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Community Psychology Competencies and Onlife Participatory Team Building: The 9th Conference of Community Psychology (9ICCP) Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Modern social ecosystems have become increasingly complex due to the sanitary, political, social, cultural and technological transformations they are dealing with. This also requires professionals working within these contexts—such as community psychologists—to adapt by acquiring new and updated skills in order to properly address the challenges they pose. Therefore, this paper unpacks the experience of planning, organising and managing the 9th International Conference of Community Psychology (9ICCP) as a case study showing how onlife social contexts require the development of specific professional competencies and at the same time take advantages from psychologists' relational skills. Indeed, the conference hosted participants from all over the world, yet it was to be organised when the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian–Ukrainian war represented threats to participants' mobility, safety and health; therefore, it was managed as an onlife, hybrid event. Dealing with this meant that the organising committee had to face unprecedented challenges, which required the team to rely on the core competencies of community psychologists, and also on digital and technical skills as well as on models and competencies typical of other professional fields (e.g., social marketing principles). We will describe and discuss the strengths as well as the pitfalls of this process, with the aim of highlighting the main challenges required by dealing with hybrid, onlife settings and how they can be enhanced and updated. We will propose guidelines and key issues to be tackled, based on the relational and participatory community psychologists' competencies to be developed in onlife settings.

1 | Introduction

The current globalised world shows the pervasive and all-encompassing nature of interconnection and contamination among different cultures (Marchetti 2014). Indeed, economic, communicative, cultural, environmental, military and political globalisation changes have led to different cultures influencing each other in a continuous dialogue that transforms the entire psycho-socio-economic landscape in an increasingly rapid and, at times, unpredictable manner (Lannutti 2017; Migliorini et al. 2023; Olcese et al. 2024), producing more complex social ecosystems to be dealt with (Gatti and Procentese 2024).

In this scenario, the widespread use of modern communication technologies contributes to the co-construction of persistent real and digital settings in a fluid manner (Hampton and Wellman 2018) and the global society is structured around complex communication processes that we—as professionals—must

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necessarily understand in their psychological, social and community dimensions (Francescato and Tomai 2024). Their use in training and participatory experiences must also be evaluated. Consistently, modern young generations are socialised more and more by online interactions (Dimock 2019; Prensky and H. 2010). Therefore, schools and formal training professionals and contexts are required to use the same language to interact and communicate with them.

For a long time, psychologists have kept a strong focus on the effects of the media (i.e., their impact on individuals, groups and communities) by applying existing psychological theories and models to understand the consequences of mediated environments (e.g., Chamberlain and Hodgetts 2008; Numerico 2021). Indeed, in psychology, media research has mainly focused on how social dynamics take shape in online environments (e.g., Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007), yet it has paid less attention to how the virtual environments represent resources for ubiquitous experiences and communities (e.g., Gatti, Procentese, and Mitchell 2021), as well as for their preventative and participatory action in training and knowledge building.

Community Psychology theories (Arcidiacono et al. 2022) are specifically helpful for the understanding of these online and offline social processes and their influence on individual and community identity, relations and social dynamics (Natale et al. 2016). Indeed, community psychology methods and competencies best engage and promote social interactions in real life as well as in the virtual settings; in fact, community psychologists' skills help in the promotion of collective awareness and in the understanding of relational and social problems also in online interactions (Francescato 2020). Therefore, there is a new innovative need for community psychologists (from now on, psychologists) to increase their digital and online communication skills and, in this way, enhance their actions for community building in a wide global perspective (Lazarus, Seedat, and Naidoo 2017; Pinkett 2003; Francescato 2020; de Rivera and Mahoney 2018). However, it is necessary to integrate their competencies in order to promote team and community building better (Autiero and Esempio 2024; Francescato 2018). Beside this, it also necessary to focus on the innovative use of digital technologies in the whole training experience from grade school to university, since the shift towards these came even faster and more unexpectedly due to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Bozkurt et al. 2020; Rapaccini et al. 2020; Talidong 2020; Vergine et al. 2022). Indeed, the COVID-19 experience modified social interaction opportunities making the virtual word the main form of connection and communication for some months, and this experience has had interesting side effects on learning and teaching procedures (e.g., Matteucci, Soncini, and Floris 2021; Procentese, Gatti, and Ceglie 2021; Puccetti and Luperini 2020).

Moving from this globalised and interconnected cultural context, this paper addresses the experience of the 9th International Conference of Community Psychology (9ICCP) 'Community psychology: community regeneration, bonds and bridges between people and environments?' (https://internationalcommunitypsychology.com/conference-photo-gallery/naples-2022/), held in Naples in September 2022, as a case study.

Indeed, due to its hybrid form, it best describes the strengths and pitfalls professionals had to face when dealing with the organisation and management of a hybrid conference involving a global community. Furthermore, it provides observations on the process of detection, acquisition and development of the proper digital skills psychologists need to work within a global interconnected and onlife context, but at the same time how the core competencies characterising these professionals can help in unfolding such processes. Therefore, key lessons learned and pillars for the management of hybrid social contexts and communities will be derived.

2 | The Onlife Perspective

Due to the rapid evolution of mass communication technology, today's society is one of hyper-communication and can be described as liquid (Bauman 2005); consistently, rapid communication strategies are needed as well (Huxham 2003)—such as those classified as Web 2.0 and 4.0 (Fuchs et al. 2010; Hiremath and Kenchakkanavar 2016). Therefore, working online and taking advantage of online opportunities become critical, as does the understanding of the meanings attributed to these new social virtual structures.

Indeed, individuals have become able to experience the social groups they are embedded in by using modern technologies, which allow them to keep in touch with other members of such groups and be updated about the latter even when not in the same place physically (Batiste 2013; Hampton and Wellman 2003; Van De Wiele and Tong 2014). By being connected everywhere and in every moment, modern technologies have blurred the boundaries between online and offline environments (Toch and Levi 2012), promoting the co-situation of such contexts (Van De Wiele and Tong 2014) and opening a new life perspective that Floridi (2009) named onlife.

Overall, this has created different ways of experiencing the social groups and the communities in which individuals are embedded, and these have therefore been defined as ubiquitous (Gatti and Procentese 2020, 2021, 2024; Gatti, Procentese, and Schouten 2023; Sherbersky, Ziminski, and Pote 2021). The psychosocial impacts of such different experiences can be unpacked with reference to the ties individuals develop towards the considered group and the physical places it dwells (Gatti and Procentese 2021) as well as to the way they behave in such groups and the relationships they create within them (Gatti and Procentese 2022, 2024; López and Farzan 2015).

Based on this, modern technologies could be potential tools in training, teaching and in the construction of knowledge by supporting hybrid working groups—that is, working groups that are required to play out their activities and tasks both remotely and in person. Indeed, in modern times working groups have had to start using computer-mediated communication and interaction tools—a shift that impacted their social dynamics (Kahlow, Klecka, and Ruppel 2020; Meluch and Walter 2012), making them hybrid too. Initially, this was related to external constraints (e.g., a pandemic, in the case of during the COVID-19 outbreak); but, then they became hybrid in order to improve their tasks and activities, as was the case for the 9ICCP experience.

In these regards, technologies can make the available resources, needs, activities and results visible (Goel, Mason, and Watts 2010), thus allowing the whole group to keep in touch and be updated about its overall progress even when members address different tasks remotely and separately. Such a shift from in person to hybrid working groups required professionals as well as students in psychology to acquire new digital skills and to enhance traditional professional skills concerning team-building and participatory interactions (e.g., Bozkurt et al. 2020; Rapaccini et al. 2020; Talidong 2020).

