

2021–2024

JYU.WELL IN ACTION





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JYU.WELL

Community for Wellbeing Research

JYU.Well, or School of Wellbeing, is a multidisciplinary community focused on well-being research. It supports the University of Jyväskylä's strategy of 'Wisdom and Wellbeing for People and Society.' It highlights well-being research and education conducted across all JYU faculties. JYU.Well provides a multidisciplinary environment and a meeting place for both researchers and educators in the field.

The goal is to enhance the profile of well-being research and education at the University of Jyväskylä, increase the impact of research, and boost the university's recognition, attractiveness, and competitiveness nationally and internationally. JYU.Well serves as a coordinating body for various disciplines of well-being research, collaborating with regional and national stakeholders, and offers research-based expertise for practical development and societal decision-making.



ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY

The planning of the Community of Wellbeing Research began at the University of Jyväskylä in March 2021. The initiative was driven by the need to strengthen the university's profile as a multidisciplinary expert in wellbeing, in alignment with the university's strategy "Wisdom and Wellbeing for People and Society".

In the 2020's, wellbeing emerged as an increasingly significant perspective in the Central Finland regional strategy, the Finnish well-being area reform, as well as internationally as a developing aspect of the well-being economy. In 2020, the University of Jyväskylä took on the responsibility of coordinating the Central Finland Health & Wellbeing Ecosystem (KEHO), bringing together key organizations in the region. To enhance the university's societal impact, JYU.Well was created in 2021 as a forum to consolidate and promote various disciplinary perspectives on well-being research.

The launch of the JYU.Well community aimed to achieve the following impacts:

- Increase the visibility, recognition, and impact of well-being research and education
- Strengthen research (postdocs, visiting researchers, industry professorships)
- Innovate education (continuous learning, flexible study paths, needs of the social and health care sector)
- Foster networking within JYU, regionally, nationally, and internationally
- Achieve success in nationally and internationally competitive research funding applications
- Enhance the university's competitiveness and attractiveness

JYU faculty abbreviations:

HumSoc: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

ITech: Faculty of Information Technology

EduPsy: Faculty of Education and Psychology

JSBE: School of Business and Economics

SportHealth: Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences

MathSci: Faculty of Mathematics and Science



The primary task during the preparation period was to plan the activities of JYU.Well, and to prepare a proposal for the rector regarding the funding for the community's coordination. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, led by Dean Professor Minna-Riitta Luukka, took responsibility for this phase, and Dr. Sari Kuuva was recruited as the coordinator for the preliminary phase. The key well-being stakeholders within the university were identified in discussions with all faculties and existing major networks. The website was designed in collaboration with JYU's communications team.

In June, an open discussion event was held to discuss the direction of the activities, and a survey was conducted among the entire university community to gather wishes regarding the new community. The name and abbreviation decided upon were the University of Jyväskylä Wellbeing Research Community, JYU.Well.

In August, a scientific steering group, consisting of representatives from all faculties was assembled to continue the planning. The scientific steering group met twice during the autumn of 2021.

SCIENTIFIC STEERING GROUP

MEMBERS

Marjo Kuronen, HumSoc
Esa Ala-Ruona, HumSoc
Lauri Frank, ITech
Monika von Bonsdorff, JSBE
Maarit Alasuutari, EduPsy
Saija Mauno, EduPsy
Katja Kokko, SportHealth
Tuulikki Sjögren, SportHealth
Janne Kotiaho, MathSci
Päivi Fadjukoff, KEHO

DEPUTY MEMBERS

Teppo Kröger/Sakari Taipale
HumSoc
Tarja Pääjoki, HumSoc
Tuomo Kujala/Sami Äyrämö, ITech
Elina Riivari, JSBE
Anna Rönkä, EduPsy
Eija Sevón, EduPsy
Taru Lintunen, SportHealth
Katja Waller, SportHealth
Lotta-Riina Sundberg, MathSci

ENHANCING THE COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES AND VISIBILITY

Organization

At the end of the successful planning phase, Rector Keijo Hämäläinen granted JYU.Well an annual funding of €280,000 for the three-year period from 2022 to 2024. The new Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Jari Ojala, took over the administration of the community's activities. Dr. Päivi Fadjukoff, Head of the Central Finland Health & Wellbeing Ecosystem (KEHO) and Senior Advisor, who had proposed the establishment of the community to the rector, joined him in advancing the activities within the university and integrating them with the broader KEHO collaboration.

