



# EDITORIAL

Although workplace innovation (WPI) has in the past largely been neglected by Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) today it enjoys much greater attention. When we sent out a call for papers for a Special Issue on WPI, we received a large number of high quality papers leading us to publish two volumes of the Special Issue. Six articles made it into Volume 1, 2017 (<http://www.eawop.org/archive>) and another five articles are now published in this current issue.

Although WPI is in itself not a new concept with origins that can be traced back to the second half of the 20th century in socio-technical design thinking; the concept, with its focus on improving both performance and the quality of working life, is especially important in this day and age. Specifically, we find ourselves in a world on the brink of many technological breakthroughs in, for example, artificial intelligence, machine learning and robotics, that are widely believed to fundamentally change the nature of work and affect the future viability of organizations. Organizations, whether public or private, are increasingly concerned not only with maintaining productivity, but also with becoming more agile and innovative. While some are still putting their faith in technological innovation alone, others realise the limitations of a narrow technological focus to successfully and sustainably navigate the complex social and economic challenges of the 21st century. Indeed, the idea that technological innovation should be complemented with non-technological innovation (i.e., workplace innovation and/or social innovation) has re-emerged and taken hold among practitioners as well as researchers from various disciplines interested in studying the phenomenon.

The five articles included in Volume 2 of this Special Issue represent a multi-disciplinary collection that combines theory, empirical research and practice. As such, the articles draw on a variety of disciplines (e.g., work and organizational psychology, sociology), showcase a range of different types of contributions (e.g., theoretical contributions, empirical papers based on experimental research, case studies, practical intervention tools for WPI) and settings (e.g., various European countries as well as a contribution based on a case study in Guatemala). We hope this collection of articles will stimulate your interest in the topic and your thinking about the application to your own practice.

We open with an interesting theoretical paper, by Tuomo Alasoini examining ways of increasing the effectiveness of work organization development programmes (i.e., WPI programmes) aimed at improving both productivity and the quality of working life. Based on previous work on institutional entrepreneurship and system transitions, the author develops a theoretical framework for analysing the likelihood that work organization development programmes would be successful. Subsequently, he engages in a discussion of how the framework could be used to develop programmes that are more likely to be successful in achieving both improvements in productivity and the quality of working life.

Next, we continue with an excellent piece by Robert van Doorn, Gerjo Kok and Robert Ruiters. The authors identify a prevalent problem in the work on WPI, namely, that the currently available methods for WPI and social innovation implementation lack the level of detail necessary for practitioners to be able to apply them directly in their local contexts. Therefore, they propose a practical tool, namely, the intervention mapping protocol as a potential approach to develop, implement and evaluate sustainable WPI interventions in organizations. Intervention mapping is especially suited for WPI implementation as it takes a systemic view and relies on the active participation of all stakeholders. The authors clearly outline the different steps of the mapping protocol and provide actionable recommendations on how to use it in practice. They conclude with a discussion of the benefits of using a systematic approach to create lasting change in both performance and quality of working life in organizations.

We follow with a fascinating case study by Liv Starheim, Peter Hasle, Per Langaa Jensen, and Birgitte Juul Diekmann. The authors describe an intervention aimed at improving the psychosocial environment in six Danish hospital wards. They developed value-stream mapping combining workflow analysis from the Lean methodology with well-being improvement activities. One key feature of this method is that it aims to improve communication by enhancing relational coordination and, therefore, employees are actively involved in all the different stages of the process. The authors find that this enabled employees to identify and implement work process improvements, which had positive effects on both employee well-being and productivity. However, they caution that external facilitator assistance is most likely necessary for the successful implementation of the intervention.

The next paper by Alvaro Figueredo and Rashedur Chowdhury presents an engaging case study in Guatemala that exemplifies a combination of workplace innovation and community-based entrepreneurship. Specifically, the authors present the case of Ecofiltro and its founder, Philip Wilson, who pursued the goal of providing 1 million families in Guatemalan rural areas with clean water by 2020. The authors outline how a visionary leader used a new business model to implement workplace innovations and involve local community leaders in spreading the usage of a water filter, thereby, enabling poor families to have access to clean water. The main conclusion the authors draw is that community-based entrepreneurial ventures can achieve societal impact and solve local problems by co-opting a wide network of stakeholders to work towards a common goal.

Lastly, Katharina Lochner, Achim Preuss, and Richard Justenhoven present three interesting studies aimed at developing an online creativity test. They argue that selecting creative employees as well as developing creativity in one's employees is crucial for workplace innovation. Nonetheless, the existing creativity tests tend to be paper-and-pencil based rendering them time-consuming, expensive and less than objective. To this end, they developed and tested an online creativity test that uses a fully automated scoring algorithm, optimised for unsupervised settings and that can be applied across borders as it is language-independent.

We offer you best wishes for the upcoming year. We look forward to seeing you at the EAWOP Congress in Turin, in May 2019. Join us on Friday, May 31, 2019 at the EAWOP Congress for a full day dedicated to exploring possible collaborations and identifying potential learning opportunities between academics and practitioners in WOP.

– Diana Rus



**DR. DIANA RUS, SPECIAL EDITION EDITOR**

[d.rus@creative-peas.com](mailto:d.rus@creative-peas.com)



**DR. ANGELA CARTER, EDITOR**

[a.carter@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:a.carter@sheffield.ac.uk)



**DR. COLIN ROTH, CO-EDITOR**

[colin.roth@blackboxopen.com](mailto:colin.roth@blackboxopen.com)