3 | Psychological Competencies for In Person and Online Communities

When referring to these skills, the systemic and ecological theory (Christens and Perkins 2008; Fuks 2010; Kelly 1986; Prilleltensky 2012) represents the epistemological, theoretical and empirical framework, especially in the complementary encounter of online and offline environments and dynamics, as they reflect the globality of current interactions (Floridi 2015). Indeed, such a perspective allows us to take into account the complexity of human and social systems by addressing the individual, relational, collective and organisational levels at the same time.

Within this perspective, psychologists—as experts of collective and relational dynamics—work towards social and collective empowerment processes promoting highly participatory groups and paths to foster reflexive and participatory communities, where culturally connoted and locally identifiable meanings can be shared (Fuks 2010). To achieve these goals, psychologists are required to directly experience the contexts they work in and for, learning about their relational dynamics and shared meanings (Arcidiacono 2016; Heron and Reason 2008). Within this work, getting to know the shared past of that social group and its common representations is critical, and professionals' self-reflexive skills represent meaningful tools towards this aim (Arcidiacono et al. 2016).

Within this perspective, the TRIP (Trustfulness-Reflexivity-Intersectionality-Positionality) model (Arcidiacono 2017) can clearly identify and promote the core competencies of psychologists in their role of activating and facilitating online and offline group processes, taking into account the ubiquity that characterises current communications, relationships and communities (Carnevale et al. 2021; Arcidiacono et al. 2016; Gatti and Procentese 2022, 2024). The TRIP model includes four main competencies: Trustfulness, Reflexivity, Intersectionality and Positionality. Trustfulness refers to the acknowledgment of all the relational actors involved and the promotion of reciprocal respect and trust among them (Di Napoli, Dolce, and Arcidiacono 2019). This is promoted through some specific relational skills such as transparency, awareness of processes and ability to keep in mind the other and to activate reciprocal relationships inducing participatory effects (Di Napoli, Esposito, et al. 2019; Prilleltensky 2012). Reflexivity is critical for going through emotions, feelings, actions, attitudes and narratives, promoting critical communities and deconstructing dominant narratives (Arcidiacono 2016; Reyes Cruz and Sonn 2011). This skill also promotes new shared knowledge and integrates the

simplified thinking strategies that characterise online sharing, introducing slower thought processes and encouraging awareness. Intersectionality is the dimension that, respecting the complexity of reality, places value on the relationship among the multiple dimensions that interact in social processes (McCall 2005). The last core competence is Positionality, which allows psychologists to question their position and the interactions they become involved in while working in social contexts. Therefore, Positionality is composed of several skills, such as observation, listening, interpretation and decision-making, which should be used with reference to both the symbolic-relational field and the pragmatic one (Fuks 2016).

These competencies allow psychologists to work for the promotion of new awareness and relationships characterised by taking care of the processes also activated in the onlife world through its reflexivity and meta-reflexivity. Therefore, community psychologists then become facilitators of collective processes, capable of co-activating processes of re-signification and a solid and sustainable empowerment (Fuks and Rosas 2008). This perspective, assumedly introduced within hybrid contexts, would involve the care of relationships and communication through the activation and co-creation of more relevant and sustainable communication and participative effectives opportunities. This effort was in fact spent on describing community psychology methods needed for a decolonising approach such as proposed by Moura et al. (2022) and Sonn et al. (2017).

3.1 | The Use of Digital Technologies in Team Building and Group Facilitation

The above-mentioned competencies could be enhanced by the use of modern communication media (Bell, van den Berg, and Liboro 2023). Therefore, psychologists are required to be aware of online communities' peculiarities, and to be able to deal with hybrid and remote participation as well as onlife interactions. Indeed, individuals' lives are increasingly structured in a double dynamic, intertwining online and offline environments. People and communities inhabit a double space: the physical and material here and now and the asynchronous and dematerialised environment of the web (e.g., Floridi 2009; Hampton and Wellman 2003)—a process that has been further accelerated and stabilised by virtue of the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Esposito et al. 2022; Procentese, Gatti, and Ceglie 2021).

Such pervasive ubiquity is also clear if we look at the emerging data concerning internet use worldwide. According to global data emerging from the 2024 WeAreSocial report, there are 5.04 billion active profiles on social media today, or more than 62% of the global population, with an annual growth of 5.6% (266 million). Mobile users also increased to 5.61 billion: 69.4% of the world population uses at least one mobile device. Digital growth since 2023 is therefore +0.9% and the time each user spends online is also growing, now amounting to 6 h and 40 min (WeAreSocial 2024). This once again confirms the huge presence of the internet in people's daily lives.

From a psychosocial point of view, it is important to point out that people use digital media in particular to access chat and messaging apps (94.7%) and social networks (94.3%). This

confirms the omnipresence of online and mediated communications and interactions, along with the need for community psychologists to take them and their intertwining with offline ones into account to work properly in modern communities to achieve desirable social effects (Gatti and Procentese 2020, 2021, 2024; Gatti, Procentese, and Schouten 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to work together and at the same time on both levels.

This is particularly relevant in training as well as team and community building processes. In training processes, the asynchronous use of technology enables the constant and multilevel collaboration of all team members, increasing their perceived effectiveness and level of collaboration (Kocsis, de Vreede, and Alothaim 2022). Indeed, psychosocial dynamics and processes can increase team resilience and the ability to cope with salient challenges in both the short and long term. In particular, importance is given to psychological safety, which enhances team effectiveness and learning behaviour (Kim, Lee, and Connerton 2020).

Furthermore, work teams today have increasingly become hybrid, cross-cultural and asynchronous. This has a double implication in terms of social dynamics and team development processes. On the one hand, the introduction of technologies in work processes has allowed the inclusion of the same team members working remotely or in hybrid form, as well as people living in different countries. On the other hand, it has enabled the division of tasks between team members who may work remotely or at different times (asynchronous work), thus requiring a higher degree in task assignment and complementarity of work among different team members (Scott and Wildman 2015).

Transversally, these transformations have required workers to adapt to new procedures for carrying out their work, to acquire new hard skills for the use of software and digital platforms (Rapaccini et al. 2020), but also to develop soft skills to manage relational, interactive and productive processes at a distance, asynchronously, and with the mediation of technologies, avoiding increased stress and workloads (Tarafdar, Tu, and Ragu-Nathan 2010). Indeed, consistently with the knowledge building community (KBC) model, skills and knowledge are co-created within participatory processes, and learning is understood as being able to produce new knowledge to be shared with the reference community (Bereiter and Scardamalia 2006).

In this vein, modern technologies and social media can also contribute to community building processes at several levels. First, through hosting and spreading networked, user-generated content, they can promote the creation of hybrid communities of interest and of practice (Acuti et al. 2018; Halliday 2016; Han, Jang, and Lee 2015; Tenney, Hall, and Sieber 2019). Then, by enhancing community cohesion, social capital and active citizenship (Gatti and Procentese 2022; Pinkett 2003). In addition, proper management of the use of new technologies and team collaboration leads to empowerment of all the professionals involved, further increasing their effectiveness (Carnevale et al. 2021; Francescato and Tomai 2024). This also allows the team to work asynchronously and under highly stressful circumstances by fostering more agile working relationships and practices which indispensable to working adequately in the modern socio-information landscape (Malik, Sarwar, and Orr 2021). In this

sense, technologies can become facilitating tools, but also real teammates (Larson and DeChurch 2020). Indeed, interesting potential uses of new technologies are emerging, especially in global virtual teams, that is, working groups that include members from all over the world (Scott and Wildman 2015).

