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Editorial

Pr. Dr. Christine Roland-Lévy, IAAP President (2018-2022)



As we are still in the COVID-19 Pandemic, this Special Issue of *Applied Psychology Around the World* (APAW: Volume 3, issue 3) is devoted to Work and Organizational Psychology. The first Section of the issue has been prepared by Barbara Kozusznik, the President of Division 1 of IAAP, Vicente Martínez-Tur, the President-elect of Division 1, and Salvador Carbonell, with the specific overall theme of *How organizations coped with the pandemic lockdown and the transition to remote work: An international perspective from young work and organizational psychologists*.

This section of the issue focuses on the following papers:

- *Pandemic shock and the accelerated transition towards remote work*, by Vicente Martínez-Tur, Barbara Kozusznik and Salvador Carbonell.
- *Beyond Germany, Spain and USA: A practitioner's view on the transition from face-to-face to teleworking*, by Alexander Rogalla.
- *"Change is the only constant" How an agile company culture adapted itself for remote working in the COVID-19 times and succeeded in providing a positive internship experience*, by Luise Roessler and Gabriel Ruiz de Almodóvar.
- *When entry into the labor market coincided with the COVID-19 outbreak*, by Carolina Bolito.
- *Employer-employee perspective on the digitalization of human resources practices: An experience from Germany*, by İpek Ünlü.
- *The challenges of a 'virtual, in-residence Winter-School' on designing interventions in Work, Organization, and Personnel Psychology in multi-cultural and global contexts*, by Carolina Moliner, José M. Peiró, Luminita Patras, Isabel Rodríguez and Vicente Martínez-Tur.
- *New Job Board for Work and Organizational Psychology: A Division 1 initiative*.

Moreover, this Special Issue of APAW, includes a second Section based on a report on the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HPLF) side event, organized by Walter Reichman, with Judy Kuriansky, as a great moderator. This event, which took place, on line, on July 12th 2021, was a great success. It dealt with *"Achieving Decent Work for Resilient and Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19: Contributions of Humanitarian Work Psychology to the Economic, Social, and Environmental Dimensions of Sustainable Development for All Populations."*

The speakers were in the order of their presentations, first, Dr. Stuart Carr, a professor of psychology at Massey University in Auckland, New Zealand, who founded the field about humanitarian work psychology, which promotes decent work and wellbeing as a road map to achieving the UN sustainable development goals.

The second speaker was Jeff Saltzman, an Industrial/Organizational Psychologist, who founded the company *OrgVitality*, that does management consulting. Importantly, in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, *OrgVitality* did a survey about employee's reaction to the pandemic, including their fears, all their emotional feelings. That's now available for free to help companies understand how to best support their workers during those times. You can find it on their website on work.orgvitality.com. Jeff Saltzman, who wrote the book *"Creating the Vital Organization: Balancing Short-Term Profits with Long-Term Success"* presented on the topic of *'Decent Work: Pandemic Impact on Workers Expectations'*.

The third presentation was given by a tremendous innovator, Therese Fitzpatrick, who is serving as the Global Leader for the implementation of the United Nations System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. It's been pioneered by the

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United Nations Secretary-General to serve the mental health needs of the UN staff, which is critical. Therese Fitzpatrick presented on the topic of mental health and wellbeing of personnel during COVID and beyond.

The fourth speaker was Paul Dommel, who is in the private sector at IBM, where he is the Global Director for Public Service and Civil Development to Civil Government, which is other than defense, and it addresses education and development. Notably, he works with populations like veterans to prevent tragic suicide, which is so important. We're going to hear about that. Paul has worked all around the world; in the US, Asia-Pacific, in the Europe and Latin America. He knows all the cultures, and combines his knowledge of technology, expertise about work and commitment to mental health, for his talk on trauma, the pandemic and the return to work, what's the role of technology?

The last invited speaker was Dr. Lori Foster, the President-Elect of IAAP. Lori is a professor of industrial organizational psychology at North Carolina state university and at the university of Cape Town in South Africa. Lori is a leader in the emerging field of behavioral science, this has been acknowledged by the UN secretary general as Lori was the behavioral science advisor to the previous secretary general at the UN and also in the Obama administration. Her topic dealt with applying psychology in order to equip

public servants for agenda 2030, connecting work to SDG 16, which is about peaceful societies.

Concerning the third Section, Charles J. de Wolff, who was the Secretary General and Treasurer of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), from 1980 to 1990, having served on its Executive Committee since 1971, passed away last June. Since Charles was an industrial psychologist, it seemed appropriate to include Milton D. Hakel's obituary of Charles J. de Wolff (1930 – 2021) in this issue.

The next issue of APAW will be devoted to the new generation of Applied Psychologists with the abstracts of the papers presented during our *Early Career Marathon* which is taking place around the clock on the 16/17th of October 2021. Do not hesitate to attend!

Before closing this Editorial, I wish to welcome all our new members who recently joined IAAP, thanks to the involvement of our members during our *Each One Reach One* campaign. I specifically wish to thank Luminita Patras, IAAP Membership Officer, and Ginger Whelan who got the initial idea of this project.

Christine Roland-Lévy, President of IAAP (2018-2022)

Section 1

How Organizations Coped with the Pandemic Lockdown and the Transition to Remote Work: *An International Perspective from Young WOP Professionals*

Editors:

Barbara Kozusznik, Vincente Martínez-Tur, and Salvador Carbonell

Pandemic shock and the accelerated transition towards remote work

Vicente Martínez-Tur¹, Barbara Kozusznik², and Salvador Carbonell³

The Division 1 (Work & Organizational Psychology) of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) organized this special issue dedicated to exploring how individuals and organizations coped with the “shock” created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 lockdown, many organizations around the world were obligated to adapt to an accelerated transition from face-to-face to remote work. It was a unique situation in which organizations, their members and teams had to reorganize their processes and activities over the space of just a few days. For this special issue, we have the opportunity to share four experiences of young WOP (Work and Organization Psychology) professionals who experienced this transition in different companies and countries. As students of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master degree in Work and Organizational Psychology, they had just begun their professional internships, which is one of the last stages of training in this international program, supported by the European Union, that encourages the participation of graduates in psychology from different regions of the world. They had a privileged perspective to see how organizations adapted to the necessity of making a rapid transition to virtual work. Students agreed to face-to-face internships with their delegated companies, and they began their professional experience in the traditional manner; however, within the space of just a few days, they had to confront the sudden change to remote work. In their articles, they describe their experiences and offer valuable testimony, so others can understand what organizations and societies faced in transiting to technological communication, and the subsequent changes in work organization that was accelerated as a result of



the pandemic. In addition, this volume provides a description of how the Winter School of the aforementioned Master program adapted to this situation, organizing an international and multicultural training that included education, networking and social events digitally.

Focusing on the shock created by the pandemic, and how participants in this special issue experienced and felt the rapid changes that occurred, we summarize in the following paragraphs some central topics. It is understood that they are elaborated further in the authors' articles.

Change and Adaptation

Generally speaking, individuals and organizations experienced a shock or surprise due to the unleashing of the virus. In addition to unexpected changes, there was an uncertainty about the professional consequences of the pandemic (e.g., loss of jobs), and the duration of the lockdown. The initial expectation that the lockdown was to be short-lived did not turn out to be the reality. Therefore, organizations

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implemented strategies for adaptation. In some, initiatives related to digitalization had already been initiated before the pandemic, and they turned out to be very helpful. Other organizations, however, were not as prepared and so had to implement more changes with regard to working remotely. Anticipatory management existed in some cases. For example, in some companies, simulations had already been created to prepare the organization for the event of a possible lockdown. These simulations included evaluating the needs of remote operations and stress management.

Individual performance

There was a shared view that the transition to remote work had a significant influence on individual performance. However, these perceptions were varied. Some participants indicated that they could concentrate on tasks and still achieve high quality results because there were no interruptions. By contrast, other participants reported that virtual meetings were so frequent that individual work suffered. They reported that there was a need to delimitate the time dedicated to individual performance versus the time connected to virtual meetings.

Team performance and leadership

Participants also perceived a change in team performance. Working remotely required a strong commitment in terms of coordination and communication because employees were not together in the same physical space. Therefore, it was even more necessary than before to clarify expectations, goals, and the distribution of tasks among team members. Leaders had a crucial role in this aspect, establishing the context for adequate remote communication and coordination. In addition, leaders had the responsibility of facilitating the transmission of the organizational culture through digital means.

Managing stress and well-being

The transition towards remote working due to the COVID-19 lockdown was a potentially strong stressor

due to at least three reasons. First, the change from face-to-face to remote work was itself stressful because it required alternative ways to organize tasks. Second, the fear of contagion existed (and still exists) in our societies, influencing us all in our daily work. Finally, the uncertainty about the future (e.g., the possibility of losing one's employment) was also potentially stressful. Organizations implemented different strategies to alleviate and reduce negative stress and its consequences, including the support of clinical psychologists, organization of virtual sport classes, the preparation of informal social events (e.g., virtual coffee breaks) so that employees could talk about topics unrelated to their jobs, and share their views about the situation beyond formal tasks, and the transparency of information related to the situation of the organization and the future of jobs.

Competences

Some competences were emphasized as relevant in remote work such as:

- **Flexibility:** openness to new experiences and using initiatives, as well as looking for solutions that take into account the variability of situations (adapting to the conditions of a changing environment, considering different perspectives, a willingness to experiment with new ways of working);
- **Problem-solving:** obtaining and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions about issues (formulating/redefining problems, selection of data, critical and constructive evaluation of performance);
- **Self-management:** planning, organizing and monitoring the accomplishment of one's own tasks by setting priorities and goals, while making optimal use of resources (the ability to formulate goals, action planning, obtaining support from others);
- **Stress management:** accepting that an effective performance can be reached despite higher levels of stress, and dealing with stressful situations (mastering the emotional/stress response,

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tolerating stressors such as time pressure, rivalry, struggle to find appropriate resources, failures, and balancing the professional and private spheres);

- Time management and balance in teams: balancing individual performance and performance as a team member in virtual meetings. These competences should be developed to help young WOP professionals be effective and satisfied.

Main concerns and challenges

Some obstacles and challenges seemed inherent in working remotely. An important aspect to be considered was isolation. Generally speaking, remote work reduced the degree to which employees interacted with each other both professionally and socially. The interactions within teams tended to focus on tasks, whereas informal communication was limited. This lack of informal interaction was especially evident for employees outside the in-group. When employees were physically present in the organization, they had the opportunity to interact with people from other departments or teams, but this became very limited when working remotely. Thus, there were obstacles in encouraging social interactions, learning from

others, and assimilating the organizational culture. Another challenge was the balance between work and other facets of life (e.g., family, leisure). Although remote work could facilitate flexibility, there was no clear separation between work and other areas of life. Job tasks and other activities outside work (e.g., education of children), were likely to overlap, creating difficulties in disconnecting from work and thus negated the ability to re-energize.

Conclusion for the future

Despite difficulties and obstacles, young WOP professionals who participated in this special issue were, in general, happy with their experiences. The pandemic accelerated the move towards a more technological work environment and a new way to organize professional responsibilities. Organizational practices, as well as government policies, need to facilitate new templates for organization of tasks into more hybrid models. This will require a change in management that balances productivity and focus on employees' mental and physical health. There will be exciting times ahead in which the psychologists will participate to contribute to more efficient and healthy workplaces.

Beyond Germany, Spain and the USA: A practitioner's view on the transition from face-to-face to teleworking

Alexander Rogalla¹

As many of us have realized, in the past year and a half, the pandemic has caused many changes in our professional and personal lives. One major change was the transition from what used to be the norm - face-to-face work environments. This changed almost overnight to a completely virtual work dynamic. This transition process evolved rapidly and brought with it feelings of uncertainty and a lack of social connection. This article describes my experience as a student from Germany, participating in an international Erasmus Mundus Joint Master degree in Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology, and now currently working as a business consultant in Berlin. This case illustrates the rapid transition from a face-to-face work environment to an exclusively remote one. Though initially the experience was challenging and frustrating, in the end, it turned out to be an insightful, joyful, and even efficient alternative, though with decidedly less social interaction.

The initial plan

In 2020, I was in my fourth and last semester of the international Erasmus Mundus Master's program and lived and studied in Valencia, Spain. For my internship I applied for and was accepted into an international program at the University of Puerto Rico, one of the university's partner schools in the Commonwealth territory of the United States. My practical work experience was initially planned to be carried out in two different organizations in Puerto Rico: the first at a major international financial conglomerate, and the second at the department of industrial and organizational psychology at the University of Puerto



Rico as a training provider. Furthermore, I was excited to participate in a humanitarian project that provides services to victims of Hurricanes and Earthquakes in Puerto Rico. During my internship, I had two academic tutors: one at the University of Puerto Rico, another at the University of Valencia, and a third professional tutor in the major financial conglomerate (the organization where the internship was principally conducted). The main function of the academic tutor from the University of Valencia was to coordinate and organize my work experience, whereas the two others directly supported my practical experience by supervising my work and providing me with feedback.

After my last year of studies at the University of Valencia, in the beginning of March 2020 I returned to Germany (my country of origin), to disconnect and visit my family. What had actually been planned to be a short visit before heading to Puerto Rico, it turned out to be a stay that lasted over the next several months due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated travel restrictions.

¹ Business Consultant

The moment I realized that all the planning was useless

Two weeks before the official start of my internship, the United States publicly announced travel restrictions for Europeans to all United States territories. That night was shocking, but somehow also expected. The days before had already been filled with suppositions and signs that this might occur. However, the moment I realized that I would possibly miss out on this great opportunity and all its implications - such as not progressing with my Master's degree - was frustrating. I felt disappointed and sad, especially since all the preparation and planning felt useless. On the night of the official announcement, I immediately wrote to my academic tutors at the University of Puerto Rico and the University of Valencia to find a feasible alternative solution that would enable me to somehow participate in the internship despite the sudden changes. However, the response was a categorically 'no' to my physically being there, as the University of Puerto Rico had also decided to suspend all student exchanges including external student internships. Even though officially the travel restrictions were meant to be just for 30 days, none of us believed that this would turn out to be the case. To complicate the situation even further, the University of Valencia restricted any face-to-face work. Moreover, the situation and regulations in every country (Spain, Germany, the United States) and the implicated organizations (the two universities and the major financial conglomerate) were completely different. Therefore, I was left with two options: to either indefinitely postpone my internship or to follow the recommendation of my academic tutors which was to look for another internship in Europe. Neither of these options were acceptable to me. Thus, the only feasible solution to successfully complete my internship in time was to take the initiative, and to propose to all the institutions involved (the University of Valencia, the University of Puerto Rico and the financial conglomerate) that we convert what had been designed to be a face-to-face internship into a virtual

one. I was thankful that all involved parties approved my proposal, and I was granted the virtual internship without the need to either postpone or cancel it.

The initial period and organization of my virtual internship

I officially started my internship at the end of March 2020 and finished at the beginning of July 2020. During this time, I worked mainly on three different projects: two within the major financial conglomerate (designing and implementing a leadership program for future talents, and a cultural exchange project), and one for the Centre of Practice at the University of Puerto Rico - a workshop on "Work-life Balance for teleworkers during the COVID-19 crisis".

My initial predisposition towards the virtual work experience was mixed. On the one hand, I was pleased that I had the opportunity to do the internship virtually during the pandemic; on the other hand, I felt a level of disappointment as I had prepared my internship beforehand with great care, and had eagerly looked forward to learning about the culture and the working and living environments in Puerto Rico. It was frustrating that even after successfully applying and receiving the permission to conduct my internship at the partner university, in the end I was not allowed to experience it in person. Nevertheless, I approached the internship with an open mind, though with lowered expectations, because I doubted that this remote internship could provide as much value as the face-to-face work experience would have offered. However, in the very first meeting with my professional tutor and supervisor, these doubts were erased, and I instantly felt welcomed and appreciated. She proposed several interesting projects in which I could significantly support the team even remotely from Germany. From the very beginning of my internship the organization seemed to already be prepared for online work, possibly due to their continuous interactions with different countries, and the fact that the department I worked for

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was the innovation unit of the company. Thus, they were more adept than the rest of the organization to adapt quickly and effectively to the sudden changes caused by the pandemic. Moreover, as an international organization with offices throughout the United States and other countries, they were required to have already established reliable ways of working virtually even before the pandemic.

Each week, I had two to three virtual meetings with my professional tutor. One meeting was to receive my weekly tasks, and second meeting, near the end of the week, was to clarify any questions and to ask for guidance on topics that needed to be prioritized. The third meeting, usually at the beginning of the following week, was to present and discuss my work with my supervisor (my professional tutor) and other colleagues. Interestingly, it was common practice to hold the meetings with the cameras turned off, which turned the meetings into what felt more like phone calls than video conferences. This left more of an impression on me than I realized, because towards the end of my internship, I increasingly missed the friendly faces on my screen of my co-workers.

Added to the aforementioned meetings, once a week I received feedback and suggestions from my academic tutor at the University of Puerto Rico, with the goal of improving my work. Thus, throughout the whole internship I had many opportunities to contact either my academic or professional tutors. My personal experience with the online work processes and virtual meetings was fluid from the beginning, since, due to projects in my Master's program, I was already used to working remotely within a culturally diverse team across the different countries. However, working fully remotely within an organization that I was unfamiliar with, was a completely new experience.

The transition from face-to-face to teleworking: the lack of connectivity and social relationships

The transition from face-to-face to teleworking in the innovation unit was smooth. The reason for that might lie in the very open and innovative climate of the unit. This innovative climate was also reflected in the leadership style of my supervisor, who was highly participative in transformational aspects and often used expeditious project management techniques. Even though this way of working might be due to the transition to teleworking, I had the feeling that this was common practice in the team even before the pandemic. Nevertheless, I believe that the innovation unit was quite an exception in the organization since the overall organizational structure and culture was more hierarchical, reflecting the need of control in other departments. For instance, in other units, most decisions needed to be approved first by the next highest hierarchal level, resulting in less decision-making authority for employees at each level, and causing slower change-adaptation in the other departments. Furthermore, the common leadership style in many of the other departments was more transactional (management led by objectives). In contrast, the culture of the innovation unit can be described as a clan culture with high levels of collaboration, flexibility and focus on internal, long-term development.

Throughout my internship, I only partially received information about how the organization as a whole was prepared to make the shift from face-to-face to a virtual work environment, and how other employees were managing the transition. Since I worked only in one department of the organization and my interpersonal contacts were restricted to three virtual meetings per week, interacting essentially with the same two to four people, I do not know how the transition

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within the rest of the company was achieved. In contrast, with regard to the project for the Centre of Practice at the University of Puerto Rico, I was more informed, hearing often the main challenges, such as, for instance, the double burden working parents experienced in having to also take on the education of their children, the social isolation, and lack of limits between work and personal life.

