



# **PRBB INTERVALS PROGRAMME**

## **Report of activities in 2020**

## Intervals Report 2020

### Challenge, change and resilience

2020 turned out to be a year to test the resilience of all – and the *Intervals* programme was no exception. We started the year as any other with a full and exciting plan of all the learning and development events we were going to hold. January and February went according to plan and we were lucky to be able to host Eric May's now classic events on *Negotiation skills* and *Explaining science to anyone*. Also in the bag were *Effective team playing* and one edition each of *Say it so it stays* and *Técnicas actorales*. And then the COVID tsunami hit.

Like so many of us, the *Intervals* team was initially stunned into inactivity as we hunkered down in lockdown and wondered what to do. We were unsure whether PRBB people would want to attend courses online and uncertain if our trainers felt their offerings were appropriate to that environment.

After careful thought we sifted through our programme and after consulting with trainers, chose the courses we felt were most easily translated to an online environment: namely writing courses and critical thinking. We tentatively offered these workshops and were happily surprised by how eagerly PRBB people took up the chance of learning something new in lockdown. In fact, we had fewer no-shows and better take-up than for many in-person events! Lockdown it seems, in spite of the trauma and stress, had the advantage of emptying diaries – so people were more able to focus on self-development.

### Bold and innovative

As the year progressed, we became bolder and broadened the course topics offered. Our trainers proved to be highly adaptable and flexible and many found creative ways to convert their offerings into stimulating online events. By the end of the year, we had run 28 courses (18 online) in 18 different topics with a total of 396 attendances (287 individuals) (Table 2). While the range of topics was narrower than usual 18 vs 28 in 2019, more editions were held of those courses suitable for online learning. Initially larger group sizes (20) seemed appropriate, but with feedback we soon reduced course numbers to 12, the same as for in-person events.

Feedback was excellent with little difference from other years. Most comments were highly positive and people really appreciated the opportunities they had. Less positive comments usually focused on the difficulties of the online setting (Table 3 and Comments section).

We noted some small differences in the profile of attendees, including a shift towards higher take-up by more junior staff. Meanwhile there was a relative drop in post-doc attendance compared with the previous year (19% vs 28.5%) (Table 5). As a programme that is freely available to all staff in all PRBB Centres, the organisers aim to allocate places fairly according to the proportion of total staff in each Centre. This is not always possible if there is insufficient demand from some Centres while other Centres are more active. If there are still empty places close to the course start date, we accept registrations from any Centre with the result that some Centres take more than their allocated share

and other Centres fewer. As in previous years, in 2020 IMIM staff did not take up their apportioned share, so these places were distributed between ISGlobal, CEXS-UPF and IBE (Table 4).

### **Gender and learning opportunity**

Gender imbalance has always been observed in uptake of *Intervals* courses and this continued in 2020. Women made up 71% of attendances to *Intervals* courses, even though they make up only 59% of the PRBB community (Table 6 & 7). It is a concern that men still do not take up learning and development opportunities and we continue to explore the reasons for this and to work with the PRBB gender balance group to try and improve male uptake.

### **New web-site**

The focus afforded by lockdown enabled the *Intervals* team to work with the Consorci PRBB IT department to finalise the new web-site, which was launched in early January 2021. This new site has been a while in gestation, but the end result offers an exciting new experience to visitors. It also offers the *Intervals* team enhanced capacity to analyse our data which can inform how the programme is shaped in coming years.

### **Looking back, looking forward**

In this difficult and challenging year, the readiness of our trainers and participants to step up, step in and make things work has been highly appreciated. The result has been an *Intervals* programme with a difference that has maintained its hallmark characteristics of high quality learning, combined with community building and networking opportunities throughout the PRBB.

The changes made to the programme in 2020 will undoubtedly remain for a large part of 2021. But the learning and innovation will not be lost and when we can safely meet again in the classroom we look forward to new and exciting ways of teaching and sharing learning in the future.

### **Thanks**

The *Intervals* team would like to offer special thanks to Ramon Safont for all his hard work and patience in developing the new web-site. And as always the programme has only been as strong as the energy and activity of all our participants and especially our trainers and collaborators:

José Antonio Aguilar, Arnau Busquets, Joaquim Calbó, Luca Cozzuto, Malte Engel, Jaume Fatjó, Susan Frekko, Fernando Gallego, Anna Janic, Gavin Lucas, Maria Lluch, Alicia Marín Muniesa, Andrés Martín, Eric May, Pau Millet, Alexandros Nikolaou, Roser Pinyol, Sonja Reiland, Pilar Rivera, Tobias Rodrigues, Louise Schubert, Roni Wright and Ruben Ventura.

