

### Special points of interest:

- \* Social scientists should rethink their roles
- \* A productive year
- \* Focus on capabilities
- \* Analyse functioning
- \* Develop the ideal self
- \* Identity clarification and development are crucial
- \* Transform values to capabilities
- \* Three newly-rated NRF scientists in Optentia

### Inside this issue:

Optentia's performance	2
Developing researchers	3
Optentia's philosophy	4
Workshops in 2020	5
Plan your research	8
A development model	9
Internationalisation	12
NRF-rated scientists	10
Open science practices	12
Top achievers	18
Programme news	24

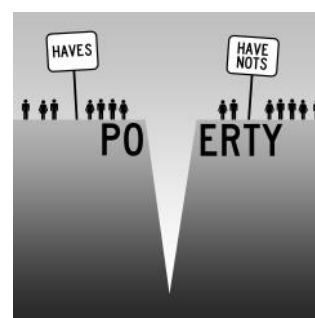
## Restoring Human Dignity: A Pathway to Flourishing Societies

What do human beings want? What constitutes a good life? Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo (who shared the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics Sciences with Michael Kremer) address these questions in their [book](#). Banerjee and Duflo (2019) ask: What does the best of the economics of today tell us about the fundamental issues societies are grappling with? They write: "A better conversation must start by acknowledging the human desire for dignity and human contact, and to treat it not as a distraction, but as a better way to understand each other, and to set ourselves to what appear to be intractable oppositions." They ask for the restoring of human dignity, which will set off a profound rethinking of economic priorities and how societies care for their members, particularly when they are in need.

Poverty and inequality are widespread: the haves are facing the increasingly alienated have-nots. Vulnerable people are exposed to economic uncertainty and natural disasters. What will happen if economic growth leaves behind the majority of a country's citizens? Dealing with poverty and inequality must start by recognising the human desire for dignity, self-respect and autonomy.

Our views of human nature affect efforts to restore human dignity: Are humans good or bad? Research findings regarding the best of human nature ([Warren, 2019](#)) show that individuals' personalities have 'light' dimensions. Dark traits (e.g. manipulation, egotism and callousness) misrepresent the capacities of people. [Kaufman et al. \(2019\)](#) developed a measure of a loving and beneficent orientation toward others that consists of three facets, namely Kantianism (treating people as ends unto themselves), Humanism (valuing the dignity and worth of each individual), and Faith in Humanity (believing in the fundamental goodness of humans). The measure demonstrated excellent reliability and validity, predicting life satisfaction and self-transcendent and growth-oriented outcomes.

Given the right conditions, everyone can hold a job and be productive. A deep respect for the dignity of people is needed to unlock their potential. Most people who live in poverty had never experienced being taken seriously by people in an official position (e.g. teachers, bureaucrats). Children quickly internalise their place in the pecking order, and teachers reinforce it. Young people end up with pessimism about



the chances of success for someone like them. Activities based on cognitive behavioural therapy have been proved effective to teach young people to gauge the environment and assess proper courses of action before they act. Work is not what follows after all other problems have been solved; it is part of the recovery process itself. Putting families who suffer from poverty back on track requires more than money. It requires emotional, social and financial support, as well as training to make the best of assets. Treating people as human beings with respect, recognising both their potential and the damage done by years of deprivation is vital. Hope is the fuel that makes people go; defining people by their problems denies hope. In times of change and anxiety, social policy should help people absorb the shocks that affect them without allowing those shocks to affect their sense of themselves!

## Performance of Optentia: 2019

In total, 22 researchers, 11 emerging researchers, and four research support staff are part of Optentia. Furthermore, 36 extraordinary professors and six extraordinary researchers are appointed in the entity. A total of 64 Master's students, 31 PhD students, and three postdoctoral research fellows are affiliated with Optentia. From 1 May 2019, a total of 38 Master's and seven PhD students have completed their studies. Concerning peer-reviewed outputs for 2019, we have produced 50.43 peer-reviewed articles and 24.6 peer-reviewed chapters.



"We produced 50.43 peer-reviewed articles and 24.6 peer-reviewed chapters during 2019."

## The Optentia Scorecard *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Output	2017	2018	2019	2020
Peer-reviewed publications	103	94	143	66
Total peer-reviewed publications	49.81	48.05	75.03	4
Peer-reviewed articles*	44.81	41.22	50.43	2.50
Peer-reviewed chapters*	5	6.83	24.6	2
Papers: Conferences	38	17	35	
Participating Master's students	37	46	64	
Completed Master's students	18	26	38	
Participating PhD students	22	16	31	
Completed PhD students	3	13	7	
Post-doctoral fellows	6	6	3	
Number of workshops presented	28	25	10	
Number of workshop participants	393	750	478	

Note: Outputs as on 12 December 2019

\* Expressed in terms of equivalents

## Development of Researchers *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Today's academic workers, work and workplaces are so beset with challenges that thoughts and actions around flourishing are needed. During 2019, Optentia have reflected on the best ways to develop our researchers. We differentiated three target groups, namely emerging researchers (who have to complete PhDs), establishing researchers (who have obtained PhDs, but are establishing themselves as researchers) and established researchers. In developing researchers we identified the following points of departure:

- Focus on capabilities: Consider the importance (value), opportunities (resourceful and enabling environment), and ability to succeed of/in: a) the use of knowledge and skills; b) the development of knowledge and skills; c) involvement in important decisions; d) building and maintaining meaningful contacts at work; e) setting own goals; f) rewards, and g) contributing to something valuable.
- Integration of three roles: teaching and learning, research and community engagement.
- Freedom of being and doing: Participation of individuals in planning of and decisions about their career development.
- High-quality connections: Building and maintaining effective intergenerational relationships.

The development of capabilities should be integrated with the career development and management of researchers. It is vital to train coaches and mentors to



Participants in Optentia's workshop for emerging researchers on 14 August 2019

establish and maintain an enabling environment.

Workshops for researchers have the following aims:

- To identify the demands and requirements for each target group.
- To clarify individuals' motives for entering the academic world and what they need to enable them as researchers.
- To identify and develop the capabilities (competencies and enabling environment) needed to succeed as a researcher.

Specific topics include:

- Choosing the right academic work.
- Success and its indicators.
- Doing the right things (effectiveness, priorities and strategy).
- Doing the right things: Goal, tasks and time.
- The flourishing academic.
- Developing researchers: A phenomenon-based approach (small group work).
- Identifying a coach/mentor and developing coaching/

mentorship relationships.

The following strategies were identified:

- Ensure that research matters get their rightful place in the orientation programme for new academic staff at the NWU.
- School and research directors should provide support to academic staff members to draft career plans and implement career development programmes.
- Create an awareness of and encourage academics to participate in training and development interventions.
- Intergenerational relationship building should be implemented.
- International networks should be established and maintained by researchers.

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**"We differentiated three target groups, namely emerging, establishing and established researchers."**

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## Optentia and its Basic Philosophy

In the name 'Optentia', its philosophy is expressed in a very concise manner: it is all about opportunities and potencies. A well-chosen, beautiful and meaningful catchword. However, what is behind it: how would a more extended, more explicit and carefully grounded elaboration of these two words look like? If Optentia has such a 'basic philosophy', it would be able to profile itself in a more attractive, relevant and distinguished way, which could be helpful for external goals. It could help identify the core business of Optentia and its grounding theories, research designs and ethics, which is valuable for its internal goals. In the past years, a few promising steps toward such a 'basic philosophy' of Optentia were already taken, and we are planning to make the next ones.

In connection to the actual research programmes and focus of Optentia, it seems likely that three or four cornerstone ideas could bear its basic philosophy: precarity, capability, social justice and relationality. No total strangers! We are planning two workshops for February 2020. These workshops aim to explore the first two concepts and their underpinning theories, concepts and critics.

'Precarity' (precarization and precariousness) may be a very strong, enlightening and scientific entry to understand and analyse what we are facing in SA today on the labour market, in poverty issues, in intergenerational solidarity, in modern education, and with concern to youngsters, women. It may even help to analyse populist tendencies, narrowly focused (social)



**Prof. Andries Baart and Prof. Ian Rothmann discussing a plan for workshops in South Africa**

policies and too optimistic 'improvement programs' ('cruel optimism'). 'Precarity' may offer an up-to-date, rich and truly basic theory (set of theories) that may make our common ground more explicit as well our common ambitions. Prof. Andries Baart has launched our thinking in terms of precarity during his last visit and we have asked him to continue. On 6 February 2020, we will spend half a day on 'precarity': what is meant by that, why is it a topical issue, what kind of problems may be (better) analysed and understood if we analyse them by means of 'precarity' and what is the meaning of precarity in your field of expertise (e.g. labour, community, or the elderly)? Andries Baart will give an introductory lecture on precarity, sketch its relevance for Optentia's focus areas and provide us with relevant literature. In the workshop, we will apply 'precarity' to our own fields

of expertise and explore its relevance. Thereby, we contribute to a basic philosophy. One week later (13 February) we will repeat the formula, this time concentrated on the 'capability approach'.

The more staff members and students will participate in these lectures, workshops, debates and explorations, the more fruitful these meetings will be and the more progress we will make in sketching Optentia's basic philosophy. Please, sign up and note these dates in your diary. We will provide participants timely with appropriate literature (books/articles), practical examples and videos. Please reserve some time to prepare for these meetings. After the meetings, we will evaluate and if all went well, we probably will launch the process of working together on a common book: Optentia's philosophy. A more detailed programme will be provided in January 2020.

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**"If Optentia has such a 'basic philosophy', it would be able to profile itself in a more attractive, relevant and distinguished way."**

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## Cutting Edge Workshops in 2020

Optentia will present various cutting edge workshops in 2020. The [Optentia calendar](#) shows the following workshops:

- The SLP in Research Design (27-32 January 2020)
- The Mmogo-method® (6 February 2020)
- Precarity (7 February 2020)
- The capability approach (13 February 2020)
- Positive psychological intervention design: A practical guide to developing impactful interventions (14 February 2020).
- Visual elicitation methods (30 March-3 April 2020)
- How to get your paper rejected (30 March 2020)
- Stats Camp South Africa (27 April-1 May 2020).



Prof. Linda Liebenberg

Prof. Linda Liebenberg will present two workshops. Please book your place as soon as possible.

Prof. Kutlay Yağmur will present two workshops during March 2020: a) Language and Identity, b) Language and Intercultural Communication. Prof. Yagmur is Full Professor at the Tilburg School of Humanities and



Prof. Kutlay Yağmur

Digital Sciences and the Department of Culture Studies. His work on language, identity and cultural diversity are highly relevant in the multilingual and multicultural South African context.

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**"His work on language, identity and cultural diversity are highly relevant ..."**

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## Goodbye to Dr Laura Weiss: The White Girl on the Bicycle

Dr Laura Weiss completes her three-year postdoctoral fellowship by the end of December 2020. It is with sadness that we have to say goodbye her. Laura made a valuable contribution to the NWU through her research that focused primarily on the experiences of postgraduate students and their supervisors in an effort to find ways to improve the throughput rate of postgraduate students. Highlights of her research include the design and application of psychological interventions for PhD students, co-authoring publications, and sponsoring master's students to attend a youth summer school in Twente. Laura will be remembered for her academic contributions, as well as for the caring and positive person she is. We say goodbye with sadness, but

also with deep gratitude for the way Laura has enriched our lives. We are also looking forward to

continuing our relationship with her in the future. Read about Laura's experiences on page 6.



Dr Laura Weiss

## Farewell from the White Girl on the Bicycle *by* Laura Weiss

**"I could follow my research passion at Optentia, one of the few departments in the world focusing on research around the topic of human flourishing ..."**

They say 'time flies when you're having fun'. Whoever they were, they were right. Never have three years passed so quickly. I have a suspicion it might also have to do with African time... When my husband Frank and I moved from the Netherlands to South Africa, we brought two suitcases each and didn't know a single soul. We will be also leaving with two suitcases each, but also so much more: new friends, a head full of wonderful memories and a heavy heart.

The reason we came to the most unlikely of all places, Vanderbijlpark, was that I found a place where I could follow my research passion at Optentia, one of the few departments in the world focusing on research around the topic of human flourishing. I hoped that my colleagues would be nice and that I would be making maybe one or two friends. Never would I have dreamt of what actually happened: I found more than just friends, I found a South African family. I was welcomed with open arms and into homes (often to be part of the single important activity in this country: having a braai). Never before did I knew the partners, children, and even some parents of almost all of my colleagues.

