

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

Positive psychology is a rapidly growing field of psychology. According to the International Positive Psychology Association, "positive psychology is the scientific study of what enables individuals and communities to thrive." It brings attention to the key role of individuals' resources and potentials, which have been largely neglected by previous research in psychology.

Positive psychology has a very short history, but a very long past dating back to William James and humanistic psychology. The idea to start a new approach to psychology was born during the unexpected holiday meeting between Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Martin Seligman in 1997. The beginning of positive psychology can be tracked back to 1998 when Seligman gave his Presidential Address to the American Psychological Association.

"It is wonderful to see what has happened in such a short period of time in this emerging field of Positive Psychology", says Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the first paper of this special issue. He reflects on the positive psychology – what has been accomplished and where should positive psychology go in the future.

In the past decade much has been accomplished in research and practical application of the positive psychology. The circumstances and processes that contribute to the optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions have been explored. As Seligman outlined in his paper in *American Psychologist* (2000), the field of positive psychology includes valued subjective experiences at the subjective level (well-being and satisfaction in the past; hope and optimism for the future; flow and happiness in the present), positive traits at the individual level (interpersonal skill, wisdom, courage, forgiveness, and originality, etc.), and civic virtues and institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship at the group level (responsibility, altruism, civility, etc.).

Although papers in this issue explore different topics, they cover all these levels – subjective, individual and group. Some of the contributions are based on papers presented at the *4th European Conference on Positive Psychology* held in Croatia in 2008. I had a pleasure to meet some of the leading authors in positive psychology in Opatija and hear about their research. Thanks to the authors and their willingness to contribute to this special issue, you can read about the work of some of the outstanding researchers in positive psychology. However, I made one exception when selecting authors: I included the paper which I co-authored with my colleagues from Croatia. My intention was to present the less known research from Eastern Europe, in the hope that in the near future positive psychology will also grow rapidly in Eastern European countries.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the authors for their contributions to this issue. I hope you will enjoy reading their papers as much as I enjoyed working with such a distinguished group of researchers.

*Ingrid Brdar*