Elinor Thompson and Eroteida Jiménez  
The *Intervals* Programme, PRBB March 2021

## **Selected comments**

*I have participated in many Intervals courses and they are very well organised and very interesting.*

*I really appreciate the organization of Intervals, especially during this strange COVID time.*

*All excellent!*

*Everything is excellent! Thank you for organizing it so careful.*

*The level is high, the seminars I have attended so far are all made with care and high standards. Congratulations.*

*I have only an excellent opinion of it!*

*Congratulations for the great work!*

*Great job! Keep up with it!*

About the adaptation to online format:

*Sometimes it is easier to attend these types of courses if online - so very positive.*

*I really appreciate the organization of Intervals, especially during this strange COVID times!*

*It is good they happen online now but as soon as the situation allows I think in-person is preferable.*

*I was surprised how an online course works well.*

*I think it's very well organised and it has adapted well to Covid19 times.*

*The online format takes the magic away.*

*The course can actually be taught completely online without losing quality, since all aspects of organization can be maintained.*

**TABLE 1** Overview of the activity

<b>Overview of activity</b>	
<b>Total number of courses/workshops</b>	28
In-person	10
Online	18
<b>Number of places</b>	418
<b>Number of attendees</b>	396
<b>Number of attendees registering but not attending</b>	8
<b>Number of individuals</b>	287
<b>Number of individuals attending more than one course</b>	79

**TABLE 2** Number of registrations, percentage of occupancy and number of attendees of each course

	# Registrations	% Take-up	# Attendees
<b>SELF SKILLS</b>			
<b>Personal mastery and emotional intelligence</b>			
Emotional intelligence as a key to success in a scientific environment (OL)	20	Waiting list	19
Mindfulness - a taster for science professionals - 3 Ed. (English, IP & OL; Spanish, OL)	51	Waiting list	51
Peer mentoring in biomedicine - Postdocs (IP)	4	50%	4
Time management in science: how to get the best out of your day - 2 Ed. (IP & OL)	24	Waiting list	22
Search inside yourself (OL)	12	Waiting list	12
<b>Thinking creatively and critically</b>			
Sharpen your reasoning skills: logic and critical thinking for scientists - 3 Ed. (OL)	58	Waiting list	57
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>169</b>		<b>165</b>
<b>INTERPERSONAL SKILLS</b>			
<b>Building relationships</b>			
Cross-cultural working: understanding diversity for enhanced scientific performance (OL)	13	65%	12
Negotiating with confidence, inside or outside science (IP)	11	Waiting list	11
<b>Leading groups</b>			
Effective team playing in science - Mid career and senior staff (IP)	9	90%	9
Getting the right person for your team (OL)	12	100%	12
Project management for scientists (OL)	16	Waiting list	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>		<b>59</b>
<b>SYSTEMS SKILLS</b>			
<b>Writing</b>			
How to write a scientific article* - 5 Ed. (2 IP, 3 OL)	88	Waiting list	86
Becoming a scientific writer (OL)	16	Waiting list	16
<b>Speaking</b>			
Explaining your research to ANYONE - inside or outside science (IP)	12	100%	12
Técnicas actorales para la comunicación científica (IP)	12	Waiting list	12
Say it so it stays: oral skill presentations for scientists* (IP)	10	Waiting list	10
<b>Careers</b>			
Career development and job opportunities after your PhD - 2 editions (OL)	24	Waiting list	24
Interview and job application skills (OL)	12	Waiting list	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>174</b>		<b>172</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>404</b>		<b>396</b>