To maximise the effectiveness of such technologies, their design and structure must also be taken into account by adapting the tools and their use to the specific needs of the team. This can be done by choosing groupware that best supports collaborative tasks in virtual teams and that assist the creation of common ground and work standards, facilitating communication, providing mechanisms for work transparency and designing lightweight, familiar technology (Morrison-Smith and Ruiz 2020).

4 | The Case Study. The 9th International Conference of Community Psychology (9ICCP)

4.1 | Aims

The 9ICCP hybrid conference 'Community psychology: community regeneration, bonds and bridges between people and environments?' held in Naples in September 2022, is addressed here as a case study. Its organisation, aims, procedures and the interactions, as well as the staff-building competencies and processes, are described and critiqued to highlight the skills needed by psychologists for the facilitation of participatory interactions involving in-person and remote participants and the results achieved.

The awareness of the possible use of new technologies according to the paradigms of the targeted global professional community guided the work experience of the 9ICCP organisational team. Community psychology principles were operationalised referring to global contexts interacting through online platforms.

The main aim was to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the procedures and relational strategies undertaken. Moreover, a final goal was to list some principles for onlife communication and training interventions within participatory bottom-up interactions. Specifically, the main research questions were: (a) how the conference could effectively and efficiently increase online and in-person training; (b) how to improve onlife team-building processes; (c) how to promote onlife knowledge acquirements.

4.2 | The Conference

Five hundred and twenty-four researchers from all over the world registered for the online platform for conference submissions and registrations; overall, the conference hosted 440 participants whose characteristics are summarised in Table 1 with reference to their role (type of registration) and type of attendance (in person vs. online). They were from six continents (Africa, America, Asia, Australia, Europe, Oceania) and 40 countries, as summarised in Figure 1.

The conference received 428 submissions; their distribution across the available kinds of submissions is summarised in Table 1. They all addressed topics such as: equity, inequalities,

TABLE 1 | Characteristics of conference participants and submissions.

Characteristics	N
Type of participants (n = 440)	
Researchers	354
Students/ volunteers	40
Organising team members	16
Guests/keynote speakers	30
Type of attendance (n = 440)	
In person	324
Online	116
Type of submissions (n = 428)	
Oral presentations	158
Symposia	31 (including 5 contributions each on average)
Posters	28
Workshops	12
Panels	15 (including 5 contributions each on average)

fairness and wellbeing, climatic change, competencies, gender issues, decoloniality and critical approach. In addition, a 'planetarian' roundtable—with people from all over the planet—entitled 'Community psychology in different areas of the planet. Competencies, Goals and Actions' was held in three sessions involving participants from all six continents. The motto of the conference was 'Sprout our future'.

The conference offered three keynotes: respectively on 'Psychologists and Peace', 'Community Psychology Addressing Climate Change' and 'Contemporary Psychology Needs'. Last but not least, the conference proposed: a 27-min video collecting community psychology experiences from all around the world; an urban heritage walk at the Naples San Vincenzo Pier; the creative interactive performance on *Environment, sea, earth and wellbeing* by the University of Naples Federico II; a recital of Olga Peretyago in San Carlo Theatre (Naples).

4.3 | Methods: Conference Organisation and Management

In setting up 9ICCP, the focus was on generating positive behaviours for ubiquitous communities. To organise 9ICCP, the local team focused on its ability to promote community mobilisation (Cheng, Kotler, and Lee 2011) of professionals and scholars globally for attending the conference. The conference settings were designed in order to allow the professional community to overcome the limitations caused by the pandemic and

beyond. In order to achieve this macro-objective, we worked by step, following the typical phases of creating a social marketing campaign, while clearly adapting them to the psychologist's profession at each stage.

Indeed, expanding psychologists' competencies has meant learning and using theories and tools pertaining to psychology in a decolonised approach (social scaffolding, equal rights in accessibility for everyone, ease and readiness in reciprocal interactions and communication, voicing of indigenous cultures) (Ciófalo and Ortiz-Torres 2024) and to other areas of human behaviour. A useful theory we referred to was the social marketing theory (Kotler and Zaltman 1971; Kotler and Lee 2008), adapted and applied to the world of community psychology. Specifically, we define social marketing here as a process in which marketing principles and techniques are used to create, communicate and deliver value aimed at influencing target audience behaviours that benefit society as well as the target audience (Kotler and Lee 2008).

First, we defined the problem, that is, participants' perceived difficulty in physically attending the conference. In a post-pandemic moment of social uncertainty, fear was one of the dominant emotions (Heeren 2020; Flaskerud 2023), making it difficult for everyone to plan their participation in the medium or long term. Once we defined the problem and its causes, we produced a purpose statement. We defined the purposes and direction of our intervention as an organisational team and identified its different detailed focuses, that is, options that had the potential to produce the desired social change (the activation of a strong hybrid interactive community and in-person participation).

To do so, a SWOT analysis (Armstrong 2006) was carried out with a twofold goal: to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the team, and to identify the opportunities and threats of the environment. This brief analysis revealed the need to increase its digital skills and resources, but also, that the team was capable of adapting to the management of a hybrid conference thanks to the most experienced human resources in online communication and to the psychological skills of the entire team. The increased collaboration, among team members, made it possible to better evaluate reciprocal skills in order to arrive at the first step of effective teamwork: the SWOT analysis with respect to the tasks and the team itself (Benzaghta et al. 2021).

As to the environment, threats were recognised in the social uncertainty related to the sanitary and political events (COVID-19, Russian–Ukrainian war) and the related perceived risks to individuals' health and safety. Environmental opportunities, lastly, were identified in the attractiveness of the city of Naples as the venue for the conference and the resilience of those interested in having in-person confrontations, who were aware that some social dynamics might be impossible to replicate online.

As a second step, we selected the target audience, segmenting the audience composed of community psychology professionals, scholars and students. We then produced audience segments, or micro-groups, that shared demographic and professional characteristics. In this way, we were able to develop suitable communication to reach professionals and students and help them

(a) distribution by continents
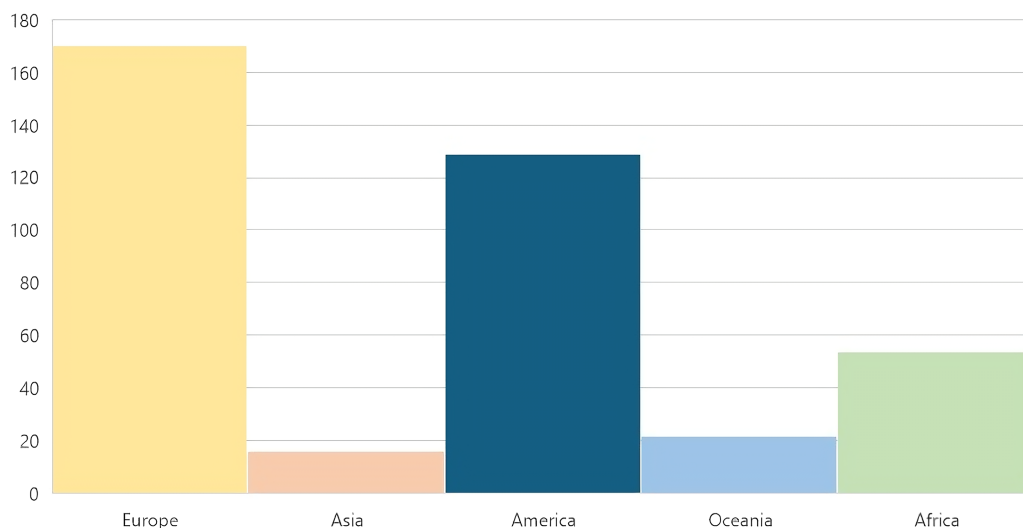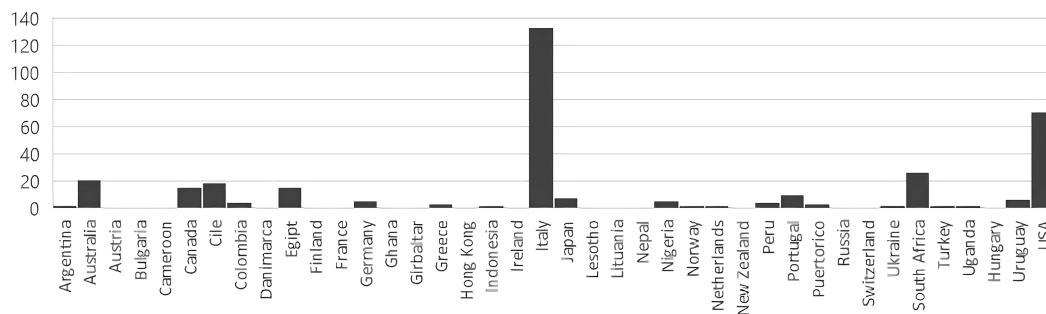