Another major consequence of the transition from face-to-face to the virtual dynamic was that, as I was working individually, I experienced a lack of opportunity to work in teams and the corresponding lack of development of related competences. Moreover, since I was not directly working with others, I did not have the opportunity to learn as much as I might have had I had more opportunities for co-operation with colleagues. As a result, I developed more individual competences, such as adaptability, flexibility, problem-solving, and self-management, rather than competences related to collaboration and teamwork. Key success factors in my virtual work experience were to divide my given tasks into actionable steps, set daily goals, and prioritize tasks. Even more important in the virtual setting was effective communication, since it takes more time and precision to convey a message virtually than in person. Throughout my internship it was crucial for me to quickly adapt to new technologies, tasks and demands and to deal with uncertainty. Even though the given autonomy and responsibility was challenging, it was also stimulating since I had the freedom to work on the given tasks in a self-reliant way, and I developed many relevant individual competences that I probably would not have developed otherwise.

Establishing a social relationship with my supervisor and colleagues through solely online communication was easier than expected, since the people I worked with were all very welcoming and open-hearted. For instance, my supervisor provided me with an inspirational first day “welcome presentation” of the organization and the team, with a lot of anecdotes, amusing stories and pictures of the company site, coupled

with headings such as “what you would have seen, if you were here”. Thus, I instantly felt welcomed and connected to the team and the organization. This experience continued throughout my whole internship since everyone I met was very friendly and helpful, and they always encouraged me to contact them if I needed any support. Furthermore, they always tried to provide me with as much background information and interesting facts about the organization and its internal processes as possible. However, besides the regular virtual business meetings there was little room to genuinely connect with others socially since the communication between meetings was mainly work-related (e.g., to specify certain aspects, or to quickly answer work-related questions). Nevertheless, due to the regular virtual meetings and discussions, I felt a great friendship with my colleagues, even though we never met in person. I am looking forward to finally meeting these people in the flesh, which is something I am planning to do in the near future.

In my opinion, establishing social connections is one major difference between a face-to-face internship versus a virtual experience. In face-to-face work, you can more easily meet and get to know your colleagues. However, within the virtual environment these social interactions need to be planned, since they will not happen within strictly scheduled meetings. Thus, for an online work experience, it is vital to establish opportunities and open forums to give opportunities for interpersonal and social interactions aside from those based solely on work-related topics. Since there were no planned social events or any other social interactions within my virtual work experience, I did not have the opportunity to get to know my colleagues and supervisor in a more personal way outside of the work context. The reason was that due to the unexpected and rapid transition from face-to-face to teleworking, the organization and the team were busy solving and managing other more urgent challenges. Hence, there was simply no time for organizing and attending social meetings or events.

Which was better and what was missing: face-to-face vs. online

Comparing the virtual with a face-to-face work experience, there are several pros and cons associated with both dynamics. On the positive side, in my experience in the virtual work environment, I was trusted to be self-reliant and was obligated to rely on my own academic and professional skills and capabilities, as no-one knew to take the responsibility to guide me in their way of approaching a given task. I needed to use and familiarize myself with multiple technologies, websites, and internet platforms to accomplish my weekly goals on my own. Further, throughout my internship I undoubtedly had greater flexibility in scheduling my workday, as well as opportunities to work on several tasks simultaneously (e.g., the tasks from the University of Puerto Rico, the tasks from the financial conglomerate, and my Master thesis). I was also, notably, not distracted by colleagues or events happening in the organization; hence I could better concentrate and focus on my work. Lastly, because of the virtual environment, my expenses were far lower than they would have been in a face-to-face internship (e.g., travel, housing and living costs), and it was more convenient as I did not have to the daily commute to the workplace.

In contrast, there were also several negative aspects associated with the virtual work experience. Firstly, I received only a few insights into the organization itself and its internal processes. I would have been interested to experience the organizational climate, as well as its culture, in more detail. Secondly, I missed the lack of opportunities to connect and have personal contact with my colleagues. Due to the virtual restrictions, I worked with only five people in total during the whole internship, even though the interventions we were working on affected more than 500 employees. Thus, I had less opportunities to connect with people, compared to a face-to-face work experience in which I would have met significantly more people in even a single day. Thirdly, I had less learning opportunities or completely different experiences

than I would have had on site. Sometimes it felt more like “working” and completing tasks rather than learning from colleagues, because I was approaching the work in ways I was already familiar with. Thus, the experience was not as insightful or rich as it would have been at the site itself. Fourthly, it was harder to reach out to colleagues; I was always obligated to either schedule a meeting or write an email. Due to the time difference between Puerto Rico and Germany, this increased that difficulty in communication, and resulted in delayed-responses and feedback. Lastly, I was unable to literally “see” the implementation of my work. Even though, my supervisor informed me continually about the implementation processes, I never had the opportunity to witness the impact of my work.

To improve the experience of future remote internships, I would suggest scheduling regular social team events and implementing fewer formal ways of communicating. For instance, instead of e-mails, there could be weekly 15-minute check-up meetings or even daily 5-minute check-in session, as well as more social interactions, to ensure informal ways of learning from colleagues. Further, the opportunity to take part in internal meetings with other departments and colleagues could also make the internal processes, the implementation process of one’s own work, and its impact, more effective and visible.

My perception of the concept of “efficiency” in a virtual work experience is mixed. The weekly scheduled virtual meetings continuously improved in their efficiency, for instance the meetings became progressively more organized and structured. Furthermore, my supervisor and my academic tutor at the University of Puerto Rico were both surprised by the amount of work that I produced. In their opinion, the output was higher than what would usually be expected in a face-to-face internship. The reasons for this might be that my motivation was greater due to high levels of autonomy and task ownership, that I could work in a more focused way because the tasks given to me by my supervisor were always clearly structured, and

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I was not distracted by co-workers or events within the organization. There were also few non-work-related one-to-one or team discussions, nor unrelated business communications, compared to what would have undoubtedly happened in a face-to-face internship. However, these social and interactive elements were the very ones that I missed the most during my work experience. To conclude, in regards to “efficiency”, the virtual work experience might provide an even better environment than face-to-face, but it also comes with a less social and interactive experience.

Conclusion

Overall, I believe that face-to-face work provides a more fulfilling and more holistic work experience than its virtual equivalent. Face-to-face internships allow for more diverse learning opportunities due to personal interactions and work-related events, as well as more memorable off-site experiences, especially abroad. Even though I would still prefer a face-to-face work experience, the virtual alternative offers several advantages; especially if one is capable of working in a self-reliant, motivated, and structured way. The virtual work experience can be more convenient, flexible, and even more efficient in some

respects. The main disadvantages of a virtual internship (at least in my case) were the lack of connectivity and social interactions, as well as less insights into the organization and its internal processes, which might lessen efficiency in the long run. The rapid transition from face-to-face to teleworking was accompanied by many positive and negative emotions, initially disappointment and frustration about losing the chance to work abroad, followed by gratitude and thankfulness for the opportunity to be able to accomplish my internship during the pandemic, and finally appreciation, joyfulness and pride in the people I met, plus the impact I had in the organization.

To conclude, I am genuinely grateful for having had the opportunity to conduct my internship in a virtual setting, which was an overall exciting experience. The virtual work experience exceeded my initial expectations by far and I was able to apply and improve my psychological knowledge and capabilities in times of uncertainty. Moreover, I am thankful that I could complete my practical work experience virtually in a foreign country, even though the physical borders were officially closed.

“Change is the only constant” How an agile company culture adapted itself for remote working in the COVID-19 times and succeeded in providing a positive internship experience

Luise Roessler¹ and Gabriel Ruiz de Almodóvar²

Internships provide the unique possibility for students to enter the working world, and to see if the area of interest could be something the student wants to continue to work on after the internship has ended. Last year, in 2020, such an opportunity was presented to me and I was thrilled to finally get some practical experience. It was supposed to be a “normal” talent acquisition internship with face-to-face interactions. At that time, none saw the COVID-19 crisis coming and what its impact would be on businesses. Due to the Corona virus, the working world was turned upside down and the business transactions needed to be adapted to the “new normal”. The focus of the internship changed, which meant that the company experienced a hiring freeze due to canceled projects. Therefore, instead of contacting people for possible employment at the company, and conducting interviews, we focused more on internal projects in order to improve the recruitment and selection processes, and to create an employer branding strategy both of which would provide a good starting point for recruitment activities “after” the restrictions of the pandemic became more lenient.

Internship experience – the gambit of emotions between excitement and anxiety

My internship in IT talent acquisition at the Flowable Group in Valencia, Spain began in March 2020. The Flowable Group is a software corporation, and



is composed of two main companies, Mimacom and Flowable. Mimacom is specialized in providing tailor-made IT projects to clients, whereas Flowable incorporates its products in all types of companies worldwide. I was thrilled with this internship, because I saw it as a great opportunity to apply my knowledge of the WOPP Master in the real world, especially in recruitment and selection. COVID-19 had already arrived in Europe, but the situation in Spain wasn't alarming at all until the mid/end of March 2020. I remember that one colleague had a cold and we made jokes about her having COVID-19. Now in hindsight it seems shocking, but at that time, we weren't conscious of the severity of the pandemic and what was about to transpire. In the first week of my internship, I got to know my team, the structure and history of the company, and my mentor and I set the objectives for my internship. Those objectives later had to be

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adapted to the remote working situation we quickly moved into, because the initial workload decreased and other working areas and projects were added that required my help.

The second week of the internship began in the same way as the first week ended. I got to know more colleagues from the office in Valencia, and since I saw my colleagues daily at work, I was able to quickly develop a good relationship with them, especially the talent team. I had meetings, attended on-boarding sessions and trainings, and was beginning to accompany and observe interviews in order to prepare myself to carry them out soon on my own. I was eager to learn as much as possible during my four-month internship. From the beginning, I felt included in the team and in the daily tasks, meaning that my mentor was highly supportive in terms of my working autonomously. I remember how my mentor told me, before the crisis hit, that I could soon interview candidates myself, which delighted me. The two weeks being present in the office helped me tremendously to build relationships, which later helped me to feel included during the transition to remote work. I believe that this strong commitment to the team wouldn't have been so strong if I had worked remotely from the beginning. The point is that personal relationships are important in developing a sense of belonging to a company, hence it can be beneficial to a company that is working remotely to organize opportunities where workers can meet in person. If this is not possible, the company can at least create virtual events where employees can talk to each other about personal topics.

One day after the Spanish government announced the national lockdown, we were no longer allowed to go to the office. When starting remote work, we faced some adaptation issues. I knew that Flowable offered work-at-home days, but most of the time, people worked from the office. Therefore, a viable remote working company structure didn't exist and people needed to adapt to the new way of working

and communicating. On top of this, there was an uncertainty about the impact of the crisis on company performance and the question of whether people could keep their jobs, both of which also influenced the adaptation of this new working situation. I remember that I felt lost during the first month of the lockdown. My tasks were no longer clear, we experienced a hiring freeze, and therefore we barely had positions to fill and no interviews to hire any more personnel.

Management practices and the transition to remote work

As a technology company, Flowable was able to adapt itself to the new situation more easily than other companies. As mentioned before, remote work was already partially utilized before COVID-19 and a minority of employees were already used to working in that way. Therefore, the principal change was that suddenly all employees had to work remotely and from home. In practice, there was no need to implement a new organization in the human resources department, apart from, of course, employees now not being permitted to work in the office.

Consequently, the main challenge was that all employees needed to become accustomed to working remotely. The most important factor for the company was to facilitate this transition, which included two main policies: 1) allowing employees to bring home their office equipment, and 2) helping employees with children to coordinate work with family. This second policy included the possibility of taking unpaid days-off when absolutely necessary.

Regarding my job in Talent Acquisition, I would like to highlight that the managers never wanted to decrease our working hours, so they decided to redirect our extra time to internal talent projects. Some examples of these projects were: employer branding, early careers, talent mapping, quality standards and candidate experience. Within these areas, the company organized divisions that consisted of, on average, five

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people in each group. In order to execute these team projects, the company began to implement expeditious, dynamic, project management strategies for remote work, combining weekly meetings with asynchronous tasks. This included the role of a “Product Owner” (Department Head), who acted as an internal customer, the role of the “Agile Project Lead” (normally a senior colleague who takes over the coordination of the tasks), and the Talent Acquisition Specialists, who developed every task in an individual or collaborative way. The agile organization was especially suitable for the work environment adapted to the COVID-19 situation. The reason behind this was the uncertainty of not knowing when or how the situation would change. By developing two-week sprints (periods of time in which we committed ourselves to finalizing a determined part of the project), we could adapt our focus in work depending on the length of the hiring freeze. I believe that this management practice had a positive impact in our motivation and expectations, while teaching us how to react to periods of uncertainty when everything could change very quickly.

Our personal experience during the transition process

The work-at-home measures were announced overnight and they were overwhelming. To be specific, on Wednesday, I went to work in the office as always, and the next day, on Thursday, it had already been decided that we would make the transition to working at home. In the beginning, nobody had believed that the situation would continue until summer. I honestly believed that the remote work was just a phase and that I would see my colleagues again physically in two to four weeks.

It needs to be mentioned that from our tutor’s point of view, it was a very challenging situation as well, as suddenly it was more difficult for him to guarantee an optimal learning process. Being physically in the office facilitates learning techniques such as shadowing and offers spontaneous opportunities for knowledge-sharing between colleagues. Talent Acquisition

is a job involving personal connection, and therefore the learning curve normally requires physical interactions. However, despite the changes, we were able to change our mindsets and create a brand-new way of working, as described above.

In addition, both Flowable and our team implemented significant actions that helped us in the transition. In particular, I appreciated the fact that the company organized several virtual mental health sessions during the lockdown in which a psychologist worked with us on coping strategies. We talked about our fears, hopes and expectations. These sessions demonstrated that the company was interested in how we were doing emotionally, and how they tried to accommodate us as best as possible. Within the talent team, we organized casual, virtual coffee breaks where we chatted about non-work-related topics. In this way we were able to stay in touch with each other and share feelings and thoughts about the situation. Aside from the daily coffee breaks, we also had internal team meetings, which we also dedicated to less formal topics. Apart from all these non-work-related meetings and events, I was in daily contact with my mentor, who helped me stay organized with all of my work responsibilities.

Foundation for a successful culture of remote work

The key to an effective culture of remote work is, above all, communication. It is so important for people to be able to speak openly about what they want, the areas in which they want to develop, and how to achieve their goals. My experienced was that the clearer my personal internship goals were and the more openly I communicated these to my mentor, the better he could adapt to my needs. I think in an on-site working environment, many responsibilities result from just seeing each other every day, so in the remote dynamic, employees need to be more deliberate about reflecting on their wants and needs more regularly. Another big advantage of an on-site working environment is that you have opportunities to connect to colleagues across departments and not

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only to your team. I became acquainted with people from other departments during lunch breaks, for example. After the transition to remote work, these experiences disappeared. People wouldn't know that there was a talent acquisition intern and I wouldn't know who was working from Valencia or from another office in Spain.

Maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life

In general, I was very grateful for the opportunity to do an internship during such an economically difficult time. Moreover, I felt very comfortable and happy with my mentor because he gave me the autonomy. I needed to develop skills, and to grow professionally during this short-term internship. On the other hand, I had to deal with some demotivating factors due to the hiring freeze, some of which caused me to feel superfluous, and fearful of having missed out on opportunities. The general mood of the team turned from happiness and contentment to worry, which unfortunately reinforced negative feelings. On top of this, my private situation wasn't ideal during the time of the lockdown. My partner was experiencing depression while we had the care of our child to take into account. I felt torn, and tried to be an eager intern, and at the same time a caring and loving mother and partner. Before my internship ended, my mentor offered to extend the internship for two months. I appreciated the offer, but the changes caused by the lockdown sapped my energy and so I refused the offer and instead chose to disconnect from work-related responsibilities.

To summarize, people can work just as effectively in remote work environments as in office settings, especially if the work is done from a computer. Key competences for a successful transition are the ability to speak openly, and to document one's experiences carefully. Another important competence is self-organization and discipline. In a remote setting, there might not be anyone controlling you to the same extent as in an office setting, hence it's important to

set priorities and act responsibly. On the other hand, employees spend more time in front of a computer, resulting in the need to be more proactive in disconnecting from technology in off hours.

During my internship, I wouldn't say that I was less productive. In fact, I feel that a balance between office and home responsibilities might enhance people's efficiency as it did mine. In particular, for those with children, remote work can be beneficial in order to achieve a healthy balance between work and personal life. It's also important to note that it's not enough to focus only on efficiency in relation to remote work, but also on one's personal satisfaction and well-being. The Flowable group, for example, tested many factors in this regard, such as organizing mental health workshops and satisfaction surveys, in order to track and maintain employee's emotional balance. The challenge for companies in remote work is to tackle loneliness and mental well-being. In order to do so, they can implement virtual bonding activities and regular country-specific workshops, where people have the chance to connect across different departments. What helped me during the internship were the monthly updates by the CEO of the Flowable Group, who was transparent regarding the turn-over, the security of people's jobs and general situation of the company. The monthly updates were calming and inspired me to keep working more efficiently. I'm sure that remote and asynchronous work will play and is playing a big role in global companies nowadays. Companies need to make sure that communication and documentation are done correctly so that co-workers can catch up anytime and I believe that the COVID-19 crisis was a good testing ground for corporations to change their way of organizing. The end result is that many companies now offer a hybrid model, in which workers can divide their work between the office or home remotely. Some companies have even changed their entire concept to fully-remote work. Those are exiting times for Human Resource professionals to be part of these changes.

Conclusion

Largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work is no longer a rare phenomenon, and has become an effective alternative that also complies with hygiene standards and protection in the workforce from contagious situations. Remote work has its advantages and disadvantages that Human Resource professionals need to keep abreast of. A big advantage is the maintenance of one's balance between work and personal life. In the first place, as there is no commuting from one location to another, there is more time spent with loved ones. Furthermore, as it is often more comfortable working in one's own home, an environment of relaxation is created. Nowadays, many people need no more than a laptop for their work, which is ideal for completing tasks remotely and offers a unique flexibility. Especially for future workers from Gen Z or Gen Alpha this way of working might be highly attractive, as they can easily work from many different places around the world.

On the other hand, without the possibility of physical interactions, people can find that building friendships with co-workers to be more difficult. One could argue that work is not a place to make friends but rather to focus on work productivity, but not everybody would agree with this kind of attitude. In the end, humans are social beings and personal interactions are important for our general level of satisfaction in life. In my opinion, work is a great place to augment social interactions, since so many hours are spent with the same people. Furthermore, the commitment towards the company could decrease without a focus on the social dimension; therefore, companies need to provide non-work-related events where the commitment can be strengthened.