The increasing activity and intensity required organization. To emphasize the multidisciplinary nature of the community, a chairperson triumvirate representing different scientific disciplines was selected from the scientific steering group. The chairpersons for 2022 were Professor Maarit Alasuutari (KPTK), Research Director Katja Kokko (GEREC, LTK), and Associate Professor Sakari Taipale (YFI, HYTK). A coordinator was recruited to take care of the practical operations. The position was initially held by Samu Paajanen, M.Soc.Sc., for four months, followed by Eeva Harjula, M.Soc.Sc., M.Ed.

JYU.Well launched an open call for recruiting postdoctoral researchers in well-being research across various disciplines. Additionally, small-scale financial support was offered to research groups for activities such as data collection and researcher visits.

JYU.Well as a profiling pillar of the University



Chairs of JYU.Well (2022-2023) Maarit Alasuutari on the left and Sakari Taipale on the right accompanied by JYU.Well post doc researcher Kaisa Koivunen in the middle.

The university leadership invited JYU.Well to be part of the university’s profiling efforts in its very first operational year. The diverse, interdisciplinary profiling was seen as supporting the development of the university as an attractive and credible entity both nationally and internationally. JYU.Well, JYU.Wisdom, and JYU.LearnDigi (later JYU.Edu) were highlighted as the three multidisciplinary pillars in the profiling application submitted to the Academy of Finland in April 2022.

The JYU.Well scientific steering group emphasized the positive maintenance of wellbeing within JYU.Well’s “Multifaceted Wellbeing” profiling area, rather than merely eliminating ill-being. They sought to promote interdisciplinary conceptual and methodological work to understand wellbeing and its impacts, as well as the societal significance, impact, and strong practical connection of wellbeing research. The goal was to consolidate wellbeing research from various fields into a more comprehensive and impactful whole, highlighting the merits of the university’s areas of expertise that had previously received profiling funding.





Structuring Internal Collaboration

The JYU.Well steering group clarified its role as a strategic visioning body, bringing broad expertise and faculty support to advance JYU.Well.

In 2022, the steering group met six times. Key themes included the profiling application and the co-development of JYU.Well's activities. The perspectives of different disciplines on well-being were clarified by examining the well-being course offerings of various subjects and considering the construction of a multidisciplinary well-being study module. Additionally, a mentoring program was prepared, particularly for young postdoctoral researchers. JYU.Well's activities and contact persons were introduced through numerous visits to faculty and unit staff and management meetings, while also gathering the university community's wishes for the development of activities.

The chairpersons triumvirate meets approximately every two weeks and forms the core of the steering group. The triumvirate prepares and advances matters agreed upon by the steering group and makes decisions on issues such as postdoctoral researcher recruitment, profiling projects, JYU.Well activities, funding opportunities for the community, and the promotion of events and stakeholder collaboration.

To strengthen faculty connections, the deans of all faculties formed an Administrative Steering Group which meets twice a year to discuss and align activities together with the JYU.Well chairpersons.

The Community and Its Visibility Grows

The courses related to human wellbeing from the curricula of all faculties was consolidated into a visible common course offering (www.jyuwellkoulutukset.fi). Additionally, the diversity of well-being research was highlighted by compiling university news related to well-being research, events, and dissertations on the JYU.Well website.

In September 2022, JYU.Well began to publish monthly newsletters for community members. These newsletters share information about the diverse well-being research conducted at our university as well as current events. They also introduce community members, present recent dissertations related to wellbeing and highlight external funding calls and collaboration opportunities related to wellbeing.

In addition to serving the research community, JYU.Well actively participated in events that gathered a broader audience, such as the Jyväskylä Summer Speech Program as one of the organizing bodies, and the Researchers' Night. Visibility was increased through the establishment of a Twitter account, roll-up posters, and a photo competition that received media attention.