(b) distribution by countries

FIGURE 1 | Conference participants' distribution according to their geographical origin. (a) Distribution by continents; (b) Distribution by 40 countries. $n = 440$.

produce a more informed decision to attend the conference based on their needs and goals.

Through the third and fourth steps, we identified micro-goals for each kind of potential participant and produced a useful communication strategy targeted in order to achieve them. Specifically, we detected behavioural objectives (attendance at the conference both online and in person, and the exchange of information among professionals) and belief objectives (what the target audience needs to know and believe in order to make a decision) (Lee and Kotler 2015). As we were dealing with professionals, we shifted the belief objectives to what we refer to as 'knowledge objects', providing timely information and realistic predictions about the status of international contacts and travel, the pandemic situation and facilities for onlife participation at the event.

This communication focused on two aspects: timing, that is, the team's ability to provide information in a timely and consistent manner; and relevance, that is, the ability to provide useful information to each audience segment based on where they came from, time of stay, contributions sent to the conference and professional interests. This was achieved through several technological channels. A dedicated website was built with attached

online secretarial software for tracking and managing participants, profiling them for information purposes and reaching them quickly for official communications. Furthermore, social media were used to promote community building and interaction among participants through official conference accounts. In addition, the team involved potential participants in the production of materials pertaining to community psychology topics and the various interpretations of the discipline on a global level—which were all gathered in the aforementioned 27-min-long video (to be shared with participants during the opening ceremony).

In addition, we also used web-conference software to promote online interactions through group meetings and webinars, which were aimed at informing in the pre-conference phase and to evaluate the 9ICCP experience in the post-conference phase. Indeed, to gather knowledge about participants' virtual and in-person experiences, online and in-person meetings were organised throughout all the phases of the conferences (May–September 2022), either involving local team members or global participants consistently with the phase. Specifically, ongoing and final evaluation sessions were organised at both local and international levels. Furthermore, a conference evaluation questionnaire was distributed to all the participants after the

conference ended, taking advantage of the Qualtrics platform and of the conference mailing list. In December 2022, a final, online meeting was organised inviting all conference participants to share the results from this questionnaire (see Appendix A) and discuss participants' feedback.

Finally, we used online communication tools and digital media to extend the conference experience well beyond its original time frame. We did this in order to preserve the community and professional heritage created before, during and after the conference with a view to ongoing community building.

These different steps followed the evolution of the conference and required the evolution of the team simultaneously. The aforementioned team-building process was central and necessary to continually identify the skills already possessed by the group, those easily acquired and those that required more development on which to design a targeted training programme for human resources.

5 | Results: The Conference Step by Step

Based on the 9ICCP experience from the organising team's and from participants' viewpoints, the main issues that emerged both as strengths and as elements needing further attention have been organised in: (a) preliminary decision criteria, (b) team, (c) addressing users' needs, (d) participatory onlife communication involvement—with reference to pre-conference, conference and post-conference phases, (e) quality of the interactive proposal. These themes are summarised in Table 2, linking them to the organisational phases that informed them.

5.1 | Preliminary Decision Criteria

Consistent with an ecological approach (Christens and Perkins 2008; Fuks 2010; Prilleltensky 2012), the organising team quickly recognised need to account for the ongoing sanitary and political emergencies not to underestimate their potential impact on conference organisation and success. Indeed, the COVID-19 emergency led the international ICCP committee to ask the Neapolitan team for an online conference; however, long local and international debates about the risk of an online conference not being effective due to the difficulties in attending the sessions and constructing fertile interactive connections were held—particularly considering participants from different time zones and countries in a global conference.

Therefore, an intensive effort was made to provide new ideas to improve the future conference within a participatory approach (Arcidiacono, Procentese, and Baldi 2010). However, the uncertainty due to the persistence and severity of COVID-19 in most parts of the world, which could hinder the possibility to travel, remained high and the whole team was aware that there was insufficient technical time to build an in-person global event after learning more about the pandemic trend. Furthermore, even from an economic perspective, it was difficult to plan logistics and timing in the absence of clear indications and reliable forecasts on participation.

In the end, organising a hybrid conference seemed like the potentially most effective idea. To achieve this, hypothesising a flexible structure to overcome the uncertainty regarding attendance, outlining clear criteria to guide our activity, counteracting the widespread fear as to the COVID-19 pandemic all represented necessary steps to offer potential participants the highest level of closeness and reliability.

The team drew on methods used in field research in unknown contexts where the research team still has not gained recognition and trust—such as our action-research in marginalised contexts (Arcidiacono and Procentese 2013; Arcidiacono et al. 2017, 2022; Di Napoli, Esposito et al., 2019). However, some challenges concerning the use of digital technologies in the management and implementation of hybrid events with professional communities had already been identified by the team during previous hybrid conferences and experiences. Because of this and thanks to professionals' reflexivity (Reyes Cruz and Sonn 2011), a compelling need to significantly enhance relational and digital skills and the degree of media literacy emerged (Hobbs 2010; Hobbs and Jensen 2009; Koltay 2016; Ofcom 2019).

5.2 | The Team

Community psychologists' core competencies—with specific reference to reflexivity and positionality (McCall 2005; Reyes Cruz and Sonn 2011)—enabled the organising team to critically evaluate the available resources and identify the ones that were needed. The first essential need was to analyse and understand the technical skills as well as the relational one within the core team and to compare them with the required skills. To do so, the team relied on previous experiences with digital technologies (Esempio, Autiero, and Arcidiacono 2021) applied in various contexts to include people with specific competencies in using social media and other technological tools and platforms in the organisational team. Indeed, dealing with hybrid environments and dynamics posed unique and unprecedented challenges for the organising team.

The second need was to expand the core team which was done at a twofold level. Locally, motivated and competent people were hired to manage the administrative tasks needed for the conference; in addition, we selected young researchers and students who demonstrated both competence in facilitating group activity and virtual communication skills, since these skills would enable them to effectively manage relational and interactive tasks. At the national level, the Neapolitan team sought technical support from the Virthulab team of Florence University, directed by Andrea Guazzini, to build the conference website and establish the entire online dimension. Their background in psychology and their outstanding competence in virtual knowledge enabled them to support a very user-friendly in-person and hybrid conference community.

Thus, the whole conference team was composed of individuals with different technical, technological, relational and organisational skills and attitudes, consistent with the varied and multifaceted nature of the tasks to be addressed and of the goals to be achieved in such an unprecedented, onlife experience. Therefore, not everyone was equipped to address every

TABLE 2 | Phases of conference management and results.