Now it's time to go back to Europe, and many people told us that they envy us. But although I know that South Africa has to deal with many challenges, you also have the sunny weather, the most beautiful landscape ... sea, desert, and mountains; the amazing animals (who can say they have monkeys and antelopes on their campus?), and vibrant Joburg. But most of all, you have the most diverse population that have one thing in common: they are the

friendliest, most open, and warm-hearted bunch of people I ever met. You can virtually have a chat and exchange a joke with anyone. Although I am definitively an odd one out – a vegetarian (or, as Lynn like to say, vegemitarian) that rides her bike to work – I always felt included. That may be the strength of South Africa – everyone is different, and that is perfectly fine.

I learned so much in three years – about the country, about the people, about the mesmerizing continent of Africa, about research, and about myself. For example, I learned that 'R' is more than a letter in the alphabet. I learned that saying 'shame' can refer to something endearing. And I learned the meaning of 'just now' the hard way. In this country, it's an unknown amount of time that could refer to a couple of minutes, tomorrow or never. In any case, it means you should NOT wait for your computer to be brought back to you after the IT guy told you he's going to be back just now...

We had no shortage of adventures (only a shortage of electricity due to load shedding). When it comes to work-related adventures, my way to work was not always without struggles: my bike was stolen and got flat tires. (I made sure our local bike shop survived.) Moreover, I was hunted by dogs that were larger than my bike, and I accidentally cycled through a fire. Other examples include getting lost in a township while searching for a research location, and me leaving the car key in our rented bus during Stats Camp in the middle of nowhere, so we had to 'break' into the window with a wire to get the keys.

I came to South Africa to do research, but found that Optentia is so much more than a research focus area. It's a place to bond, to learn and develop, a place to make a difference, a home. Optentia is extraordinary in many ways. Prof. Ian is the embodiment of a positive leader. He shows gratitude, he gives people autonomy, he supports you if you need it, he creates an environment where everyone is free to express their opinion and where people can come together to not only share knowledge and skills, but to connect. He made amazing things possible, such as a stats camp in a game park. And never in my life have I followed so many workshops, lectures and training from experts that Prof. Ian somehow collects from all over the world.

The high quality of the research Optentia is conducting never ceased to impress me. It's relevant to real-world problems, it uses advanced (statistical) methods, and the results make a tangible difference where it matters most. I hope that Optentia will continue to share its philosophy of looking at the potential of people, organisations, systems and societies. I am looking forward to staying part of my Optentia family as extraordinary researcher. Finally, I got so hooked on South Africa that even though my next adventures takes me to the VU Amsterdam, I will be working with data from South Africa, this time analysing cultural differences in eyewitness statements. But for now, I want to say to my South African family: baie dankie, ke leboha, enkosi!

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." – A.A. Milne

## Plan Your Research for 2020! *by* Anjonet Jordaan

With December and its festivities looming large in mind this time of the year, it is important to take time out to plan for 2020 before it starts. Those of us who work in the South African Higher Education sector will know that once we enter the New Year it is easy to get swept up in the excitement and urgency of the new academic year.

Putting your research planning off because it does not seem urgent makes it easy for it to be put off until March or not done at all, and real opportunities being missed out because you were not ready.

As we all know, research is an endeavour that requires long-term thinking: the project, long-term research trajectory, or the rating you aim for will only be realised over the course of years. Similarly, being ready to take the steps you can and need to take in the coming year to get there in



time, is of utmost importance – even more important is knowing what those steps are.

So, set aside the time to think and assess where you are in terms of your research and where you would like to be in the future. Start asking yourself questions about what you need in terms of collaborators, training, balance between teaching and research, conference attendance, article publishing in jour-

nals, press coverage for research results – the list is endless. Talk it over with a colleague and return to your list of priorities monthly and schedule activities to help you make the kind of progress you would like for your research career.

Click [here](#) to access the December 2019 presentation of funding opportunities.

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**“... research is an endeavour that requires long-term thinking ...”**

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## Learning about the POPI Act

The Optentia Research Focus Area and other research entities at the North-West University (NWU) often have Master's and PhD students who conduct their research projects in the field of human resources management. The students enrolled with the NWU often work within the human resources departments of organisations and are ideally placed to use information about staff working for their employers in their research projects. This information is personal information and falls within the regulatory scope of the Protection of Personal Information Act 2013 (“POPI”). The question is how

Optentia could obtain sample information about employees without prejudicing the integrity of the research and without contravening the provisions of POPI. In order to assist the supervisors to ensure the research projects of their students comply with the requirements of POPI, Jos Floor, an attorney, was asked to conduct a meeting to explain the applicable provisions of POPI and seek a workable solution.

Click [here](#) to access the presentation about research and the POPI Act. Please note that the presentation is password protected.



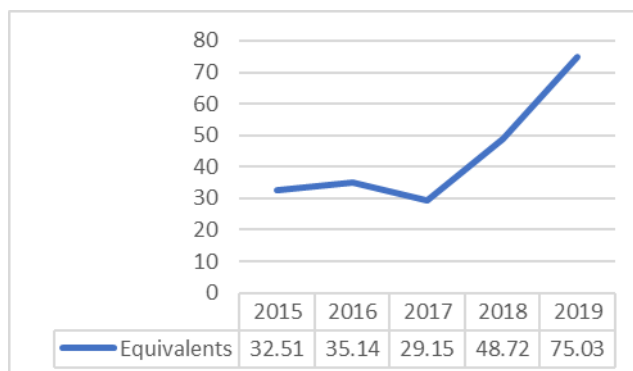
**Jos Floor**

## Taking Stock and Moving Forward

It is the end of 2019 and time to evaluate the performance of Optentia. Our achievements can be summarised as follows:

- Peer-reviewed outputs increased in 2019. A total of 75.02 article equivalents (which includes peer-reviewed articles and chapters) have been published in 2019.
- Three Optentia participants, Prof. J. Hoffman, Prof. A. Fouché and Dr Jacques Rothmann were awarded NRF ratings from 1 January 2020.
- The Risk Management Programme was successfully integrated into Optentia during 2019. A total of 13 mini-dissertations (for the Master's in Risk Management) were completed in one year.
- A total of 22 cutting edge workshops were presented during 2019. Various development opportunities were created for staff members and students.
- A Stats Camp was presented during the last week of April 2019. An honorary doctorate

**"A total of 22 cutting edge workshops were presented during 2019."**



**Peer-reviewed publications of Optentia: 2015-2019**

was awarded to Prof. Monica Ferreira.

- A total of 10 new videos were produced during 2019.
  - The Optentia Scientific Committee evaluated more than 50 Master's and PhD proposals during 2019. The throughput of Master's and PhD studies was acceptable.
- Various priorities will be addressed during 2020:
- Conduct more multidisciplinary research projects.
  - Apply for research unit status.
  - Develop new master's and PhD qualifications.

- Undertake recruitment and ensure throughput of PhD candidates.
- Develop the capabilities of diverse research staff and students.
- Marketing, network and apply for research funding.
- Implement technology in teaching and learning, as well as research.
- Optimise research administration.



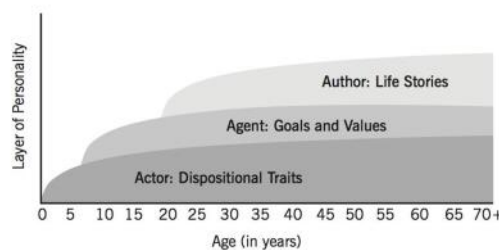
**Prof. Vera Roos presented various qualitative research workshops during 2019**



## A Model for Developing Researchers *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

The development of researchers is vital to their capabilities and flourishing. However, people tend to change their behaviour when they want to change and in the ways they want to change. People developers need a model to coach individuals towards sustained behavioural change. Coaching for compliance is unlikely to lead to such change. Boyatzis, Smith, and Van Oosten (2019) introduced a model that focuses on coaching with compassion. The model of intentional change (see Boyatzis et al., 2019) is a proven method of coaching with compassion. Coaching with compassion unlocks the power of passion. According to Boyatzis et al. (2019), behavioural change tends to occur in bursts (labelled as 'discoveries'). Five discoveries must occur for an individual to make a sustained desired change in behaviour:

- Discovery 1: The ideal self which results from dreams, aspirations, and fantasies. Components of the ideal self are: a) hope, which results from feasibility (impacted by self-efficacy) and optimism; b) purpose (influenced by passion); c) values and philosophy (influenced by a person's life or career stage), and identity.
- Discovery 2: The real self (strengths and weaknesses).
- Discovery 3: The learning agenda.
- Discovery 4: Experimenting and practicing new behaviours. It might take between 18 and 254 days to change a habit.
- Discovery 5: Resonant relationships and social identity groups.



Layers of personality according to McAdams (2015)

While all these discoveries are crucial components of sustained behavioural change, my recent experiences with researchers pointed to the critical role of clarifying identities and developing multiple identities in order to flourish. Sen (2009) stressed the importance of figuring out your identity: Who are you? How do you want to live, love and work in society? How will you draw upon your talents, traits and past experiences to articulate and embody a meaningful life? McAdams (2015) wrote: "The challenge of identity is especially acute in modern industrial and post-industrial societies, which provide their young adult citizens with a bewildering array of choices and possibilities for the construction of a meaningful life." According to Senn (2009), all of us have competing identities (rather than a single identity): hope for harmony in our troubled world lies in the plurality of our

identities. Choice and reasoning play a vital role in determining the clarity, logic and relevance of particular identities which are diverse.

McAdams (2015) links the construction of identity to personality development (see the figure above). He identified three layers of personality, namely actor, agent and author. To become fully human entails: a) to play out fully and effectively your traits; b) to pursue your most cherished goals and values, and c) to narrate a story about your life that gives you meaning and purpose. Ultimately, becoming a flourishing researcher entails being an actor, agent and an author.

Boyatzis, R., Smith, M., & Van Oosten, E. (2019). *Helping people change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

McAdams, D.P. (2015). *The art and science of personality development*. New York: Guilford Press.

Sen, A. (2009). *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny*. London: Penguin Books.

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**"... my recent experiences with researchers pointed to the critical role of clarifying identities and developing multiple identities."**

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## Three NRF-rated Scientists for Optentia

Three researchers in Optentia have recently been awarded National Research Foundation (NRF) ratings: Prof. Ansie Fouche, Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Dr Jacques Rothmann. A total of nine NRF-rated researchers are now participating in Optentia.

Prof. Ansie Fouché (who was awarded a C-rating by the NRF) studied Social Work and obtained her first degree in 1993. She received her master's degree in Social Work (Cum Laude) from the University of Pretoria in 2001. In 2008, she completed her DPhil in Social Work at the same university. She has been a registered social worker since 1993. Her research focus includes themes of the delay in treatment of child victims of sexual abuse who are potential court witnesses and evaluating the benefits of collaborative strengths-based interventions for women who experienced childhood sexual abuse. Her motto is: Start where you are, use what you have, do the best you can until you know better and then go out and do better. And then when you do better, pay it forward. Also, choose mentors that believe in you – people who believe you can even if you are in denial about your own abilities and potential.

Prof. Jaco Hoffman who was awarded a C-rating by the NRF) is a second generation socio-gerontologist with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa where – against the backdrop of infrastructural, financial and social strain – millions of people grow older in the youngest region of the world. Within this context he has been cross-disciplinary involved in African gerontology over the past 25 years through research,



**Prof. Ansie  
Fouché**



**Prof. Jaco  
Hoffman**



**Dr Jacques  
Rothmann**

practice and advocacy as well as in management. Jaco's research experience relates to the Social Sciences (Sociology, Anthropology) with specialisation in the multidisciplinary field of Socio-gerontology. Overall his academic project draws together all these different aspects of the sub-Saharan reality to converge towards a deeper understanding of dis/enabling care environments for all ages. His consistent departure point and contribution is a generational perspective across the life-course through qualitative research methods. The aim is to develop a home-grown conceptualisation of ageing issues in Africa. This rating by the NRF is a great step forward towards the recognition of socio-gerontology studies in sub-Saharan Africa as a multi-disciplinary sub-field and its main streaming.

Dr Jacques Rothmann, a senior lecturer in Sociology on the Potchefstroom campus of the NWU joined Optentia in December 2019. Jacques obtained a PhD in Sociology in 2014. He was awarded an NRF Y-Rating in 2019. His main areas of interest and expertise include lesbian and gay studies, queer theory and sociological theory (particularly the work of proponents of symbolic interactionism). He has published in national and international peer-

reviewed academic journals and supervises postgraduate students in the fields of gender and sexuality studies. He established the Lesbian, Gay, and Queer Studies Working Group for the South African Sociological Association (SASA) in 2010. His primary research focus centres on gay masculinity. His PhD and subsequent publications engaged the lived experiences of self-identified gay male academics on South African university campuses. His most recent work provides a theoretical contemplation of how social resilience may counteract debates that foreground the agency/victimhood dualism that typify the lives of gay men in various social institutions – particularly academia and the media. Welcome to Optentia Jacques!

