

# NEWSLETTER

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### ***Dear Members of ENPP!***

In this edition of the ENPP newsletter we have thorough information on what is going on within the field of positive psychology in Croatia, where one of ENPP board member Ingrid Brdar together with Majda Rijavec the country representative of Croatia inform us about research, publications and programmes within the field of positive psychology in Croatia. Then we have information on the “German Association for Positive Psychology Research” which is a recently founded network in Germany to connect researchers in the field of positive psychology in Germany. We also have an introduction on a special issue of the journal of positive psychology, in an article named “Putting the person back into positive psychology”. There, one of ENPP board members, Dr Kate Hefferon together with Dr Jacqui Synard and Dr Lea Waters write about the importance of deepening, widening and advancing the field of positive psychology through qualitative approaches.

Then we have an introduction on “The Joint Action on Mental health and Wellbeing” which is a European project on a governmental level which **addresses issues related to workplaces, schools, depression, suicide, e-health, community-based** mental health care and **mental health in all policies**.

Last but not least we have an introduction about our next European conference on Positive Psychology in Angers. Both submission and registration is already open. We encourage you to look at the programme, save the dates and start planning your trip to Angers next summer!

I would also like to remind you that ENPP is also on Facebook now, please look us up and like our page:

<https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanNetworkforPositivePsychology>

Dora Gudrun Gudmundsdottir  
President of ENPP



## GREETINGS!

*Dear Members of ENPP,*

We hope that you enjoy our newsletter, please visit our website for further information, where you will also find our former newsletters:

[www.enpp.eu](http://www.enpp.eu)

*Dr Dora Gudrun  
Gudmundsdottir  
President of ENPP*



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# Positive Psychology in Croatia

By Ingrid Brdar (University of Rijeka) and Majda Rijavec (ENPP CR, University of Zagreb)

Croatian scientists have studied many topics related to the well-being long before positive psychology emerged as a separate field in psychology. Positive psychology has attracted significant research attention in the country. Researchers from Croatia took part in all European Conferences on Positive Psychology since 2004, when the second conference was held in Italy. In 2008, Croatian researchers were in charge of the organization of the fourth European Conferences on Positive Psychology in Opatija.

National happiness index has been measured from 2010. It includes several domains: satisfaction with current life situation, satisfaction with personal development and social environment, access to basic needs, emotional state, health, healthy and ecological behavior. Pilar's Barometer of Croatian Society is more comprehensive and explores different domains, one of which is well-being. This project began in 2008, but it is not carried out regularly. So far, it has been conducted four times, and the last round was carried out in 2015.

## Network

Croatian Network of Positive Psychology was founded in 2004. After the conference in Opatija, many researchers and practitioners joined the network. The mailing list comprises more than 400 individuals interested in this field of psychology. Some of them also joined European Network of Positive Psychology.

## Major research areas and research groups

Many researchers explore a variety of topics of positive psychology. There are four larger research groups in Croatia. One research group works at the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar in Zagreb. Ljiljana Kaliterna Lipovcan has conducted various large-scale investigations of quality of life in Croatia. She leads the research project "Croatian longitudinal study of well-being (CRO-WELL)" which has just started. This four-year project is funded by Croatian Science Foundation. It will follow people over time to explain the relationships between well-being and life outcomes, as well as fluctuations in well-being as a function of different individual differences. In addition, the project deals with the question whether well-being can be considered not only as an indicator of the good life, but also an essential part of favorable outcomes and positive life events, as proposed in the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions.

Another group at the University of Zagreb is led by Majda Rijavec from the Faculty of Teacher Education. The focus of their research is on life goals, work orientations, volunteering, forgiveness, and flow experiences. Majda Rijavec leads the project "The role of flow in learning motivation and students' well-being". The project aims at establishing relationship between flow and some other relevant theoretical concept such as academic self-efficacy, self-regulation of motivation and engagement as well as the role of flow in students' well-being and burn-out.

