



**International Association  
for Suicide Prevention**

**Organisational Strategy**

**2024 – 2028**



# International Association for Suicide Prevention

## Organisational Strategy 2024 – 2028

### **Context:**

Suicide is a major public health problem with far-reaching social, emotional and economic consequences. It is estimated that there are currently more than 700 000 suicides per year worldwide and that almost 77% of all global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).<sup>1</sup> For every suicide there are many more who attempt suicide and we know that each suicide profoundly affects many more people. The reduction of suicide mortality is of global importance and a vital public health consideration.

### **The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP):**

The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) was founded in Austria in 1960 and today is the largest global organisation dedicated to suicide prevention. Working in official relations with the World Health Organisation (WHO), IASP embraces national organisations, institutes and individual members in over 80 countries worldwide.

*“IASP is a leader in suicide prevention worldwide, especially with regards to knowledge sharing, the diversity of its stakeholders, and its transparency. IASP excels in fostering collaboration and cross-cultural knowledge sharing through its diverse global network. Inclusive of individuals with lived experience, the association facilitates globally informed and cohesive response efforts”.*<sup>2</sup>

Suicide prevention aligns closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages. Reducing the global suicide rate is a specific indicator for Goal 3, reflecting the urgency and importance of addressing the issue of suicide on a global scale. Through our collaborative efforts and partnerships, IASP plays a crucial role in advancing this agenda and working towards reducing suicide rates worldwide.

**Vision:** Our vision is of a compassionate world, free of suicide.

**Mission:** To prevent suicide and suicidal behaviour, to alleviate its effects, and to provide a forum for academics, mental health professionals, crisis workers, volunteers, and lived experience.

**Values:** Six key values are fundamental to the core of IASP’s mission and are reflected through our global membership which are central to the productivity of the Association: diversity and inclusivity; compassion and full recognition of lived

<sup>1</sup> WHO (2022), Suicide: Facts and figures globally

<sup>2</sup> IASP High-Level Impact Evaluation Report by Philanthropy Advisors (2023)



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experience; collaboration and transparency in all we do; prevention and support which drives the progress in reducing suicidal behaviour to which we strive to achieve.

## Compassion

Demonstrate unwavering compassion towards individuals affected by suicide, continually recognising the importance of empathy and understanding in supporting those who are struggling and ensure their perspectives are embedded throughout the work of the association.

## Diversity & Inclusivity

Embrace and celebrate diversity in all its forms. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that values and respects individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. We believe that diversity strengthens our collective impact and enhances our ability to address the complex challenges of suicide prevention with empathy, innovation, and effectiveness.

## Recognition

Acknowledge the value of insights and experiences of all those with a lived and living experience of suicide.

## Collaboration

By fostering collaboration, we strive to unite a variety of perspectives and expertise, amplifying our impact on global suicide prevention efforts.

## Prevention & Support

Champion a proactive approach to suicide prevention and ensure that supportive information, resources and available support services are easily accessible to individuals worldwide irrespective of geographical locations or economics status.

## Transparency

To uphold a commitment to open and honest communications

## Principles & Human Rights

Embracing the principles of human rights through safeguarding and promoting the fundamental rights of all individuals, fostering a world where dignity, equality, and respect are at the core of our efforts in suicide prevention.



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## Lived and Living Experience

The perspectives of individuals with a lived and living experience of suicide is central to truly effective and empathetic approaches in addressing the challenges of suicide prevention. As reflected in our values, IASP is committed to ensuring these perspectives are interwoven into the architecture and narrative of the association and empower this strategy and the work we do.

## Strategy 2024–2028

### Introduction:

Over the last 15 years IASP has prepared and advanced a vibrant strategy that reflected and targeted current needs of addressing suicidal behaviour and its prevention across the globe. By incorporating an external evaluation and carefully listening to the membership and partners, the Board embarked on a strategic process to formulate organisational direction for 2024 – 2028 that reflects the growing need to reduce suicides.

The following strategy is a continuum of the previous strategies and extends to meet higher demands in low- and middle-income countries where suicides are more predominant and resources more limited. Focus is on key organisational concepts of inclusivity, diversity and sustainability as a priority, as well as a commitment to collaborative partnerships that spearhead joint action and positive results.

**Aim:** To utilise collectively our expertise and knowledge in order to empower effective suicide prevention throughout the world.

To meet this aim, the 2024 – 2028 IASP strategy is built on four strategic priorities;

- **Leading Global Collaboration**  
Advance and strengthen IASP's global mission by fostering inclusivity and collaboration in suicide prevention worldwide.
- **Expanding Reach and Diversity**  
Enhance reach, diversity and representation throughout our membership and network to further suicide prevention across all cultures, sectors and regions across the globe.
- **Strengthening advocacy & knowledge exchange**  
Build a stronger international presence for advocacy and suicide prevention promotion, ensuring effective use of IASPs platform for communicating cross cultural knowledge exchange and evidence-based research.