Methods	Results
Phase 1: Preliminary steps	
Problem definition and SWOT analysis	(a) preliminary decision criteria
Geopolitical and sanitary context definition	(b) team
Teams' skills and resources definition	(d) participatory onlife communication involvement—with reference to pre-conference, conference and post-conference phases
Technological resources definition	
Potential participants definition	
Scholars	
Professionals	
Students	
Potential participants segmentation	
Tone of voice and proper communication development	
Potential participants' needs and threats definition	
Troubles with travels	
Fears due to the political and sanitary lack of safety	
Interest in the conference and its topics	
Phase 2: Pre-conference actions and conference implementation	
Potential answers to needs	(c) addressing users' needs
Through technological tools	(d) participatory onlife communication involvement—with reference to pre-conference, conference and post-conference phases
Through new skills	(e) quality of the interactive proposal
Through widening the team	
Dissemination of the answers to users' needs, fears and doubts	
Development of an informative and target website	
Costs adjustment	
Open, continuous, precise and multilingual supportive system	
Supportive system for travels and stays	
Communication services using different channels: emails, website, social media	
Social media as tools for community building	
9ICCP implementation	
Planetary roundtable organisation based on the time zones	
Session organisation based on the time zones	
Online and offline poster session organisation	
Organisation of social and cultural activities for participants to learn more about the local context	

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

Methods	Results
Continuous onlife support (e.g., online participation and presentations, in presence secretary activities, facilitation of hybrid interactions during the sessions, technical support during the sessions)	
Survey to evaluate conference experiences	
Phase 3: Conference evaluation and post-conference dissemination	
Creation and maintenance of knowledge heritage	(d) participatory onlife communication involvement—with reference to pre-conference, conference and post-conference phases
Creation of the YouTube channel	
Post-production and upload of the registered conference contribution	
Creation of an offline storage of the conference materials	
Continuous online support	
About the use of the Conftool platform (e.g., attendance certificates downloads)	
About accessing the YouTube materials	
About post-conference events participation	
Evaluation analysis	
Analyses of the data gathered through the evaluation survey	
Dissemination of the evaluation	
Dissemination through email	
Online dissemination meeting (December 2022)	
Special issues and articles in scientific journals	

challenge in the most effective way. Indeed, managing and facing hybrid social and organisational dynamics effectively required a continuous learning process and attention to the peculiarities and features of the technological tools and platforms to be used (Caena and Punie 2019; Di Stasio et al. 2021; Taranto and Buchanan 2020). This represented a significant challenge for professionals who were not accustomed to dealing with these kinds of environments or platforms. Consequently, the team responded differently to such challenges based on their readiness for digital transformation (Eynon and Malmberg 2021; Giang et al. 2021; Hashim and Tasir 2014; Teichert 2019): some members refused to engage with these challenges, while others tried to adapt to the new environments and requirements; only a few team members already possessed the necessary skills.

To respect this, while minimising its potentially negative impact, the team decided to divide the tasks among its members based on their skills, roles and personal attitudes. This approach allowed for the organisation of the work, division of tasks and coordination while simultaneously working on several fronts, thanks to the optimal and strategic use of available technologies—as will be further detailed—as well as the reciprocal trustfulness as described in the TRIP model (Arcidiacono 2017;

Carnevale et al. 2021). The leadership role was crucial in this experience, providing unity and coherence to the entire work and organisational processes.

A business-like—or managerial—orientation in the academic context (Amaral 2020; Bevilacqua, Stazio, and Borrelli 2021; Shujahat et al. 2019) was adopted to fully utilise the available and remaining resources, dividing the organisation into leadership role, sectoral responsibilities (e.g., online communications, secretary activities, web development, online community building and participation), workforce. This result-oriented and managerial organisational model (Feola, Vincent, and Moore 2021) was adapted to the environment and profession of reference, namely that of community psychology, gathering the positive tools (e.g., social marketing, digital transformation, high-profile digital and technological tools, accurate role assignment); in a business perspective these represented very competitive elements; in the experience of the conference, these elements provided a service tailored to the demands and needs of the targeted professional community, facilitating their participation and involvement in the conference and thus creating a dense, cohesive and fertile community network. This orientation was adopted from an integrative perspective, taking as an example the productivity

typical of business model in order to deliver an adequate service to users, without the economic driven goals of the pure business models (Feola, Vincent, and Moore 2021). This need arose from the awareness of the many needs identified through the SWOT analysis, as well as of the possible challenges due to an initial lack of skills and resources within the team.

5.3 | Addressing Users' Needs

The reflexivity characterising our professional profiles as psychologists allowed us a step by step understanding of users' needs and requests (Prilleltensky 2012; Reyes Cruz and Sonn 2011) as they evolved in response to the ongoing sanitary and political circumstances as well as on the need for certain level of familiarity with new technologies to effectively participate in a hybrid conference. We were aware that different geolocations, professional backgrounds and degrees of familiarity with the Web could have an impact on the participants' engagement, participation and co-participation.

Therefore, our first action was to understand the main needs and characteristics of our potential users according to the mailing list and contacts we gathered; then, we endeavoured to meet their needs, also taking into account their educational, academic and professional goals.

Furthermore, considering the unpredictability of COVID-19 pandemic trends, the organising team decided not to penalise, but rather to facilitate, the shift from online to in-person registration fees and vice versa. This was aimed to allow sudden, last-minute decisions in the type of participation chosen. This required further work for the team but created a relaxed atmosphere despite the in-person/remote dilemma. For online participants, we paid special attention to the scheduling of their presentations, so that no one was required to have their presentation at night in their time zone; this required a precise and careful study of time zones and time compatibilities.

5.4 | Participatory Onlife Communication

The community psychology approach values promoting participatory processes also in training and knowledge building (Arcidiacono, Procentese, and Baldi 2010) by listening to people's narratives and their needs, creating contexts that amplify the voices of minorities, allowing them to express their feelings and thoughts (Martín-Baró 1996; Montero and Sonn 2009; Reyes Cruz and Sonn 2011). Virtual tools were also used as facilitators of interactions, communication and community building processes (Gatti, Procentese, and Mitchell 2021).

5.4.1 | First Phase: Preliminary Steps

In line with the need to guarantee accessibility and to address potential difficulties with digital technologies, in this first phase we worked together with the Virthulab team to build an easy-to-access website, choosing online conference tools. The website was created to be user-friendly, attractive and engaging. We also activated a 24-h email response service, ensuring responses

were provided no later than 1 day after receiving the message. This email service enabled the organising team to provide participants with a consistent and ongoing assistance with initial conference procedures (submission, review, registration, programme), and in addressing travel and accommodation issues when the conference was approaching.

Furthermore, the Conftool conference platform was used. This conference management software facilitated the collection of participant data, the gathering and review of abstracts, the organisation and dissemination of the conference programme and the quick sharing of news and other information. It also reminded participants of conference deadlines via the mailing list. Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp were used to enhance communications among the team and the participants, creating an onlife community of interest (Acuti et al. 2018; Halliday 2016; Han, Jang, and Lee 2015; Tenney, Hall, and Sieber 2019). The first two were used to further spread conference-related information through conference official accounts, while WhatsApp allowed the team to stay connected and keep track of the ongoing tasks and potential issues. Overall, this allowed the team to alternate in-person meetings and remote work, to distribute tasks based on each member's skills and attitudes, and to coordinate during the whole process. This was achieved by optimising time and workloads through transparency, awareness of processes and ability to keep in mind the activated dynamics (Prilleltensky 2012).