A team of researchers at the University of Rijeka work on the project "Models of psychological well-being: Determinants and cross-cultural aspects of the construct of happiness". Ingrid Brdar, the lead researcher, also participates in a core group leading the cross-cultural project "The Eudaimonic and Hedonic Happiness Investigation" which started in 2008. It aims at exploring hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being using a mixed method approach, in an attempt to find a clearer definition and operationalization of the controversial construct of happiness. The second phase of the EHHI project gathers researchers from 13 countries.

Researchers at University of Zadar study life satisfaction at adolescence and adulthood, and temporal life satisfaction. They explored life satisfaction and quality of life as well as satisfaction in different domains: study satisfaction, satisfaction in parenthood, emotional regulation in educational context.

## **Publications**

The first book on positive psychology was published in 1997 by Majda Rijavec (Miracles do happen: Psychology of positive thinking). The university textbook on positive psychology was published in 2008 (Positive psychology: Scientific exploration of human strengths and happiness by Rijavec, Miljković & Brdar). In 2011 two books of collected papers were published. The first book, "[Positive Psychology in Education](#)", was edited by Miljković and Rijavec. The second book, entitled "The Human Pursuit of Well-Being: A Cultural Approach", was edited Ingrid Brdar. The book brings together selected papers presented at the 4th European Conference of Positive Psychology. Furthermore, two special journal issues were devoted to positive psychology: Journal of General Social Issues (2006) and Psychological Topics (2009). Several authors have published papers on positive psychology in distinguished journals, like Journal of Happiness Studies and Journal of Positive Psychology.

Majda Rijavec and Dubravka Miljković published many popular books on positive psychology (psychology of irrational beliefs and psychology of happiness and the good life) and different applied topics: positive psychology at work, positive discipline in the classroom, and psychology of positive people.

## Teaching positive psychology courses

Several universities include positive psychology courses in their curricula, either as compulsory or as elective course. Two faculties offer positive psychology as elective course both at masters and at doctoral psychology programs: Faculty of Teacher Education (University of Zagreb) and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (University of Rijeka). At graduate level, positive psychology is offered at University of Rijeka (Faculty of Teacher Education) and Croatian Catholic University (Zagreb). Positive psychology is also offered as an elective course at Faculty of Science at University of Split. These courses provide an overview of main theories and research in positive psychology.

## Programs in schools

There have been some attempts to implement positive psychology programs in Croatia as well. In one-year program (15-25 sessions during the school year) 115 high school students from 5 schools were included (Rijavec & Miljković, 2007). Topics such as awareness of positive experiences, gratitude, forgiveness, creativity and optimism were taught. Similar programs were implemented in second year high school students (Šverko et al. 2009) and third and fourth graders in elementary school (Ivanković & Rijavec, 2012).

## German Association for Positive Psychology Research (DGPPF)

In order to **connect researchers** in the area of Positive Psychology in Germany and in the German-speaking countries, we have recently founded the German Association for Positive Psychology Research (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Positiv-Psychologische Forschung, DGPPF). We are a network of researchers of diverse disciplines who are working within the field of Positive Psychology.

Our aims are...

... to **connect** researchers of all disciplines who work within Positive Psychology

... to **evaluate** and extend positive psychological knowledge based on **scientific methods**

... to **foster** and propagate Positive Psychology in **academic education and research**

A first conference is will take place in Trier, Germany 19.-21.05.2016. Abstracts can be submitted until January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at [konferenz@dgppf.de](mailto:konferenz@dgppf.de)

To become a member or for further information please go to <http://dgppf.de>

Should you have questions, please contact Prof. Dr. Michaela Brohm (President) or Jun.-Prof. Dr. Corinna Peifer (Vize-President) at [info@dgppf.de](mailto:info@dgppf.de).

# Putting the person back into positive psychology: Deepening, widening and advancing the field through qualitative approaches

Journal of Positive Psychology Special Issue in Qualitative Research. I (Kate Hefferon) have been a qualitative researcher for the past 10 years and have been privileged to work with some of the most innovative and pioneering qualitative researchers during this time. By completing my graduate work in Europe, I was exposed to many different ways of thinking about knowledge formation, critical debates regarding the traditional psychological methods of inquiry and indeed the spectrum of paradigms one can choose from when wanting to understand a phenomenon of interest. Despite this predominantly European acceptance of qualitative research, North American and indeed positive psychology approaches have traditionally taken a more positivist stance on research practice. Indeed, I (KH) have witnessed (and been the recipient of!) many incorrect rejections of qualitative journal articles based on: too small a sample size; inability to generalize, replicate or follow a 3-study design, etc. These issues are indeed relevant for traditional positivistic approaches, and yet not for so many other epistemological approaches.