When entry into the labor market coincided with the COVID-19 outbreak

Carolina Bolito¹

From the moment I started my Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's degree (EMJMD) in Work, Organizational, and Personnel Psychology (WOP-P), I had been looking forward to the moment when I would be able to put all the knowledge acquired over the past two years into practice. In this program, this opportunity begins at the end of the second year, when students are encouraged to switch from the academic environment to the corporate. After the challenging process of searching for an appropriate initiation into the professional world, my expectations were high and in the beginning of March 2020, I was finally ready to start my four-month on-site internship. At that time, COVID-19 cases had barely been noted in Europe, and so I planned to move to a new city - Porto, the second-largest city in Portugal – to start my internship in the area of Talent Acquisition.

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the organization I was about to become a part of was a large multinational company within the agricultural sector, with approximately 11,000 employees, in more than 35 countries. The internship would take place at the company's Shared Services Center, which was inaugurated in Porto in 2019, with the objective of grouping support functions, such as Information Technology (IT), Finance, and, of course, Human Resources, in one place. This being, as mentioned above, my first professional experience, and still within the scope of my Master's degree, my objective was, essentially to observe and absorb the daily activities of the organization, the main activities within the Human Resources department, and note the coordination between different departments. In short, a great part of my expectations regarding what I would be able to do was based on the possibility of having a face-to-face office experience.



My first day at the company coincided with the date when the first cases of COVID-19 were registered in Portugal. At that point, the virus had already begun spreading across Europe and was reaching alarming numbers in several countries. Suddenly, after only two weeks from the start of my internship, the first lockdown was implemented in Portugal. With no warning, I was obliged to move back to my hometown and work from home, all whilst a global pandemic crisis was just beginning to emerge.

Until that moment, even though it was already covered by the law, remote work was uncommon in Portugal, and opportunities for virtual internships or teleworking were scarce. Companies, in general, were not prepared to operate remotely, and therefore, with such a sudden change that was precluded by little previous preparation, organizations had to react quickly to survive in this new reality. Although I was reluctant at first, and even though it had its advantages and disadvantages, working remotely turned out to be an enormous opportunity both personal and professional growth. More specifically, although, initially, I was reticent about the idea of working at a distance without having someone sitting next to me and accompanying me in my daily tasks (which was

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my primary expectation for this internship), the truth is that this new dynamic resulted in a greater effort on my side from the start. For example, I had to adapt quickly to new scenarios and situations, be proactive and seek information instead of waiting for it to be given to me, be more autonomous while carrying out tasks - sometimes with reduced information and a considerable level of uncertainty - and open and resilient to overcoming difficulties while working alone. In short, I feel that this experience drove me to quickly develop skills that are (and I believe will be even more in the future), essential in the labor market (as mentioned above, adaptability, pro-activity, self-management, resilience, etc.) in unexpected, but very effective ways.

Adaptation Process

The first weeks of confinement were very challenging as not only did I have to adapt to a completely new reality (the corporate world) and do it remotely, but I was also very aware of a general atmosphere of fear and uncertainty as the virus continued to spread across the country, and new restrictive measures were implemented every week.

During the two weeks while I was still working on-site, an “Office Closure Simulation” was performed to test if everything was ready in case the company was forced to suddenly shift to a work-from-home policy. For one full day, all employees were required to work from home and were encouraged to share their experiences and challenges. This simulation allowed the company to better understand: the needs of employees in terms of IT equipment and other materials to perform the work at home; any flaws in the system in order to ensure that everything was connected appropriately; and relevant training materials to support all workers. Therefore, the change in work circumstances in terms of corporate access and equipment was predicted appropriately, and so did not become problematic, in the sense that I felt that I had everything I needed from the first day of remote work.

Additionally, from the moment that the Portuguese government started to implement restrictive measures even before the lockdown, a weekly call was scheduled with all the employees in the Porto office to discuss the impact of these measures in terms of the company’s policies, explain the next steps in advance, and clarify any questions. At a time when many companies were starting to suspend their operations indefinitely, this measure was fundamental for me, in the sense that it helped me to manage the anxiety and uncertainty about the future more efficiently, allowing me to continually be informed and able to plan the next steps of my internship. In the end, the organization was able to maintain its “normal” activity, even allowing my internship to continue (with the necessary adaptations), according to what had been initially defined in terms of period and type of activities.

As a multinational company, there was already a great predisposition for the use of digital tools, both in relation to communication (meetings, training sessions, and the normal coordination of daily activities), and documentation (employee records, training materials, etc.). Therefore, the conversion to teleworking was fluid and there was no need to develop extensive training sessions, as most workers were already used to working online and using online tools. I was also comfortable with digital tools and applications, as I had worked on developing several projects with colleagues in other cities and countries during my international Master’s degree, so in that sense, the adaptation to online work was not a challenge for me.

Organization of Individual Work

As part of the Talent Acquisition Team (in which there is a large amount of contact with people and, more specifically, with external candidates), a significant part of my expectations regarding the internship was based on the opportunity to participate in face-to-face events (interviews, job fairs, etc.), which, needless to say, was not possible from the moment the first lockdown was implemented and we started

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working remotely. Therefore, my tasks consisted mainly of sourcing candidates for available positions, curriculum analysis, and performing phone screening interviews. Even though I was unable to participate in face-to-face interviews as I had first expected to do, the company quickly shifted to an online model and thus I still had the opportunity to participate in occasional virtual interviews with partners and hiring managers. I was also responsible for researching alternative hiring measures with the aim of writing procedures to optimize the company's recruitment and selection process.

In my view, the increased control over the way individual work is planned and carried out is one of the greatest advantages that remote work can offer in a company. However, the reality does not always correspond to this expectation, as individual working time is often impacted by a large number of meetings and virtual working sessions. Connecting to one meeting after another often means that the time that is necessary to focus on individual tasks is frequently diverted, and failing to recognize and act upon this can result in the increase of the individual workload over time. Therefore, one of the greatest challenges during my virtual internship was to find balance between the time I spent in virtual meetings and my individual workload, especially considering that in addition to the daily sessions I had with the team and tutor in the organization, I still had university assignments, webinars, and meetings related to my Master thesis. One routine that I developed over time, and that I found useful in achieving this balance, was to schedule "focus times" for tasks I knew I would have to complete during the work week. This helped me to plan ahead and organize the remaining activities differently, in order to be able to set aside the necessary time to concentrate on the other tasks, without overloading myself.

Another aspect, which I personally found to be a great advantage when shifting to remote work, was the increased level of focus I was able to reach. As a

student, I was already used to organizing my individual tasks independently and to study alone. Thus, whilst others might consider that there are more distractions at home, for me, being able to stay on track and concentrate was not problematic as I was lucky to have an appropriate, independent workspace, where I found it easier to focus and work on my tasks, than if I had been in a noisy, open-spaced office. On the other hand, I often became too involved in my workload, and this was something that I had to learn to manage over time as, in the absence of the physical separation between work and home, I often found it difficult to disconnect and so ended up working longer hours than when I had been physically in the office.

Organization of Teamwork

The organization of teamwork is undoubtedly one of the major challenges when it comes to working remotely. My internship, with the goal of working closely with my tutor and team, was no exception.

The first major obstacle was, of course, in terms of communication. On the one hand, it is essential to have frequent team meetings, to stay connected, reduce the feeling of isolation, discuss important topics, and assign tasks. However, these meetings can easily become excessive in the sense that they take up a large part of the workday, they can interrupt productivity, and leave little time for other tasks and activities. Therefore, although we had all the necessary tools to communicate virtually, as a team, we tried different scenarios until we found the solution that worked best for us in terms of the frequency with which we connected with each other. In the end, we had a daily morning meeting in which we reviewed the tasks each one of us were responsible for completing, and then shared any difficulties that we might be experiencing. For me, this was very important, as it forced me to be open, for example, in the moments when I did not have many tasks assigned and I wanted to take on new responsibilities.

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Also, one of the greatest advantages of these virtual meetings is that there was no limit to the number of participants as is the case with conference rooms that have limited seating. Thus, I had the opportunity to be involved in meetings (e.g., with leadership and hiring managers), training sessions related to the implementation of projects, and even a virtual job fair which, in an on-site model, would not have been possible or, at least, would have been much more limited.

Since the daily “formal” team meetings mentioned above were very structured, and focused on tasks rather than relationships, we learned to take a moment immediately after these calls to check in on each other socially and talk about trivialities not related to work at all (which, at this point, boiled down to talking about the TV shows and movies we were watching during the lockdown, showing our pets, or sharing last Sunday’s culinary failures).

In addition to the regular team meetings, my tutor and I would schedule occasional feedback sessions to discuss the status of my internship, the positive aspects, and the elements that could be improved. These meetings were designed so that there was two-way, open communication: I received feedback from my advisor about my work and development, but I was also allowed and even encouraged to make suggestions, express challenges I was having, and share aspects that I wanted to address/improve – all of which was fundamental to align expectations throughout the internship with those of the organization and ensure that the initial objectives were met.

Based on my experience, I would say that the main enabler in terms of virtual organization of teamwork, is a shared effort to ensure that communication is as effective as possible. This includes being open and direct, defining clear and shared expectations and goals, as well as using the necessary strategies to achieve them. Otherwise, it is easy to lose one’s sense of direction, and not reach intended the goals.

Some examples of this include scheduling periodic strategic planning meetings to prioritize and define goals and then follow-up on open items, avoiding vague task descriptions and imprecise deadlines, and scheduling meetings in advance so that all participants can plan and be prepared for them.

Lessons Learned and Expectations for the Future

Looking back, it is important to acknowledge that this experience was not always easy. I believe the most valuable lesson I learned from my virtual internship was not to be afraid to connect with other people, speak up, and ask for help. When we were working from home, alone, the feeling of isolation could be overwhelming at times and, at first, I would get frustrated if I was not feeling energetic on a certain day, or if I felt stuck in a certain task. Over time, as I shared my feelings with other colleagues who were experiencing the same situation as I was, I started to realize that the more I connected with other people, the more effectively I coped with those feelings. Although I was working more independently than if I had been physically in the office with the whole team, I realized that I did not have to deal with everything alone, and that it was acceptable to be direct and ask for help when I was not feeling confident. In the end, I believe it all comes down to understanding what works best for each one of us, being able to pay attention to other aspects of our lives, and to disconnect, and allow ourselves to rest when necessary. Realizing this is, in my opinion, the first step to having the best experience possible, learning, and growing personally and professionally when working either in face-to-face or remote environments.

In my view, remote work is undoubtedly a dynamic that is going to last. Unlike what happened a year ago, when companies had to suddenly react and adapt to a disruptive situation, there are now fully remote internship/employment programs that are designed and developed to provide a positive and meaningful experience. With an increasing number

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of young people entering the job market through these virtual internships/first job experiences, I believe that the demand for remote and hybrid positions will increase more and more, and companies will need to adapt (instead of resist) to change, in order to attract and retain employees, and maintain their competitive advantage. On the other hand, workers of all ages will have to be increasingly open, available, and prepared to work in the remote or hybrid model. More than that, companies and workers will need to focus on the development of fundamental competences for this reality, from which, based on my experience, are the following: digital skills to achieve the necessary proficiency for the adequate performance of tasks performed remotely; self-management and planning, as well as pro-activity which is needed to perform the tasks independently and without close supervision; communication, both written and oral; and teamwork which is necessary to keep group work fluid, even at a distance.

Further, I believe that the shift to remote/hybrid work will bring with it profound changes in terms of the socio-political paradigm. With a number of new forms of work and employment emerging at a fast pace, the traditional model of work that has served as the foundation for labor policies and legislation around the world for many years, no longer fits the reality. In the near future, governments will need to work towards the development of policies that protect employees who work from home (online or not), ensuring that they have all the necessary conditions, and putting health and safety in the forefront. In addition, issues such as the mental health of workers and work-life balance are at present, and will become increasingly more, pressing, which means that it will demand attention both from governments and companies. This is because, although remote work has the potential to bring benefits, such as greater time flexibility for working parents, and the reduction of time spent commuting (which can be used in other ways), the truth is that in the absence of a physical separation between work and home, employees

may feel obliged to stay connected at all times and, of course, much longer, than while working at the office, which can result, in many cases, in the deterioration of physical and mental health. The good news is that some steps in this direction have already been implemented, and governments around the world have started to discuss and make changes. For example, in a decree-law of September 2020, the Spanish government stated that companies must respect the normal work and rest periods when defining working hours for remote workers. Among other factors, this document points to the obligation of providing workers with the necessary equipment and materials to perform their work remotely and reimbursing employees for additional expenses related to the performance of work-related activities. In Portugal, although no specific laws have been issued yet, changes in the legal framework of telework have been under discussion in the Parliament, where issues such as the indemnification of expenses, the right to disconnect from work-related tasks, the guarantee of equal rights, a policy of non-discrimination between remote and on-site workers, the reinforcement of the voluntary nature of the regime, and the protection of teleworkers in the context of work accidents, have been addressed.

In short, I believe that when properly regulated and managed, with all the digital tools and possibilities that companies have at their disposal nowadays, remote work has the potential to be as much (or even more) effective as on-site work. In addition to efficiency and productivity, I believe that remote work is associated with a number of benefits, for companies, such as the reduction of costs in facilities, and the access to a larger pool of qualified candidates without location restrictions; for employees, there is increased flexibility, and a reduction of time and money spent commuting every day. Therefore, I look forward to seeing how the next years unfold and which exciting developments are yet to come in the post-pandemic world.

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Conclusion

Taking everything into consideration, it is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden implementation of remote work had a significant impact on my internship experience. The atypical period in which it took place was a moment of great turbulence and unpredictability for companies in general, in which leadership and employees had to adapt to a new way of working with very little preparation, with all the psychological impacts associated with an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, confinement and social isolation.

Even though my internship turned out to be completely different from my initial expectations, the virtual experience I had was a great opportunity for professional and personal growth. The fact that it

took place remotely may not have allowed for the office experience I expected, but it allowed me to develop first-hand the necessary skills for the job market of the future, to push my limits, and to understand that I am more proactive, flexible, and resilient than I thought I was.

In conclusion, I feel that, overall, the positive aspects of my virtual internship experience outweighed the negatives by far. In life, I believe that we must be open to and welcome new experiences, and changing the work dynamic is undoubtedly one that I recommend.

Employer-employee perspective on the digitalization of human resources practices: An experience from Germany

İpek Ünli¹

Over my lifetime, I have seen great changes in technology. First, there were just land phones and televisions in my home. We bought our first computer, installed a cable internet connection (not wireless), and then the mobile phone arrived. I remember the first time a friend of mine told me about the touch screen. Even the idea was unbelievable. Yet up until the recent pandemic beginning in 2020, technology, with all of its improvements, was mostly a crutch, not the main way of living but more a supportive equipment that made our lives easier. Then, with the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 virus, everything changed in the blink of an eye and technology began to be the most essential part of our lives, bringing with it a lot of challenges itself. After having experienced the shift of traditional ways of working to the digital settings, now I know that *nothing is impossible*.

In March 2020, I was scheduled to do my six-month, on-site internship at a sports company's global headquarters, with the talent acquisition team located in Herzogenaurach, Germany. I had not lived there before, and did not know the language, culture, company, people or the location. Then, the day before my internship started, the lockdown was announced.

After the announcement about the closure of the campus and months of ambiguity about when the internship would begin onsite, the company had to take fast actions in order to shift all the work to digital. Previously, during my Erasmus Mundus Joint Master degree in the Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology (WOP-P), we had spent two years practicing teleworking using different projects with diverse groups of people. It was an exercise that had



great payoffs and helped all the students in the program to be competent and ready for any sudden change in the work dynamic. Yet, no one in the program had expected to have to work 100% virtually from home so soon.

Performing under unusual circumstances would be a challenge for anyone and my internship experience turned out to be an unforgettable one. I want to share the experiences I had during this period of time of my internship, about information on the onboarding period, a few of virtual projects we worked on, and the approach taken by employees and leaders' regarding specific activities. This narrative gives an overall idea of the digitalization of human resources practices from my perspectives and that of the company. We had to integrate remote working conditions into our lives mentally, physically and emotionally which brought its own advantages and disadvantages. Thus, competences such as self-motivation, resilience, the ability to adapt and change were developed.

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Onboarding

Starting a new job in a new company is exciting, bringing with it with new responsibilities, relationships with colleagues and more. In my case and that of many others, excitement was not the feeling that we had in general since many elements were restricted and unknown. Therefore, my company and team organized a virtual onboarding program for the new starters to learn and engage. Actually, it was an on-site event that was shifted to the digital setting very quickly. Within the first weeks, the program consisted of a virtual welcoming event for all interns, individual introduction meetings with colleagues, online training, e-learning, and equipment installation. As a first step, this program did help to connect everyone socially, technically and physically.

The welcoming event helped us to get to know the history, culture and structure of the company. Moreover, we learned some useful information such as how to use the digital systems, software programs, and platforms that were used by the company. The equipment that we had to use as new starters was sent to our homes. Later, I had individual introduction meetings with my team members to get to know their roles and responsibilities. At that time, because of the pandemic, I did not get the chance to meet any of my colleagues in person. Therefore, these online meetings carried a tremendous value on a human level since these meetings were not just to share job-related information, but to give us the chance to get to know each other personally. All my colleagues were very open in sharing who they were, what they knew, and what they were responsible for. In addition, to complete my onboarding training, I had access to the e-learning platform, which was fundamental in helping me to understand the way of working especially within my job function area.

Digital Projects

During my six-month internship, we had to look at the best digital solutions for our job function area. I contributed and led some pilot talent acquisition

projects in terms of digitalization and of course this working process was also digital.

It is known that job fairs are beneficial for job seekers and companies. Through these fairs, job seekers introduce themselves, look for information about the companies and vacancies and ask questions to clarify questions they have. In the same line, companies present themselves, meet many potential talents and collect as much information as possible from them. If there is a good fit between a vacancy and a potential candidate, it is possible that the end result is recruitment. The effects of these fairs extend past hiring, however. According to Beam (2016), job fairs can have huge effects on employment which extend beyond any direct job-matching that happens at the fair.

In May 2020, there was a job fair planned in Switzerland just for the sports industry, in order to unite the professionals with students and alumni. Many prestigious companies, including the company that I was working for, and clubs intended to attend. Because of the restrictions caused by the pandemic, the scheduled on-site job fair was shifted to online. We prepared everything digitally as if it was an on-site fair (digital booth, flyers, a webinar in the auditorium). Even if it was a digital event, it still provided many of the advantages of an on-site fair and also many more that would not have been possible in a physical fair. We were able to include a high number of recruiters and had a high number of candidates from different continents. At the end of the project, we had the chance to reach even more people than we would have in an on-site job fair. We managed to create diverse talent pools with potential future employees for different job function areas.