5.4.2 | Second Phase: Pre-Conference Actions and Conference Implementation

During the conference, scientific sessions were hybrid to ensure that both online and in-person participants had equal opportunities for participation. Sessions hosting online presenters were scheduled to avoid night-time presentations as already mentioned. Furthermore, hybrid sessions were recorded thanks to the capabilities of the platforms used. This allowed online participants to access these sessions asynchronously too—for example, should such sessions be planned at night-time in their time zones. Furthermore, given global audience of the conference, several, hybrid and in person, sessions offered simultaneous translations in Italian, English and Spanish.

In addition, we also organised the previously mentioned planetary roundtable, which consisted of three sessions held around the world. Participants were asked to answer to the same question 'What is the present and future of community psychology in your experience?' followed by a further session that discussed the outcomes of the previous ones. Sessions were based on the compatibility of the time zones between the different panellists and the Naples in-person participants. This allowed global communication at compatible times across different regions.

Furthermore, due to the onlife setting of the conference, the poster session was organised both in person and as a permanent, online gallery where the PDF files of the posters were uploaded by the organising team. This allowed both online and in presence participants to contribute to the conference via posters. This enabled all attendees to view and interact with the poster

contributions presented by others regardless of them attending the conference in person or remotely.

5.4.2.1 | Interactive Settings. To enhance the quality of the hybrid sessions, we activated a specialised tutoring service held by members of the organising team who were specifically skilled in supporting hybrid interactions, solving technical problems should they arise and favouring online participants' involvement in conference sessions. Indeed, participating in a conference does not include only listening to others' research or presenting one's own, but also to making contact with other scholars, meeting and interacting with them and sharing viewpoints about research topics and broader subjects. To better deal with possible connection issues, problems with audio or video, misunderstandings in meetings due to different time zones and tediousness of use by remote listeners, we selected classroom tutors and chairpersons who not only had communication and relational skills, but also technical and organisational competence in the use of online platforms.

5.4.2.2 | The Spontaneous and Self-Organised Meetings and the Bank of Ideas Narratives. In the complex organisation of the conference programme, a priority was to find the opportunity for sessions spontaneously organised by associations involved in the topic of the conference (EFPA Community Psychology Standing Committee and ECPA) and for the global participatory project: *New Bank for Community Stories and Ideas*, a unique global collaboration designed to promote community building and strengthen community life everywhere.

5.4.2.3 | The Creative Interactive Performance "Environment, Sea, Earth and Wellbeing". Pursuing active participatory goals—with the help of a theatrical improvisation group we collaborated with—the participants gathered in Vigliena—San Carlo Theatre venue (Naples) to hear proposals and stimuli that addressed climate change issues. However, we should have maybe dared and better used the narrative tools we use in group work (i.e., script, movie, etc.) also considering such demanding audiences.

5.4.3 | Third Phase: Conference Evaluation and Post-Conference Dissemination

Several dissemination activities were also run after the conference. First, the organising team gathered all the needed information about online and in-person participants to provide them with attendance certificates. This was managed through the Conftool online platform but required the team to send out precise and detailed emails to participants including the guidelines to download the certificate when available; this way, no one was excluded.

Furthermore, as all the conference hybrid sessions had been registered, the organising team worked along with videographers to post-produce and upload them on a YouTube channel, so that such sessions remained available for participants for a longer time. Again, precise information about this procedure had been shared among participants before the conference and was recalled when the contents became available, so that everyone could enjoy them.

Lastly, as already mentioned, an online meeting with all the interested participants was held in December 2022. During this meeting, the organising committee presented the results from the evaluation survey (see Appendix A). Great satisfaction for the overall conference emerged with reference to both its organisation and the general atmosphere the team was able to create, suggesting that technological tools had been successfully embedded in conference activities and practices, providing both online and in-person participants with an enjoyable and engaging onlife (Floridi 2009) experience. Consistently, both online (e.g., virtual speaker support, poster presentation facilities, communication with ICCP organisers, conference materials) and in-person (e.g., conference venue, registration procedures, in-person speaker support, social gatherings) characteristics, processes and elements received great appreciation—as shown in Tables A1 and A2.

Moreover, the editing of journal special issues referring to the conference contributions was promoted.[1]

6 | Discussion

This paper moves from the complexities characterising modern, hybrid, social contexts and interactions to unravel the skills of professionals and scholars to properly work within them. Specifically, the experience of the 9ICCP, which took place in Naples in September 2022, has been addressed as a case study based on the onlife characteristics the event had to assume due to the social, political and sanitary context. Therefore, this conference may be an illustration of the strengths and challenges in setting, managing and disseminating such an event targeting a global audience. From this experience, the paper derives key lessons and foundational principles for managing hybrid social contexts and communities.

The conference evaluation questionnaire answered by 288 participants suggested that the organising team was able to face the challenge of managing online and hybrid materials, participation and interactions in a successful way. Furthermore, this also shows that the team managed to pay equal attention to online and in-person dimensions, which provided participants with an engaging and interactive experience regardless of them being online or in person. Lastly, the ratings of the social moments of the conference (e.g., opening ceremony, closing ceremony, welcome reception, conference dinner; see Table A1) suggest the high relevance of psychologists in dealing with the promotion of highly formative groups and paths (Fuks 2010), based on their skills as experts of collective and relational dynamics. In this vein, addressing the processes activated and the participants' needs and issues enabled the organising team to focalize specific knowledge moving from these competencies and from reflexivity and meta-reflexivity processes.

However, such positive results were not achieved without pitfalls and troubles along the way to the 9ICCP conference. Indeed, at the beginning, the team was inadequately prepared to manage a hybrid event. To address this issue, the team relied on its ability to think critically about the available and necessary resources in order to produce the new knowledge and

strategies which could help addressing unprecedented tasks and environmental requests (Arcidiacono et al. 2017, 2022; Arcidiacono and Procentese 2013; Reyes Cruz and Sonn 2011). In order to do so, several in-person and online meetings were needed to better unpack and understand the emotions, feelings, attitudes and narratives of team members (Reyes Cruz and Sonn 2011) with reference to the need to acquire specific digital skills. Based on this, the leadership was able to divide up the tasks according to what everyone could learn and manage due to their backgrounds and readiness for digital transformation (Eynon and Malmberg 2021; Giang et al. 2021; Hashim and Tasir 2014; Teichert 2019). Furthermore, some broader and more technology-related tasks required the team to collaborate with external professionals—that is, the Virthulab team—to gather the human resources and technical skills needed.

The mentioned meetings allowed the head of the team to track processes and teamwork, and the opportunity to rely on technologies facilitated such tasks as well as the communications within the team more broadly (Arcidiacono 2016). Reciprocal trust within the team was built by allowing every team member to have a clear and precise idea of who was in charge of or working on which task, so that everyone could be aware of the unfolding processes as well as of the decision-making strategies (Prilleltensky 2012). Such organisation allowed the team to economise on waste and maximise the available resources in a numerically limited team, supporting the usefulness of a skills- and attitudes-based, goal-oriented organisation. Therefore, thanks to the adaptation of the described business-like—or managerial—model (Amaral 2020; Bevilacqua, Stazio, and Borrelli 2021; Shujahat et al. 2019), the team of psychologists, drawing on different hybrid skill profiles, represented a facilitating element for the digital transformation that was needed due to the hybrid management of the conference. Such blended management allowed the organising team greater access to knowledge sharing processes, promoting interactions which transformed the team into a community of practice (Arcidiacono 2016).