After many years of espousing the importance of qualitative research, in 2013, the four of us met at IPPA to present on a subject that means a great deal to us all - challenging the monopolization of positivistic methodologies within positive psychology. During our symposium, we argued that positive psychology was truly missing out on the “human” elements of optimal functioning, by eliminating or underestimating more phenomenological, social constructivist epistemological approaches. Indeed, this lack of qualitative research has been a criticism of positive psychology since its inception. Qualitative research has the ability to uncover novel and deeper understandings of phenomena in which positive psychologists are interested. It can help explain and explore events that would be nigh impossible via traditional quantitative means.

And yet, there is a dearth of qualitative research within the field and this can be for several reasons including a lack of understanding regarding the:

- i) Aims and purposes of qualitative research
- ii) Rigorous and systematic processes applied to qualitative research and
- iii) Applicability and usefulness of qualitative research

Among many of our aims for the special issue, one in particular was to showcase qualitative research in the field of positive psychology and help to educate researchers in the area about the three points above.

## ***Overview of Special Issue Submissions***

In preparing this special edition for the Journal of Positive Psychology, I [Jacqui Synard] have been very much inspired by the passion, hard work, and dedication of my co-editors as we strive to develop a qualitative research forum for positive psychology. It was exciting to be flooded with articles and to think, "It's real and we're not alone here!"

Reviewing these recent submissions provides a quick, cursory pulse on the state of qualitative research in our field. Three things stand out. Firstly, most of the qualitative submissions were as a part of mixed methods studies rooted in the post-positivist research paradigm. Secondly, many of the submissions used deductive inquiry, with Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis methodology being the most popular approach. Thirdly, qualitative research was often embraced as a method of data collection as opposed to a fully-implemented research methodology. The latter includes attention to obtuse-sounding yet important philosophical assumptions like ontology and epistemology which are critical for ensuring the level of research rigor that positive psychology has been predicated upon.

So how do we capitalize on this momentum to move qualitative research forward? The key is openness to different forms of knowledge by both qualitative and quantitative researchers alike. My current career in counselling and past career in strategic marketing has taught me to embrace both qualitative and quantitative approaches which wonderfully combine to inform very rich practice. Obtaining training in qualitative methods, partnering with experienced researchers, and simply reading more qualitative studies will help those interested in quantitative build their skills. Finally, journals and other forums can open doors through steps which range from recruiting qualitative research reviewers to developing formats that are qualitative friendly.

### ***The Importance of Qualitative Research in Applied Settings***

People's personal accounts are important and valuable as they are the representation of the lived experience providing us with a unique insight into their world. As an applied practitioner in elite sport, having worked across a number of Olympic sports and currently with British Cycling, it is clear to me (Arabella Ashfield) that our staple is people; dealing with the challenges they face and supporting them in the process of optimising their physical and mental capabilities. Therefore, it is imperative that research captures what an experience means to an individual, how it affects them and the relationships between associated thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Positive psychology has much to offer high performance sport, however, the research field is at risk of limiting the scope of practice, and knowledge of conditions, concepts and specific experiences if we fail to hear from the individual. It would be remiss of us as researchers to risk potential mis-conceptualisation based upon an insufficient understanding of the lived experience. Moreover, applied approaches may be curtailed to the detriment of the individual. As such, we want to champion the qualitative methods

that progress the field and develop our understanding whilst drawing upon the breadth of methodological approaches which can inform applied practice.