Another topic that I was working on was Virtual Assessment Centers. Assessment Centers is “a standardized evaluation of behavior based on multiple inputs” (International Workforce on Assessment Center Guidelines, 2009, p. 224), an essential component

of the recruitment process that brings participants together. With the restrictions from the pandemic, it was not possible to plan an assessment center; however, the recruitment process was already in progress, therefore, we had to create a virtual assessment center. We opted for a scientist-practitioner approach while preparing this project. After extensive research in work, reading literature on organizational and personnel psychology, and several meetings with consultants, we adapted the information gathered to create a virtual assessment center, while considering the needs of business due to the current situation.

These are just two examples of the many projects I worked on with pragmatic solutions and in this way fulfilling the requirements of the new work environment. Both digital processes brought pros and cons and both events were location-free and offered a completely global experience. They included a fully sustainable process without travel or paperwork. Tracking the candidates was easier than expected as we used the virtual system throughout the events. On the other hand, the loss of physicality was significant. According to Howland, Rembisz, Wang-Jones, Heise and Brown (2015) virtual worlds deteriorate reading facial cues and body movements of the physical world. In the future, there will be a need to spend more time and energy to build ad-hoc conversations with the candidates so as to be able to read them more accurately in on-screen conversations.

Working remotely as a team is challenging and must be handled carefully. Due to my personal experience during the 2020 pandemic, I consider the two main points that need to be tackled during remote working to be: teamwork and communication. Firstly, colleagues generally work on projects and tasks together. Cohen and Bailey (1997, p. 241) defined a team as “a collection of individuals who are interdependent in their tasks, who share responsibility for outcomes, [and] who see themselves and who are

seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social systems”. In the beginning of a project, fair and clear distribution of the responsibilities between the team members is crucial. Since colleagues do not work in the same physical space while working remotely, it is more difficult to check in with each other. Therefore, every team member has to be clear about what is expected from them, of them, and when and how they need to present finished tasks. During this time trusting and supporting each other bonds the team members and results in better work. Secondly, communication is the key to working remotely. Having recurring meetings helps members to check in with each other, to see the big picture of the project, to determine the direction, and to support the ones in need. Apart from verbal communication, there are many digital platforms that can be used by team members to work on the same documents and materials simultaneously, in order to create tangible results. According to Cardon, Huang and Power (2019) these digital tools help the team, unit, and organization to communicate easily, learn from each other, share opportunities, and collaborate more efficiently.

Human Touch: Employees

Working in a company does not mean just working on projects and generating ideas and products. It is the dynamic and the social environment that employees work in that creates the culture of the company. This includes elemental beliefs and values, and shared behavioral norms within the organization (Verbeke et al., 1998). During my internship, there were many virtual events organized by the company so that colleagues were able to get to know each other better, relax with each other, and keep social life as active as possible.

I feel that the constant meetings with team members is essential. These meetings do not need to be job-related; on the contrary, they can be simply to

have someone to speak with, share non-work-related events, and grow together. In my company, we had half-hour meetings with the team every day. Apart from that, we had periodic virtual lunches or coffee breaks. This helped us to maintain the social side of work life.

Communication does not only have the aim of growth or burdening others with problems. Having “fun” and “joy” was crucial during the lockdown and the period of working remotely. We had many virtual events designed to experience the joy of life from home. For instance, a colleague created a questionnaire called “Chat Roulette” using the company platform. Team members answered this questionnaire about hobbies and interests. The ones who had mutual hobbies and interests were paired and had off-calendar meetings. These gave us the chance to talk about our hobbies with colleagues that perhaps we had not known beforehand, who shared common interests. Another program was online gym sessions. The trainers working in the company created weekly exercise programs for those who wanted to do sports through virtual classes. These classes created a supportive and social environment that kept the gym atmosphere alive. There was also a company quiz night which was a very entertaining event for the new starters. Organizers created a quiz about the company and broadcasted the game through YouTube. Randomly formed teams joined the quiz, building a team spirit. It was a well-prepared event that helped the newer employees to learn about the company and to get to know each other. Lastly, there was a virtual event that my team and I organized called “Most Likely”. We prepared a series of statements for the attendees (e.g., Who is most likely to become a celebrity? Who is most likely to win a Nobel prize?). For every statement, we planned up an open discussion. Everyone nominated someone on the team (which could have included themselves), and supported their nomination using concrete examples, in order to convince the others and reach a consensus. Twenty-five colleagues from different parts of the world joined the virtual event. This created an interactive

and entertaining atmosphere and every participant felt comfortable with sharing their memories, experiences and opinions. We learned new things about each other, and the interaction helped everyone to detach from the current situation and was a great tool for team building. We even had one colleague playing guitar and singing at the end of the session.

These are just a few examples from my experience which made the distances shorter. There are many more to do in the future that we still have not participated in. We will have to consider the environment and our needs, then, we will look at the solutions by using our creativity to our advantage. There is no need to wait for an employee, manager, colleague or anyone else to take action because we can take the initiative ourselves to create them.

Human Touch: Leaders

People management is quite challenging and a significant responsibility in general. It is even more challenging in virtual work settings since the leaders are the ones who primarily have the task of being attentive to the application of technology to be able to execute sustainable business success (Sainger, 2018).

Abbatiello et al. (2017) states that digital leaders have an impact across teams, they help to connect networks of teams and people, and create a diverse and inclusive working environment for everyone to share knowledge. During my online internship period, we had “Stand up” meetings every week organized by our leaders. The aim was to create an open stage with an atmosphere for all the team members to fluidly share anything that came to their mind. Moreover, once a month, we had “Touch Base” meetings with our senior vice president, in which people were encouraged to ask him questions openly. Everyone shared their experiences, thoughts, concerns and anything else they felt relevant. In other words, speaking freely is a beneficial practice and during remote working is even more important. People share and see that others are also experiencing very similar experiences. They find answers and feel the relief.

With regard to direct management, as it is difficult to maintain constant communication in a digital setting during a workday, a manager needs to be clear about the directions to give and then trust employees to do their tasks. In my experience, receiving trust and support from my manager helped me to grow. It is beneficial to have both autonomy with responsibilities, and support when needed. Moreover, having a manager who focuses on strengths and ways to improve, contributes to a person's development, and is fundamental for personal and professional growth.

To sum up what I have learned during this remote working period in terms of leadership, it is significant for a manager be accessible, approachable, clear, trusting, empathetic, supportive, and a contributor to the development of team members.

Lessons Learned

In March 2020, our lives changed drastically over a night. Even if the conditions return to how they were, the way we live and work is never going to be the same again. Therefore, there are prominent skills and competences that we need to develop that are even more important than before.

First of all, fast adaptation to the new situations is crucial. However, adaptation is not enough to survive. In order to navigate this ever-changing hybrid environment, we have to be confident with management skills. It is important to understand the particular circumstances, reflect on them and adjust ourselves according to them in order to build up. Additionally, improving our technology skills and usage is essential for the adaptation to the conditions.

Secondly, nowadays self-motivation is a very important skill to have. People are still facing restrictions around the world with many regulations. Many of us do not have the chance to do what we like and what motivate us. Maintaining a work-personal life balance by keeping these two elements separate is essential for our resilience. Having SMART (Specific,

Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals can re-frame our work and personal directions based on the current situations, and these goals can help to motivate us. Thus, we have to be resourceful in finding what works for us within the current conditions. Finding new hobbies, having post- or pre-working rituals, staying connected with our loved ones, are just some examples. Keeping a diary is another way to understand where we are and where we aim to be. When we write down and verbalize our thoughts and concerns, it is easier to address them and find solutions.

Thirdly, humans are naturally social and emotional creatures and we feed our souls by socializing. Therefore, we must continue to listen, share and learn from each other. Solutions are created through these exchanges and collaborations almost automatically. Changing to a virtual environment and not being able to come together physically, does not mean there is has to be a breach between us. We still can be connected mentally and emotionally.

Conclusion

The pandemic has changed our way of living and working. We have become more flexible, and this has caused employers and the employees to create stronger ties. Employers understand their employees better and employees try to add value to their companies, while at the same time taking care of their personal lives.

We must look at the positive side of challenging events and take advantage of the new situations. We are experiencing a massive change in our lives on a global level and we have the chance to shape the future. The choices we make now are for our current and future selves. Therefore, as a recommendation, we should never be passive. Obstacles and challenges are always present; however, this cannot and should not stop us from growing personally and professionally.

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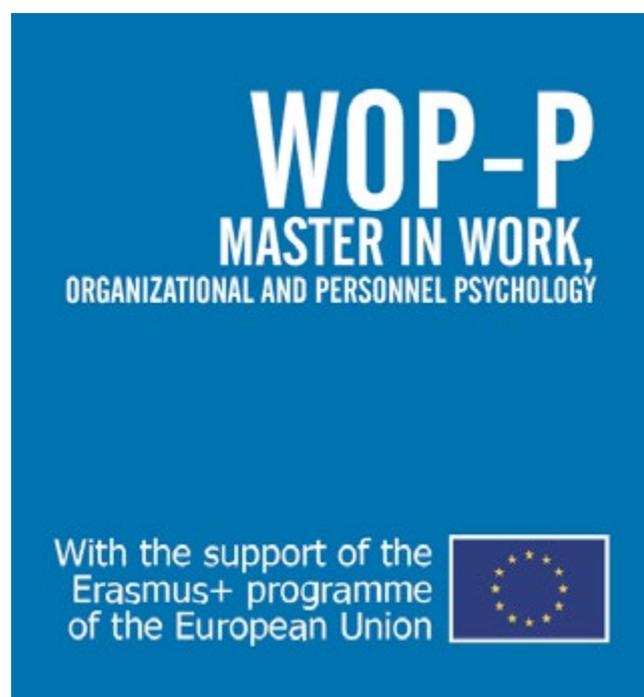
The challenges of a ‘virtual, in-residence Winter-School’ on designing interventions in Work, Organization, and Personnel Psychology in multicultural and glo-cal contexts¹

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The article offers a description of the Winter School (WS), organized as a part of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s degree in Work, Organization and Personnel Psychology (WOP-P). This is an intensive learning unit that lasts five months, with a peak in-residence period of two weeks, in which Master’s students from the different universities of the consortium, and also students from the six partners universities (USA, Canada, and Brazil), come together to work and live in an enriching environment that many students describe as unique. The XIV edition of this program experienced a major disruptive change due to the lockdown dictated by governmental restrictions related to the COVID-19 crisis. This lockdown restricted mobility, and the program was converted to a virtual environment. Here we present the difficulties and changes that had to be addressed, and the lessons learned from this challenging digital experience.

The foundations of the Winter School

With a focus on promoting the internationalization and dialogue among cultures in the professional education of Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychologists (WOP-P), the Joint Intensive Learning Unit (also referred as Winter School) is a pre-professional learning experience in the context of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s degree in Work, Organization and Personnel Psychology (EMJMD in WOP-P).



Accordingly, the triple aim of the Winter School is to develop the competences to design WOP-P professional interventions in a GLO-CAL (global-local) environments, create a multicultural experiential-learning atmosphere, and foster virtual and face-to-face teamwork. The Winter School is an intensive learning unit in which more than 50 students from various countries around the world, and from the ten Universities of the Consortium (four from Europe, four from

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² IDOCAL. University of Valencia

³ Together with the authors of this article, this edition of the Winter School was developed with the collaboration of Salvador Carbonell, Irene Bresó, Nuria Tordera, Salvatore Zappala and Leonor Cardoso, and all the participating teaching staff, whom the authors want to publicly show their gratitude.

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the US, one from Brazil, and one from Canada), began by working for three months virtually and then met in Gandía (a town in Valencia, Spain) for a two-week in-residence internship.

From its inception more than 15 years ago, and with the support of Professors Robert Roe and Bernhard Wilpert, the Winter School has been understood to be an intensive learning unit that is in a continuous process of change. In each edition, the cultural diversity of the participants, together with the type of activities included in the program, require that adaptations be an obligatory part of the program. Accordingly, and with the learning philosophy of the EMJMD in WOP-P, which considers students to be active partners in the learning process, each edition of the Winter School is co-created and unique.

The XIV edition of the Winter School (20-2021) was deeply influenced by the health pandemic created by COVID-19. On March 2020, our society became immersed in an epidemiological context in which a lockdown and other mobility restrictions led to the cancellation of the two weeks of face-to-face in-residence program that should have taken place in Gandía (Valencia, Spain). This change brought with it the challenge of co-creating a 'virtual in-residence' experience.

In this narrative, we present the adaptations of the activities that were required, especially those corresponding to the intensive in-residence phase, and the design of new actions that provided participants with a unique experience of learning, networking, socializing, and professional and personal development. First, we will briefly provide an overview of the WS learning unit.

The Winter School in the context of the EMJID in WOP-P

Linked with the architectural model of competences for European Psychologists (Lunt, Peiró, Poortinga & Roe, 2014; Roe, 2002), the goal of the Winter School (12 ECTS), scheduled to be right before to the pre-professional internship, is to be a unique learning experience in the development of professional competences in the design of interventions, along with a networking and socializing experience for personal and professional development. To provide a closer context to this learning unit we briefly highlight some features of the Master.

The Master's program is based on the reference model for the training of WOP-psychologist in Europe of the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (ENOP)⁴ (Depolo, Peiró, & Zijstra, 2020), and aims to promote the competences considered for the European Certificate in WOP-P Psychology (Europsy), and also research competences. The education and training follow the scientist-practitioner model and the rationale of evidence-based practice⁵ (Briner & Rousseau, 2011), so both explanatory and intervention knowledge and skills are developed together with research competences.

Outlining the planography of the Winter School: the content

The Winter School is an exceptional opportunity for participants to continue their preparation as Work and Organizational psychologists (Martínez-Tur, Peiró & Rodríguez, 2014). It emphasizes three relevant facets of professional education: (1) the competences to design WOP-P professional interventions in a GLO-CAL environment, while considering scientific evidence, contextual and organization factors, (2) the practice of virtual and cross-cultural teamwork competences, and (3) the competences in professional work in an international environment. In fact, the

⁴ https://www.enop-psy.org/pdfs/ENOP_reference_model_2020.pdf

⁵ See <https://scienceforwork.com/> that was initiated by several WOP-P alumni.

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Winter School is designed as an educational resource for strategies, based on five pillars: (1) contextual factors, (2) professionals' ethical organizational justice behaviors, (3) evidence-based practice (4) evaluation of the intervention design, and (5) implementation of interventions. Moreover, there are two transversal components that promote a positive experience of teamwork and multicultural co-existence.

The contextual module assumes that meaningful information and knowledge about the context is required for professionals to be able to design interventions in organizations. WOP psychologists live and work in a dynamic, global and diverse world that is often characterized as VUCA: the conditions of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. However, the conditions are not the same everywhere in the world; different territories and countries have different challenges and practices. Thus, in the contextual factors' module, participants analyze these specificities focusing on several world regions and identifying features relevant to WOP-P interventions. Hence, participants identify similarities and differences in different global regions and seek explanations of why certain factors may or may not be important to organizations in specific countries, as well as how that information helps to develop international business relationships.

Professionals in WOP-P ground their interventions on ethics and aim to promote justice. The objectives of the ethical and organizational justice module are to: a) understand the basic principles of organizational justice and their relationship to ethical behavior, b) identify the factors that lead workers to perceive their work relationships as just or unjust, c) become aware of the consequences of perceptions of fairness to individuals and organizations, and d) analyze different work situations in terms of principles of justice, so as to propose interventions.

The third module focuses on evidence-based practice. Practitioners need to integrate different forms

of evidence, including academic evidence, in order to justify their decisions for interventions. To do this, students in teams carry out a State of the Art Rapid Evidence Assessment (SOAREA) (see Briner, Denyer & Rousseau, 2009), that aims to identify relevant evidence on a practical question related to a workplace intervention that practitioners can use as part of their evidence-based decision-making process. An important aim of this module is to improve competences in the search and selection of information that may or may not support the choice of a particular method, technique or approach to be used in an intervention in a particular context.

The fourth module is on Intervention Design. Design methodology was originally developed for the domains of engineering and product development, and is currently used in WOP-P. In this module participants learn how to apply the principles of design methodology in practice, identify requirements of the products and services as expected by the client and other stakeholders, and create the intervention to achieve the desired goals. The focus is on developing the design of the intervention and managing it in practice. In teams, participants design an intervention for a complex, real-life problem within a limited amount of time. They are required to integrate global organizational policies and local particularities in their proposal.

Finally, the students participate in a workshop about implementation of interventions. During that workshop, participants have the opportunity to design and develop an intervention plan according to a case provided by the instructor.

Our goal is to prepare students to deal with a multifaceted and intercultural world. To fulfill this aim, the Winter School aims at creating a learning environment that facilitates the development of global competences. Following the OECD⁶ model, this competence implies understanding both local and global issues, addressing the analysis of problems from

⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/innovation/global-competence/>

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different perspectives that coexist in an intercultural environment, and presenting global challenges that require the commitment of the students. It also requires a respectful attitude towards the diversity of people, their societies and cultures, as well as their willingness to engage in improving the difficulties they identify.

The flow of the Winter School and its phases

The Winter School takes approximately five months (from November to March) to complete. It is structured in three phases: an e-learning phase (3 months); an intensive in-residence phase (2 weeks), in Gandía (Valencia, Spain), in which the students work together with the international teaching staff, and finally, an integrated project phase (virtual work with a tutor, 1 month).

The first phase begins with a virtual inaugural and induction session in which the philosophy, structure and dynamics of the Winter School are presented to the participants. In this session, students are divided into teams and will work remotely. After this initial session, a virtual 15-week phase begins, and according to the syllabus and through guidance by the teachers, individuals and multicultural teams work virtually on the different modules described above. The second phase corresponds to the intensive in-residence period that last for two weeks. It is the occasion when the WOP-P Master's students gather together. During the third phase, participants, individually, carry out an integration of the contents, by designing the main traits of an intervention, and prepare a press release for its launch.

The Winter School is an opportunity for the participants to develop their social capital, create bonds and build an international professional network. These elements are extended through interaction with the alumni association's representatives who come to the WS to invite students to join. The Winter School is taught by invited, external scholars hailing from different countries, who help to develop bridge-capital building. The most important period to fulfill these functions has been always this intensive face-to-face phase, but in the XIV edition the pandemic caused

serious disruptions, and it was necessary to move into a virtual in-residence phase. The experience of coexisting had to be simulated virtually if we were to preserve the essential, and somewhat magic, features of the WS.

The pandemic: Challenges and changes

Challenges: How to achieve a virtual atmosphere and experience of coexistence during the intensive in-residence phase. The sanitary and social context created by COVID-19 obligated us to make important changes to the Winter School's design and implementation. This was the first time that the school would be virtual in all its phases, including the intensive in-residence segment. The coordinating team was aware of the enormous challenges - including aiming to achieve not just the outcomes, but also the atmosphere, climate and experiences that emerge when a group of students and teaching staff, live, work and share social time together in the same location for 15-day period.