When somebody wins a research award, such as an NRF-rating, you see only the final success. You do not see earlier rejections and setbacks. You might assume they found it easy, but it is rarely so. [Hugh Kearns](#) refers to the iceberg illusion: above the surface we tend to see success. We do not see the persistence, failure, sacrifice, disappointment, dedication, hard work and discipline, because these are below the surface. Optentia is proud of Prof. Fouché, Prof. Hoffman and Dr Rothmann!

**“A total of nine  
NRF-rated  
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now  
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Optentia.”**

## Stats Camp in South Africa: 27 April–1 May 2020

The first South African Stats-Camp was presented in April 2019. The second Stats Camp will be presented during the last week of April 2020.

Stats Camp 2020 provides a comprehensive four-day analysis retreat. Analytical competence is of great importance to conduct social and psychological research. The Optentia Research Focus Area, in collaboration with two international experts on statistical analysis (Prof. Todd D Little and Prof. Rens van de Schoot), will present a Stats Camp in South Africa. Stats Camp is an internationally recognized award-winning educational event focused on advanced statistical training at a graduate and post-graduate level.

This unique Stats Camp Analysis Retreat brings experts across a wide range of statistical and methodological disciplines together in one place, for the purpose of helping you tackle any issues you are facing with your personal research project. Our instructors and teaching assistants form a collaborative network to help guide you through your research process, and we encourage you to take advantage of this unique opportunity to work with our team to bring your research to the next level.

Stats Camp analysis retreats are highly relevant to current trends and practices in modern advanced statistical analysis. They enable researchers to get practical “hands-on” instruction that delivers practical value. Each year, full week-long Stats Camps and Mini Camps are held in locations throughout the world.



Who will forget the magical moments at Mongena Lodge during Stats Camp South Africa 2019? Click on the image above to watch a video about Stats Camp.

The goal of the Stats Camp is to help participants to run their models in Mplus or R (lavaan, blavaan, stan) and maybe even to finalize their results section.

We ask the participants to bring their own data and they should be interested in analysing SEM models. The goal of the week

is to help them to run their models in Mplus or R (lavaan, blavaan, stan) and maybe even to finalise their results section.

Click [here](#) for more information about Stats Camp 2020. Click [here](#) to watch an interview with Prof. Todd Little.

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**“Stats Camp 2020 provides a comprehensive four-day analysis retreat.”**

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An image from the 2019 South African Stats Camp

## Advocating Open Science Practices *by* Prof. L. van Zyl

“... small changes in the way in which we work could have a huge cascading effect on the credibility of our discipline.”

Psychological Science is having a bit of a credibility crisis. During the last half decade, many of the founding principles on which modern psychological science is built have been challenged, disproven or could not be reproduced (Open Science Collaboration, 2015). In 2015, the Open Science Collaboration initiative (2015) aimed to replicate and reproduce 100 seminal studies within the domains of social- and cognitive psychology and found that only 36% of such could yield similar results. Of these 36%, the vast majority produced marginally significant effects, with mean effect sizes being approximately half the magnitude of the original studies (Efendic & Van Zyl, 2019). Despite these 100 studies largely being contained within the Social and Cognitive psychological domains, other domains such as work- and organisational psychology and positive psychology has recently come under fire. Seminal works within both these domains such as Fredrickson's "Positivity-Ratio", the "Happiness-Performance Thesis" (Brown, Sokal & Friedman, 2014; Friedman & Brown 2018), and the Hofstede Cultural Values studies (Dimitrov, 2014; Taras, Kirkman & Steel, 2010) have been questioned, and even disproven. These failures to replicate have led to a controversial conclusion that the discipline of psychology is undergoing a "crisis of confidence" or a "replication crisis" (Pashler & Wagenmakers, 2012); with the relevance of the subdisciplines being questioned by both scientists and the public (Van Zyl & Junker, 2019).

This crisis in confidence is not just contained within the international sphere but has trickled down into our local context. In an opinion paper within the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (SAJIP), Efendic and Van Zyl (2019) highlighted several context specific challenges with distracts from the credibility of psychological science within South Africa. This ranged from studies being insufficiently powered, issues in analyses, evidence of data manipulation, occurrences of Harking, as well as institutional factors such as the pressure to publish, the incentivisation of research outputs and the issues with editorial policies/competence of reviewers. This paper sparked an interesting debate within the scientific community and resulted in a special edition on open science practices within South Africa. This special edition collated the opinions of 10 prominent work and organisational psychological researchers (c.f. Van Zyl & Junker, 2019 for a summary), which resulted in a Strategy for Enhancing the credibility of the discipline within South Africa (Van Zyl, 2019). The proposed strategy called for structural changes in SAJIP's editorial management processes (implementing the Transparency and Openness Promotion guidelines of Nosek et al., 2016, developing new author guidelines, implementing reward systems for open science practices, experimenting with collaborative review approaches), developing the competence of reviewers, implementing reward/recognition systems for reviewers, advocating for invited papers on best-practice guidelines for quantitative/



Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

qualitative/mixed method analytics and the like. Although the strategy proposed by Van Zyl (2019) directly relates to how the SAJIP could go about enhancing the credibility of the discipline, it failed to provide structured guidelines and/or tips for what psychological scientists themselves could do to enhance the scientific merit of their studies.

So what can we, as psychological scientists, do to manage the credibility crisis facing our discipline? We don't have to fundamentally change our view of science, nor do we need to completely alter the way in which we work. Murphy (2019) indicated that small changes in the way in which we work could have a huge cascading effect on the credibility of our discipline.

## Advocating Open Science Practices: Tips and Tricks for Researchers

Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl proposes 10 tips and tricks for researchers:

- Ensure that studies are sufficiently powered. Use free tools such as G\*Power to calculate the appropriate sample size needed to accurately estimate the effect you need. Report the justification of the sample size within every paper you write.
- Use Statcheck to ensure that we eliminate the occurrence statistical errors. Statcheck ([www.statcheck.io](http://www.statcheck.io)), developed by Sacha Epskamp and Michele Nuiten, is a free 'spell checker' for statistics that scans the statistics reported in the paper to check if the p-values, degrees of freedom, and test statistics are correct. Run this before you submit your paper to a journal.
- Publish your SPSS, R, Mplus, SAS or LISREL syntaxes along with your paper. Add your syntaxes (or even Raw outputs) as supplementary material accompanying your papers. This doesn't just add to the credibility of the paper, but allows other researchers to learn from you! (This increases the impact/citations of your paper!)
- Make your research freely available. Publish the pre-prints of your papers on platforms such as [SocArXiv](https://arxiv.org/) or on [OSF](https://osf.io/). Not everyone in the world has access to journals. Pre-prints make your work more easily accessible to those who could use it.
- Pre-register your studies. Pre-registration implies that before you conduct your research, you have a set idea as to what you want to investigate, how you would like to go about doing it, how you think you could analyse your data... and very importantly... what you anticipate the results would be. Register your hypotheses before hand, as this eliminates Harking and data manipulation. It also adds an extra layer of credibility to a paper. You can pre-register at [OSF](https://osf.io/).
- Anonymise and Publish your Data. Make your data publicly available and provide guidelines for its use. But ensure that you comply to the appropriate legislation (e.g. GDPR, POPI). You can even get a publication out of it! You can publish your data with the Journal of Open Psychology Data!
- Partner, Partner, Partner! One of the most meaningful strategies is to partner with other people outside of your current institution. Partnerships are not only fun, and aids in managing the work-load, but it also results in more transparency and credibility.
- Be clear in your analytical methods and research process. One of the main criticisms in the literature is that scientists are not clear about the process which they followed when conducting their research. Make sure that your research methods section is clearly articulated. That the research procedure is discussed in detail and that the analytical process you employed is thoroughly presented. Ensure that you clearly define the statistical cut-off scores, level of significance. And remember to justify such!
- Manage your obsession with Null Hypothesis Testing! The major sinner in our field is the over-reliance on Null Hypothesis testing (c.f. Murphy, 2019 for a full explanation). We need to move away from a binary "significant vs non-significant" classification system for our results. Look for alternative estimation means such as Bayesian Inference and change your "scientific language". As Murphy (2019) indicated "readers often appear to interpret the phrase 'this result is statistically significant' to mean 'this result is important'. This has to stop."
- Finally, remember that the statistical methodology employed is just a tool, not the contribution! Do not attempt to employ advanced analytics as a mean to superficially enhance the level of perceptive sophistication of your paper. Unless you are writing a methods paper or a best practice guidelines, move away from the mindset that the analytical complexity justifies the theoretical contribution of your paper. Rather focus on crafting a good research question! Your analytical method should logically flow from such. Remember, the analytical method should only be seen as a "means to an end" and not an end in itself.

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**"Use Statcheck to ensure that we eliminate the occurrence statistical errors."**

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In conclusion, we have an active role to play in not only promoting our discipline but also to ensure that it remains credible. We have an active responsibility to advance credible, transparent and trustworthy research practices.

Click [here](#) to see the reference list for this article.



## Talented Researchers Selected for PhDs in Optentia

Various promising researchers have been selected for PhD study at Optentia in 2020:

Thapelo Chachaa completed a master's degree in Human Resource Management at the North-West University (NWU) in 2018. Thapelo has been employed by the NWU as a lecturer in Labour Relations Management since 2014. His PhD will focus on the competencies and capabilities of academic staff in higher education institutions in the South African context.

Praise Choeni completed a master's degree in Industrial Psychology at the University of Venda. Her dissertation focused on the role of leaders' emotional intelligence, role-breadth self-efficacy as well as organisational climate in pro-active work behaviour. Praise's research interest is leadership and work outcomes of employees.

Deon Kleynhans completed a master's degree in Industrial Sociology in 1997. Currently, he is a manager in the human resource department of Arcelor Mittal. Deon's study explores the suitability of authentic leadership as a leadership style during times of change in the steel manufacturing industry that could potentially help to promote both organisational and individual work outcomes. The role of trust on different hierarchical levels and perceived empowerment are mediating factors that are being tested in his model.

Annelisa Murangi is a junior lecturer at the University of Namibia since 2015. She completed a master's degree in Industrial Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch in 2019. Her research was about the job crafting



**Thapelo  
Chachaa**



**Praise  
Choeni**



**Deon  
Kleynhans**



**Mandla  
Ndlangamandla**



**Annelise  
Murangi**



**Suzette  
Ragadu**



**Coen  
Welsh**

and work engagement of special needs teachers in Windhoek. For her PhD studies, Annelisa wishes to expand the model she tested in her master's study. She is particularly passionate about seeing employees who work with people with disabilities flourish and excel in their work as it has potential to impact the end receivers, who are the people with disabilities.

Mandla Ndlangamandla completed a master's degree in Industrial Psychology at the University of the Free State. His PhD will focus on the effectiveness of human resources departments in relation to human capabilities at the universities of technology.

Suzette Ragadu currently works at the Department of People Management and Development, Tshwane University of Technology. Her PhD focuses on the impact of a perceived living wage on the quality of work-life of early childhood development teachers.

Coen Welsh is an industrial psychologist and management consultant in Namibia. His com-

pleted a master's degree in Industrial Psychology at the University of Namibia. His PhD study focuses on the capabilities, and functioning of leaders in banks and financial organisations in Namibia.

**"Various  
promising  
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study at  
Optentia."**

## Would I be Happier as a Teacher or a Carpenter?

Most people are looking for ways to make their life as happy as possible. Since we work a great part of our life time, it is worth knowing which occupations will bring us the most happiness and which will bring the least. This requires information on how happy people are in different occupations and in particular, what kinds of people are the happiest in what kinds of occupation.

Joyce van Leeuwen and Prof. Ruut Veenhoven sought answers to these questions using data taken from the WageIndicator for 2006 to 2014 for the Netherlands. The large dataset of 160.806 respondents made it possible to assess differences in happiness levels in 130 occupations and to split the results across four personal characteristics.



The occupation in the Netherlands with the highest life satisfaction was ship, aircraft controller and technician working in this field. The occupation with the lowest life satisfaction was forestry and related work. The occupation giving the most life satisfaction for women was creative and performing artist, for men it was

keyboard operator. The full text is available in [EHERO working paper 2019-4](#).

A similar project in the South African context is currently undertaken by Prof. Ian Rothmann.