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- **Driving innovation & impact**

Lead suicide prevention efforts through IASP's forum of expertise, exploring changing trends, innovative research and effective implementation and practice; with measures to evaluate outcomes and organisational impact.

## **Leading Global Collaboration:**

**Advance and strengthen IASP's global mission by fostering inclusivity and collaboration in suicide prevention worldwide.**

- **Rationale:**

Globally, there are numerous international, national and local organisations plus a multitude of concerned people focused on preventing suicide. In bringing together both the expertise (individuals, governments and NGOs) and informed and evidence-based research, a consortium of experts will have the experience to expedite the global aim of preventing premature deaths by suicides.

- **Impact:**

- Cross sectoral collaborative partnerships strategically working together to prevent suicides through agreed partnerships.
- Cohesive results by empowering people to connect within their communities (global, regional, national) in the resolve to reduce suicide.
- Increased combined resources, from across all sectors, leading to reduction in suicide.
- Increase reach in suicide prevention in the low- and middle-Income Countries.
- Addressing unexpected public health emergencies with speed and efficacy.

- **Outcomes:**

- Broader engagement with key partners, across all sectors, in suicide prevention.
- Increase in effective collaboration across the sectors.
- Increased collaborative partnerships with knowledge and understanding of the complexities of suicidal behaviour and its prevention.
- increased organisational agility and readiness in addressing emerging global trends, priorities and concerns.
- Increased strategic financial sustainability and organisational growth within the association.

- **Strategic Actions**

- Engage key influencers and experts in support of IASP's mission in all sectors.
- Strengthen collaborative partnerships to increase expertise and resource support in suicide prevention across all sectors and disciplines.



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- Integrate strategic resource preparedness into business and funding strategies to ensure agility and responsiveness to changing and emerging trends.
- Embed sustainability to support growth and impact to meet the challenges and to remain agile in proactively addressing emerging trends and risk factors in suicide prevention.
- **Outputs**
  - Engaged key influencers and expertise, from outside the field, active with IASP's mission.
  - Established multi sectoral partnerships across all regions.
  - Established collaborative agreements and joint strategies with relevant international and national NGOs across the sectors.
  - Effective collaboration with the World Health Organisation as an organisation in which IASP is in official relations.
  - Established collaborative partnerships with relevant inter organisational, international and national organisations and institutes working in suicide research and prevention.
  - Increased regular programmatic funding over the 5-year period, reaching \$5m per annum by 2028.
  - Specialist business support within governance and engaged externally to support the association as it embeds stability and grows.
  - Established policy and practice underpinning sustainability of resources.

## **Expanding Reach and Diversity:**

**Enhance reach, diversity and representation throughout our membership and network to further suicide prevention across all cultures, sectors and regions across the globe.**

- **Rationale:**

Within the low and middle income countries (LMIC) the rate of suicide is significantly higher, resources and data are limited and available care is less accessible. Promoting inclusivity and diversity within countries that need it most, as well as ensuring breadth of voices are reflected in IASP's membership and wider network, can allow for the focus to be on prevention and engagement as a priority.
- **Impact:**
  - Greater engagement in combatting suicidal behaviour across all six global regions.
  - Increased global reach, representative of where needs are greatest and increased membership across all regions (by 15%)
  - Change in the mental health "map" of LMICs and the low uptake from mental health professionals, academics and NGO in gaining membership from these regions.
  - National suicide prevention strategies implemented, monitored and evaluated, globally.



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- **Outcomes**
  - Increased breadth of voices from multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral engagement, including Lived Experience, informing and advancing suicide prevention efforts.
  - Extensive commitment to inclusion and engagement of the LMICs where the needs are the greatest and the resources are limited.
  - An inclusive and diverse organisation focused and representative of the critical areas of demand.
  - Growth in the spread of the cohesive prevention strategies throughout all 6 regions.
- **Strategic Actions**
  - Increase the voice of the organisation internally and externally to strengthen community connections across all sectors.
  - Increase commitment, engagement and inclusion in LMICs in membership engagement and our wider network.
  - Strengthen organisational diversity to ensure equity and inclusion in a multi sectorial context throughout IASP, including Lived Experience in governance and programmes of IASP.
  - Increase active collaboration with diverse communities throughout all programmes, including Partnerships for Life (Pfl), with a focus on implementing suicide prevention strategies.
- **Outputs**
  - A strong interconnected, diverse and vocal network that is engaged and active.
  - Increased membership embracing and reflecting diversity and inclusivity in the organisational mission.
  - Governance model representative of its mission, multi-disciplinary nature and membership that meets the current & future requirements of a growing association.
  - Increase in active collaborative partnerships taken from all sectors to focus on global need.

## **Strengthening advocacy & knowledge exchange:**

**Build a stronger international presence for advocacy and suicide prevention promotion, ensuring effective use of IASPs platform for communicating cross cultural knowledge exchange and evidence-based research.**

- **Rationale:**

Contextually relevant and culturally sensitive suicide prevention promotion and interventions are needed. By promoting evidence-based research, IASP can identify best practices, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and advocate for evidence-



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informed policies. By facilitating cross-cultural knowledge exchange, IASP can learn from different cultural perspectives and employ and disseminate best practices accordingly.