The challenges included implementing innovations and sharing with the students the concerns and interests we had in finding ways to make the XIV WS unique, while maintaining excellence not only in the teaching and learning processes but also in teamwork. We also needed to take into account the social and interpersonal bonding processes in informal gatherings and meetings.

Facing these challenges was not only an issue of organizing the teaching sessions in a different way. It required finding and making appropriate resources available. It was a challenge to organize social events that would contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of learning, together with growing opportunities.

Changes: Restructuring what we already had to achieve the goals. The Winter School begins with a virtual introductory session on the presentation of its contents, work processes, objectives and philosophy, all of which are presented at the beginning of the face-to-face phase. For the XIV Winter School, a more interactive and participatory session was designed. We started with different icebreaker exercises to

The challenges of a 'virtual, in-residence Winter-School' cont.

create opportunities for interaction between teams and team members. Likewise, the exchange of information on the views, expectations, emotions, and concerns discussed in the teams was presented to all the groups.

In the second phase, we had to replace the customary welcome dinner, which was usually planned after the arrival of participants on the first Sunday evening of the program, with a virtual welcome session. This took place on the previous Friday afternoon and was presided over by guest keynote speaker, Professor David Guest. The group members, who had already been working together for several months, took this opportunity to introduce themselves as teams. Afterwards, all the teams were presented, and a group of students organized a talent show.

Technology played a critical role in all phases of the program and became especially important during the virtual in-residence phase. We used the structure of MsTeams for lessons and meeting rooms for the different teams and classes. The role of the Winter School coordinators was "enriched" by having to learn new functions, such as in technological and organizational facilitators, opening and closing the teaching sessions, and being available to support the teaching staff virtually. The digitalization of the virtual in-residence phase was also a challenge for international teachers. The Winter School had to become flexible as much as possible with regard to the differences in technology, time-zones, providing the necessary resources, and adapting the schedule to everyone's different needs.

At the end of the first week, we had, as usual, a feedback session from the students and a formative evaluation of the progress of the in-residence phase. As in previous editions, a session was organized virtually with the alumni representatives. In that session, Marija Davcheva, (WOP-P Alumni 2017/19 and EFPSA Representative in the EFPA Board of Scientific Affairs) and Guido Martinolli (EMA Program Representative for the EMJMD in WOP-P) introduced the different associations and social networks of the EMJMD in WOP-P to the participants.

The closing session was organized as a general virtual gathering with the participation of students,

professors, and the coordination team. Taking advantage of the virtual environment, the coordinating professors from all the universities of the consortium joined this last session. Included in the agenda was the handing out of the WOPPY awards and recognizing the students who had been elected by their peers as distinguished in the contribution of the values of the WS (see box 1 on page 37). Moreover, a certificate was awarded to the winning teams in the competition for intervention design.

Changes: New strategies and tools to achieve objectives. To overcome the challenges posed in the XIV Winter School, it was not enough to adapt the activities included in previous editions; new activities and initiatives were needed to promote the spirit and unique experiences of the Winter School for these particular circumstances.

In the first place, to reinforce and facilitate opportunities for the participants to get to know each other, we asked each of them to design an Electronic Personal Card (EPC). They were invited to present themselves in creative, free style ways, with the aim of showing their unique personalities. These were available before the virtual introductory session of the Winter School.

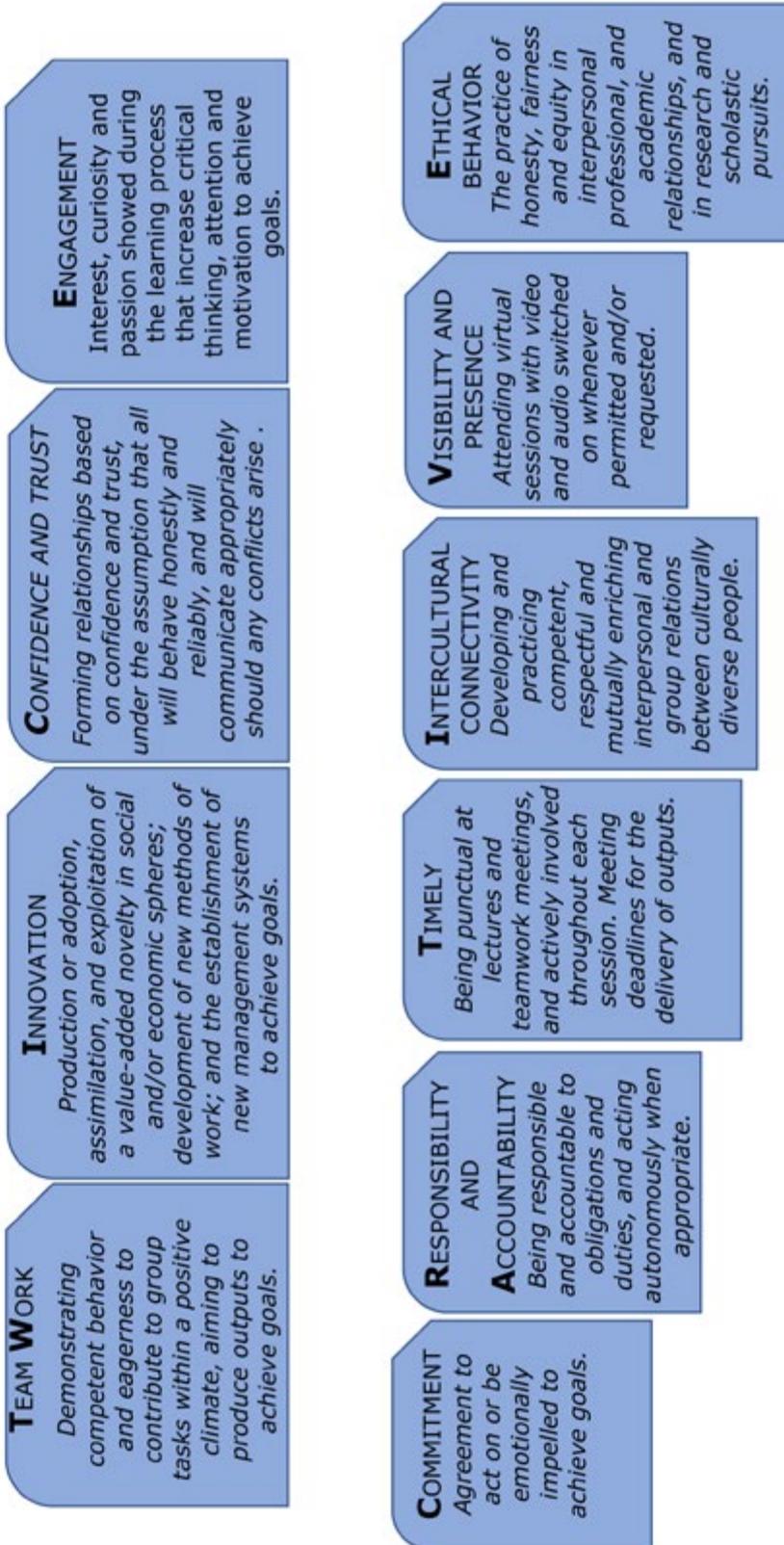
Another activity aimed to create ties between participants was the "Coffee With..." sessions. Every fifteen days, for one hour, students had a virtual coffee break with several alumni, who shared their professional experience and the key elements of their career. For each session, a key issue was agreed upon with the guest, and a bio was circulated when the session was announced. The participants prepared specific questions addressed to the guest based on this information, fostering very lively sessions with a very trusting, positive atmosphere.

A third activity created to move fluidly into the use of technology in the intensive phase, was a countdown program. In each countdown session, one specific virtual tool was introduced. These included: communication tools, collaborative tools (brainstorming and interactive boards, mind-mapping, interactive pools), teamwork tools, project management tools and delivering tools.

Box 1. Winter School Values

The values that we most value and are ideally developed in this program

TWICE CREATIVE



The challenges of a 'virtual, in-residence Winter-School' cont.

It was important to share some common rules in order to achieve an effective online learning experience and to effectuate a more probable outcome with respect to rhythm and dedication during the intense program of the virtual in-residence phase. In this phase, each day students participate in a four-hour workshop or seminar and then works in teams for approximately the same number of hours, preparing the practical case of an intervention design. To this end, we provided the participants a 'good practices' document on the most effective ways to participate in virtual learning sessions.

The fully virtual context offered advantages since we designed the program with a Miro whiteboard on which information was incorporated and updated under a flexible "right-now" scheme. In this way, students and tutors were able to follow the program more dynamically, without the limitations of the traditional PDF or printed programs.

We also aimed to encourage participants to share their talents, stimulating the cooperation in activities of common interests. Participants were encouraged to share their talents to their group members, and the outputs were presented at the talent show during the inaugural session.

Moreover, during this phase, an informal communication channel was opened through Slack, in which participants could informally share personal experiences, important moments in their lives, and personal opinions. In addition, we created a WS hashtag to be used in different social networks. To further augment unity, token WS, mugs were designed and distributed to the students by the coordinators of each university.

Finally, we will mention two important activities that were developed to promote informal interaction in a dynamic environment. The first took place on the Friday afternoon of the first week. It was a virtual team-building activity, facilitated by external consultants. For more than two hours, ten groups of

students competed "in search for the Elixir formula", in an environment where creativity, shrewdness and light-heartedness were required to succeed.

The second activity was a virtual party organized by a group of students at the Winter School with the Gather Town application. At the closing ceremony they invited everyone to gather and enjoy a wonderful party that was very well prepared and greatly enjoyed by the participants. We congratulate and thank them for this wonderful initiative.

Concluding comments

We have presented initiatives and adaptations that were implemented, with the participation of the students, in face of the new conditions created by the pandemic. This experience has taught all of us that, although the physical space and face-to-face gathering is meaningful, when there is a clear aim and a shared willingness, it is possible to develop unique, completely virtual learning experiences. In this adventure, participants' contributions were fundamental. Nevertheless, we hope to return to face-to-face phases of the Winter School in the next editions. In fact, one of the sayings we often repeat is: "two Winter schools are never alike". This will be truer than ever, because now we have learned, in trial and error, excellent lessons with and from the participants. That is why we express a big 'thank you' to everyone involved in the XIV edition of the Erasmus Mundus Winter School.

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“During this unprecedented time, we hope to create connections and support opportunities that will help work and organizational psychologists across the globe”

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“With this new initiative, work and organizational psychologists worldwide will have equal access to information that will help them forge their personal career paths.”

– Gudela Grote, President, Alliance for Organizational Psychology

Section 2

Achieving Decent Work for Resilient and Sustainable Recovery From COVID-19: *Contributions of Humanitarian Work Psychology to the Economic, Social, and Environmental Dimensions of Sustainable Development for All Populations*



Walter Reichman,
*IAAP United Nations
Representative*



IAAP is accredited to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). This status permits IAAP to present statements to meetings of commissions and committees of the UN and to hold side events during meetings when the sessions are in recess. This is a transcription of one of those sessions held on July 12, 2021.

It was held during the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC.

In 2015 the UN established the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is the social and economic agenda of the UN until 2030. Each year HLPF meets to review the progress toward the implementation of these goals. The meeting was particularly important this year due to the world's experiences with COVID-19. The theme of the forum this year was how to ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19 that puts us back on track to achieving the SDGs.

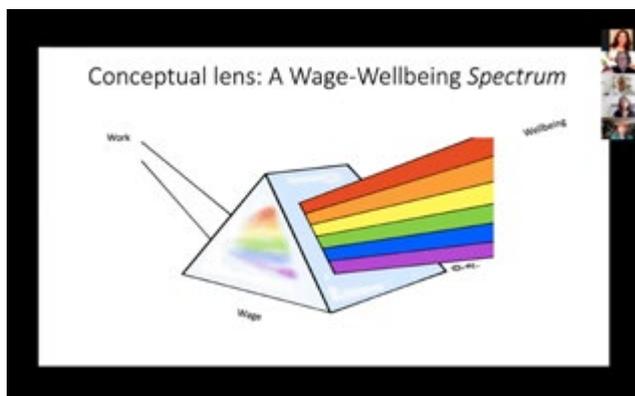
IAAP proposed a side eve for a series of presentations related to achieving “decent work” as we build back after the pandemic. Decent work is a part of SDG 8. We decided to publish the edited transcript of the session so readers would gain a sense of the words of the presenters as opposed to a summary report of the event.

Judy Kuriansky: The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated economies, and people’s wellbeing, worldwide, hence our topic in this side event for the UN High Political Forum. Our topic is *‘Achieving Decent Work for Resilient and Sustainable Recovery From COVID-19: Contributions of Humanitarian Work Psychology To The Economic, Social, and Environmental Dimensions Of Sustainable Development For All Populations.’* The Sustainable Development Goals of the UN agenda are related to the economic growth and decent work target of SDG 8 and is interlinked with Target 3.4 to promote mental health and wellbeing and, SDG 1, to end poverty, the UN priority. It is also related to SDG 16, peace and security. You will become aware of the interlinkage of all these goals and targets as they

Achieving Decent Work for Resilient and Sustainable Recovery From COVID-19 cont.

relate to decent work, and economic development. This session is sponsored by the International Association of Applied Psychology, The Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, both professional psychological organizations and the management consulting firm, OrgVitality.

Dr. Judy Kuriansky, the moderator of the session is the NGO representative for The International Association of Applied Psychology to the United Nations, and a psychology professor at Columbia University Teacher's College. All our presenters are leaders in the world of work. Some are psychologists, and some are in the private sector, but they're all innovators. We turn first to Dr. Stuart Carr, a very good friend, and Professor of psychology at Massey University in Auckland, New Zealand, who founded the field of humanitarian work psychology, which promotes decent work and wellbeing as a roadmap to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Stu. explain to us what a living wage is, because that's your innovation, and very important for our topic today.



Stuart Carr: Thank you, Judy. I'm here representing a large group of researchers, in Project GLOW, which stands for Global Living Organizational Wage. That's a 26-country network of humanitarian work psychologists, and people from a range of disciplines, looking at the links between wages, living wages in particular, and sustainable development, and sustainable livelihoods through the lens, for example, of wellbeing. I'm going to talk a little bit about wage

and wellbeing for sustainable livelihoods. I'd like to start by looking back at wages before, during, and after COVID-19. Before COVID-19, we know in the world's workforce of 3.3 billion, two thirds of those were in the informal sector. Poorly paid, irregularly paid and insecurely paid. Many of them were struggling to make the ends meet. Of the remaining third in the formal sector, under the protection of legal minimum wages, were also struggling to make the ends meet. We know during the pandemic, there's been downward pressure on wages, especially those more precariously employed. We know that pressure has been inequitable. It's been hitting women, young people, ethnic minorities, more than others. We know that after we come out of this pandemic, and hopefully that'll be soon, the ILO in the Global Wage Report was calling for setting adequate wage levels, through a balanced and evidence-based approach. That's something very much that the humanitarian work psychology approach is endeavoring to do, through Project GLOW.

I'm going to ask the audience to share a metaphor here, a conceptual lens, if you like, a Wage-Wellbeing Spectrum. It's a simple image, but it says quite a lot. People got to work. They expect to get a wage. They don't go there just for the money, but the money is important, because it's a means to an end. The wage they get is a bit like a spectrum in terms of wellbeing because the wage you get can change the color of your life in many ways, through your wellbeing and your sustainable livelihood. That image of a spectrum is very important, because it also suggests the idea of thresholds. If we look at that spectrum, the difference can be made going from one color to another, by crossing a threshold. Thresholds is something that Project GLOW has been looking at.

In work psychology, we call the of setting of threshold 'job evaluation'. It's one of the oldest areas in work psychology. When we look at what's been happening during the pandemic, we saw people, frontline workers, were being applauded in the street. That was a form of job evaluation, where people were saying,

“Well, we’re recognizing you’re doing a very valuable job for society, for people, but you’re often not terribly well-paid.” People now are saying, “Okay, applause is not enough. We want more concrete measures,” and then perhaps they’re saying, “We want a more humanitarian, work-centered way of setting key wages.”

If we look at the way wages have been set in that manner, for example, around minimum wages, which is the legal minimum, we see it’s often an econometric calculation, not always but often, and it’s in the form of a singularity. It’s not a single number. It’s a dollar number very often, or some other currency. Then what happens is that wage may be implemented, and then an argument ensues. It’s an unresolved argument, in many ways. The proponents will say it’s not high enough, and opponents will say it is too high. We’ve ended up in a bit of an impasse, and we have a bit of a controversy around minimum and living wages in many countries around the world, including here in New Zealand. A humanitarian work psychology approach would say, “Let’s approach this somewhat differently.” It’s a complementary approach; it’s not trying to displace existing approaches. It would say, “Let’s plot the relationship between variations in worker wages and wellbeing, because wages vary. They’re not singularities, and so does wellbeing.”

Then we look at what kind of wage is already sustaining livelihoods, and possibly shared prosperity, because we know from research if you’re looking after people’s wellbeing, you tend to get higher engagement and that can create efficiency gains, which means what the UN is calling ‘shared prosperity’. The approach is saying, “Let’s look at what’s actually happening out there, naturally occurring. We might be able to see some of those thresholds. We might be able to use the relationship between wage and wellbeing, to induct those critical thresholds.”

Here’s an example from New Zealand. New Zealand was the first country in the world to implement minimum wages in 1894. In 2017, the incoming

government in New Zealand pledged to raise minimum wages, which caused many people to struggle, from \$16 an hour, in 2017 to \$20 an hour in 2021. They’ve done that in April 2021 this year. They pledged to do that, despite the pandemic, and they held to their pledge. In 2018 before the pandemic our Marsden funded Royal Society of New Zealand project on living wages conduct a survey of a thousand lower-paid New Zealanders across the country and repeated it in 2020, when New Zealand had just been through its most severe form of lockdown.

They found that people on the minimum wage were struggling to make ends meet. There’s a working poverty trap. People at the bottom end of the spectrum are struggling to make ends meet. The interesting thing about that poverty trap, is that it’s shorter in 2020, than in 2018.

As the wages increase there’s a smaller poverty trap, with fewer people caught in working poverty. When we ask people, “Are you making ends meet?” A larger number said in 2020, than in 2018, that they were, showing that the policy is starting to work, and showing us the way that you can actually track what kind of wage makes a difference to people’s wellbeing. It shows that policy change can make a difference in a pandemic and hopefully out of this pandemic.

Let’s move on now to living wage, which Judy mentioned. A living wage is not a legal wage. In many cases, it’s more of a voluntary decision by organizations. It is typically set higher than the minimum wage, which is a subsistence wage. It’s a wage that’s higher and enables, theoretically, a higher quality of work life, wellbeing, and life generally.

