly ask for participants' feedback after ECP events	Conference coordinator/ board	All mandate
Task 6.1.4:	Evaluate main sessions at the WCP conferences as required by the WPA executive board	Conference coordinator/All committee members/ Board	Q3 2025/2026/2027
Objective 7: Strengthen ECPs' Advocacy, representation and funding opportunities			
○ Key action 1: Strengthen ECPs' representation within WPA leadership, national psychiatric associations and policy-making bodies.			
Task 7.1.1:	Increase ECP's representation in WPA governance structures and sections.	All Committee members/ Board	All mandate
Task 7.1.2:	Conduct a survey to assess barriers and challenges faced by ECPs within national psychiatric organisations	All Committee members/ Board	All mandate

Task 7.1.3:	Encourage ECP chapters to establish a strong representation within national psychiatric associations and policy-making bodies.	All Zonal Reps/ Board	All mandate
Task 7.1.4:	Explore avenues to fund ECP Section activities	All Zonal Reps/ Board	All mandate

ECP: Early Career Psychiatrists, WCP: World Congress of Psychiatry, WPA: World Psychiatric Association, WPEP: World Psychiatry Exchange Program, Q: quarter

Board: Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary,

7- **Risks and Mitigation Strategies**:

The following key risks have been identified as potential challenges to the successful implementation of the WPA ECP Action Plan. Each risk is accompanied by targeted mitigation strategies to minimise impact and ensure resilience.

Risks	Potential Impact	Mitigation Strategies
Risk 1: Limited Member Engagement	Reduced participation in initiatives and activities affecting collaboration and overall impact.	- Conduct surveys to understand the needs and preferences of members. - Implement targeted outreach campaigns through webinars, newsletters, and interactive content. - Offer participation incentives, such as recognition awards or access to development programs.
Risk 2: Outdated Administrative Processes	Inefficiency in handling memberships, archives, and communication can lead to frustration among members.	- Digitise key processes, including membership workflows and document management. - Invest in user-friendly platforms to streamline archives and communication. - Define responsibilities and protocols to enhance internal accountability and transparency.
Risk 3: Poor Visibility of the ECP Section	Limited awareness of the section's existence and activities among potential members and stakeholders.	- Enhance social media presence and the ECP page on the WPA website. - Collaborate with national ECP organisations to increase visibility. - Organise high-profile events and campaigns to showcase the section's initiatives and successes.

Risk 4: Lack of Collaboration Opportunity	Missed chances for impactful projects and shared research due to limited member interaction.	- Launch collaborative digital spaces (e.g., Slack, discussion boards) for members to engage in interaction. - Develop structured research and mentorship programs. - Host regular networking and skill-sharing events to encourage engagement.
Risk 5: Variation in Presentation Quality at Events	Inconsistent experiences for participants, resulting in a reduced overall quality of ECP activities.	- Create standardised guidelines and training resources for speakers and organisers. - Include diverse formats that cater to various learning and presentation styles. - Gather participant feedback to continually improve event quality.

8. Communication and ECP Engagement:

Clear and consistent communication is essential to ensure alignment, transparency, and sustained engagement within the WPA ECP Section. This section outlines how progress on the action plan will be shared and how ECP members and key stakeholders will remain informed and involved.

Progress Communication Strategy

- Regular Updates: Regular updates via email and social media, highlighting key achievements, upcoming activities, and opportunities for involvement.

- Annual Report: A comprehensive report detailing milestones, metrics, challenges, and lessons learned will be disseminated to all members and presented during the WPA World Congress of Psychiatry.

- Newsletter: Regular ECP newsletters will include a dedicated section on action plan updates and member contributions.

Engagement Channels

- Social Media Platforms: Active engagement through Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn to reach global members and promote ongoing initiatives.

- ECP Section Website Page: Updated regularly with reports, event information, and resources to ensure transparency and accessibility.

- Virtual and Hybrid Meetings: Monthly committee meetings, biennial open forums, and annual member assemblies to encourage direct communication and feedback.

Key Stakeholders and Their Roles

- ECP Section Board: Leads implementation, oversees reporting, and ensures transparent communication with members.

- Zonal Representatives: Act as regional liaisons, sharing updates and gathering feedback from local members.

- WPA Leadership: Receives periodic briefings and annual reports to ensure alignment with WPA priorities.

- ECP Members: Informed and engaged through regular updates, invited to contribute to activities, provide feedback, and participate in working groups or task forces.

9**. Conclusion**:

The WPA ECP Section Action Plan 2025–2028 is a strategy to promote the structure, profile, and contribution of the section to global mental health. Guided by the values of equity, diversity, transparency, and innovation, the plan sets clear goals and specific actions to empower ECPs in each region.

By strengthening governance, enhancing participation, fostering cooperation, and aligning with global mental health agendas, the ECP Section reaffirms its commitment to building a dynamic, caring, and forward-looking platform for early-career psychiatrists.

The practical implementation of this plan depends on a concerted effort, open communication, and ongoing assessment. The WPA ECP Committee is dedicated in its entirety to making this vision a reality and to empowering its members to become active participants in shaping the future of mental health care worldwide.