Therefore, the training of psychologists devoted to collective and participatory interactions underwent a hybridisation process when addressing new needs stemming from the community of reference (in this case, a global professional community). Such hybridisation was not only related to the intertwinement of online and offline development of interactive dynamics: the evolution of the profession stands out also in the acquisition of additional tools and skills from other professions and environments, clearly adapted to the field of psychology and to the specific tasks and requests professionals have to deal with within it. Consistently, the team's main learning topics also included: the study of the pillars of social marketing (Kotler et al. 2015) and their adaptation to the tasks and activities pertaining to the work of psychologists; the focalization on the tone of voice (Kotler et al. 2015) to be used in the various communications (organisational information, community building, things to experience in Naples, tourist facilities, etc.); the study of the concept of user experience with reference to the population segments identified on the 9ICCP dedicated website and the secretarial software and how to implement a better experience; the development of front-end programming and graphic skills for websites (especially directed towards landing pages); the ability to use social media and some of its analytical tools to constantly evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of communication strategies (Camacho et al. 2020).

Therefore, the conference represented an opportunity to put together the skills and values on which psychology relies—for example, TRIP competencies, equal participation, social interactions, team-building and collaborative work, community building processes—and the specific knowledge and skills needed to properly use technological tools and platforms to achieve these aims, when it comes to online and hybrid interactions and social processes. Indeed, the attention given to allowing equal participation and opportunities to all community members—regardless of their being part of minorities or being somehow disadvantaged in accessing a given environment or meeting—allowed the organising team to think about targeted solutions to the identified potential obstacles to equal participation (Arcidiacono, Procentese, and Baldi 2010; Martín-Baró 1996; McCall 2005; Montero and Sonn 2009). Examples of strategies aimed at addressing such issues were: simultaneous translation available in several sessions: English, Spanish and Italian were all recognised as conference official languages; technical and informative support available both online (in all the phases) and in-person (during conference days), hybrid session scheduling based on the compatibilities among the different time zones from which the speakers connected.

Furthermore, typical tools and methodologies of community psychology—for example, SWOT analysis—were used to outline all the steps of conference planning, organisation and management. Indeed, such methodologies were characterised by focusing attention on strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats, to allow professionals to keep in mind the environmental opportunities and constraints when addressing the resulting requests and needs (Armstrong 2006). In this vein, keeping in mind the opportunities stemming from hybrid social contexts and onlife experiences (Floridi 2009), but also the threats related to the newness of this kind of contexts and interactions (e.g., privacy issues, shutdown risk; Baruh, Secinti, and Cemalcilar 2017), allowed the team to properly address participants' needs and requests, providing timely and precise information.

6.1 | Limitations and Future Directions

This paper addresses the hybridisation and enhancement of the skills and experiences of psychologists when dealing with collective interactions. It presents a single yet multifaceted case study—specifically, the 9ICCP planning, organisation and management. Despite the single case study, the complexities implied by the nature of the processes and tasks to be tackled by the organising team provides several relevant hints. However, some limitations also emerged.

First, regarding the organising committee, it is important to note that team members acquired different levels of awareness concerning the activated processes and challenges faced—varying based on their skills and level of involvement in the management of the conference. Therefore, the critical

approach presented in this paper was developed only by some of the team members—specifically, those who were more involved in the critical reflection process that led to the development of the necessary skills.

Furthermore, it was not possible to further compare the experiences, challenges and results obtained through this organisation with those addressed by previous organising committees. Indeed, even though ICCP conferences are held every 2 years, the archives are not focused on the organisational procedure of previous conferences. Therefore, implementing a shared heritage of knowledge about the challenges met by the committees organising future ICCP conferences might be useful for keeping track of the challenges such committees face and the skills and actions needed to address them. This may result in a pool of good practices which may be helpful to promote and systematise the professional development of psychologists dealing with onlife contexts and experiences.

Furthermore, such a pool may represent a resource for future conferences aimed at promoting participatory and reciprocal interaction sessions. Indeed, such good practices may benefit not only from these practical experiences but also from the community psychology competencies in the facilitation of collective processes we referenced (Fuks and Rosas 2008).

However, a last limitation refers to the 9ICCP experience having a limited impact on the following experiences—that is, it could not serve as a virtuous example for the following conferences, some of which foresaw an only-in-presence attendance again. Therefore, despite this experience showing the relevance and usefulness of digital skills and media literacy in appropriately managing hybrid, onlife social contexts—and conferences—and professional community building processes, a part of the professional community may still not be prone to adopting online and hybrid tools and dynamics in their professional practices—as it happened in the 9ICCP team too. Based on this, a systematisation of the steps, core ideas and skills and social processes which allowed to organise and manage the 9ICCP is even more necessary in order to provide professionals with more precise guidelines about how to deal with such contexts and social dynamics.

7 | Conclusions

The 9ICCP experience has allowed us to think critically about the role of the psychologist as an architect of relationships and possibilities with reference to modern, onlife contexts and experiences, based on the care dedicated to the activated processes and the skills in supporting them through reflexivity and meta-reflexivity (Arcidiacono 2017; Fuks 2016; Heron and Reason 2008). In this regard, a proper and mindful use of new technologies will help psychologists in dealing with the complexities characterising modern social contexts and environments (Gatti and Procentese 2024), producing ideas, actions and strategies that allow groups and communities to tackle social transformations in their respective contexts (Arcidiacono 2016). Indeed, relational, team-building and group facilitation competencies are the backbone of events with participatory and interactive goals. A team with these skills could more effectively work with and for processes aimed at

community empowerment and building on a local, global and glocal level (Pinkett 2003).

Based on the experience with the 9ICCP, some key lessons learned have clearly emerged and may represent useful guidelines for psychologists dealing with the management of onlife events, communities and environments in the future:

1. Since social contexts and communities are constantly changing—including technological progress and globalisation processes—psychologists need to continuously renew and update their skills. As mentioned above, this should refer not only to the need for hybridisation of the profession and acquisition of digital and technological skills, but also to the acknowledgment that some models and theories pertaining to different fields might also become useful in psychology tasks and challenges if properly adapted (e.g., social marketing within the 9ICCP experience);

2. Closely linked to the first point, continuous learning and learning to learn (Caena and Punie 2019; Hoskins and Fredriksson 2008) become critical elements to properly work in such contexts. Indeed—as demonstrated by the 9ICCP experience—professionals who can recognise the changing characteristics of modern challenges and address them by acquiring or developing the needed skills can represent catalysts for teams needing to deal with them in a proper and effective way;

3. Due to the complexities stemming from the composition, heterogeneity and size of a team, an attitude—and skills-based, goal-oriented organisation can represent an effective approach to economise and maximise the available resources. Indeed, as shown by the 9ICCP experience, the adaptation of a business-like—or managerial—model (Amaral 2020; Bevilacqua, Stazio, and Borrelli 2021; Shujahat et al. 2019) represented a facilitating element for the digital transformation that was needed due to the characteristics of the tasks and—above all—due to the mismatch between team members' average skills and the characteristics of the tasks to be addressed;

4. Given continuously changing contexts and challenges, a strong ability to evaluate not only one's goals but also the steps to be implemented towards them is essential—but also requires constant monitoring and reflexivity. Tools and methodologies that enable planning and organising the subsequent steps based on a careful reading of the current circumstances will help in doing so—as was done in the 9ICCP experience by using SWOT analysis to read the context and inform all the following steps;

5. When a team does not hold the needed skills to address a given challenge and some of its members are not available to acquire such skills through vertical or horizontal training, the team may need to rely on external experts—as was done by collaborating with the Virthulab team during the 9ICCP planning—in order to overcome such constraints. However, in order to run an effective evaluation of this, professionals need to acquire a minimum level of skills that enables them to understand the competences and services offered by other professionals, so that they can avoid unnecessary and/or harmful interventions and accurately evaluate the costs involved;

6. Such attention should consider the different levels and systems implied in the actions to be implemented and goals

to be achieved, consistently with an ecological approach (Kelly 1986);

7. Relational, team-building and group facilitation represent also in the onlife dimension the backbone competencies for psychologists aimed by participatory and interactive goals; and,

8. Producing a knowledge repository is as important as maintaining it, in order to overcome the classical ways of disseminating results and instead reach a broader target.