\* In collaboration with CÍCLIKS programme

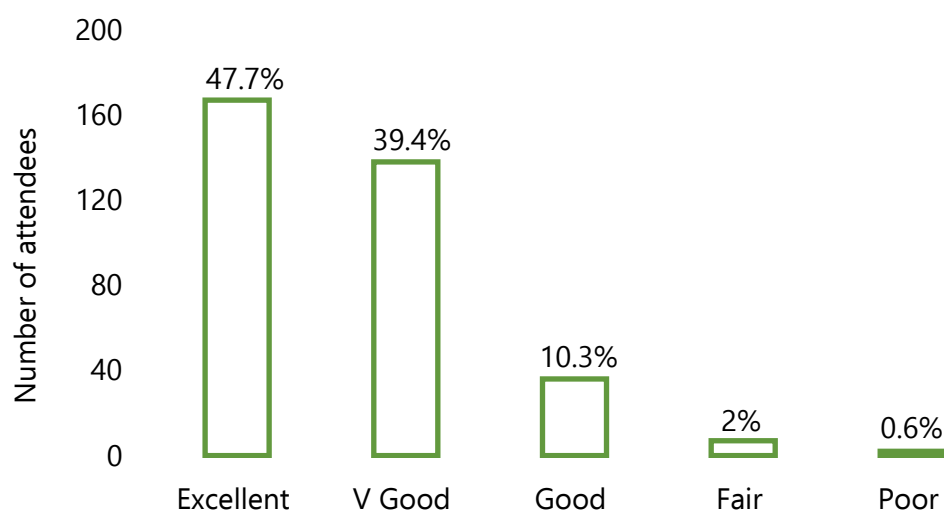
OL: Online

IP: In-person

**TABLE 3** Summary data of attendees' ratings of each aspect of *Intervals'* courses

Reaction sheet questions	% of maximum possible score weighted			
	2020	2019	2018	2008 - 2017
How would you rate this course overall?	<b>86</b>	88	87	85
How would you rate the relevance of this workshop to your professional development?	<b>87</b>	87	85	83
How well did the workshop meet your expectations?	<b>83</b>	85	85	82
What is your overall rating of the trainer(s)?	<b>92</b>	93	93	90
How would you rate the trainer's competence/experience in relation to the subject?	<b>94</b>	94	93	91
How would you rate the trainer's interpersonal and presentation skills?	<b>93</b>	93	93	89
How would you rate the relevance and usefulness of the training materials?	<b>83</b>	84	83	80
How would you rate the venue for this course?	<b>76</b>	79	77	78
How would you rate the overall organisation of the workshop?	<b>90</b>	89	88	85

**FIGURE 1** Summary of scores for all courses – how would you rate the course overall?



**TABLE 4** Number and percentage of attendees by institution

Attendees' institutions	% PRBB residents	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>CRG + CNAG</b>	31,5	<b>110 (27,8%)</b>	121 (30%)	165 (30%)	124 (28%)
<b>CEXS-UPF + IBE</b>	23,5	<b>117 (29,5%)</b>	125 (30,9%)	182 (33%)	128 (29%)
<b>IMIM</b>	28,5	<b>82 (20,7%)</b>	86 (21,3%)	86 (16%)	88 (20%)
<b>ISGLOBAL</b>	11,6	<b>73 (18,4%)</b>	56 (13,9%)	72 (13%)	90 (20%)
<b>EMBL-Barcelona</b>	2,7	<b>5 (1,3%)</b>	2 (0,5%)	19 (3%)	--
<b>Consorti PRBB</b>	2,2	<b>3 (0,8%)</b>	6 (1,5%)	13 (2%)	4 (1%)
<b>EXTERNAL**</b>	--	<b>6 (1,5%)</b>	8 (2%)	17 (3%)	--
<b>CMRB</b>	--	--	--	--	2 (0%)
<b>FPM</b>	--	--	--	--	7 (2%)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>396 (100%)</b>	404 (100%)	554 (100%)	443 (100%)

\* From PRBB 2019 demographic data

\*\* Scientific writing courses - Collaboration with CÍCLIKS programme

**TABLE 5** Number and percentage of attendees by post

Attendees' post	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>Predoc</b>	<b>210 (53%)</b>	195 (48,3%)	291 (53%)	181 (41%)
<b>Postdoc</b>	<b>76 (19%)</b>	115 (28,5%)	116 (21%)	117 (26%)
<b>Senior Invstgtr</b>	<b>20 (5%)</b>	18 (4,5%)	23 (4%)	31 (7%)
<b>Clinician</b>	<b>10 (3%)</b>	6 (1,5%)	1 (0%)	14 (3%)
<b>Tech &amp; lab staff</b>	<b>36 (9%)</b>	29 (7,2%)	47 (8%)	27 (6%)
<b>Admin &amp; support</b>	<b>9 (2%)</b>	16 (4%)	27 (5%)	16 (4%)
<b>Management</b>	<b>14 (4%)</b>	10 (2,5%)	39 (7%)	30 (7%)
<b>Not classified</b>	<b>21 (5%)</b>	15 (3,7%)	10 (2%)	27 (6%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>396 (100%)</b>	404 (100%)	554 (100%)	443 (100%)

**TABLE 6** Percentage women/men 2020

	Men	Women		Men	Women
<b>Attendees to Intervals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>PRBB residents*</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>59</b>
Per position:			Per position:		
<b>Researchers</b>	30	70	<b>Researchers</b>	48	52
Predocs	28	72	Predocs	43	57
Postdocs	33	67	Postdocs	44	56
Senior researchers	45	55	PIs	62	38
Clinicians	30	70	<b>Technicians</b>	34	66
<b>Technicians</b>	22	78	<b>Admin</b>	33	67
<b>Manag, Admin &amp; Support staff</b>	22	78			
<b>Not classified</b>	33	67			

\* From 2019 PRBB demographic data

**TABLE 7** Percentage women/men over the years

	2020		2019		2018	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Intervals attendees</b>	29	71	33	67	27	73
<b>PRBB residents</b>	41	59	41	59	41	59

**TABLE 8** Source of trainers

Source of trainers	2020	2019	2018	2017
PRBB Institutions - Senior staff	<b>10</b>	15	9	10
External (Spain)	<b>11</b>	15	15	13
External (Europe)	<b>2</b>	4	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	34	26	27