Our research on wages shows that as people exceed the minimum wage things start to look up a little bit, but they’re still struggling. They only start to come above that waterline at the level of a living wage. It’s more attuned with wellbeing. We’ve been asking people in New Zealand to give us their stories about how well their wage is working for them and their wellbeing. An example of a response is “we were at

Achieving Decent Work for Resilient and Sustainable Recovery From COVID-19 cont.

the minimum wage, we're now at the living wage, and we're now managing to enjoy a certain quality of life and wellbeing." That's somebody looking at where they'd been and saw they've crossed into another color of life or transformation. This is typical of results we're seeing from South Africa, from New Zealand, from China and also recently from Thailand and Philippines. This is a job evaluation that's human-centered, worker-centered, and enables us to identify where the living wage may be.

We've looked at the minimum wage and the living wage, now let's look at the maximum wage. Work psychologists tend to focus on the latter. You can have an income without having a job and a wage. We focus more on wage inequality. This is not a new idea; a maximum wage has been around since antiquity. Plato, for example, is reputed to have said to Aristotle, "The top wage should never be more than five times the bottom wage in any community." That's the wage ratio. In 2013, the ILO, in a bold World of Work Report, put forward this idea of wage ratios as a means of breaking away from runaway wage inequality. It is, in a very clever way of doing so, because if you're at that CEO-end of the wage spectrum, and you want to raise the wage there, you need to raise the wage of all the workers, because the ratio has to stay the same. It creates positive interdependence between people and wages. Let's be clear here, we're talking about breadcrumbs at one end of the table and feast at the other. There are cases of excess. This is about redistributing a little bit, so that there's more equity in the wage wellbeing spectrum. We know from past pandemics that the public tolerance for these big wage gaps gets shorter and that may well be happening at the present moment. We know that's likely to be even shorter when we have intersecting gender, racial justice, social economic, social political, and environmental crises.

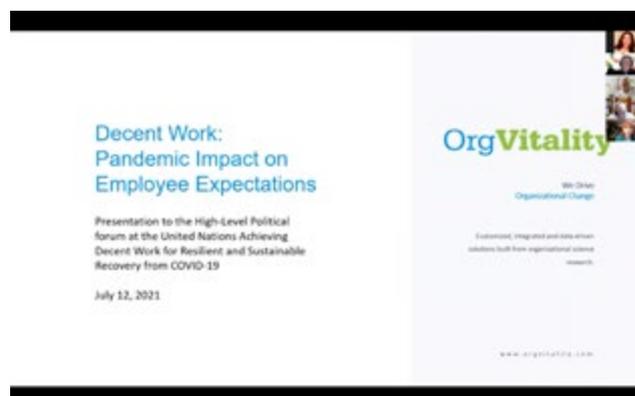
Maybe we should be looking as well at the maximum-minimum wage ratio, and its relationship to sustainability of livelihoods through wellbeing. We may be approaching a point where we need to

start setting maximum - minimum thresholds, and researching them much, much more. That's started, but it needs to accelerate. To conclude, I'm arguing that we can apply humanistic, humanitarian job evaluation to set wage range thresholds that are more likely to sustain livelihoods through wellbeing and thereby addressing all of the SDGs, all 17 of them. Thank you very much.

Judy Kuriansky: Stu, you've lived up to your reputation. You've given us a way out of this drastic economic disaster. You've highlighted this new world of humanitarian work psychology that's emerging, and you've given us a new definition of the word GLO.

To elaborate on this issue of decent work, and how we deal with this hopefully emerging recovery, we turn now to Jeff Saltzman. Jeff is an industrial/organizational psychologist, which means he's an expert on work. He founded the company OrgVitality, that does management consulting. Importantly, in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, OrgVitality did a survey about employee's reaction to the pandemic, including their fears and emotions as they relate to work. That's now available very free to help companies understand how to best support their workers during these times. You can find it on their website orgvitality.com. I recommend that. Jeff wrote the book 'Creating the Vital Organization: Balancing Short-Term Profits with Long-Term Success'. With all that, welcome Jeff speaking, on the topic of 'Decent Work: Pandemic Impact on Workers Expectations'.

Jeff Saltzman: Thank you, Judy. It's great to be here. It's different than Stuart's presentation. I'm going to be focusing on people generally working in larger organizations. People who are in the formal workplace.



I think you'll find some interesting overlap between the two presentations. Let me start. Much has been speculated about how the pandemic will shape employee expectations about the workplace. I'll be the first to admit, I don't have a crystal ball, but based on history and our humanity, some predictions can be made regarding what is likely to occur. What we see, collected from employee surveys and interviews, is that many of the current patterns in the data are similar to the patterns we saw after 9/11, and during the great recession, which began in 2007. When we look at patterns of data from employees, we have to be careful not to paint with too broad of a brush. While there's a statistical distribution with every trait, truth be told, there are more similarities than differences when it comes to the specifics of what workers want from the world of work

Before I get into those similarities, and differences, and patterns in the data, and how best to respond to them, there's a fundamental tenant I would like to put forth. The underlying human psychology, which drives the fundamentals of what workers want from the workplace, has not changed during this pandemic. It did not change after 9/11. It did not change after the great recession, and it's very unlikely to change anytime soon. What does and can change, is how those fundamentals are fulfilled. Let me cover a few of those fundamentals to illustrate. First, the sense of equity, that for the effort I put in, I'm given a fair return. That return is measured in terms of compensation and benefits. The benefits can be varied, and each person will put a different weight on the value of those benefits. Such as job prestige, organizational mission, development opportunities, resume building, insurance, flexibility, vacation time, retirement plans, time to retirement or job security. Many people, for instance, will take a job with lower compensation, if they can retire after 20 years with health insurance and a pension. Others will take a job and work under less satisfying conditions if the organization is viewed as serving a higher purpose. The combination of compensation and benefits that people value is varied and can, and does, change

over time. Sometimes this is driven by life stage, or by impacts of significant events such as technological advances, economic crises, attacks by foreign actors, or pandemics. After a pandemic, people still desire equitable treatment, but the factors that create that equitableness can and will change. Not necessarily for all, but at least for some.

The second fundamental is being treated with respect and dignity. I defy you to find a worker, anywhere in the world, of any generation, from any culture, that doesn't want to be treated with respect and dignity. Pathology aside, this does not change over time, and is a constant. Respect and dignity are so often used in conjunction with one another that they've become joined at the hip as a unified concept. Not only in the world of work, but also in our day-to-day conceptual thinking as well. Dignity is often defined as a person's freedom to write their own life story. That requires freedom from oppression, and has within that notion, both rights and obligations. One right, is of control over oneself and one's body, and an obligation would be to take responsibility for your behaviors and actions. Maintaining dignity in the world of work, using that definition, is a balancing act. If dignity is about the right to choose, and as one enters an employment situation, one is giving up at least some dignity in that you're working not necessarily to your own ends, on your own initiatives, but on organizationally defined goals. And often on an organizationally defined schedule.

The third factor is organization effectiveness, which also includes effectiveness of leadership. One of the factors causing people to quit an organization, is experiencing frustrations day-to-day in getting their work done. While there are always exceptions, by and large people want to work. They want to contribute, and they want to do a good job. One piece of evidence for this, is that people who are overworked have higher levels of job satisfaction, than people who are not given enough to do, which generates feelings of being less valued. Organization effectiveness has both an internal and external component.

An internal component is how well the place is being run. And an external component, do we offer products and services that are attractive, and of high quality.

A fourth fundamental factor, that each employee wants to have, is a sense of personal future, a career path, and each employee is chasing their own personal rainbow. Here's the thing though. No one has ever seen someone else's rainbow. A rainbow is created when a beam of light passes through water droplets, is diffracted, and shines on the color receptors in your eye. When two people look at a rainbow, even if they're standing side by side, they're seeing different rainbows. Different light beams, passing through different water droplets, reflecting uniquely off the color receptors in their eyes. Their respective rainbows may appear very similar, but as each of us perceives a rainbow, we're perceiving a unique image. An image that no one else perceives. Organizations are constantly looking for their own rainbows, or perhaps more accurately, the mythical pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. They create all sorts of messaging to motivate employees, to see the same rainbow the leader at the top of the organization sees. Just as each person needs to see rainbows their own unique way, each employee needs to internalize organizational goals in their own fashion. Employees can get on board with the organizational vision, but just as each of us has a unique vision, our own personal rainbows, each of us will have a unique vision of why we work to achieve the organizational goals, no matter how similar we think it might be. During this pandemic, it'll come as no surprise if I say that stress levels have increased. While stress levels have been steadily increasing over the past decades, during the pandemic it would not be unusual to see survey responses in the mid-80s to mid-90s. In other words, the vast majority of the workforce is very stressed. No surprise, women with either preschool aged children, or school aged children, are the most stressed. They're often juggling work, remote schooling, lack of childcare options, canceled afterschool activities, running a household, and perhaps an aging parent or two.

While many organizations are concerned about the stress levels of employees and trying various strategies to reduce stress, such as closing on a Friday, or mandatory vacation time. As we make changes, such as everyone coming back to the office, the changes themselves can be stress-inducing, even if done with the best of intentions. An organization will not be able to eliminate stress, but it can help employees cope with it. One of the causes of stress is lack of information. The lack of information, along with increased levels of fear driven by the unknown, of a novel disease increases anxiety. Take anxiety, throw in media reports of panic buying, and you get runs on toilet paper, on milk, eggs, et cetera. The desire for information is clearly indicated in the data as an insatiable desire as it reduces the uncertainty and stress people are feeling. Ominously, in the absence of accurate information, people make up their own stories or open themselves to lies and false information. Employees want to hear the truth, and they want to hear it from the top of the house. You cannot over communicate to your employees at this point, and they will be grateful for it. In times of uncertainty, the ratings of leadership, in terms of trust and competence, improve significantly. In uncertain and fear-inducing situations effective, decisive leadership, which points to a solution path, is strongly desired. Employees are willing to give leadership the benefit of the doubt, at least until proven otherwise. This is a pattern we've seen over and over.

What happens though, is that organizations rarely, if ever, can hold onto the gains in ratings of leadership as the crisis subsides. In uncertainty, leadership is often more visible, communicates more, giving reassurances where possible. That visibility and high level of communication, as it dissipates, so do the enhanced scores. As a leader, be as visible as possible to your folks. Do not simply retreat into the war room to plan out options and contingencies. Talk to them and listen to them. Oftentimes in situations of uncertainty, chaos in the workplace increases. There's a school of thought out there that chaos is a good thing, that it increases innovation and drives higher levels of performance; but be assured it does no such thing.

Chaos by definition makes less information available to staff. Chaos is not an organizing principle or a way to achieve a higher level of creativity or performance. It is simply chaos and leads to greater uncertainty. This is not a good time to reorganize or move people around without very good reasons. Reducing chaos by increasing information flow should be the goal. Be as clear as possible about what the organization is doing to cope with the situation and provide as much information as possible regarding the impact on each organizational member. Give people as much agency as possible. This is a path towards increasing dignity. Get people involved in solving problems and give them as much control over their own paths as possible. After 9/11 for instance, those employees who were actively involved in restoring one company's operation located at ground zero saw dramatic increases in satisfaction, pride, and engagement compared to another group not involved at the same company. Work towards restoring or increasing employee confidence. And remember, it's likely that every single one of your employees, in one fashion or another, has struggled. Confidence can be impacted by improving the way you conduct business. Improve the internal processes and relationships, tackle issues that will increase effectiveness, but perhaps have been put off, and do so in a visible, communicative fashion. Reinvigorate the organization's competitiveness. Ensure that your services and products are current and competitive. Communicate to your staff what you're doing to enhance competitiveness. Provide current reassurance. Assure that organizational members can thrive in the current environment. What do they need to be effective, and what special circumstances are they dealing with? Take a long-term view of staff member development and opportunity. The value proposition to employees is to provide skills and experiences that equips them for a meaningful career, not for a specific job. Finally, remember how people react to COVID is not uniform and will vary based on individual differences; and will also be dependent on personal circumstances. What we do know about people is that when they

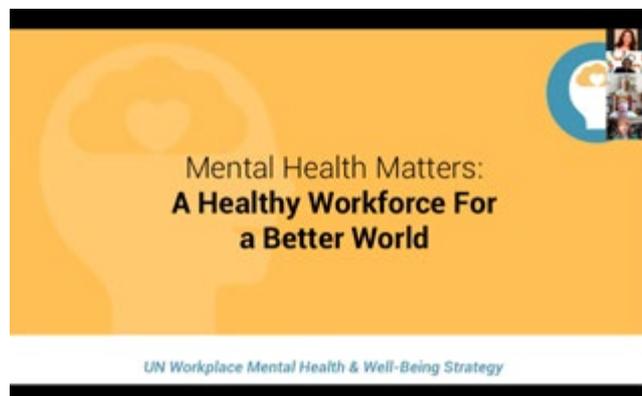
are appropriately supported and feel safe, there's a tremendous amount of resilience and people can bounce back from adversity. Thank you.

Judy Kuriansky: My, my Jeff. Those were fabulous points, very psychological too. Ways for employers to really boost their employees. You said safety, empowering them, giving them control and confidence and encouraging their personal rainbow. There's a lot of color besides a lot of intelligence on this panel here. Thank you so much Jeff.

We turn now to a tremendous innovator, another one on our panel, Therese Fitzpatrick, who is serving as the Global Lead for the implementation of the United Nations System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. This is very important. It's been pioneered by the United Nations Secretary-General to serve the mental health needs of the UN staff, which is critical. He's very, very forward thinking about mental health and that's what is under Therese's wing now. The project that she's overseeing, which is a big job when you think about the vast amount of UN personnel who are in posts all over the world. You look up the strategy on the website Mental Health Matters; A Healthy Workplace for a Better World, and you can also see their poetry book there. Soon there'll be podcasts and online learning. Therese, of course, also works with the UN member states group of Friends of Mental Health and Well-being that I know very well, having founded it with Ambassador Otto of Palau and now administered by Canada, Bahrain, Belgium, and Ecuador. She is really integrating the member states with the workers. With all that, Therese is perfect to address her topic of mental health and wellbeing of personnel during COVID and beyond. Thank you, Therese.

Therese Fitzpatrick: Thank you for the introduction, Judy. I thought it would be useful today, having heard about all the different research around it might be useful to have a practical example about what we're actually doing across the UN system. As Judy alluded to, it's a very large system, it's a very complex system working in all countries of the world. The

timing, I think, was quite incredible that the mental health strategy was launched towards the end of 2018. We commenced work on that in 2019, which meant we were well-placed when COVID hit to really think about how we could pivot and support personnel across the globe.



The strategy was started after a survey done in 2015, which showed that UN personnel reported symptoms consistent with a mental health condition at a higher rate than the general population, and that those rates increased the longer personnel worked at the UN. There's obviously a whole range of reasons for that. We can share the survey results, but I didn't want to go into them today because I wanted to talk more about what we're doing about that. It is really important that we're thinking about the health and wellbeing of UN personnel, because we can't make the world a better place unless we are healthy ourselves. In the words of our Secretary-General, "Let us all be part of a healthier workplace as we work for a better world for all." It benefits us, it benefits the world, and it also is an opportunity for us to learn about what works so we can be contributing to the knowledge base in this area as well. There are four key themes of the strategy, and I just wanted to outline this because it gives you a sense that it is quite a broad strategy. It is looking at how do we create a workplace that enhances mental and physical health and wellbeing for all while having a strong prevention approach. How can we look at the risks? How can we mitigate those risks? You can imagine what

is involved in working within the UN. There are many locations, and many are dangerous. We can't take away those risks, but we can think about how we're creating a workplace that really gets the best out of all of our personnel. The second key theme is around developing, delivering, and continuously evaluating mental health and wellbeing services in all duty stations.

We have a number of mental health services that are available. We need to continue to look at them to make sure there's equal access for UN personnel no matter where they work in the world. As you can imagine, over the last 12 months there has been quite a shift in terms of access as we move to more telehealth, as we look at our insurers, as we have a more agile approach to how we can approach psychological and mental health support. The third key theme is around welcoming and supporting staff who live with mental health challenges. That is both from ensuring the reduction of stigma to making sure we've got the policies and procedures in place to support staff when they are experiencing a mental health condition. The fourth area is ensuring sustainable funding for implementation of the strategy, and to make sure that it is sustainable over time.

It was originally a five-year strategy, of which we're about at the halfway mark now. As I mentioned, we started working in 2019. We were putting the structures in place. Then in March 2020, we paused and really started to think about what are the needs of our staff now. It was interesting to hear the previous speaker, particularly around communication. We did do a survey last year and the top thing that came out was the importance of communication as a way to support mental health and wellbeing. That's not just communication around mental health, but transparent communication as much as possible, given the level of uncertainty, to ensure that some personnel understood what was happening, understood what changes were happening, and understood how we would be working into the future. It did require an agile response from the UN.

Achieving Decent Work for Resilient and Sustainable Recovery From COVID-19 cont.

We examined our policies and flexible working arrangements. How could we support personnel if they were supporting children at home, if they were looking after elderly parents? Everybody had different needs over this time, so flexibility was absolutely key. We did a health and wellbeing survey, as I mentioned, that was undertaken by 13 UN organizations that showed variability across different organizations and different duty stations; but allowed us to think about who the people are who are most at risk. One of the key things that really stood out, for me as part of that, was that it was our younger personnel, below age 45 who were experiencing core levels of stress throughout that period. It made us think about how we can provide more support for younger personnel who've obviously had their social lives particularly disrupted and were feeling quite isolated, as well as young parents looking after children. We did a lot of work around access to psychosocial support, and that varies across UN organizations; but I'm looking at external providers when we needed it, and also increasing the number of counselors available across the UN system. We were also mindful of the increased risk around domestic abuse, which was increasing across the world, but obviously the UN personnel are not immune to that. We did a lot of work around how can we support personnel experiencing domestic abuse. We worked with an external organization to launch a global directory which had resources within nearly every country across the world, so people can go and find out what support is available within that country. We also did a lot of work around World Mental Health Month. it's normally a day, but we turned it into a month; and we had different things across each week of October. We learned what other organizations were doing so we could learn from them. A number of personnel talked about their personal experiences. From this we learned how to deal with people at risk, especially people experiencing domestic abuse and people with a disability. We partnered with UN Global, which is our LGBTQ network across the system and also with Young UN. We are starting to think about how we can support all of the

different groups who are at risk. We did a lot of work around communication and getting the information out there. That was also where the poetry book came in. We asked UN personnel to submit their poetry. We got over 50 poems written by UN personnel from 20 countries in seven languages. It's actually quite beautiful to see people talking about their experiences in poetry form. Again, all of this is on our website along with the video of the launch of that event.

