

## **A NEW SPIRIT IN PCP: LINKING PEOPLE, IDEAS AND DREAMS**

**Selected Papers from the XIIIth Biennial Conference of the European Personal Construct Association (EPCA), Galzignano Terme, Padua, Italy, July 2016**

### **Editorial**

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The last 10 years have seen a wealth of *Personal Construct Psychology* (PCP) activity and innovation across Europe, producing a diversity of results from different countries. Nevertheless, it is indubitable that a new generation has arrived and new connections are being forged, and this is reflected in our conference title: *A New Spirit in PCP*.

Examples of the new spirit can be found in the range of schools now offering constructivist psychology and psychotherapy training with PCP at their heart. There are programmes in place preparing graduate students into a new generation of teachers and researchers, new journals being launched, and new fields of practice being explored. Collaborations between institutes across Europe have led to new networks being established and these have in turn led to innovative international learning opportunities such as *Racconti Mediterranei* summer schools and *Alpine Tales* winter workshops.

At the same time, PCP practitioners across Europe have been developing a certain presence in the fields of education and organisations, and we have seen the development of PCP coaching as a specific practice. New media are being embraced linking special interest groups, and innovative online learning programmes are being explored and enjoyed, with video-conferencing as a key tool in enabling international exchange and collaboration.

The 2016 conference was marked by this ferment. It was a meaningful moment of encounter and discussion to continue co-projecting new possibilities of learning and growth, both professionally and personally. Linking people, ideas and dreams – the slogan of the congress – was the thread of the days lived together, not only

through almost one hundred contributions which included papers, workshops and symposia, but also during the more informal opportunities. The open and dynamic method of *Open Space Technology* (OST), to which specific sessions had been dedicated, was suitable for this aim. Some working groups, such as ones interested in developmental age, continued their meetings even when they returned home.

The congress was also an occasion to officially launch two important ventures into the PCP world, the *George Kelly Society* and the *ICP International Lab*. The *George Kelly Society* is a multidisciplinary, scientific and professional society which supports the study of, and communication about, the life and work of George Alexander Kelly and his ongoing influence in the many fields to which he contributed. The *ICP International Lab* is a recent project supporting people who are working in different countries with PCP, or who are interested in constructivist approaches and looking for the development of professional opportunities. We believe that this work related to creating relational platforms is fundamental in order to prepare for future challenges and to superordinate single local institutions.

The seventeen articles that we are introducing in this Special Issue are representative of the reality that we as a PCP community are outlining: the richness of the contents and topics included is a proof of how much we do and we can do in the more disparate theoretical and operational fields. They extend from recent advances in psychotherapy to developmental psychology, from research to didactics, from social and cultural integration to ethics. The debate confirmed the rele-

vance of the Kellian approach into the fields of psychology, psychotherapy, and beyond. It has to be added that the congress was useful also to remind ourselves that various issues still remain open that will require involvement and reflection both from scholars and practitioners in the future.

One of the most relevant general issues can be identified in the difficulty, already encountered previously, of knowing jointly and collectively defining directions and commitments for the future of PCP. Indeed, despite having resorted to the OST with expert guidance, the working groups, specifically charged, could not produce an articulate and synthetic final document during the conference. In all probability the rearrangement of the direction around the *George Kelly Society* will be an incentive to identify lines of development and thematic areas to leap into the future of this constructivist current.

We can affirm that the recognition of the importance and the potentiality of Kellian intuition remains a strategic objective; its realisation will depend on the ability to communicate, disseminate and compare the results reached, especially in an international context that deals with increasing challenges and unfamiliar themes. The *George Kelly Society*, as a platform of communication and validation at the service of local organizations of professionals and research, is now available and makes the object of PCP much more attainable.

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## REFERENCE

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