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**"The occupation in the Netherlands with the highest life satisfaction was ship, aircraft controller and technician working in this field."**

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## Springer Books: Achievements of Optentia Participants

Various Optentia staff members were involved as editors and authors of Springer books during 2019. Optentia staff published 25 Springer chapters (article equivalents) in five books. Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl, Prof. Ian Rothmann and Prof. Silvia Koller were editors of Springer books. The three books edited by Prof. van Zyl and Prof. Rothmann provide a) important insights on the development of positive psychological capacities in multi-cultural contexts; b) empirically validated interventions that have significant effect on the development of positive psychological capacities and attributes in multi-cultural situations, and c) present specific intervention protocols and frameworks of positive psychological attributes such as humour, gratitude, and flourishing within multi-



cultural contexts. The books edited by Prof. Koller, present a method to apply Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development to empirical

research and report on research done in one of the world's emerging centres of psychological investigation.

## Developing Work Capabilities

In his book "Hope after state capture", Mcebisi Jonas (2019) analysed the economic and political landscape in South Africa. He argues against a system which places politics at the centre of policy-making and implementation, at the expense of growth. Compared to other countries in their first 25 years after political reform, South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita has declined in relation to the world GDP per capita. The net rate at which people have entered the job market has exceeded the rate of job creation: between 27% and 37% of South Africans are unemployed (depending on the definition). He identified eight realities for South Africa, namely that we are locked in a job crisis, an inequality crisis and a low growth trap, we have a crisis of failing investment, we are not competitive enough, we have been unable to prepare our youth adequately, we are being left behind in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and that we have failed to build a capable and corruption-free state. Given these realities, we might wonder whether there is hope.

Jonas points out that the unleashing of our potential will only happen when state, institutions, markets and citizens cohere more deliberately around a common purpose and set of interests. Moreover, President Cyril Ramaphosa referred to the importance of developing capabilities when he recently talked about lessons we could learn from the Asia-Pacific region: "... those who invest early and work to develop local capabilities stand to gain the most as underdevelopment gives way to a



Prof. Jac van der Klink and participants in the workshop on the work capability approach

region of huge consumer markets and advanced productive hubs." The capability approach might be a useful approach to study and develop capabilities.

According to the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, the capability approach is a theoretical framework that "entails two core normative claims: first, the claim that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and second, that freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value."

Prof. Van der Klink argues that the value of work appears to be an essential characteristic of a flourishing working life, well-being at work and sustainable employability. Therefore, the central paradigm of occupational psychology should change to focus on flourishing individual and societies. Especially normativity and contextuality are essential elements in this regard. A paradigm that recognises how social conditions and environments where people are working can enable them to flourish. The ca-

pability approach can provide such a paradigm.

Seven aspects (values) form the basis of the capability set: a) Use of knowledge and skills. b) Development of knowledge and skills. c) Involvement in important decisions. d) Building and maintaining meaningful contacts at work. e) Setting own goals. f) Having a good income. g) Contributing to something valuable. These values translate to capabilities via three variables, importance, enablement and efficacy. By answering three questions the abovementioned values are transformed to capabilities (or the lack thereof): First, do individuals think that the value is important (valuable) to them. Second, do their work offers them sufficient opportunities to do it? In other words, is the work environment resourceful and enabling? Third, are they able to succeed in realizing it? Do individuals have the capacity and competencies to realize the aspect of work.

Click [here](#) to watch an interview with Prof. Jac van der Klink about the Work Capability Approach.

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**"... the unleashing of our potential will only happen when state, institutions, markets and citizens cohere more deliberately around a common purpose and set of interests ..."**

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## Learning about Capabilities from Prof. Jac van der Klink

Prof. Jac van der Klink visited Optentia during October 2019. We created opportunities for PhD students of Optentia to discuss their projects with Prof. van der Klink.

Prof. van der Klink summarised his views on Optentia and South Africa as follows: "This country has produced some of the most famous, inspiring and wise people who the 20th and 21st centuries have known and who are my personal heroes and sources of inspiration. Nelson Mandela is the most pronounced of these people.

I recognise his positivity, love for people and a strong and unconditional desire to make the world a better place in an institution such as Optentia. Despite the great problems and challenges that this country is struggling with and which I see of course, there is hope if there is sufficient positive energy. I feel proud and privileged to have been here and to have been able to discuss and exchange ideas with so many inspiring people."



Prof. Ian Rothmann and Prof. Jac van der Klink preparing for a game drive at Mongena Lodge

Click [here](#) to see the workshop Klink. Note: The presentation is password protected.

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"I recognise his positivity, love for people and a strong and unconditional desire to make the world a better place in an institution such as Optentia ..."

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Thera Lobi (PhD student in Optentia), Prof. Jac van der Klink, Prof. Ian Rothmann and Tessa de Wet (PhD student in Optentia)



## Top Achievers of Optentia

Optentia recently acknowledged the achievements of six of its researchers. Four criteria, namely contribution to research equivalents, progress towards an NRF rating, research leadership and participation, and funding applications, were used to identify the top achievers.

Prof. Chrizanne van Eeden received her award in recognition for her role as supervisor or promoter of four Master's and two PhD students who submitted their dissertations and theses for examination in November 2019.

The achievements of Prof. Ansie Fouché and Prof. Jaco Hoffman included obtaining an NRF rating, publishing peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, attracting research funding and playing a critical role as leaders in Optentia.

Dr Leoni van der Vaart's achievements include publishing peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, attracting research funding, and organising and leading research.

Prof. Hermien Zaiman received the award because she provided the leadership needed for 13 Risk Management master's students to submit their mini-dissertations in November 2019.



Dr Marita Heyns



Prof. Ansie Fouché



Prof. Hermien Zaiman



Prof. Jaco Hoffman



Dr Leoni van der Vaart



Prof. Chrizanne van Eeden

"Optentia recently acknowledged the achievements of six of its researchers."



Optentia House provides a home for researchers. Our researchers are flourishing ... as is the Gardenia Jasminoides (Katjiefiering) at Optentia House

## Promotions of Optentia-Affiliated Staff

Three participants in Optentia were promoted from 1 January 2020. Prof. Ansie Fouché was promoted to the position of full professor. Dr Elsabe Keyser and Dr Marita Heyns were promoted to associate professor. Congratulations to our three colleagues! We are proud of your achievements.



Dr Elsabe Keyser



Dr Marita Heyns



Prof. Ansie Fouché



## Prof. Leon Jackson Defended his PhD Thesis

During September 2019, Prof. Leon Jackson defended his PhD thesis in Cross-cultural Psychology at Tilburg University. The topic of his thesis was "Diversity management in the New South Africa: An acculturation approach". Prof. Ian Rothmann, who was appointed as an examiner of the thesis, attended the defence. The defence of the thesis was not an easy task: Prof. Jackson's promoter, Prof. Fons van de Vijver, passed away one month before the planned defence. Because of the unexpected death of his promo-ter, the defence was

postponed for more than two months.

In his thesis, Prof. Jackson developed a dual-process model as framework to shed light on diversity management. The focus on diversity conditions and psychological and sociocultural outcomes represents a contribution to scientific knowledge. The main contribution in the study was that it demonstrated how the management of diversity can be viewed in a model that draws on organisational science and applies these ideas in a dual process model for diversity.



Prof. Leon Jackson at Tilburg University

## Optentia Participants Visited NWU Mahikeng

A total of 10 Optentia participants visited the Mahikeng Campus of the North-West University (NWU) on 7 August 2019. The aims of the visit was to participate a research exhibition of the research entities in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, meet researchers at the campus, understand the culture and the environment in which the campus finds itself better and to promote multidisciplinary research.

The visit included to the Mahikeng Campus was a great opportunity for teambuilding. Optentia members had time to catch-up, and discuss and debate issues. The visit was also an enriching experience: widening our own paradigms to better understand our colleagues on the Mahikeng Camous, their research an their challenges. It was an interesting change of scenery; and a genuine appreciation for our own environment in Vanderbijlpark - Optentia House!



Optentia researchers who visited the Mahikeng Campus of the NWU



Lynn Booysen representing Optentia at the Mahikeng Campus

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“... it demonstrated how the management of diversity can be viewed in a model that draws on organisational science ...”

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## Interdisciplinary Teamwork: Short Intensive Programme

In 2018 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between NWU (Optentia) and VIVES College of Applied Sciences in Belgium. One of the activities that was agreed upon was a two week Short Intensive Programme (SIP), for Vives and NWU students from different professional disciplines (i.e. Education, Nursing, Psychology, Industrial Psychology and Social Work). The first SIP took place in South Africa in October 2019 where 24 students (12 from NWU and VIVES respectively) had the opportunity to experience international and interdisciplinary interaction around the theme of bullying.

The main goal of this particular SIP was to create an awareness with students in these aforementioned fields of study that ideas, concepts, perspectives and approaches across different disciplinary and contextual (i.e. European and African) boundaries, can add broader and deeper insight into the understanding of their own disciplines, as well as in the application of their professions. In an intricate and complex global social world there is a need to develop and enable students in disciplines linked to humanities and health to merge a disciplinary depth but also to appreciate the contribution of other disciplines to be able to work in interdisciplinary teams.

During the SIP workshops were presented and facilitated by expert NWU lecturers (who were part of the project), from the faculty of Humanities, Health Science, Economic and Management Science, and Education with specific reference to the departments Schools of Psychology, Social Work, Psychology, Indus-

trial Psychology, Education and Nursing, capacitating students with knowledge and understanding about inclusion and wellbeing linked to bullying from different disciplinary and contextual perspectives.

The students also got the opportunity to visit two township (Sharpeville) primary schools, two previous Model C schools, social work centres and local clinics, where they got an opportunity to informally converse with teachers, social workers and clinic workers to explore their understanding and experiences of interdisciplinary teamwork and the importance of contextual factors linked to the topic of bullying.

Based on the knowledge and understanding gained during the workshops, as well as the visits to the different institutions, the students (in different diverse

groups) were expected to develop an online web-programme providing guidelines on how to address bullying in an interdisciplinary and inclusive manner, while keeping contextual factors in mind.

NWU team members include: Mirna Nel, Ansie Fouché (Social work), Elize Kung (Education), Elrie Botha (Industrial Psychology), Suegnet Scholtz (Nursing), Sesepe Lethale (Nursing), Shanae Theunissen (Psychology), Baaqira Ebrahim (Psychology), Relebogile Sekati (Industrial Psychology), Tinieke Kruger (Industrial Psychology), Eddie Kok (Education) and Yolanda Fourie (Education). The VIVES colleagues are: Eveline leRoy (Applied Social Sciences), Nele Ducatteeuw (Education), Francine Deplae (Nursing) and Nele van de Putte.

“... there is a need to develop and enable students in disciplines linked to humanities and health.”



NWU and Vives students participated in the multidisciplinary project

## Interdisciplinary Teamwork: Short Intensive Programme

Secondary to the SIP a research activity was also conducted focusing on exploring the students and lecturers' experiences regarding the different SIP activities within the interdisciplinary teams. It was also explored how they experienced their development of understanding inclusion, well-being, interdisciplinary teamwork and the importance of contextual factors when dealing with bullying.

Moreover, cultural activities also included a visit to the Apartheid Museum, a cultural day playing Djembe drums and a weekend visit to a game farm. After the two weeks the general feedback from students and lecturers alike was that it was: "A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE!"



Participants in the Short Intensive Programme involving the Vives College of Applied Sciences and the North-West University

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"It was explored how they understand inclusion, well-being, interdisciplinary teamwork and the importance of contextual factors when dealing with bullying ..."

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Participants in the Short Intensive Programme during a visit to the Apartheidmuseum in Johannesburg



## My First International Experience *by* Sibusiso Mnxuma

“... I could relate to his life story as it shared great similarities to my own ...”

The events leading up to my first international visit were quite testing as I had issues getting my visa. However, with the support and help I had from my colleagues and little prayer on my part, I got my visa two days before the scheduled departure date. I must admit I had begun to think that “maybe this wasn't meant to be”, but all is well that ends well. On 06 Oct 2019 at 23:00, we were on board KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and on our way to the Netherlands. We landed at Schipol Airport the next morning around 9 am, and this was the beginning of what would be an eventful four days.