Photographer: Kirsi Siukola



Photographer: Hannele Metsäranta

The “Wellbeing Actions in Central Finland” themed photo competition was held in the fall of 2022 in collaboration with KEHO, the Regional Council of Central Finland, and the regional media Keskisuomalainen and Yle Jyväskylä. The photo on the left, “Friends,” won the jury vote, while the photo on the right, “Generations Chain,” was the winner of the public vote.

INCREASING IMPACT AND COLLABORATION

The growth of the JYU.Well community continued, and its activities were actively presented in various university units and at numerous events. Around 200 new members joined the community in 2023. The steering group was also expanded to include representatives from independent institutes. Director and Research Professor Taina Saarinen from the Finnish Institute for Educational Research and Professor Aila-Leena Matthies from the Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius joined as members of the steering group.



The JYU.Well community received new opportunities for developing well-being research, collaboration, and impact through profiling funding from the Academy of Finland, with JYU.Well's share amounting to €1.3 million for 2023–2028. This enabled the recruitment of new postdoctoral researchers. University Lecturer Anne Soini (PhD) received a research period position to examine the concept of well-being in the teaching programs of the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences and the Faculty of Education and Psychology. JYU.Well also received strategic funding of €500,000 for its impact work, which enabled several new initiatives.

New forms for impactful collaboration



Roadmap for Wellbeing Services County Collaboration

Following the commencement of operations of the Central Finland Wellbeing Services County (HYVAKS) at the beginning of 2023, a roadmap for intensified university collaboration was created. As a new initiative, it was agreed to establish new joint professorships, expanding the collaboration from sports and health sciences to three other faculties. Additionally, we initiated the development of internship processes for students pursuing careers in the social and health sectors, along with the integration of teaching and practice.

HYVAKS also commissioned a study on the success of the establishment of the Wellbeing Area (€56,000 + VAT). It was carried out by a multidisciplinary student team, and the report was openly published



Impact projects

JYU.Well allocated over €200,000 of strategic funding to nine different impact projects in well-being research across various faculties. These projects enabled concrete work to increase the impact of research and create networks for collaboration in the field of well-being. The themes of the funded projects were:

- Integration of Finnish language training for immigrant workers in the health care system
- Virtual Skills Coaching in Adolescent Psychiatry
- Evaluation of caregiver and family support activities in child and family social work
- Science communication for families with babies
- Digital support for the elderly
- Model for Handling Sensitive Health Information
- Model for biobank recall studies
- Mental well-being and the environment of residential services
- Enhancing clinical collaboration in sports medicine





JYU.Well Summer Team

Multidisciplinary collaboration in practice was developed by assembling a summer team of student interns from various fields of study at the final stage of their programs to complete diverse expert tasks. This approach proved to be an excellent way to organize students' expertise into productive work, as well as an inspiring training method for well-being experts. Multidisciplinary collaboration yielded fruitful working methods, with each team member contributing their expertise constructively.

In the summer of 2023, the eight-member JYU.Well team surveyed the Central Finland Wellbeing Services County to provide up-to-date, researched information on its activities. The team jointly planned and carried out the project's data collection, analysis, and reporting. Their work was published in a report:

- [“Siirtymävaiheesta kohti toimivampia käytäntöjä: Kokemuksia Keski-Suomen hyvinvointialueen käynnistymisestä”](#)

Additionally, a student project report titled [“Yliopistokoulutuksen työelämäyhteistyö uudistuvassa sote-kentässä”](#), was published to map the current situation and development opportunities for psychology and social work education, internships and employment.



Peer Mentoring for Early-Career Researchers

During the academic year 2023–2024, a peer mentoring program was implemented to support early-career researchers on their academic paths. Multidisciplinary small group work strengthened researcher networking, promoted interdisciplinary understanding, and researcher identity.

The year-long program included 14 volunteer mentors and 35 postdoctoral researchers from all university faculties. Five out of the seven groups operated in English, bringing together domestic and international researchers. This also supported the integration of international researchers into the university community. Discussion topics were decided by considering the views of all group members.