- **Impact:**
  - Freedom to talk openly about suicidal behaviour, reducing stigma.
  - Concerted global effort and commitment in reducing suicide.
  - Suicide prevention becomes an acceptable global health strategy for all.
  - No criminalisation of suicide in the world.
  - Suicide rates decrease.
- **Outcomes**
  - IASP to have an effective loud, clear and research-based voice.
  - Increased acknowledgement of the critical issues of addressing suicide and its prevention, using evidence based and informed strategic actions, on the global stage.
  - Increase in communications impact and engagement through a variety of channels and audiences across the globe.
  - Improved knowledge of the many factors that lead to suicidal behaviour: sociological, health, mental illness and poverty etc.
  - Decrease in laws against criminalising suicidal behaviour.
- **Strategic Actions**
  - Build IASP's presence on the international stage to allow the association to advocate and promote suicide prevention effectively.
  - Communicate suicide prevention research and activities to the public to increase knowledge and awareness.
  - Enhance knowledge exchange by developing a diverse and inclusive programme of conferences, workshops, webinars, podcasts etc.
  - Strategically advocate for IASP policy positions by increasing engagement with governments, academics, NGOs and Lived Experience.
- **Outputs**
  - A robust communication system for informing members and the general public.
  - IASP, visible and present at global policy and sector specific events.
  - A diverse and inclusive series of conferences, workshops and dissemination activities.
  - Increase in scientific papers on suicidal behaviour and its prevention.
  - Policy position statements on relevant issues related to engagement in suicidal behaviour and its prevention.
  - Decrease in the number of countries that criminalise suicide and suicide attempts.





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## Driving innovation & impact:

Lead suicide prevention efforts through IASP's forum of expertise, exploring changing trends, innovative research and effective implementation and practice; with measures to evaluate outcomes and organisational impact.

### ○ Rationale

In 60 years of IASP's existence as an international NGO, the field of suicide research and prevention has grown in knowledge and global reach due to the commitment of both the international and national forum of experts within governments, institutes, corporate sector and overarching inter organisational constituents. By acting as a catalyst towards innovation, and remaining reactive to global trends IASP will continue to drive the field forward.

### ○ Impact

- Cohesive overview of suicide prevention requirements across the globe.
- Marked changes in attitude towards suicidal behaviour resulting in acceptable access to health and sociological policies.
- National strategies to prevent suicide evaluated/shared/promoted across all borders
- Gained knowledge on effective measures in preventing suicide in health and sociological settings.

### ○ Outcomes

- A vibrant and engaged forum at the forefront of understanding of suicide and tailored approaches to its prevention.
- Increase in knowledge and good practice on developing active partnerships in multi-cultural societies for strategic suicide prevention.
- Increased number of countries engaged in preparing a national strategy in suicide prevention.
- Clear indication, reviewed and evaluated, of the components of effective suicide prevention strategies.

### ○ Strategic Actions

- Cultivate collaboration to increase understanding of suicide, exploring innovative approaches to its prevention and building the evidence base.
- Identify new and changing trends impacting on suicidal behaviour and integrate these into the work of the organisation.
- Develop global guidelines, policy positions and best practice in suicide prevention according to the emerging needs within the field.
- Expand the most prominent programs within the three key areas and increase the capacity to underpin our vision.



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- Ensure comprehensive evaluation components are embedded organisationally and programmatically.
- **Outputs**
  - Inter-organisational collaborations focused on research, implementation and best practice.
  - Strong and active IASP SIGs and Task forces focused on thematic areas of suicide prevention, high risk groups and emerging trends.
  - Preparedness protocol to address all external eventualities.
  - Guidelines and templates to be adapted and translated for local use.
  - An expanded programme agenda in all regions.
  - Establish a comprehensive evaluation strategy that measures and communicates impact of organisational and programmatic outcomes.

## Conclusion

*As the world grapples with intricate public health quandaries, ranging from global pandemics to escalating mental health crises, the significance and influence of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) has expanded exponentially.<sup>3</sup>*

To continue meeting the complex challenges involved in reducing suicides globally, a strategy that is nuanced, responsive and rooted in collective action is required. This new 5 year strategy for IASP builds upon the organisations' strengths and recent growth. With a focus on strategic foresight, collaborative engagement and member responsiveness, IASP stands as an equipped and thriving community that is well positioned and ready to lead in suicide prevention on a global scale in the next 5 years. Together, drawing on our strengths and fostering innovation, we will continue to work towards a world where every life is valued and suicide is preventable.

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<sup>3</sup> What lessons did IASP learn from responding to COVID-19 to prepare for future mental health emergencies? A view from organisational and program space 9 October 2023. V3. BLYSS GmbH



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