My first impression was that everyone was comfortable using their phones in a busy public train station with no worries of someone grabbing it and running off. Speaking of the train station, I was really impressed by the public transport system in the Netherlands, everything runs like clockwork. Onto a train to Utrecht and then a short taxi ride to the hotel. This is where I had my first 4IR experience, there in the hotel foyer was a self-service check-in desk, no human interaction just an LCD screen. After a brief but needed nap we were off to our first appointment the very same day. We met Prof. Andries Baart at the “Stadskantoor”, a state-of-the-art government building dedicated to community use, hosting a floor dedicated to meeting rooms and board rooms open to the community for free. I remember thinking to myself, “now this is one way of contributing to economic growth”. Our meeting with Prof. Andries was mainly about the possibility of future collaborations with Op-

tentia. Later that day I also had the pleasure of meeting Prof. Ype Poortinga for dinner at his home. This was an evening filled with insightful discussions and learnings while enjoying the beautiful view of the canal. Having travelled for 11 hours two appointments seemed a healthy target for the first day.

Day 2, after a short walk to the bus stop, onto a bus and then on a train to Eindhoven to meet a former colleague from the North-West University, who has since relocated from South Africa to the Netherlands, Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl at Eindhoven University. He introduced us to his colleagues at Eindhoven. A highlight was that we met Prof. Eva Demerouti. She is a respected scholar in the field and I came across her work many times. How special to meet her ... Later that day we had dinner at Utrecht University with Prof. Rens van de Schoot and two of his colleagues. This was an evening of statistical and mathematical insight, but what was even more striking was the three's eagerness to assist and collaborate. They showed great interest in what we were busy with in terms of our research focus and a strong desire to collaborate and assist with statistical techniques.

The day next we were off to Tilburg University, where we met with Prof. Kutlay Yağmur, an expert in cultural studies. What an amazing human being, this is one person with whom I felt a strong personal connection and felt I could relate to his life story as it shared great similarities to my own. He shared great insights about his life's journey, experiences of diversity and culture



**Prof. Andries Baart and  
Sibusiso Mnxuma in  
Utrecht**

dynamics. I thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent with him. Our next two meetings were at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, here we met with Prof. Ruut Veenhoven, an expert in studies of happiness from an occupational psychology perspective. What struck me about him is the level of positivity he still has in spite of his personal challenges with illness. And lastly, we met with Prof. Marise Born, with whom we shared and exchanged many ideas on potential collaborations in future as well as research funding opportunities.

On a lighter note, Prof. Ian Rothmann and I got onto what seemed like the last train from Rotterdam to Utrecht, it was packed with passengers, and we had convinced ourselves it would get better as we stop at the stations in between as people got off, however it seemed as though for every person that got off another two boarded the train, needless to say we were standing all the way to Utrecht station. Overall, this was an amazing experience that I will cherish forever. I am genuinely grateful to Optentia, and the North-West University for this.

## My First International Experience by Sibusiso Mnxuma

Prof. Ian Rothmann and Sibusiso Mnxuma visited the Netherlands from 7-11 October 2019. The aim of the visit was to introduce Sibusiso to Optentia's networks. The meetings with our international colleagues were very rewarding. Thank you Prof. Ype Poortinga, Prof. Andries Baart, Prof. Ruut Veenhoven, Prof. Marise Born, Prof. Kutlay Yağmur, Prof. Rens van de Schoot, Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl and Prof. Jac van der Klink for



Arriving at Schiphol Airport



Sibusiso with cross-cultural psychology expert, Prof. Ype Poortinga



Sibusiso with happiness expert Prof. Ruut Veenhoven



Sibusiso with statistical experts at Utrecht University



Sibusiso with cultural expert, Prof. Kutlay Yağmur

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**"The meetings with our international colleagues were very rewarding."**

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Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Marise Born and Sibusiso Mnxuma at Erasmus University in Rotterdam



Prof. Ian Rothmann and Sibusiso Mnxuma at Eindhoven University of Technology



## News: Human Flourishing in Institutions *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

The news in the programme can be summarised as follows:

- Prof. Ian Rothmann and Dr Rachele Paver were actively involved in statistical analyses and reporting for the RYSE (Resilient Youth in Stressed Environments) project.
- Two PhDs in the programme, Elna Rossouw and Vasti Opperman submitted their theses for examination. Elna Rossouw investigated the flourishing of judges in South Africa. Vasti Opperman studied the stress, coping strategies, perceived personal control and well-being work of secondary school-teachers. Two manuscripts from the two theses have been submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Four more manuscripts will be submitted by the end of January 2020.
- Five PhD candidates, Christiaan Bekker, Tessa de Wet, Thera Lobi, Kalashni Narainsamy, and Elette van den Berg are making



Tessa de  
Wet



Christiaan  
Bekker



Thera  
Lobi



Elette van  
den Berg

good progress with their studies.

- A number of PhD studies focus on capabilities, competencies and functioning of employees in key jobs.
- Postdoctoral fellow, Dr Rachele Paver is currently developing research and

funding proposals focusing on employer and employee interventions to deal with unemployment. Prof. Roland Blank, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Hans De Witte and Prof. Anja van den Broeck are involved in the project.

**“We aim to broaden the research to include employer perspectives on unemployment.”**

## Optentia-affiliated Researchers at NTUST

Prof. Ståle Pallesen held a workshop on meta-analysis, hosted by Optentia-affiliated Prof. Sufen Chen, at the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST) from 20-22 November 2019. He helped the researchers and students to understand the fundamental concepts of systematic review and the logic of synthesizing data from a body of literature. Prof. Amandeep Dhir lectured on the dark side of social media and brought much inspiration for the first-year graduate students at the Graduate Institute of Digital Learning and Education at NTUST.



Prof. Sufen Chen, Prof. Amandeep Dhir and Prof Ståle Pallesen at NTUST

## A Life-changing Event: Losing a Close Friend *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Friends are the people who can make good times better and the hard times easier to live with. Friends make life more fun and fulfilling ... I lost two great friends this year, Prof. Fons van de Vijver and Prof. Deon Meiring.

Fons, died from a hemorrhagic stroke on 1 June 2019. It was a major shock. Deon shared the news about Fons' death while I was in Italy, waiting for my flight to South Africa. For Deon, Fons was not only a PhD promoter... he was a father. And then... another shock... Deon passed away on 4 October 2019 - on Fons' birthday. Deon was 52 years old when he died.

Deon Meiring was a South African Industrial Psychologist and Professor of Industrial Psychology at the University of Pretoria. Before joining the University of Pretoria, he practised as a Senior Industrial Psychologist in the South African Police Service for 19 years (1991–2010), where he focused on specialised selection and assessment practices. I first met Deon in 1989. I was a lecturer in Industrial Psychology at the Potchefstroom University. Deon was an honours student in Industrial Psychology. Few people know that Deon was a good rugby player. Living and working in Pretoria, it was not strange that he was a passionate Blue Bull rugby supporter!

He played a vital role in an intervention study that I conducted for my PhD in the SAPS. He invited me to stay in his home in Pretoria while I was doing my research at the South African Police College in Pretoria. In turn, I accompanied him when he was looking for a cross-cultural psychology expert who could be

a promoter for his PhD study. I became a co-promotor for his PhD study at Tilburg University. In 2001, Deon, Prof. Murray Barrick (US) and I reported on the first meta-analysis of personality and performance in South African studies at the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (USA) conference which was held in Canada.

Every year, from 2002–2007, Deon and I travelled to Tilburg to work on his PhD. We were regular visitors to "Het Dorstige Hert", a bar close to the University. Sometimes beer was not enough to quench our thirst after a hard day's work. Following Deon's PhD defence, at Tilburg University and Fons' appointment as an extraordinary professor at the NWU, we decided to apply for research funding to initiate a research project on the development of a personality questionnaire that would be suitable for all language groups in South Africa (the South African Personality Inventory -SAPI). Deon and I hosted various workshops and conferences together (for example the First South African Conference on Burnout, as well as a workshop on bias and equivalence in psychometric tests). We collaborated countless times in initiating international networks and organising international visits of experts to South Africa. In 2012, we participated for weeks in an Mplus workshop at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. At every conference I organised in South Africa, Deon was there to present an award to me. Evidence of these awards are in various offices at the NWU Vanderbijlpark Campus.



A joint presentation with Prof. Deon Meiring at the conference of SIOPSA: 24 July 2019

Deon was known for his support when his friends were not well. For example, he supported Steve Kearney (who passed away in 2004) for many years. Deon became the chairperson of the Steve Kearney Educational Trust for disadvantaged students of the Royal Bafokeng Holdings. He initiated a book, 'Platinum Man', that was written in honour of Steve Kearney in 2006. In 2008, when I was experiencing difficulties, Deon pitched up at my house in Potchefstroom to provide support. Knowing that I was emigrating to Namibia, he gave me a book with the title 'The last lecture' (Pausch, 2008). The title of the book is derived from the concept of a retiring professor's 'last lecture'. For Deon there was a last lecture, dedicated to Fons! In his book, Pausch discusses the importance of childhood dreams and how to go about achieving them. He mentions themes such as taking the time to dream, the importance of good parents in a child's life, and how to put people before materials, which all apply to Deon. But Pausch (2008) writes: "We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand." Deon made a significant impact on Industrial and Organisational Psychology in South Africa. But, he had even a stronger impact on people!

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**"We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand."**

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## Creating Solutions to Tackle Africa's Youth Unemployment

Prof. Roland Blonk (TNO and Tilburg University) recently visited Optentia. Prof. Blonk, Dr Rachele Paver and Prof. Ian Rothmann are planning a research project to tackle youth unemployment in South Africa. Youth unemployment is one of the most pressing challenges in Africa. There is an urgent need for quality jobs as well as matching skills.

Interventions have been developed to help young unemployed people to find work. For example, research showed that the JOBS programme is successful in combating unemployment levels. With a relatively short training, big improvements were made by helping people to find a job who had been stuck in welfare for years. It also became clear that the motivation of the participants to find work was significantly high. The training consisted of two elements: learning necessary skills and learning to adopt a mindset that allows you to be successful in the labour market. However, both need to be in place in order for it to work. TNO in the Netherlands has co-developed an integral approach to dealing with unemployment. Click [here](#) to read more.

On 16 October 2019, Prof Roland Blonk presented the following workshop at Optentia: Unemployment in The Netherlands: On guiding unemployed and guiding employers to combat unemployment based on Fishbein and Ajzen's (2010) Integrative Model of Behavior. The workshop gave a presentation of a model of dual-focused unemployment guidance within the context of Dutch social security. This guidance is a combined focus on the individual and the employer.



Dr Rachele Paver, Melanie Rothmann and Prof. Roland Blonk at Mongena Lodge



Prof. Ian Rothmann and Prof. Roland Blonk

**A mismatch exists between the reality and expectations of unemployed youth. This mismatch is reinforced by a lack of exposure to the real labour market.** "Even in countries with frightening high unemployment rates, like South Africa (where 54 percent of those between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four say they are unemployed, companies complain that they cannot get the workers they want: workers with some education, a good attitude toward work, and a willingness to accept the wages on offer" (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019)

Concerning the individual, Prof. Blonk and his colleagues developed Weighted Customization based on Fishbein and Ajzen's Integrated Model of Behaviour as an overarching model to enhance tailored guidance to the individual. Although this integrated model is about individual behaviour, they apply this model also to employer inclusive behaviour. Application of this model resulted in different, employer

tailored interventions to enhance employer inclusive behaviour. Throughout the workshop the main question was: What if we apply these thoughts and this model to the South African context and what (developmental) steps do we have to make? Click [here](#) to see the presentation of Prof. Blonk. Please note that the presentation is password protected.

"The main topic is to strengthen motivation and perseverance to make people resilient to inevitable setbacks."

## Resilience in Stressed Environments (RYSE)

Oil and gas production and climate change have large impacts on social, economic and environmental systems that affect young people's mental health and overall wellbeing. To better understand these complex relationships at both ends of the carbon cycle (production and consumption), the five-year multinational CIHR funded Resilient Youth in Stressed Environments (RYSE) research project studies the resilience of young people in Canada and South Africa.

Led by Dr Michael Ungar at the Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University in Canada and Prof. Linda Theron, University of Pretoria in South Africa, the team of researchers works with partners from the oil and gas industry, government, school boards and key organizations within each of the communities to better understand how to support the health and well-being of young people in changing environments.



South African and Canadian researchers discussing the RYSE project during a meeting in November 2019

Prof. Ian Rothmann and Dr Rachele Paver are responsible for the statistical analyses of the South African data of the RYSE project. Initial analyses of the data of 577 respondents showed fascinating results. The results showed very different findings for the South African and Canadian samples. It was clear from the initial analyses that safety, health

and well-being are critical areas for intervention in South Africa.