Concept Workshops

Concept workshops are multidisciplinary discussion forums where concepts related to wellbeing are considered from different scientific perspectives, often discussing the various translations of English concepts into Finnish. The discussed concepts, with reference literature, are collected in a multi-disciplinary concept bank that is open to everyone on the JYU.Well website. In 2023, the following themes were discussed in concept workshops:

- Resilienssi [resilience]
- Osallisuus [sense of belonging, participation, social inclusion, engagement or (patient) advocacy]
- Yksinäisyys [loneliness]
- Vaikuttavuus [impact]
- Yhdenvertaisuus [equality, equity]



Community and Collaboration

As a new communal activity, JYU.Well organized joint workdays in the JYU.Meet spaces at Agora as well as online exercise breaks in collaboration with the “Active University project”.

JYU.Well actively collaborated with other profiling areas, various communities, and projects, and coordinated the writing of several statements requested by the university.

Through collaboration with high schools, participation in the Jyväskylän Kesä -festival's Summer Speech Program with the theme "Hope," involvement in the Researchers' Night and the University's multidisciplinary business day, and numerous other events, JYU.Well's core messages and activities were extended beyond the university community.

JYU.Well supported the publication of a peer-reviewed book titled “Hyvinvointi koettuna, kuvattuna ja tulkittuna” [Wellbeing Experienced, Depicted, and Interpreted] by researchers within the Wellbeing and Health Research Network (HYTTI). This work highlights multidisciplinary perspectives on well-being research from various human sciences.

BRINGING UNIVERSITY EXPERTISE TO SOCIETY

The importance of multidisciplinary collaboration and its significant results were celebrated with two introductory events for the Professors of Practice and other joint key persons of the University of Jyväskylä and the Central Finland Wellbeing Services County. Additionally, an open, free online course was launched, introducing themes of multidisciplinary well-being.

The chairing triumvirate was partly renewed, with Professor Anna Rönkä (KPTK) and Professor Aila-Leena Matthies (CHY) joining the continuing chairperson Katja Kokko.



Massive Open Online Course for Everyone

HYMY0001 Hyvinvoinnin monet muodot [Multifaceted Wellbeing] (1 credit)

Created by experts within the JYU.Well community, the “Multifaceted Wellbeing” course provides a comprehensive understanding of wellbeing as a multifaceted and multilayered concept. It covers perspectives on the welfare state, economic, physical, and mental wellbeing at different life stages, and their interconnections. It emphasizes the importance of wellbeing as a resource for individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

This flexible, multidisciplinary course is suitable for developing expertise in various fields. Over 200 people, including young people, students, retirees, social and healthcare professionals, and those outside the workforce, completed the course in the first six months. Their feedback has been excellent.

“Varied materials! Podcasts, videos, and interactive images alongside readable text provided stimulation and variety.”

“The reflection tasks were nice, as they allowed me to articulate my thoughts and learn a bit more deeply about the topic.”

“The topics were easily approachable and applicable to my own life.”

Signing of the strategic partnership agreement between the University of Jyväskylä and the Central Finland Wellbeing Services County.

The agreement promotes and deepens cooperation and multidisciplinary expertise in the areas of research, education, development, and innovation activities, and enhances the profile of Central Finland as a platform for education and development of social and healthcare professionals. Key themes of collaboration include challenges related to aging, lifestyle factors related to physical activity and nutrition, ICT solutions in social and healthcare services, and impact research in the field of social and healthcare services.

The social work education and research at the Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius signed a similar cooperation agreement with the wellbeing services counties of Central Ostrobothnia, Ostrobothnia, and Northern Ostrobothnia.

Shared Key Experts

To deepen and expand collaboration, new joint tasks were established in addition to the already existing joint professorships in the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences.