### ***Moving Towards More Inclusive Methodologies***

My (Lea Waters) own introduction to qualitative research is quite recent compared to my co-editors of the special edition. My training was squarely in quantitative traditions and my publications over the past 2 decades have used large samples with multivariate analysis and have come from the basis of objectivism. The entry into qualitative research has given me a breath of fresh air and allowed me to reflect on my own role as a researcher in the research process. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr Kate Hefferon here because it was she who encouraged me to explore qualitative research. In 2011, I had the good fortune of travelling from Australia to London in order to present my work on positive education to the UEL MAPP students. After the class I spoke with Kate about the research I was aiming to do exploring the role of gratitude in school leaders and my concern that a survey study would not really unearth the full effect of how gratitude operates. Kate pointed me towards some qualitative research readings and I embarked on my first qualitative study. The study was successfully published and the deductive thematic analysis I used undoubtedly provided a rich picture of gratitude for school leaders and the dualistic effects that gratitude can provoke. Working as an editor on this special edition has exposed me to a whole new world of research, it has helped me to question some of my deeply held epistemological ideas and has provided me with an understanding of a range of new methods.

Above we have aimed to outline the driving forces behind the special issue and its conception as well as our personal experiences and beliefs around the importance of qualitative research. We are delighted that this special issue showcases a range of articles from established practitioners in the applied field as well as luminaries from several established and utilised methodological approaches. Together these prominent researchers describe their views on the contribution that can be made by qualitative methods. Alongside these pieces, the special issue will present a range of empirical and discussion articles exploring a variety of different contexts and topics of research. We are excited about what the special edition will offer the positive psychology community and hopeful it open a doorway to more qualitative research being embraced by positive psychology.

### **Acknowledgements**

The editorial team would like to thank Bob Emmons and Milla Titova for their support and hard work in making this Special Issue a reality.

## The Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being

The need to include mental health among the first priorities of the public health agenda has been increasingly recognized in Europe over the past decades. This recognition is based on the existing evidence on the magnitude of mental health problems in European countries. Mental disorders are highly prevalent in Europe and are a major burden on society. According to estimations of WHO they affect every fourth citizen at least once during their life and can be found in more than 10% of the European Union (EU) population during any given year. There is also an association between mental health problems and losses of productive human capital. EU mental health surveys revealed that there are substantial costs associated with mental disorders, such as higher presenteeism and absenteeism or significantly reduced earnings among those with a mental disorders, which also are the leading cause for people receiving work disability benefits.

On the other hand, there is increasing data proving that **positive mental health and well being** is a key factor for social cohesion, economic progress and sustainable development in the EU. Mental health is a human right and a key resource for the success of the EU as a knowledge-based society and the accomplishment of the objectives of the Lisbon strategy.

### ***Working towards a European framework for action***

Significant efforts have been made by EU and Member States (MS) to improve mental health of the populations. Yet, despite all these efforts, a lot remains to be done. In European countries, at least 30% of people with severe mental disorders do not have access to mental health care, and the majority of the populations don't benefit from the interventions that have proved to be effective in prevention and promotion.

It was in this context that the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being, launched in June 2008, agreed that "there is a need for a decisive political step to make mental health and well-being a key priority" and that "the mental health and well-being of citizens and groups, including all age groups, different genders, ethnic origins and socio-economic groups, needs to be promoted based on targeted interventions that take into account and are sensitive to the diversity of the European population".

*Positive mental health and well-being  
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development in the EU*





To attain these objectives, a series of thematic conferences were organized, from 2009 to 2011, to facilitate the sharing of experiences and to strengthen collaboration between stakeholders. Finally, giving sequence to all these events, in 2011, the Council invited Member States and the Commission to set up a joint action on mental health and well-being under the health program.

The Joint Action for Mental Health and Well-being (JA MH-WB), launched in 2013, aims at building a framework for action in mental health policy at the European level and builds on previous work developed under the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being.

The objective of the JA MH-WB is to contribute to the promotion of mental health and well-being, the prevention of mental disorders and the improvement of care and social inclusion of people with mental disorders in Europe.