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**"... safety, health and well-being are critical areas for intervention in South Africa."**

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## Happiness is ... Meeting Friends *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

The annual conference of the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology in South Africa (SIOPSA) always holds a surprise. This year, I met my previous Namibian master's student, Charmaine Kasuto, and my previous PhD student, Dr Simeon Amunkete, at the SIOPSA conference. I was supervisor for the Master's study of Charmaine when I was employed at the University of Namibia. I was the promoter of Simeon's PhD at the NWU. Besides the pleasure of seeing my previous students again, I feel proud of their achievements!



Prof. Ian Rothmann, Charmaine Kasuto and Dr Simeon Amunkete



Prof. Ederick Stander and Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

## Motivation@Work: A Dynamic Approach

Reducing poverty and inequality is one of the key objectives of the National Development Plan. To achieve this objective, jobs should be created to boost household income. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play an increasingly important role in job creation and, hence, their effectiveness in key. Organisational effectiveness, in turn, relies heavily on optimally performing employees who are psychologically well.

To generate knowledge to support the development of evidence-based interventions for SME effectiveness, Dr Leoni van der Vaart (together with Prof. Anja Van den Broeck and Prof. Ian Rothmann) embarked on a research project.

Dr Leoni van der Vaart recently returned from a two-month visit at KU Leuven in Belgium. The visit aimed to prepare for and initiate implementation of the abovementioned project for which we have submitted a grant proposal to the National Research Foundation in South Africa (awaiting the outcome of application). More specifically, the following outcomes were achieved in relation to this project:

- Discussed the research projects (master's theses) of Master's students (Nadia Jordaan and Simeau van Nieuwenhuizen) focusing on validating questionnaires for use in the remainder of the project. We spent time setting up the questionnaires during this visit and the students are currently in the data collection phase;
- Informal training by Prof. Anja van den Broeck on sys-



tematic literature reviews. This was in preparation for the supervision of the PhD student (Ms Lynelle Coxen) on the project:

- Held several meetings with Lynelle to work on the first manuscript from her PhD (a systematic literature review of diary studies on basic need satisfaction and need frustration from a self-determination theory perspective); and
- Reviewed diary study papers on the topic in order to identify possible questionnaires that can be used in the empirical phases of the PhD project (see document attached for an example of the review). We recruited a Master's student at KU Leuven that will pilot the questionnaires as part of his thesis.

In addition to these outcomes, the following outcomes were also achieved during the visit:

Presented "The experiences and motivation of unemployed people: A person- and variable-centred perspective" to colleagues and PhD students of the Faculty of Economics and Business (KU Leuven) to share insights gained from my joint PhD with KU Leuven and additional research conducted on unemployment in Belgium.

Two manuscripts "Motivational profiles of the unemployed in South Africa" and "happily (re) employed? A prospective study from a self-determination perspective"

The visit was sponsored by VLIRUOS via a short-term research stay grant for which Dr Leon and Prof. Dr Anja applied. We hope that in future we will be able to apply for similar grants that enables collaboration between the NWU and KU Leuven.

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**"Small and medium enterprises play an increasingly important role in job creation."**

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## Welcome Prof. Tess Patterson!

During August 2019, Optentia and specifically the Strengths-based studies and interventions programme, welcomed Prof. Tess Patterson as an extraordinary professor. Prof. Patterson is a Senior Lecturer in the Psychological Medicine Department, University of Otago and the Associate Dean (Student Affairs) of the Otago Medical School. She is also a practicing Clinical Psychologist specialising in the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders. Her research focuses on harmful sexual behaviour, both in terms of the perpetrators and victims of such harm, as well as on the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders.

During her inaugural lecture, entitled: "Confronting the issues of sexual harm in regard to the child witness, perpetrator and victim-survivor", Prof. Patterson discussed a triage of sexual harm, namely: the child witness, the perpetrator and the victim-survivor to an audience of academic peers, future research collaborators and healthcare and helping professionals. The lecture focused on examining three key areas related to sexual harm. First, it focused on the child as a witness in cases of childhood sexual abuse and the dire need for gold standard forensic interviewing practices. Secondly, she surveyed atypical perpetrators of sexual harm - such as female sexual offenders and adolescents who engage in harmful sexual behaviour. And lastly, she explored the long-term outcomes and lived experience of those who have survived childhood sexual abuse.

From the lecture it remains clear that CSA is a severe worldwide problem that affects men and women of all ages and is also perpetrated by both male and female



Prof. Ansie Fouché, Prof. Tess Patterson, and Prof. Hayley Walker-Williams

offenders. The high prevalence of sexual harm both in New Zealand and South Africa emphasises the importance of helping professionals being involved in sexual abuse assessment, treatment and research. Prof. Patterson confirmed the fact that a substantial portion of males are also victims of sexual abuse or sexual violence in New Zealand and this resonates with the current prevalence trend in South Africa which is slightly higher in males than females thus, males and females appear equally vulnerable. Furthermore, Prof. Patterson emphasised, that we cannot ignore the impact on the offender or the offender's others, as these offenders belong to others, and in many instances have a spouse, children, parents or a wider family, who are also impacted by their devastating crime of shame. Thus, at the larger community level we need to advocate for interventions in terms of service provision for offenders and their families/others. Overall Prof. Patterson's lecture presented us with an uncomfortable burning issue and it accentuated the importance of confronting these tough issues so as not to deny accountability for this social crisis. As helping professionals and researchers

we need to address these issues, not by labelling or stereotyping the victims or offenders but instead by understanding the broader systemic issue within the given cultural context. As such we can take action and focus on changing that which needs to be changed. Click [here](#) to watch an interview with Prof. Patterson.

Prof. Patterson's research niche resonates with our vision at Optentia. Furthermore, her lecture highlighted significant differences and important similarities between a developed country such as New Zealand and a developing country like South Africa, in terms of this research platform. This highlighted and confirmed the dire need for international dialogue in order to grow and confront our understanding of the dynamics instilled in this topic of sexual harm.

Prof. Walker-Williams and Prof. Fouché began collaborating with Prof. Patterson in 2017. A memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the North-West University and the University of Otago. Funding has been obtained from the University of Otago to pilot the S2T intervention with male survivors in New Zealand in 2020. Congratulations Prof. Patterson!

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**"... a substantial portion of males are also victims of sexual abuse or sexual violence."**

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## My Research Journey *by* Mahloma Hebert Molakeng

The past three years has been personally challenging, endorsing growth and building character. The first two years of my research journey was mainly about preparing me for days I would be collecting data, by attending workshops and frequent sessions with my study supervisor for guidance.

At first, I had little knowledge about the risk and resilience of social workers in the child protection setting. Through reading academic journals, discussions with my study leader and interviewing social workers in child protection, I developed a much clearer understanding of the risks they face and how some of them adapt positively, in spite of these risks. Moreover, conducting research requires excellent organizing skills, and now I have learned, through practical experience, how to organize my work better. For instance, coordinating an interview

schedule across various regions in the Free State and travelling to those areas.

What I have learned is that these participants are placed at risk by factors mostly outside of their control on an institutional level; and their resilience stems primarily from factors on an individual level of the socio ecological model. More qualitative exploratory studies still need to be conducted to further explore this phenomenon across all the regions of South Africa, to better understand the risk and resilience of all designated social workers in South Africa. The sooner we understand the exact factors that place them at risk across the spectrum, we can start developing interventions to reduce or even eliminate these risks. Also, the better we understand from lived experiences, how some do better than is expected, we can translate these



Mahloma Hebert Molakeng

lessons into interventions to help promote resilience of all child protection social workers, since they are at the front line of protecting children who are subjected to neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

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**"... their resilience stems primarily from factors on an individual level ..."**

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## Risks and Resilience as Experienced by Designated Social Workers

I registered for my Master of Social Work at the Vaal Triangle campus in 2018. The process of doing my masters was not without its challenges, frustrations and new experiences. However, doing my masters has opened my eyes and mind to what research entails as well as to the world of academia. Child protection services is still a great need globally and locally, however, rendering these services are very difficult and not all child protection social workers are able to overcome specific workplace adversities that often render them depressed or burnt out, sometimes leading to poor service delivery. My study focused on those child protection social workers who do indeed overcome these difficulties in the Western Cape, as it is vital to learn 'how' they manage to do better than is expected.

I conducted a scoping review focused on the risks experienced by child protection social workers: The adversities of child protection social

workers: a scoping review. A total of 32 publications were included in this scoping review and were analysed using thematic analysis. Findings were embedded within the socio-ecological model therefore, themes were formulated based on the five levels in this model. Two themes were developed: Intrapersonal level risk factors (high levels of anxiety and stress, cynicism and disengaged coping; being ill-prepared and a personal history of maltreatment) and Institutional and community level risk factors (unsupportive workspaces; detrimental workplace duties and work pressure). I could not overlook the negative outcomes raised in some publications as a result of the risk factors.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 designated child protection social workers about their risks and resilience processes, titled: Risks and resilience of ten designated social workers in the Western Cape: a qualitative



Emma Boonzaier

exploration. Once again, findings from these interviews were embedded within the socio-ecological model which highlighted that risk factors were mostly embedded within the institutional and community level, and their resilience processes were embedded within the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. In terms of resilience of these participants, three themes were developed; a constructive personal profile; positive workspaces and a positive personal life. This journey was long and demanding, but it taught me perseverance, how to work ethically and think critically.



## Experiences of Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a devastating, universal social crisis with long-term negative outcomes for women survivors. Literature over decades, found that CSA may have a devastating short and long-term impact on survivors. Adult survivors of CSA are likely to present with negative mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder; sexual problems (for example, sexual dysfunctions and intimacy disturbances); and intra- and interpersonal difficulties such as relationship conflict, low self-esteem, trust and security issues.

Alexander (1992) reported that the long-term effects of sexual abuse appear to be judged by the level of support received from significant others. She further explains that although the effects of CSA are related to the nature and context of abuse, it can be better understood in correlation with the importance of attachment relationships that occur concurrent with the abuse. As such, the non-supportive significant adult refers to those adults who are in a position to protect the CSA victim but fail to do so, by not preventing the abuse from happening, not believing the child who discloses, not making any attempt to stop further abuse, passively or intentionally discouraging disclosure, or offering no or insufficient support in the recovery process. From this perspective, a secure attachment is developed between parent and child as the child seeks protection and safety from their caregiver, when early parental or caretaker relationships are characterised by threat, deprivation, loss, rejection, unavailability, betrayal or detachment, it leads to insecure attachment, which is in turn related to numerous other long-term negative outcomes.

The aim of the study was to explore what is known from literature and women survivors regarding non-supportive significant adults in relation to their childhood sexual

abuse experiences, and was conducted in two phases by means of exploratory qualitative research by applying Freyd's (1994, 1996) betrayal trauma theory and Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory, as theoretical frameworks. Non-supportive reactions to disclosure are reported in literature, although there exists no summary on what is known on the experiences of women survivors of CSA in relation to non-supportive significant adults. Phase one of the study was done by conducting a scoping review on publications between 1980 and 2019. The results of this scoping review found three main themes describing the experiences of women survivors of CSA in relation to non-supportive significant adults. Theme one identified non-supportive behaviours experienced before disclosure or discovery of abuse. Theme two identified non-supportive behaviours experienced during or after disclosure or discovery of abuse (collusion and/or coercion and entrapment and/or enablement). Theme three identified the long-term negative consequences of non-supportive experiences. These three themes support the findings of Freyd's (1994, 1996) betrayal trauma theory and Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory. The findings of the scoping review reported no South African studies, with most studies conducted in developed countries. In order to honour diversity and context, these findings could not be translated from one group to another. This motivated for the second phase of the study, with the aim of contributing towards the ongoing conversation on the experiences of women survivors of CSA in relation to non-supportive significant adults, as well as to inform the knowledge base of how these experiences manifest in a South African population of women survivors of CSA, so as to inform viable treatment interventions. These survivors had all participated in the Survivor to Thrive (S2T) collaborative strengths-based



Bianca Brits

group intervention programme. Qualitative secondary analysis was employed on three data sets of twenty-six group treatment intervention sessions with twenty-five women survivors of CSA, ranging from 18 to 57 years, spanning over a five year period. The results corresponded with the three main themes found in literature, namely non-supportive behaviours experienced before disclosure or discovery of abuse (barriers to disclosure and detached parenting), non-supportive behaviours experienced during or after disclosure or discovery of abuse, and the long-term negative consequences of non-supportive experiences. However, when viewing the participants testimonies, one additional sub-theme emerged, namely the double betrayal attachment injury. The non-supportive adult who failed to prevent, detect, support, or protect can be seen as a traitor of the child-victim. This double betrayal leading to severe attachment injuries in childhood and adulthood is described as more damaging than the sexual abuse trauma. The overall conclusion drawn from this study is that non-supportive experiences reported by women survivors of CSA are represented in terms of non-supportive experiences before, during, or after disclosure or discovery of abuse, which causes devastating long-term negative outcomes in the lives of women survivors of CSA. This study provides evidence of the dynamics involved in the experiences of women survivors in relation to non-supportive significant adults.