Where to from here? We're really in that transition phase now working on an implementation guide so every UN organization has a mental health action plan and is reporting on that. We're doing a lot of work for leaders and managers, because we know it's such a difficult time for them to know how to support staff. We're doing a lot of work around training and resources. A lot of this is about minimizing duplication of effort. There is a lot of work that's happening across the UN system, and we're really working to make sure that we're sharing those resources across UN organizations to make sure we're all developing the same resources, and they're available to all personnel.

We've also recently launched another global health survey, which is actually broader. It's around all issues around health and wellbeing. There are 20 UN organizations taking part in that, and it's one of the biggest surveys we've looked at to make sure we're really focusing our policies, focusing our efforts, supporting UN personnel, and knowing where the issues are. We're looking at some of the administrative issues that make things difficult for people who are experiencing a mental health condition. We know there are small things we can do that can make a big difference to personnel, particularly when they are needing to take time off due to mental health issues. Lastly, we are working on integrating our strategies. There's a whole range of different strategies across the UN. For example, currently within the Secretariat there's an anti-racism task force to make sure we are supporting all staff, and to make sure that there are no issues in terms of racism. Obviously, that is linked

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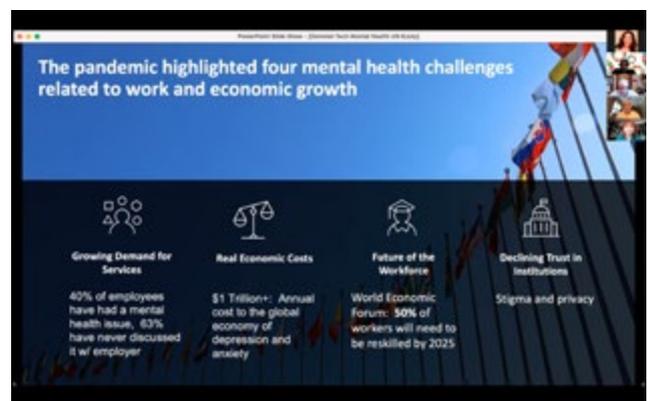
to mental health as well.

Here are UN strategies and that mental health is considered within all of the work that we do. You can start to see that shift. I think that now people come to me and say, "I'm doing some work on this. I think it's related to mental health. Can we work together?" We are working in a much more integrated way. We've got a range of resources that are available no matter where you are. We have a number of fact sheets and podcasts in all of the UN official languages. Some of the fact sheets we are working on are why is mental health important? How can you improve mental health and well-being? Thriving as a leader and manager. Then also we move on to supporting staff experience with mental health conditions, because we know that if UN leaders are able to look after their own mental health and wellbeing, that's great for them. It's great for their team, and it's great for the world. We're on social media. I've got email, and I do encourage you to have a look at our website. There's a whole range of different information in there that is freely available for anybody who would like to use it within their organization. Thank you, Judy.

Judy Kuriansky: Oh my. Theresa, you're presenting to us a model of how organizations can really move forward in helping the mental health of their workers. It's brilliant. You start with the Secretary-General, who we honor for really bringing mental health to the fore, which he's doing. He, Creating the strategy, and you implementing it in this really brilliant way with all these examples Walter and I were very happy to be on one of the first webinars on the World Mental Health Day, and then you brought art into it through poetry. Really getting to people's hearts, where they live and also in person. I remember being in the lobby at the UN and people being amazed that you were there to really answer questions and engage in conversation with them. It's really brilliant and innovative as a model

The innovation of all of these speakers is really amazing. Paul Dommel, who's our next speaker is also on the cutting edge. He's in the private sector at IBM,

where he is the Global Director for Public Service and Civil Development to Civil Government, which is other than defense, and it addresses education and development. Notably, he works with populations like veterans to prevent tragic suicide, which is so important. We're going to hear about that. Paul has worked all around the world; in the US, Asia-Pacific, in Europe and Latin America. He knows all the cultures. He combines his knowledge of technology, expertise about work and his commitment to mental health. His presentation is on trauma, the pandemic, and the return to work, what's the role of technology? Thank you, Paul.



Paul Dommel: Thank you, Judy. What a great panel, really excited to be part of it. Mental fitness underpins our ability to work well. Right now, there's really a mismatch between the need for services and access to services. I'm going to give some examples of how technology can help to address that gap. Just this week, I live in Virginia in the United States and on Friday, unfortunately our state had to shut down access for new admissions to state mental health hospitals and clinics. The reason was because there's 30% of openings in staff. 108 frontline staff workers in those hospitals have quit in the last two weeks because there is so much stress on them. That's a real tangible example, for me, of stress in the general system of mental health.

I think the pandemic highlighted four challenges, and we touched on some of these during the side event this morning. There's a growing demand for

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services. There's data is not just a UN statistic. It's a general statistic that 40% of employees have had a mental health issue. Sixty-three percent of them have never discussed it with an employer even though it affects their fitness and their readiness for work. It's a real economic cost. It's a trillion dollars plus a year off of the global economy. When you look at the future of the workforce, more stress coming especially to the bottom and the middle parts of the workforce; 50% of workers are going to need to be re-skilled by 2025 and combine that to the declining confidence in our institutions, whether it's government or other employers, there's a lot going on here.

There is no great, easy answer for this stuff, but I think technology is changing fast and there is a real role for it. There are virtual assistants, and we use those all the time to help people find support, get answers to easy questions and point them in the right direction. These are new capabilities that just in the last few years, and over the pandemic, have really started exploding. We can really use technology to personalize solutions, to help to understand an individual better and structure programs that work for them. I think we're really much better at understanding the importance of super high levels of security and privacy for this in order to build trust and confidence in the system. Just a couple of examples that I'm going to point to. One of the big challenges for veterans around the world, and the US is no exception, is that some of our veterans really struggle with the transition from military life to civilian life. They are making the transition from a structured regimented life in the military to finding and fitting in the workforce. Unfortunately, this leads to a very high suicide rate. It's double the suicide rate during the first few years after leaving than it is in the general society. In fact, it's more prevalent among women veterans than it is among men veterans.

There is work being done to deal with this. The Department of Veterans Affairs in the US is starting from the fact that we're going to help our people make that transition. We're going to give them tools to help

with mental fitness, to understand where they are, to help with a job search, to connect to peers, and to have a mental health hotline. In this particular example, we at IBM, and there are other companies, lots of other companies that are doing this. We are working with a company called Total Brain, which does work with mental fitness and measurements, and works with corporations on the fitness of their teams. After assessment we do job search support. The biggest stressor for veterans, one of the biggest stressors is "what am I going to do? What's my job going to be?" Every day, we scan a 51,000-job database. For any given veteran, it helped to shrink the size down to something that's really tangible and is based on interests and on capability. We use some AI to help to match military occupation codes with civilian jobs and give them the shortlist of real opportunities that are relevant for them.

It's amazing, this piece of technology and the veterans are really into it. They use this thing 20 minutes a day, which is a lot of time to be on an app. It's not Facebook time during a pandemic, but it's a real amount of time that they're connecting with this. Then the way that the technology looks and feels is important. In a totally different example, we work with a huge and growing number of homeless people in Orange County in California. We create a view of each of these really vulnerable people and present them to government and non-profit services so that somebody in the housing business knows that a person is receiving behavioral health treatments. And when a person comes out of the prison system, we let community housing services know that a person is getting the behavioral support services and health care they need as well as the employment support and benefits they need. The idea is really to take all this complexity of working with government and with these services and make these services work for the individual.

The last example I'm going to talk about is really interesting. It's called the Lebanon Relief Organization. It really started with a giant explosion in Beirut,

in the terminal about a year ago. They were finding that the relief workers going into Lebanon were suffering trauma and then they started to look further and found that 80% of Lebanese people have been exposed to trauma in their lifetime and 90% of them have no access to specialized treatment. Seventy-one percent, an amazing number, have experienced war related trauma in their lifetime, and 50% of kids in Beirut needed psychological help. So, the Lebanon relief network came together in the last year. It's a group of specialists from academia, clinicians, NGOs, corporations that began to really take a look at what could be done in Lebanon, and what they did was form of big plan of raising awareness and offering self-help tools. And that's where technology fits in, promoting the need for professional support and really starting to look at things holistically. So, one of the things that they were able to do was help to put together some self-help tools in less than 12 weeks. They came up with a set of tools that permitted a person to go on line, assess their symptoms and receive some really simple things that they could be doing to address those symptoms. Things that you can do on your own in the long run. The next phase of the project deals with the large diaspora of Lebanese people that are around the world, and many of them are therapists. Many of them are psychologists and it will permit those people to sign up and register to provide support for people back in Lebanon on a volunteer basis. The idea there is to match the need for resources with people that are willing to volunteer time. Again, not the complete answer, but it's part of an answer of addressing that mismatch.

So, the last year has really taught us a lot and it is possible to move fast. The urgency of the pandemic shows that if we can identify a set of these really burning requirements and we can move fast. How people interact with technology is critical to it being successful, and there's so much that can be done now in environments where you don't have to do this hardcore coding and where things can just be configured and set up quickly, and now privacy and security, which are increasingly important, are also

increasingly easy to manage. That's my story, Judy. There are real opportunities for technology to fill a gap and with anything these days it's really possible to move quickly.

Judy Kuriansky: I really love that you said that because we think of technology in a certain way, it's advanced us, but then it's distanced us in the midst of this pandemic. So, thank you for bringing up how technology can really help people in trauma, both from Lebanon, we all know and love people there, and also for vets whom we know and love so much. And the second point that's so important about what you have brought to this table is the contributions of the private sector, which we really need in this complex in order to build back better in the work world. So, thank you so much, Paul.

Another innovator is Dr. Lori Foster who's another good friend. We're all friends here. Lori's a professor of industrial organizational psychology at North Carolina State University and at the University of Cape town in South Africa. And she's connected to both of our co-sponsors because she's a fellow of SIOP, which is the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and also the incoming president of the International Association of Applied Psychology. Lori is a leader in the emerging field of behavioral science, and it's very important. This has been acknowledged by the UN Secretary- General as I've mentioned before. Lori was the behavioral science advisor to the previous Secretary - General at the UN and also in the Obama administration, and she's head of behavioral science at Accompanied Polymetrics that uses complicated neuroscience and data science, which is very important now at the UN to connect talent with job opportunities. So appropriately, her topic is applying psychology to equip public servants for agenda 2030, connecting work to SDG 16, which is about peaceful societies. Lori, you're amazing.

Lori Foster: I really appreciate the introduction. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My title is *Applying Psychology to Equip Public Servants for Agenda*

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2030, and I want to begin by pointing out that so many of the SDGs require on some level behavioral change. Whether it's behavioral change on the part of people who are working for the UN, outside of the UN, in many aspects, in many facets of this world, and one SDG in particular that I'd like to focus on today is 16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. If we pick



up even a few of the targets around SDG 16, I think it will become clear that we need to be focusing on behavior to accomplish agenda 2030 in this decade of action. Target 16.3 is about promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels. Target 16.5 is substantially reducing corruptions and bribery and all their forms. This again, requires behavioral change, and 16.6 is Developing Effective, Accountable and Transparent Institutions at all Levels. For today's presentation, I'd really like to focus there, target 16.6, and link this to the contributions that applied psychology can make. There's a rather famous article in applied psychology, which was published by Benjamin Schneider in 1987. The title of the article almost says it all. The people make the place, and I would argue that if we're looking to develop effective accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, we need to keep in mind that the people make the place, and therefore, the way to do that is to really begin to focus on the people and putting up systems that enable people to be their best selves at work. Interestingly, Benjamin Schneider, in this article, notes that when we think about the structure, the process, the culture of an organization, these are

the outcomes of people. These are not the causes of behavior at work, per se. All of this means is that to promote SDG 16, we need to get people right, and behavioral insights has a strong role to play on getting people right. The OECD defines the behavioral insights as lessons derived from the behavioral and social sciences, including decision-making, psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, organizational, and group behavior. So, as you can see from this definition, this broad umbrella, it's multidisciplinary in nature and applied psychology in particular has a strong role to play. There are lots of different ways in which we can use behavioral insights and applied psychology to equip public servants for agenda 2030 during this decade of action. I've listed only a few examples here, but there are many more. Everything from screening, hiring, onboarding, and training employees.

We can talk about using applied psychology to improve motivation, staff development and to provide feedback. I think we've heard Jeff talk earlier about leadership. We can use applied psychology to figure out how to accurately and effectively measure performance in a way that makes sense to build teams and to create a sense of psychological safety such that people feel comfortable speaking up and speaking out and making contributions to their workplace in the public sector. We can also use applied psychology to promote organizational change and organizational culture, and again, just a few examples. Stuart talked about job evaluation earlier. We heard about mental health. We heard about increasing agency, lots of different roles for applied psychology to improve the plight of the public service. Let's take just one of these examples and drill down. Let's talk about motivation. Now, if we wanted to think about and talk about improving motivation in the public sector amongst public service, the way that an applied psychologist might go about it is aligned with what Datta and Mullainathan might call behavioral design. There are a lot of different ways to describe this process, but this is one nice way to think about it as define, diagnose, design, and test. So, if you tell

me okay, in my government workforce, I've got this problem with motivation. What are we going to do? We might start by really focusing in on defining the problem. Okay, what does that mean? What does it mean when you say there's a problem with motivation? Define precisely what that means and how to measure it. And this is a point at which applied psychologists would be inclined to question and test our assumptions because sometimes our assumptions are spot on and, sometimes, they can lead us astray, and so really beginning the process by questioning and testing those assumptions. Measuring what motivation means in this context is an important first step. We then get into diagnosing what are the behavioral barriers and what are the bottlenecks that might be preventing people from behaving in the way that you would hope to see in the public services workforce?

I will quote a psychologist called Kurt Lewin who's famous for saying there's nothing so practical as a good theory and argue that there are a lot of really good theories in applied psychology, that in combination with your own observations and the workforce, can provide insight into what those barriers, what those bottlenecks might be, and what kinds of interventions might fuel the types of behaviors that you would hope to see more of in the public service, in the workforce. Thirdly, we design an intervention to try to move the needle in the desired direction, and finally a methodology to test whether or not that intervention works. If it does, we scale it up. If it doesn't, we tweak and try again or try something altogether different. This is behavioral design process that can be applied across the board. I'm explaining it here in the context of work motivation.

So, what does applied psychology tell us about work motivation if we're to run with this example? Lots of things, more things than I have time to explain, but a few points that I will highlight is one that I said a moment ago, that we really need to question and test our assumptions before we decide that our problem is indeed a motivation problem. It might be, it might

not be. Number two, be aware of the fundamental attribution error. This is a concept in psychology, which says that when we observe somebody else behaving in a certain way, there are two different categories of explanations we might make in our own minds. One is a dispositional explanation. So, the reason why they're behaving that way at work has something to do with them, their distinct personality. Maybe we think they're lazy or they're not motivated. A different category of explanations is situational, maybe something about their environment that's pushing them in one direction or another. The thing is, in psychology, we've observed that people aren't equally likely to make dispositional and situational explanations. As human beings, we're much more inclined to jump to that dispositional explanation when in reality, sometimes it's people's environment that is pushing them in one direction or another, and as a psychologist we might look at that environment and say, how can we reshape that in a way that might promote the wellbeing of this individual worker and enhance their performance? Third bullet point, there is more to work motivation than monetary rewards and incentives. Now, I don't want this to come across as money doesn't matter because, as we heard from Professor Stuart Carr at the beginning of the session, money does matter. So that's not the point, but the point is you can't stop there. There is more to work motivation than monetary rewards and incentives, and there are a number of theories that speak to this. There are lots of good theories about work motivation but not enough time to go through all of them today. I'll point to one, a macro theory called self-determination theory, and there was a good article that was published in 2017, and it was really outlining the state of the science on self-determination theory. A few points I'll pull out for today's discussion. Number one is that work motivation doesn't just vary in terms of quantity. This person is more motivated than that person. It also varies in terms of quality, and it turns out that there are higher quality forms of motivation, and there are lower quality forms of motivation. The way that self-determination theory might

explain this is in terms of more autonomous forms of motivation versus more controlled forms. The more autonomous forms of motivation are what I would call higher quality motivation. Those are the kinds of motivation that emanate from within our public services workforce. Whereas the more controlled forms are, yes, you might be able to get me to do something, but it's clear to me that my behavior is being controlled by someone else, and I feel a little bit less ownership over that. That's the kind that's less likely to persist over time when those incentives or when those punishments are gone. The autonomous forms of motivation, the ones that emanate from within are more likely to persist. Self-determination theory has a lot more to it. Here's an interesting study. This one was published in the journal of management about four years ago, and it was trying to test out different forms of motivating the workforce.

Now this particular study was conducted at Intel, and it was amongst computer chip manufacturers. So, the work was set up so that people worked 12-hour shifts, four days in a row followed by four days off, four days on four days off, and the problem was to figure out how do we enhance the motivation of that workforce when they come back to work after four days off? So, these researchers, it's a really good example of that testing phase of the defined diagnose test methodology that I talked about, randomly assigned workers to three different conditions. So, in one condition on the first day back, they were told okay, if you can hit this relatively challenging performance goal, then you're going to get a bonus. The equivalent of about \$25. A second group was told, if you can hit this relatively challenging performance target, then you're going to get a compliment from your boss at the end of the day. The third group was told that if you can hit the target then you're going to get a voucher for a pizza for your family. Then they measure the performance of the workforce. Now you can ask yourself, you can guess, which of these three incentives work the best? Well, they measured everybody's performance after the first day back, and they all worked. Each of the three incentives increased

people's performance. What was really interesting was the next question; which of these sustains motivation over time, and that's where they saw a difference. Once the incentive was removed after day one, they looked at performance on day two, day three and day four, and what they found was the people who had been randomly assigned to the monetary incentive group, their performance actually dipped below what it had been at baseline when there was no incentive whatsoever. The people who received the compliment from the boss, their performance sustained the highest of all of the three groups. The pizza voucher was somewhere in between. That compliment from the boss begins to get at what self-determination theory might call relatedness needs. That we as human beings have various needs; autonomy needs, needs to develop competence, needs for relationships with others, and there are ways to combine incentives to help address those needs. Now that's private sector. So, what about the public services workforce? I would say there are more examples from the private sector historically than there have been behavioral insights from government and non-governmental institutions, but there's real momentum heading in this direction. Coming soon, a very nice publication coming out by the department of economic and social affairs, UN DESA, titled Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. And this is a part of a bigger toolkit that the division of public Institutions and Digital Government is coming out with, where they talk about how to promote new mindsets, competencies, behaviors, to support the public services workforce in achieving agenda 2030. Be on the lookout for this one. I have a chapter in there with my colleagues, Joseph Sherlock, and Dan Ariely where we expand on some of the concepts that I'm talking about today. I'll also say that the OECD, this was in 2018, nearly three years ago, mapped out behavioral insights being applied to public policy around the world, and I don't expect you to read the words on this map, but what you kind of see is there are lots and lots of behavioral insights being applied to public policy across the

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world, more than 200 institutions, which span institutions inside government, outside of government, as well as multinational organizations like the UN. Judy mentioned at the beginning that I had the pleasure of working in one such team.