### **The Joint Action in a Nutshell**

**Number of countries:** 28

**Number of partners:** 51 (30 associated and 21 collaborating)

**Funding:** Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency (CHAFAEA) / DG Sanco

**Coordination:** NOVA Medical School /Faculdade de Ciências Médicas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

**Start date:** February 1, 2013

**End Date:** January 31, 2016

***The Joint Action addresses issues related to five areas:***

1. promotion of mental health at the **workplaces**;
2. promotion of mental health in **schools**;
3. promoting action against **depression and suicide** and implementation of **e-health** approaches;
4. developing **community-based and socially inclusive** mental health care for people with severe mental disorders; and
5. promoting the integration of **mental health in all policies**.

**DEPRESSION, SUICIDE AND E-HEALTH** Aims to develop a framework for action at the level of policies, infrastructures and interventions for prevention and treatment of depression and suicide and mainstreaming implementation of E-health interventions. The Joint Action will address prevention of depression and suicide in different target groups throughout the lifespan; identify solutions for implementing evidence-based interventions including e-mental health and; integrate e-health interventions into the package of health services and clinical practice of health professionals.

**COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES** Aims to develop a framework for action on community-based and socially inclusive approaches to mental health in Europe, with a special emphasis on transition from institutional care to community care for people with severe mental disorders. The Joint Action will evaluate progress made and share experience in community-based and socially inclusive approaches in mental health in EU and; develop a framework for action at EU and MS level to tackle challenges identified in this field.

**MENTAL HEALTH AT THE WORKPLACE** The main objective of this part of the Joint Action is to improve practices and policies that contribute to health at work in the context of psychosocial stress including support for affected employees. In the center of our activities is the implementation of a structured exchange of experiences between relevant stakeholders in the fields of “labour and health policy”, “social partners” and “social security” across all participating member states. In particular, our activities focus on the cross-sectoral co-operation, mainly involving stakeholders from the health policy and labour policy sectors.

**MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS** Aims to strengthen the cooperation between health, social and educational sectors. The Joint Action will map the scientific evidence and the best practices relevant for the implementation of effective actions in the field of mental illness prevention and mental health and well-being promotion, including education attainment, among children and adolescents in Europe and; write a report with results from situational analyses and recommendation for action to promote mental health of children/adolescents in EU & MS.

**MENTAL HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES** Aims to assess and recommend policy processes, infrastructures and instruments that strengthen the links between mental health and other policy areas. The Joint Action will define a set of commonly agreed objectives; map the practices that takes into account the mental health implications of decisions in order to improve population mental health and mental health equity and; identify the best practices and deliver a reference action framework to promote collaboration across sectors at EU, Member States and regional level.



## ECPP 8th in Angers, France in 2016



The European Conference on Positive Psychology, ECPP8 will take place in Angers, France from 28th June to 1st July 2016.

The [registration](#) and the [abstract submission](#) are now open.

The Scientific Committee is impatient to receive as many good abstracts as possible to make ECPP8 in 2016 a great event for Positive Psychology in Europe.

To offer our attendees a huge variety of presentations, we have organized a program around 13 themes and topics regarding Positive Psychology. More information [here](#)

We want to thank the Keynote Speakers who have already accepted to come next June:

Towards a European Positive Psychology (Chair: Dora Guðrún Guðmundsdóttir, & Jan Walburg)

Positive Psychology in Society and Communities (Chair: Pascale Haag)

Positive Psychology in Education (Chair: Ilona Boniwell)

Economy and Positive Psychology (Chair: Claudia Senik)

Meaning, engagement, and wellbeing: Positive Psychology at work (Lisa Vivoll Straume)

Positive Psychology Interventions (Chair: Antonia Csillik/Chiara Ruini)

Meaning, strengths, values and spiritual accomplishments (Chair: to be confirmed)

Positive Psychology across the lifespan (Chair: Colette Aguerre)

Flow (Chair: Marta Bassi/Jean Heutte)

Positive Psychology, Health, Sports, and physical activity (Chair: Joan Duda)

Flourishing (Chair: Felicia Huppert)

Mindfulness, Loving Kindness Meditation and Positive psychology (Chair: Rebecca Shankland)

La diversité de la psychologie positive francophone (Chair: Jacques Lecomte)

Looking forward to seeing you in Angers,

Charles Martin-Krumm for ECPP 2016