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**"The non-supportive adult who failed to prevent, detect, support, or protect can be seen as a traitor of the child-victim."**

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## Experiences of Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

A growth mindset entails that any human has the understanding that abilities and intelligence can be developed (Mindset Works, n.d.). In support to the Optentia mission, which advocates for the development and organisation of knowledge for the optimal expression of individual, social and institutional potential, this article strives to motivate readers to take this 'growth mindset journey' with me in reviving and inspiring thoughts on how to reach your full potential. Take a deep breath and inhale the qualities essential for developing your BEST self! As Briggs (2015) enlightens, you have to view challenges as opportunities, cultivate a sense of purpose, as well as your grit (determination and perseverance), take ownership of your own attitude, celebrate your growth with others, and take pride in developing your own growth mindset. As an establishing researcher of the Optentia team, my gratitude is expressed



**"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest"**  
~ Benjamin Franklin ~

through the privilege in being part of such an amazing research focus area, contributing to the interdisciplinary flourishing of all humans. In reflecting back on 2019, what a tremendous year indeed as I celebrate my growth with you and taking pride in the development of my own growth mindset as facilitated by Optentia. May you all experience a blessed festive season filled with laughter, love, peace, a fruitful rest, and most importantly, a growth mindset.

Briggs, S. (2015). [25 Ways to develop a growth mindset](#). InformED. [The growth mindset](#). Mindset Works. Available from



Dr Mariette Fourie

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**"... this article strives to motivate readers to take this growth mindset journey..."**

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## The Neurological View on Positive Psychology *by* Dr Mariette Fourie

I believe that classrooms can be transformed into positive learning spaces by the applications of positive psychology. My research confirmed strong connections between fluctuations of emotional states and brain functions. Education is not a neutral phenomenon. It is an ideology conceived as a terrain on which people move, and acquire consciousness of their position. Because education is ideological and an important mechanism for shaping societal values, teachers should not be left out, but be at the front and centre of educational diffusion in schools as a vital part of teaching and learning. Positive psychology elucidates the study of cognitions, traits, and contexts of behaviour associated with optimal

life-span development. Interpreting this from an educational perspective, teachers need to improve the psychological wellbeing of learners if they are to create meaningful learning environments that cultivate increased learner performance. Teachers should include the principles of positive psychology in their teaching approaches in creating optimal learning environments. Psychology should expand its focus to improve child education by making greater use of intrinsic motivation, positive affect and creativity. Research on utilising positive psychological perspectives to endorse brain plasticity in a positive direction is increasingly encouraging and empowering. Research on neuroplastic-

city considers several ways in which positive psychologists can facilitate brain plasticity in a positive direction. Learners' emotional states affects their ability to learn optimally, through the application of hierarchical linear modelling. Teachers need to regard the influences of the application of positive psychology on neuroplasticity in their classroom practices. They should be aware that learners regard their past failures as significant indicators to be cognitively engaged in the learning process. Using a positive psychological approach in education serves to foster a sense of competence, confidence, and optimism, which generate a sense of control or agency, in the learners taught.

## Innovative Research Methodologies *by* Dr Mariette Fourie

During the South African Education Research Association (SAERA) 2019 conference hosted by DUT this year, the pre-conference workshops included a session on innovative research methodologies. As workshop presenters, De Lange and Moletsane explained how data collected and analysed from participatory visual methods may expound beyond ideological engagement where new conversations and changing perspectives are initiated that could influence policy debates and development. These participatory visual methods include, for example, photo-voice, participatory video, drawing/mapping, and digital storytelling. The workshop expanded on the photo-voice method, which is a qualitative visual research method that utilizes photographs taken by participants in the specific community to explore stories, experiences or ideas about a particular community concern through group dialogue. Participants also usually add short cap-

tions about their photographs taken and represent their perception about problems or issues that exist in their community that need to be addressed. The presenters allowed the participants of the workshop to create their own poster in communicating a unique message. Pictures were collated from old magazines and the whole group were engaged in a very creative manner.

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."



Mariette's Photovoice creation

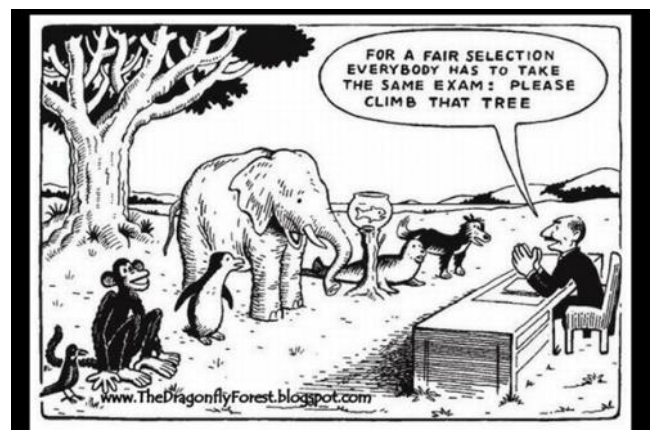
"... this article strives to motivate readers to take this growth mindset journey..."



Photovoice methodologies for social justice (Adopted from Kessi, Kaminer, Boonzaier & Learmonth, 2019)

## The Fish That Climbs a Tree *by* Dr Mariette Fourie

This article is extracted from a conference presentation at Rhodes University during November 2019. I had the privilege to co-present with two international colleagues at our annual Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of South Africa conference. What a wonderful opportunity to establish international collaboration and networking. The conference theme "Pedagogies in Context" welcomed all presenters to share alternative pedagogical approaches in addressing diversity.



## The Fish That Climbs a Tree by Dr Mariette Fourie

Pedagogies in Context Through the Art of Teaching and the Science of Learning

Global disruptive change elicits discourses in student access and success for the 21st century. The inevitability of change necessitates alternative pedagogical approaches in changed teaching and learning spaces. Pedagogy serves as a cornerstone in which effective teaching regards the diverse student population through creating responsive curricula to target knowledge and enable success. Do universities then 'adapt or die'? Re-conceptualising pedagogy through professional development is at the fore front to address these nuanced challenges. .

Pedagogical skills and approaches of university teachers have to regard the diverse educational needs of students. We propose a different pedagogical approach in delivering and assessing content. How does content then relate to pedagogy? Good for whom, and exactly whose interests are being served? 'Neuropedagogy is an interactive and transdisciplinary approach to art of teaching and science of learning that builds upon the learning sciences, Mind, Brain, and Education science, and the concepts of neuroplasticity and neurodiversity; targeting and facilitating educational and real-world experiences through responsive curricula, instructional practices and design, active learning, assessment, and feedback to support comprehension, application, and transfer of learning across educational modalities to meet the needs of all learners' (Betts & Fourie, 2019).

Teachers are perhaps not neuroscientists, but regarded as brain changers (Whitman & Kelleher, 2016), since they are in one of the few professions that are responsible for learning. Teachers are expected to create engaging learning experiences for students through the effective facilitation of the transfer of learning,

and should therefore perchance have a scientific understanding of how students learn. If not, optimal pedagogies that focus on active learning and the transfer of learning across real-world contexts could be absent. As Blakemore and Frith (2008:118) explain "We know a little of what goes on in the brain when we learn, but hardly anything about what goes on in the brain when we teach." Teachers' pedagogical approaches in early learning models have promoted the unconscious beliefs about intelligence and how the brain learns, which caused incorrect interactions with students that subsequently led to reduced student learning. Having an understanding of neuroscience would enable university teachers to evaluate misconceptions about the brain where advancements in technology have greatly promoted brain functioning in contradiction to early models promoting neuromyths.

To accommodate the diverse educational needs of students, we propose a neuropedagogical approach evident of differentiated instruction and Universal Design for learning (UDL) as an extension of the Learning Science. Differentiated instruction testifies of a pedagogical approach that allows for valuing and planning for diversity in heterogeneous settings, and that promotes a student-focused way of thinking about teaching and learning. The UDL framework is based on three different types of networks which include affective networks (the why of learning), recognition networks (the what of learning), and strategic networks (the how of learning). The purpose of UDL is to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all humans based on scientific insights into how humans learn (CAST). The UDL guidelines offer a set of concrete suggestions that teachers can apply to ensure that all the learners in their classroom can access and successfully participate in meaningful and challenging learning opportunities.



Dr Mariette Fourie and Dr Kristen Betts (Drexel University)

An analogy for bridging the gap between science and pedagogy through professional development, refers to the topic of this paper "The fish that climbs a tree", initially described in a quote associated with Albert Einstein. In this very interesting and confusing, yet simplistic phrase, we hope to have academic developers, practitioners, and researchers intrigued. Professional development has to consider the significance of plural of 'pedagogies' since it includes a variety of scientific approaches and principles which could best address and meet learning needs of all students across social, cultural and economic diversity. As it has been stated for this HELTASA 2019 conference, it is becoming more and more evident that varied structures of different knowledge exist, and subsequently meeting the learning needs of students in different social, cultural and economic conditions in all institutions, is clearly problematic.

Pedagogical skills of teachers should focus on active learning and the transfer of learning across real-world contexts. Effective learning design and assessment will not be at the fore front if teachers do not engage in evidence-based and research-informed pedagogical approaches best meeting the needs of students. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning.

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**"Teachers are perhaps not neuroscientists, but regarded as brain changers."**

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## The Learning Pit Analogy by Prof. Mary Grosser

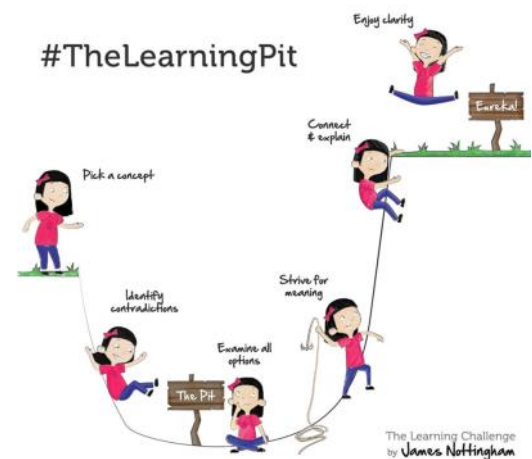
Preparing students for the 21st century involves the development of cognitive potential, which seems to remain a daunting task for teachers. Teachers have to develop competencies in relation to fundamental dispositions, communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creative thinking, citizenship, and information connectivity, which require the development of different types of minds, namely a disciplined mind, synthesising mind, creating mind, respectful mind, ethical mind and introspective mind.

From the perspective of the Learning Pit analogy (Nottingham, 2017) that foregrounds the importance of conceptual development during learning, and is built on the premise that learning should not be made easy, and include confusion, frustration, effort and challenge, some of the important 21st century competencies might be developed effectively during teaching. The Learning Pit analogy constructs learning around four principles, namely identifying a Concept that students have a basic understanding of, creating cognitive Conflict in

the minds of the students about the meaning of the concept, and giving students opportunity, and a reason to Construct meaning in relation to the identified concept. Finally, students are engaged in reflection to Consider how their thinking about the concept changed during the learning process. Additionally, employing the Learning Pit analogy gives teachers a chance to observe the quality of students' efforts to exit the Learning Pit, and room for praising student efforts that would lead to growth.

Pushing students into Learning Pits during teaching, and not allowing them to jump the pits, provide cognitive challenges to students that create opportunities to develop growth mind-sets, allow students to take control of their learning, advance collaboration and communication during learning, develop critical and creative thinking as fundamental thinking skills, as well as important dispositions such as resilience and perseverance.

For more information on the Learning Pit: Nottingham, J. (2017). *The Learning Challenge*. London: Corwin Press



**"The Learning Pit analogy constructs learning around four principles..."**

## Byron Bunt receives a PhD-degree

During the October 2019 graduation ceremony, Byron Bunt, a lecturer in the School of Commerce and Social Studies in Education at the Faculty of Education, received his PhD-degree. In his thesis *Potential benefits of a Puzzle Video Game - Cognitive Enrichment Programme for the development of critical thinking among first year BEd students* he explores the merits of a puzzle video game, Portal, for the development of critical thinking skills, dispositions and standards for reasoning among first year BEd students in a 13-week inter-

vention. The intervention possibly contributed to a slight improvement in relation to some of the critical thinking skills, and appears to be beneficial for the growth noted in relation to the dispositions and standards for reasoning, on which the study focused. The findings of the study extend the knowledge base in relation to critical thinking development by offering a novel integrated formal, informal, and non-formal learning approach for developing critical thinking. Prof. Mary Grosser was the promoter of the study.