Riku Nikander

Clinical physiotherapy
Associate Professor,
SportHealth



Merja Rantakokko

Gerontological
rehabilitation,
Associate Professor,
SportHealth



Elina Sillanpää

Health care science,
Associate Professor,
SportHealth



Salla Toppinen-Tanner

Work Ability Promotion
Professor of Practice,
EduPsy. Position is shared
with the Finnish Institute
of Occupational Health



Minna Kivipelto

Social work Professor
of Practice, HumSoc.
Position is shared with
Finnish Institute for
Health and Welfare



Sami Äyrämö

AI in wellbeing and health
research, Associate
Professor, ITech



Tiina Jokela

Director of Central
Finland Biobank
MathSci



Diverse activities promoting interdisciplinary encounters

JYU.Well workdays, wellness breaks, and other events related to the university's wellbeing research are examples of continued community activities that emphasize interdisciplinarity. Topics covered in the 2024 concept workshops included nature wellbeing, addiction/dependence, empathy, interaction, cultural wellbeing, and emotions.

Workshops open to the entire university community addressed key themes raised through the mentoring program. Topics covered included:

- Planning and prerequisites for future career paths
- Internationalization and integration into the university community
- Balancing work and other aspects of life
- Handling disappointments and criticism as part of research work
- Learning from diversity

The JYU.Well newsletter continues to be published monthly for community members. Social media visibility expanded to LinkedIn and Instagram, which replaced X in the summer of 2024. Communication was complemented by a new wellbeing-themed podcast, "Hyvinvoinnin välittäjät" [Wellbeing Mediators].

- As part of the EduFutura collaboration between educational institutions and the Wellbeing County, we worked to develop a working life service model and to establish a teaching and research center dedicated to improving the good everyday life of the elderly and disabled citizens.
- JYU.Well supported the investigation commissioned by the university board to develop JYU's profile and impact related to wellbeing and social and health sectors, and to define long-term goals.
- JYU Well started the recruitment process for a permanent university researcher position in the field of research methods to strengthen wellbeing research.



In August 2024, JYU.Speak, a research-based VR application, was launched to help students and staff manage their performance anxiety and public speaking. The service operates as a free-of-charge self-service at the university library Lähde.

JYU.Well Summer Team 2024



JYU.Well again assembled a summer team composed of students from various disciplines through an open call, now with a focus on communication and impact in wellbeing research. Out of approximately 90 applicants, a ten-member summer team was selected to carry out a variety of tasks requested by researchers.

JYU.Well research groups received assistance with tasks such as producing websites and presentation materials, photography and videography, planning social media posts, and writing and translating various texts. Finally, the team produced a report for the wellbeing research community titled "JYU.Well as a Developer of Communication and Impact in Wellbeing Research," which includes tips to support science communication and research impact.

Chair Triumvirate



2022–2024
Katja Kokko
Research Director
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2024
Anna Rönkä
Professor
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2024
Aila-Leena Matthies
Professor
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Contact Persons



2021–
Päivi Fadjukoff
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2022–
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Postdoctoral Researchers



2022–2024
Kaisa Koivunen
Gerontology and public
health, SportHealth



2022–2024
Anu Sirola
Social sciences, social
psychology, HumSoc



2023–2024
Ana Belén Gallego Alonso
Psychology, EduPsy



2024–2028
Kirsi Keskinen
Gerontology, SportHealth



2024–2028
Eija Salonen
Early childhood
education, EduPsy



2024–2028
Soumen Atta
Multi-objective
optimization, ITech

JYU.Well Scientific Steering Group

MEMBERS

Teppo Kröger, HumSoc
Esa Ala-Ruona, HumSoc
Sami Äyrämö, ITech
Jutta Viinikainen, JSBE
Anna Rönkä, EduPsy
Saija Mauno, EduPsy
Katja Kokko, SportHealth
Merja Rantakokko, SportHealth
Tiina Jokela, MathSci
Taina Saarinen, KTL
Aila-Leena Matthies, CHY
Päivi Fadjukoff, KEHO

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Salla Toppinen-Tanner, EduPsy
Sami Kokko, SportHealth
Tuulikki Sjögren, SportHealth
Lotta-Riina Sundberg, MathSci

JYU.Well Administrative Steering Group (JYU Deans)

Mika Lähteenmäki, HumSoc
JYU.Well administrative leader
Anna-Maija Poikkeus, EduPsy
Sarianna Sipilä, SportHealth

Pasi Tyrväinen, ITech
Hanna-Leena Pesonen, JSBE
Mikko Mönkkönen, MathSci





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