Taken together, this leads to an understanding of how modern team and community building processes need to be onlife; hence, hybrid, just as communities now are (Gatti and Procentese 2022, 2024).

Moreover, becoming aware of the role of the online superstructure and understanding the implications stemming from its presence in individuals' and communities' lives, psychologists interactive and participatory skills in managing relational events should be enhanced by their use in in-person, hybrid and virtual interactions.

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Ethics Statement

The authors declare that the results are reported honestly and the submitted work is original and not (self-)plagiarised.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

Endnotes

[1] See: Global Journal of Community Psychology in Global Perspective, 2024, Vol 10, No 1/2 (2024): Special Issue: Preventing and ending gender-based violence; The present issue of the Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology; see also Ciófalo and Ortiz-Torres (2024).

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Appendix A

TABLE A1 | Evaluation of the 9ICCP conference by conference participants.

	n	M	SD
Conference overall	266	3.41	0.79
General atmosphere of the conference	265	3.68	0.83
9ICCP website	267	3.15	0.86
Submission review process	263	3.63	0.82
Conference venue (Via Partenope)	266	3.82	0.92
Registration procedures	267	3.41	0.81
Conference materials for participants	266	3.34	1.08
Virtual speaker support	263	3.80	1.07
In-person speaker support	267	3.86	0.94
Presentation rooms facilities	267	3.70	0.94
Poster presentation facilities	265	4.09	1.03
Service at lunch/coffee breaks	267	3.71	1.16
Welcome reception and conference dinner	266	4.03	1.07
Opening ceremony	262	3.81	1.00
Closing ceremony	261	4.15	1.05
Communication with 9ICCP organisers	266	3.49	0.81
Keynote lectures	264	3.59	0.89
Quality of presentations	265	3.54	0.68

Note: 1–5 range scale.
Abbreviations: M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

TABLE A2 | Participants' satisfaction about the 9ICCP conference.

Conference characteristics	Evaluation	n (%)
Conference overall	Very dissatisfied	10 (3.7%)
	Dissatisfied	10 (3.7%)
	Satisfied	118 (44.2%)
	Very satisfied	118 (44.2%)
	Don't know/NA	10 (3.7%)
	Missing data	1 (0.5%)
General atmosphere of the conference	Very dissatisfied	7 (2.6%)
	Dissatisfied	7 (2.6%)
	Satisfied	83 (31.1%)
	Very satisfied	135 (50.6%)
	Don't know/NA	33 (12.4%)
	Missing data	2 (0.7%)
Submission and review processes	Very dissatisfied	5 (1.9%)
	Dissatisfied	10 (3.7%)
	Satisfied	95 (35.6%)
	Very satisfied	121 (45.3%)
	Don't know/NA	32 (12%)
Registration procedures	Very dissatisfied	8 (3%)
	Dissatisfied	20 (7.5%)
	Satisfied	104 (39%)
	Very satisfied	125 (46.8)
	Don't know/NA	10 (3.7%)
Virtual speaker support	Very dissatisfied	13 (4.9%)
	Dissatisfied	11 (4.1%)
	Satisfied	71 (26.6%)
	Very satisfied	89 (33.3%)
	Don't know/NA	79 (29.6%)
	Missing data	4 (1.5%)
In-person speaker support	Very dissatisfied	6 (2.2%)
	Dissatisfied	10 (3.7%)
	Satisfied	72 (27%)
	Very satisfied	106 (39.7%)
	Don't know/NA	73 (27.3%)
Presentation rooms facilities	Very dissatisfied	8 (3%)
	Dissatisfied	11 (4.1%)
	Satisfied	89 (33.3%)
	Very satisfied	105 (39.3%)
	Don't know/NA	54 (20.2%)

(Continues)

TABLE A2 | (Continued)

Conference characteristics	Evaluation	n (%)
Service at lunch/ coffee breaks	Very dissatisfied	7 (2.6%)
	Dissatisfied	39 (14.6%)
	Satisfied	69 (25.8%)
	Very satisfied	61 (22.8%)
	Don't know/NA	91 (34.1%)
Communication with 9ICCP organisers	Very dissatisfied	8 (3%)
	Dissatisfied	15 (5.6%)
	Satisfied	96 (36%)
	Very satisfied	133 (49.8%)
	Don't know/NA	14 (5.2%)
	Missing data	1 (0.4%)
Keynote lectures	Very dissatisfied	7 (2.6%)
	Dissatisfied	12 (4.5%)
	Satisfied	103 (38.6%)
	Very satisfied	103 (38.6%)
	Don't know/NA	39 (14.6%)
	Missing data	1 (0.4%)
9ICCP website	Very dissatisfied	15 (5.6%)
	Dissatisfied	33 (12.4%)
	Satisfied	117 (43.8%)
	Very satisfied	100 (37.5%)
	Don't know/NA	2 (0.7%)
Conference venue (Via Partenope)	Very dissatisfied	7 (2.6%)
	Dissatisfied	9 (3.4%)
	Satisfied	72 (27%)
	Very satisfied	114 (42.7%)
	Don't know/NA	64 (24%)
	Missing data	1 (0.4%)
Conference materials for participants	Very dissatisfied	14 (5.2%)
	Dissatisfied	43 (16.1%)
	Satisfied	85 (31.8%)
	Very satisfied	85 (31.8%)
	Don't know/NA	39 (14.6%)
	Missing data	1 (0.4%)

(Continues)

TABLE A2 | (Continued)

Conference characteristics	Evaluation	n (%)
Poster presentation facilities	Very dissatisfied	6 (2.2%)
	Dissatisfied	11 (4.1%)
	Satisfied	59 (22.1%)
	Very satisfied	65 (24.3%)
	Don't know/NA	124 (46.4%)
	Missing data	2 (0.7%)
Welcome reception and conference dinner	Very dissatisfied	8 (3%)
	Dissatisfied	15 (5.6%)
	Satisfied	56 (21%)
	Very satisfied	70 (26.2%)
	Don't know/NA	117 (43.8%)
	Missing data	1 (0.4%)
Opening ceremony	Very dissatisfied	7 (2.6%)
	Dissatisfied	13 (4.9%)
	Satisfied	80 (30%)
	Very satisfied	85 (31.8%)
	Don't know/NA	77 (28.8%)
	Missing data	5 (1.9%)
Closing ceremony	Very dissatisfied	8 (3%)
	Dissatisfied	9 (3.4%)
	Satisfied	51 (19.1%)
	Very satisfied	61 (22.8%)
	Don't know/NA	132 (49.4%)
	Missing data	6 (2.2%)
Quality of presentations	Very dissatisfied	6 (2.2%)
	Dissatisfied	2 (0.7%)
	Satisfied	108 (40.4%)
	Very satisfied	140 (52.4%)
	Don't know/NA	9 (3.4%)
	Missing data	2 (0.7%)
Have you been a virtual or in-person participant?	Virtual	80 (30%)
	In person	181 (67.8%)
	Missing data	6 (2.2%)

Note: n = 267.