**Dr Byron Bunt at the PhD graduation ceremony**

## News from AGenDA Programme *by* Prof. Jaco Hoffman

What an amazing year for the Ageing and Generational Dynamics in Africa (AGenDA) programme! The highlights were numerous with among others:

- Maryna Rankin and Estelle Louw who were awarded their Master's Degrees in Ageing Studies;
- two prestige lectures from Prof. Sinfree Makoni (Penn State, USA) and Prof. Anne Margriet Pot (Free University of Amsterdam) as Extraordinary Professors respectively;
- visits from Prof. Isabella Aboderin (APHRC, Kenya), Prof. Johnny Strydom (Consultant senior policy advisor, AU) and Prof. Kavita Sivaramakrishnan (Director: Socio-medical Sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, USA); and
- the degree Philosophiae Doctor Honoris Causa conferred by North-West University on Prof. Monica Ferreira as one of the founding scholars and most significant figures in the field of ageing in Africa.

Prof. Monica Ferreira was recognised for her attributes as:

- being a most prominent first-generation exponent of research and development of policy on ageing in Africa;
- a skilful negotiator and connector of local and global worlds, driving a recognition of African ageing issues on the international stage;
- not only pioneering scholarship on ageing in Africa, but also contributing internationally to the expansion of research on population ageing as one of the major challeng-

es that will face the globe in the 21st century.

- an activist for the everyday (often unrecognised) contributions made by millions of older persons for country, community and significant others;
- a nuanced translator of research into policy and practice;

above all, as a wise Nkuku (Setswana word for grandmother) and mentor to numerous second and third generation scholars of ageing research across the continent and the world.

Click [here](#) to watch an interview with Prof. Anne Margriet Pot.



Prof. Mirna Nel, Prof. Johnny Strydom, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Sinfree Makoni, Prof. Monica Ferreira, Prof. Jaco Hoffman, Prof. Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy and Prof. Pamela Maseko



Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Vera Roos, Prof. Anne Margriet Pot and Prof. Jaco Hoffman



Prof. Monica Ferreira

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**"Prof Ferreira is a wise 'Nkuku' and mentor to numerous second and third generation scholars of ageing research."**

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## News from AGenDA Programme by Prof. Jaco Hoffman

AGenDA had the unfailing support of all its extraordinary professors with Prof. Norah Keating notably pushing the capacity building aspects and agenda on the social aspects of ageing research internationally. A huge thanks to her for facilitated funding for a NWU student to attend a masterclass on Ageism during the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics European Region (IAGG-ER) Conference, 23-25 May. Norah also facilitated and funded a preplanning meeting for the development of a programme of research and policy engagement on Long Term Care in Sub-Saharan Africa in Liverpool during the British Society of Gerontology Conference (July 2019) with the planning workshop on Long Term Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: Experiences, Systems and Economies in Nairobi, Kenya in 18-19 September 2019. (see the photo attached of Prof. J. Phillips—DVC Stirling University and Prof J. Hoffman at a preplanning meeting in Liverpool; and of the planning group in Nairobi).

With Prof Isabella Aboderin, Jaco Hoffman joined an Africa Union Expert group to review and revise the 2002 AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (AUPFPAA) in Nairobi, Kenya (see photo). This work will continue through 2020 for approval by the AU in 2021. In the meantime Prof. Johnny Strydom continues his important policy work at the African Union with the AU Social Agenda 2063 approved by Ministers in Abijan as well as the approval of the AU Plan of Action Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2019-2023) this past June.

Two books that involved Prof Andries Baart draw attention, Beurskens, Elly; Marije van der Linde and Andries Baart (2019). *Praktijkboek Presentie*. Bussum: Uitgeverij Coutinho and the to be published Voman, F, Baart, A and Hoffman, J. (2020). *Care ethics: towards a recasting*. Peeters, Leuven.

**"AGenDA had the unfailing support of all its extraordinary professors ..."**



**Prof. J. Phillips (DVC Stirling University) and Prof. J. Hoffman**



**Prof. Isabella Aboderin, Prof. Jaco Hoffman and an African Union Expert group on Ageing**





## Culture, Safety and the Fourth Industrial Revolution *by* Fred Goede

Safety performance across the globe has improved markedly over the last decades, mainly based on compliance to management systems and legislation. But safety performance is starting to plateau and the goal of zero fatalities remains out of reach. With the largest environmental disaster ever at the Deep Water Horizon spill in the USA to the Boeing 737 Max 8 incidents, compliance does not seem like the final answer. A whopping 70% to 80% of all safety incidents are being ascribed to the "wrong culture". Elimination of the human element by automation, artificial intelligence and the fourth industrial revolution can further improve safety performance. Or is this a wrong assumption?

On 6 November 2019 the Centre for Applied Risk Management (UARM) hosted the third annual workshop on culture and safety with Prof Dr Ir Gert Jan Hofstede from Wageningen University and Research, extraordinary professor at Optentia, NWU. He has expertise in socio-technical systems, social simulation, complex adaptive systems, national culture and simulation gaming. His presentation was titled "Modelling for policy: sociality and culture" about policy, change and sociality, followed by demonstrations of Agent-Based Modelling. His PhD student Fred Goede presented the findings of his research on safety risk culture and management, illustrated with examples from decades of industrial work experience.

The interactive workshop and lively debate that followed, centred around South African safety challenges. For example, with very high road fatalities of 14 000



Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede (in the Mandela-shirt) with some of the participants at the workshop in Johannesburg in November 2019

per year, how do high-risk industries in South Africa ensure that employees entering these facilities, take safety seriously inside the workplace?

We should not only consider risk culture in safety systems today, but also how we design safety systems of tomorrow. These so-called complex sociotechnical systems beg several questions:

Do humans have a dwindling role in the 4IR era, or precisely not since we are the designers of these technologies?

What cultural risks should we consider in complex socio-technical systems to make our organisations more safe?

On request of the participants the

workshop will be presented again next year to present the latest models and case studies from the collaborative research.

Reference: Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations, Software of the mind, Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival. New York: McGraw Hill.

Fred Goede is senior lecturer at the Centre for Applied Risk Management in Optentia, North-West University and co-presenter of the M. Com in Applied Risk Management, hosted at IRMSA since 2015. His email address is: [fred.goede@nwu.ac.za](mailto:fred.goede@nwu.ac.za)

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**"We should not only consider risk culture in safety systems today, but also how we design safety systems of tomorrow ..."**

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Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede, Prof. Hermien Zaaime, Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Fred Goede



## Are We Prepared to Live Longer?

We grow older at an accelerating pace. It took 50 years in the western world to live on average ten years longer. It took 20 years in many African countries to live ten years longer. Dealing with a life span that during this century will reach on average 100 years is a challenge. We need to think about saving enough, creating a stable income at old age and about how we can work happily during older age. The world of retirement savings saw many different systems. There still is no "perfect solution", but we can learn a lot from the failures and successes and prepare for a better elderly future. Click [here](#) to watch an interview with Prof. Theo Kocken.

Theo Kocken (1964) is professor of Risk Management at VU University, Amsterdam, an extraordinary professor at the North-West University, founder of the Anglo-Dutch pension investment and risk management firm Cardano and chairman of the Cardano Development Foundation, London, Amsterdam) which focusses on risk-management solutions in frontier markets to improve local currency finance and improve financial inclusion. Before founding Cardano, he was Head of Market Risk at ING Bank and Rabobank between 1990 and 2000. He graduated in Business Administration (1990) en Econometrics (1993) and received his PhD at VU University Amsterdam (2006). Over the past 25 years, he has published many books and articles on risk management, pension fund design and financial markets. He also uses alternative media. Together with Monty Python's Terry Jones, Theo pro-



Prof. Herman van der Merwe and Prof. Theo Kocken



Fred Goede, Prof. Neels Erasmus, Prof. Hermien Zaaiman, Prof. Herman van der Merwe, Prof. Theo Kocken, Dr Sonja Gilliland and Emmanuel Mulambya

duced the documentary "Boom Bust Boom" on financial crises and how human behaviour is at the roots of economic phenomena. He is currently working on an

international documentary about the worldwide increase in longevity and how to cope with it.



"We need to think about saving enough, creating a stable income at old age and about how we can work happily during older age ..."

## Celebration: Prof. Rens van de Schoot *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Prof. Rens van de Schoot, an extraordinary professor in Optentia, will present his inaugural lecture as full professor at Utrecht University on 21 January 2020. In his lecture, Rens looks for the answer to the question whether scientists can be replaced by machines. According to Rens, computers are becoming faster, models becoming more complex and software is making more and more decisions.

Internationally, Prof. Rens van de Schoot is a highly respected scholar. He is one of the best friends of the NWU, Optentia. Over the years, he presented many workshops on statistics and Mplus in South Africa. He also created countless opportunities for researchers from our country to learn more about research and statistics.



Prof. Rens van de Schoot

Together with Prof. Todd Little and Prof. Ian Rothmann, he played a leading role in bringing the first Stats Camp to South Africa. He made a major financial contribution to the Stats Camp in South Africa in 2019. Optentia values his assistance to staff and students. But, what we value even more is the fact that he treats people with dignity.

Click [here](#) to read about the announcement of his inaugural lecture. Click [here](#) to read about his work. Click [here](#) to read about his project to automate systematic reviewing:

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**"Rens looks for the answer to the question whether scientists can be replaced by machines ..."**

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## Wishing the Malan Family Strength to Cope with Adversity

The year 2019 will be remembered as a difficult year for many people. For one family, the Malan family, it was an extremely challenging and taxing year. Mioné, the oldest daughter of Marinda and Phillip, was diagnosed with Acute Biphenotypic Leukemia, an uncommon type of leukaemia. It is estimated that around 5% of people with acute leukaemia have biphenotypic leukaemia. Chromosome rearrangements and other abnormalities. Mioné became ill in June 2019 and was hospitalised for many weeks in Pretoria. She is now in remission, but has to get two weeks of chemotherapy because doctors fear a relapse before a bone marrow transplant will take place in January 2020. Mioné will receive full body radiation from 7-9 January



The Malan Family: Jo-Anli (14), Marinda, Elrize (10), Phillip and Mioné (16)

2020 and conditioning chemotherapy from 10-13 January 2020. The transplant will take place on 15 January 2020. The bone marrow donor is from Germany - a country with 8.5 million registered donors. Regardless of

all the challenges the family faces, Marinda has been efficient as always with the management of finances in Optentia. Her NWU, Optentia family wishes Mioné and the family the best for the next months and the future!

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## Books

- Banerjee, A.V., & Duflo, E. (2019). Good economics for hard times: Better answers to our biggest problems. London: Penguin Books.
- Boyatzis, R., Smith, M., & Van Oosten, E. (2019). Helping people change. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Quinn, R.E., & Thakor, A.V. (2019). The economics of higher purpose: Eight counterintuitive steps for creating a purpose-driven organization. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Sisodia, R., & Gelb, M.J. (2019). The healing organization: Awakening the conscience of business to help save the world. New York: HarperCollins Leadership.

Thank you Lynn Booysen, Marinda Malan, Elizabeth Bothma, Anjonet Jordaan, Rachele Pave and Nadia Jordaan for your hard work and initiatives during 2019. We value your contributions!

## Upcoming Events (Click [here](#) to go to the Optentia Research Calendar)



- ◇ 15 January 2020 - Meeting: Optentia Scientific Committee
- ◇ 21 January 2020 - Inaugural lecture: Prof. Rens van de Schoot (Utrecht University)
- ◇ 27-31 January 2020 - Short learning programme in Research design
- ◇ 29 January 2020 - Workshop: Ethics application process
- ◇ 5 February 2020 - Meeting: Optentia Scientific Committee
- ◇ 6 February 2020 - Workshop: Mmogo method
- ◇ 7 February 2020 - Workshop: Pre-carity
- ◇ 13 February 2020 - Workshop: Capability approach
- ◇ 14 February 2020 - Positive psychology intervention design
- ◇ 19 February 2020 - Lecture: Ethics of care
- ◇ 4 March 2020 - Meeting: Optentia Scientific Committee
- ◇ 30 March - 3 April 2020 - Workshop: Visual elicitation methods
- ◇ 30 March - 3 April 2020 - Workshop: How to get your paper rejected
- ◇ 15 April 2020 - Meeting: Optentia Scientific Committee
- ◇ 27 April - 1 May 2020 - Stats Camp South Africa