

## IAP'S EFFORTS TO SUPPORT COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY (August 2020)

**IAP – the global network of over 140 science, engineering and medical academies** – has concentrated its efforts to-date on:

- establishing an **interdisciplinary group of 80 experts** from the academy community to help meet demand for advice especially from LDCs and/or countries with weak national science advice ecosystems;
- publishing a communiqué calling for **global solidarity** on COVID-19 (<https://www.interacademies.org/node/53457>), translated into Portuguese by member academies, a second condemning the US decision to withhold funding to the WHO (<https://www.interacademies.org/news/global-academy-network-condemns-us-decision-halt-who-funding-amid-covid-19-pandemic>) and a third highlighting the opportunity for a **green recovery** designed to generate co-benefits in social equity, health, and the environment (<https://www.interacademies.org/greenrecovery>);
- ongoing **collation** of how academies are responding to the pandemic in their own countries (<https://www.interacademies.org/node/52980>);
- a **short video** (<https://www.interacademies.org/node/52980>) calling for strong leadership, evidence-informed policymaking and international collaboration;
- joining a movement led by health experts and former ministers in the Global South calling for **health equity** during the pandemic (<https://www.interacademies.org/news/open-letter-un-health-inequity-during-pandemic-cry-ethical-global-leadership>);
- working with others on a **science-based guide for the public** to help them protect themselves and others (<https://www.interacademies.org/index.php/publication/covid-19-how-can-i-protect-myself-and-others>), which is now available in over 15 languages at <https://ssec.si.edu/covid-19>;
- reframing its ongoing interregional project on **Climate Change and Health** to account for global pandemics (<https://www.interacademies.org/index.php/project/climate-change-and-health>).

**At the global level**, the IAP communiqué focuses on the **imperative for the science community and governments to work together** to:

- (1) **to collect, validate, share and use evidence** to (a) improve preparedness and responsiveness now, and (b) improve governance systems for the future. This includes setting standards for COVID-19 reporting e.g. of infections and fatalities, and indeed standards of research which this emergency has exposed as highly variable<sup>1</sup>.
- (2) **to help less developed countries**, with weaker public health systems and science advisory mechanisms, to cope.

**At the regional level**, IAP's regional networks have been active in an effort to support and mobilise their respective members:

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<sup>1</sup> Related to this point, IAP has just started a project on combatting predatory academic journals and conferences (<https://www.interacademies.org/index.php/project/predatorypublishing>)

- [All four IAP regional networks have held webinars to enable sharing of information and experiences amongst member academies](#)
- NASAC (Africa) has published a statement with six specific actions to provide impetus for change, calling on its members to play their part at the national and continental level (<https://nasaonline.org/en/index.php/2020/04/08/nasac-statement-on-covid-19-pandemic/>)
- EASAC (Europe) has published a commentary on the importance of a **green recovery** from COVID-19 underpinned by science (<https://easac.eu/media-room/press-releases/details/european-academies-of-science-european-union-must-base-green-recovery-plans-on-science/>).

**At the national level**, national academy responses to-date have included:

- **Providing evidence-based advice** to governments at the municipal, national and regional level by participating in governmental task forces and commissions, supporting real-time policy review, synthesizing and distilling the best available scientific evidence, and by issuing statements and recommendations for decision-makers, and translating this advice into different local languages.
- **Establishing expert databases** for decision-makers with relevant expertise.
- **Conducting public outreach** to help their communities understand public health guidance, including through translation into local languages and engaging migrant communities.
- **Engaging with the media** to ensure scientifically accurate information is available to all.
- **Sharing data and experiences** amongst their members and with other academies in their region and gathering lessons learned.
- **Conducting COVID-19 related research and modelling** in academies with their own research facilities.
- **Providing technical training**, for example via online telemedicine courses, diagnostic laboratory techniques.
- **Providing fast-track reviews** of COVID-19 related-research proposals.

The **Global Young Academy** is a member of IAP and also has a programme of COVID-19 response that engages early career researchers, and many of the (over 40) **National Young Academies** have their own initiatives. Some of these are public facing, some provide support to their own communities, many deploy social media and virtual conferencing/webinar technologies. Their collective initiatives are listed at <https://globalyoungacademy.net/covid19/> and range from a joint statement with the National Academies of G7 countries (<https://globalyoungacademy.net/gscience-gya-covid-19-statement/>) which focuses on the critical need for international collaboration, to practical interventions like appealing to universities to house refugees and the homeless in empty student housing during lockdown, and sharing coping strategies for women in science working from home and endeavouring to balance their career and family responsibilities.

The purpose of these initiatives is to **inspire local and collective international action**, perhaps as an antidote to the political national entrenchment presently witnessed from governments.

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