This was during the Obama administration from 2014 to 2016 and was the White House, Social and Behavioral Sciences Team. Around 2015, Obama signed an executive order titled Using Behavioral Science Insights to Better Serve the American People. It was really highlighting some of the things I'm speaking about today and how useful applied psychology can be in improving government and non-governmental organizations, and you will notice that there are multinational organizations on this map, including UN entities. There is a lot of momentum within the UN family around increasing and leveraging strategically our usage of behavioral insights to improve not only governments around the world, but the UN as a system, as an organization. The Joint Inspection Unit in 2019, did a very nice review of change management in UN systems organizations, and if you read that report, you'll see that they highlight areas in which behavioral insights were being applied, as well as the need for greater applications of behavioral science and applied psychology as we look to make sure that our UN entities are fit for purpose for decade of action.

More recently, really, just a few weeks ago, the Secretary-General came out with a guidance note on applying psychology at the UN, which focused on a variety of different ways in which applied psychology, and behavioral science can strengthen the UN system. So, I would point you to that if this is an area of interest, and I'll conclude with a statement from the previous Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon which I think speaks volumes. It says our global agenda, and most importantly, the people worldwide, they are intended to serve deserve nothing less than the best science available. A human centered agenda requires a rigorous research-based understanding of people. So, to conclude, the people make the place. if

we want to strengthen institutions and contribute to the SDGs, getting people right is key and behavioral science at large and applied psychology in particular can be an important mechanism for getting people right at work. Thank you very much.

Judy Kuriansky: Thank you Lori for those two P's, the people in place actually, the UN agenda does have a foundation of five Ps on people, peace, which is your SDG 16 and prosperity, which is what we're talking about here, are part of that. So, we're really grounded in there and thank you Lori for bringing out the issues of applied psychology. What we're learning here so much today is all these brilliant friends and brilliant psychologists and contributors to the world of work are really in these disciplines of applied psychology, humanitarian work psychology, and also behavioral psychology. So, it's three phrases of the types of psychology that we're learning about here, and no one better to know all about that, than our discussant, Dr. Walter Reichman.

Walter wears many hats. In the private sector, he's a partner and a vice-president of OrgVitality. In academia, he's a leader in the field of humanitarian work psychology that we've heard about, that Stu really founded. He edited the book, "Industrial and Organizational Psychology Helped the Vulnerable: Serving the Underserved." It provided many examples such as entrepreneurship in Uganda and Britain's training of the homeless. At the UN, he's the major force in our NGO community as an NGO representative for our International Association for Applied Psychology, the former president of the Psychology Coalition that we created for NGOs that are accredited to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations, and he's a major advocate on behalf of decent work, ending poverty and the rights of disabled persons in work, and Walter you are amazing. Pull it all together for us.

Walter Reichman: Thank you, Judy. You're wonderful as always, and I just want to acknowledge the brilliance, the creativity, the work, and the insights of this magnificent panel of my colleagues. It was a joy to listen to you. It's a joy to read you. It's a joy to

know you and I thank you for giving me the privilege of being able to comment on the kinds of things that you have said. Whatever you say, your thinking, your research, generates a whole host of thoughts and ideas, and I'm going to share a little bit of it with you, but there is much more that I learned from you today and learned from you over the years that I've worked with you.

We are in the middle of a pandemic. If you think in terms of the variant, and you think in terms of the rise in cases that are happening in the United States, in India, the elimination of audiences at the Olympics and the rise in cases around the world we realize we are in the middle of a pandemic. And yet, even though we are in the middle of the pandemic our United Nations has decided to focus on the future; what's going to happen after this. And so, they are devoting 10 days of the High-Level Political Forum to look to the future, not to dwell on what's happening, but to look at the future. I find that extraordinarily wonderful, and it's within the legacy and the tradition of the United Nations.

If you recall, the idea of the United Nations was formed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain when they were in the middle of the Second World War at a time when we were losing more military battles than we were winning. With a sense of the future and the sense of hope, they went beyond the Second World War and said, we don't want to put the world back the way it was before the war; we want to put it in a better and a different place, and the concept of the United Nations developed from that.

As we look at what the UN is doing now, and as we look at what our group of presenters this morning are doing, they are doing very much the same thing. They are optimistic for the future, and they're saying, we don't want to put the world back the way it was before the pandemic. We want to put it in a better place than it was and that it is now. And so, we see the contributions of each one to this goal and to this purpose.

Stu Carr does not want to bring us back to poverty or sitting on the edge of the precipice where millions of people will fall into poverty. He knows, and we know that things have gotten worse in terms of finances as a result of the COVID. But where do we want to go from here? And Stu and his colleagues came up with the notion of the living wage, and he showed data about well-being when there is no minimum wage, a minimum wage, and a living wage and the difference in the quality of life. And thank you to New Zealand for pioneering the institution of this living wage as a test case.

When I think of the living wage, and even when I think of the minimum wage, one of the major criticisms that I've heard over the years was that if we raise the minimum wage, if we have a living wage, that companies will have to go out of business, and the people who are working there will be worse off because they won't have jobs at all. There is some validity and there is some truth in this when you look at the research. But I think the work that Stuart Carr is doing is taking us in a new and more wonderful direction. He and his group are saying is that there is a tipping point. There is a point in society where we can give people a living wage and at the same time maintain the company's existence. If we can find this tipping point, we will have eliminated a basic problem relevant to poverty and relevant to living a decent life. What I would love to see come out of the world-wide research is an algorithm that we could provide in different countries, in different sectors of different countries, which will say, "This is the living wage that will both maintain the organizations and the businesses and give the workers the sense of wellbeing and a sense of being able to do the things they have to do to support themselves and their families.

Moving from there to my colleague, Jeff Saltzman, he very much picks up on the same theme when he talks about what workers are going to expect when they come back to work after this pandemic. Basically, he's saying, they're going to expect what everybody expects when they go to work. They're going to expect exactly what they expected when we came out of

9/11. They're going to expect exactly what we came out of the financial crisis of '08. And that regardless of minor differences, we all basically want the same thing in work and in life. Once again, he points to equity, which now points back to Stuart Carr and the living wage.

Jeff adds another element of this. He describes equity. He describes the psychology behind experiencing that you are being treated in an equitable manner. What does that mean? It's comparison between you and other people. He goes beyond equity, and he talks about respect and dignity, and makes the comment that everyone around the world, in their work, in their business, in everything that they do want to have a level of respect and a level of dignity. He points to the organization as the provider of what is expected. He points to what makes a resilient organization and the need for good leadership to bring equity, bring respect and dignity and reaches the conclusions that it's openness, that it's communication, it's being open and fair, taking people into consideration, telling them the truth, that will bring a better life as we come back from the pandemic.

He also points out the fact that there is stress in work. There is stress in each different types of work that we do and that is the role of leadership; it's the role of the organization to somehow damp down the stress and not increase the stress and to help people learn how to deal with the stress so it does not become a mental health issue. The notion of stress and it turning into a mental health issue is a segue into the work of Therese Fitzpatrick and Paul Dommel.

The work at the UN is absolutely remarkable. As Therese said, there was a survey done in 2015 much before the pandemic that indicated that 49% of the employees of the United Nations were describing themselves as having some type of a mental health issue. When the Secretary General saw that, he was appalled by it and decided that something had to be done. He put together a group that came up with a five-year plan to reduce and to prevent mental health issues within the United Nations. The plan is online. I

read it. I thought it was an absolutely brilliant plan. And from my way of thinking, that becomes a model that every business organization could adapt and use to damp down and reduce if not eliminate mental health issues in the workplace. And as we know, as people come back from the pandemic, there is going to be more mental health issues than there were before.

Therese is the person responsible for implementing this magnificent plan. Her work, which is the work of a lifetime, the work of a career, and just absolutely magnificent. Read all the material on the UN mental health website. They're eye-opening and educational. She points out something else in the data that struck my interest. It is that the longer the people were employed at the United Nations, the greater the mental health issues they had. While we know correlation is not causation, we have to take a look at this correlation and look at it in terms of the kinds of things that Jeff said related to management and leadership and fostering activities that can engender the stress that can lead to mental health issues.

What occurred to me as I read the work was would it be possible to use management as a tool to bring people with mental health issues into some kind of treatment? And it occurred to me that one of the things that inevitably happen when you have a mental health issue, is your performance suffers. It may not be the number of sales that you make, or the number of widgets that you turn out, but it has an effect on your performance, on your absenteeism, your lateness, the level of conflicts you have with other people. If management would monitor job performance and increase what is included under performance to include some of these more subtle things, and then when they have an employee who was showing some of these performance decrements, confront them and say, "Look, your performance has been going down. We can't tolerate this performance. I don't know what's causing it, but you have to increase your performance. I would suggest that you go to the employee assistance program, to

the medical department, to an outside therapist, to see if this will help you. In the meantime, I promise you, we will maintain your job. We will keep your job until you're ready to return and become an effective worker." Perhaps this would be a motivating element for returning workers with mental health issues to bring them into some kind of therapy.:

I am also influenced by Paul Dommel's statistic that 63% of the people with mental health issues never in fact tell their employers. They don't know about it. And this is a result of and increases the level of stigma. And bringing management into the treatment process, the diagnostic process, the motivating process for bringing people into therapy would be a way of reducing stigma.

I am turning again to Paul's work, and I find that one of the most exciting pieces of work that's going on is in technology and coming from the private sector. We all know that technology has been just bursting through the world over the past couple of years. We are where we are today because of technology. We're not sitting in a room talking to each other; we're talking to each other from different places. That's technology. You pointed to the advances of technology, and they're probably at its rudiments at this point. We can present some type of information to people with mental health issues, but I can envision that in the future through the efforts of artificial intelligence and through the efforts of big data, the degree of technology and the amount of technology will burgeon forward, and hopefully it will be applied to mental health issues and to workplace issues.

We now know, for example, that people who were in therapy during this pandemic have been talking to therapists online, through Zoom. Can you imagine a situation where people in far off countries, where there are not enough therapists, can go on their cell phone, can dial up and speak to a therapist in another country, in another part of the world who can help them? Can you see therapists putting in symptoms and coming up with a diagnosis, and along with this diagnosis, some drug ideas or treatment ideas for

people? The future of technology in bringing mental health issues is burgeoning. And as Judy said, the private sector has to play a major part in this. IBM and other technology organizations have the future of mental health, the future of wellbeing, the future of coming back to a better place than we are now is in their corporate arms.

I am awed in listening to Lori Foster's phenomenal work at the White House and at the UN in applying psychology, behavioral science, and organizational psychology to the process of developing policies and implementing policies. We will need to use her suggestions for bringing about positive change as we come back from the pandemic, as we try to bring forward the kinds of suggestions that have been made here today. So, for example, if we're going to institute the living wage as a process, there's going to have to be government involvement in setting up this as a process. There's going to have to be the input from labor unions and the input from management organizations. And in terms of developing policy and in implementing policy and motivating people to in fact bring the policy to life, the behavioral sciences will be absolutely essential in bringing this forward.

And certainly, as she has demonstrated, the United Nations can certainly use the work of behavioral scientists. At this point, there are 12 psychology associations that are accredited to ECOSOC. Their one purpose in existence at the United Nations is to bring our science and best practices to the United Nations. And for those of you who are in the audience who are a part of the secretariat, and those of you who are in the audience who are part of the missions, make use of us. We are there to work with you, to help you, and we can apply the same kind of creativity insight, and best practices that have been described this morning. We can provide it to help you bring the SDGs into existence and to bring us to a world that we want, a world that will be better than it was before this pandemic occurred.

Thank you all for this opportunity. Thank you.

Judy Kuriansky: I think you can tell that Walter's dream when he was a little boy was to be at the United Nations, and now he is making a big difference there. So, bless you for that, and for summarizing so well and synthesizing all of our amazing speakers.

We are so indebted to our great leader, our President of the International Association of Applied Psychology, Dr. Christine Roland-Lévy, who will wrap this all up with some closing remarks, who is really also bringing the applied psychology concept that Walter mentioned, and Lori mentioned, to show how much contribution there is from a psychologist to the United Nations. So, thank you so much for that.

She is an innovator, and started the journal, *Applied Psychology Around the World* that you should look at on the internet. She is a professor of social psychology in France, from where she comes to us. She's very involved in the world of work, overseeing IAAP's Divisions of Economic Psychology and Work Psychology, and having been president of the International Association for Research in Economic Psychology, and focusing her research now on risk-taking and wellbeing in the workplace. Very important. Her outstanding achievements in academia were acknowledged by being awarded the Distinguished Order of the Palm by France, an award established by Napoléon.

Christine Roland-Lévy: Thank you. Thank you so much, Judy, for your kind words. Thank you to all of you. I have to start with that. I'll go very quickly with these closing remarks because we're a little behind time, but still there are a few words that I wish to say.

First of all, what a wonderful session, what a fascinating session. This is really, I think, very important, and very innovative in a way. It is clear to me that from today, despite the tragedy of the ongoing pandemic in many parts of the world, we still have hope thanks to this event; hope that we are going to be able to contribute to more decent work. I think that we have learned today quite a lot from each other. Thanks to the contributions, to the recommendations, including about technology as we heard, contributions

from work psychologists in particular, thanks to their scientific knowledge and behavioral science. I think all this will be of great benefit for all of us.

Today, we have heard that there is hope for more decent work if we base it on, as we were reminded by Walter, equity, respect, dignity, and a meaningful career for all. We also heard the idea of the potentially living wages, which may not be there yet, but it's a goal that we're aiming at.

Maybe a takeaway message here is that mental health and wellbeing for all can contribute to decent work, and this is crucial in order to achieve the UN SDGs that we have heard about today. I'm convinced that the area of research to achieving decent work for resilience and sustainable recovery from COVID-19, are based on points that we have shared today. They will help our world recover and build back better after COVID-19 for a world with more fairness, more justice in the workplace, a world that leaves no one behind. We all deserve decent work.

As President of the International Association of Applied Psychology, a co-sponsor of this event, I express sincere appreciation to my colleagues from the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, SIOP, and from OrgVitality, also co-sponsors of this event. Thank you all for making this session a very stimulating one.

Before closing, I wish to include my personal thanks to Walter Reichman first of all, for the great discussion he made but also for making this event possible. So, thank you all. Thank you, Walter. Thank you, Judy. Thank you all very much.

Judy Kuriansky: As we wrap up, blessings to everybody. We've had our mind fed, but also our hearts with a lot of metaphors about grit and glow and rainbows even, and then, thank you Christine, about hope. Bless you all. And thank you as we move to build back better.

Headline cont.

Section 3

In Memoriam: *Charles J. de Wolff*

Milton D. Hakel

Charles J. de Wolff

(1930 - 2021)

Charles J. de Wolff died June 24, 2021, at the age of 91. With his death, the world of work/industrial/organizational (WIO) psychology lost one of its most prominent contributors and organizers. He excelled in all three organizational ecologies in which WIO psychologists spend their careers.

Charles was born in Amsterdam on January 22, 1930, at the outset of the global economic depression. His father was a teacher in a primary school in an impoverished part of the city. Although unemployment was widespread, his family was able to avoid the worst poverty. When WWII broke out in 1940, the Netherlands was quickly occupied; in the winter of 1944-45, extreme food shortages and starvation became known as the "Hunger Winter", the most difficult time in his life. Liberation by Canadian troops happened in May of 1945.

Charles began his study of psychology at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in 1947. The academic program was quite similar to what it had been in the pre-war period, with much emphasis on philosophy. He completed his undergraduate studies in 1953.

Government

While still a student and earlier in 1953, Charles began part-time and then full-time employment in the Selection Department of the Dutch Navy, interviewing applicants and conducting validation studies. This led to further study of methodology and statistics, as well as training as a naval officer, active duty, and military and then civilian service investigating the entire range of issues that now occupy the attention of WIO psychologists: assessment, prediction, development, and evaluation of inductees and officers. Attendance at conferences and publications resulted.

Industry

In 1961 Charles accepted full-time employment at Hoogovens, a Dutch steel company, while continuing and completing his PhD studies in 1963. Early projects focused on employee testing and selection, and then expanded into applicant attraction. There followed several cooperative studies with other large employers, and frequent conference presentations and publication, most notably on workplace stress.

Academia

Charles was already well involved in the academic world as chair of the Netherlands Institute of Psychologists when in 1976 he began his professorship at the University of Nijmegen. Conducting research on workplace stress contributed strongly to his decision to accept the offer. Workplace absences due to illness had increased enormously, and the number of persons on disability benefits in the Netherlands was approaching one million. This led to many research projects and also to consultation on public policy in the coming years.

Service to WIO Psychology

In 1974, I had the privilege of becoming the editor of *Personnel Psychology* and continuing a project initiated by its previous editor, Rains Wallace. Rains had invited Charles to write a review of industrial psychology in Europe. Rather than writing alone, Charles secured a grant and chaired several meetings of industrial psychologists from seven countries. One of those meetings was held at Ohio State University where, after its deliberations, a joint discussion session was held with members of the Summit Group. A year later the review article (de Wolff and Shimmin, 1976) was published just ahead of a symposium at the APA Convention. Subsequently, de Wolff,

Charles J. de Wolff cont.

Shimmin, and de Montmollin (1981) edited *Conflicts and Contradictions: Work Psychology in Europe*.

In 1979, Charles was one of the founders of the European Network of Organizational Psychologists. Like the Summit Group, it is an informal association of WIO psychologists.

From 1980 to 1990, Charles was the Secretary General and Treasurer of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), having served on its Executive Committee beginning in 1971. This was a period of rapid change for IAAP, and Charles was a central figure in regularizing its publications contract, congresses, and finances.

In 1991, Charles was the founding editor of the *European Work and Organizational Psychologist*, in association with IAAP and also with the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology.

In Summary

Charles de Wolff was articulate, thoughtful, resourceful, energetic, and visionary. After his mandatory

retirement in 1995 from the University of Nijmegen, he continued to serve, advise, and publish. Crucially, he always did what he had agreed he would do. He set a sterling example, one entirely worthy of emulation.

Milton D. Hakel

Ohio Eminent Scholar and Professor of Psychology Emeritus

Bowling Green State University

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Richard Campbell, Robert Morrison, Enzo Spaltro, Milton Hakel, Paul Wernimont, Maurice de Montmollin, Benjamin Schneider, Douglas Hall, Lee Hakel, Charles de Wolff, Lynn Baker, Frank Friedlander, Goren Ekvall, Lyman Porter, William Graham, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, USA, in 1975.

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- All works cited should be listed alphabetically by author after the main body of the text.
- Single space between paragraphs, no indentation, font should be Arial, size 10, section heads/subhead should be bold.
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