

## Stay informed

### OUR LATEST OUTPUTS (selection)

Mpango et al. (2020). Challenges to peer support in low- and middle-income countries during COVID-19. *Globalization and Health*, 16(1):90. → <https://t1p.de/pqs1>

Nixdorf et al. (2020). Development of a global mental health peer support worker training program. Poster, GACD Annual Scientific Meeting, 10-13/11/2020  
→ <https://t1p.de/7de4>

Kohlmann, B. (2020): My life in Corona times: Germany, May 20. In: *Life during the Corona virus: view from the ground Vol. 3; Newsletter of the World Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation (WAPR)*  
→ <https://t1p.de/kbmi>

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### NEXT NEWSLETTER: #07

- Completion of participant recruitment for the UPSIDES main study
- Interview with Prof. Galia Moran about the UPSIDES evaluation approach (Ben Gurion University, Israel)

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# UPSIDES

## Newsletter

#06  
December  
2020



## #06-TOPICS

UPDATE ON THE COVID-19 SITUATION AT THE UPSIDES STUDY SITES

EXPECTATIONS FOR UPSIDES PEER SUPPORT (INTERVIEW WITH MARIA HAUN AND PD DR. SILVIA KRUMM, ULM)



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## Update on the Covid-19 situation at UPSIDES sites

As described in our previous newsletter, the UPSIDES study was facing serious interruptions due to the Corona pandemic earlier this year. Throughout this stressful and overall unusual year 2020, we managed to keep up the good spirits and stand together as a consortium - and we even participated, for the first time, in this year's Global Peer Support Celebration Day across all study sites.

This was only possible through the continuous support and guidance we have received by our international and local advisory board members, stakeholders and administration; and through the tremendous commitment and ingenuity of the very heart of your project: the UPSIDES peer support workers.

After all, we are happy to report that the majority of our study activities have successfully restarted at our study sites across the globe. Of course, with some adjustments to ensure the safety of everyone involved. This includes more flexibility in data assessment and peer support to reduce the risk of infection by alternating contacts by telephone and in person or by conducting meetings outdoors.



Painting by Barbara Kohlmann,  
UPSIDES Peer Support Worker, Ulm.

## Interview with Dr. Silvia Krumm and Maria Haun (Qualitative studies - UUIm)

*Q: What are you currently working on?*

**SK:** We are in the midst of the data analysis of the focus group discussions with mental health professionals that were conducted at each site. In these groups, participants talked about their views and expectations regarding the UPSIDES intervention. Specifically, we want to get an idea about how the mental health professionals' perspectives on peer support vary across the study sites.

*Q: We are very keen to hear the first results of these focus group discussions. Can you give us a sneak preview?*

**SK:** Participants expressed a great variety of different positive and challenging expectations. We can see that peer support serves different functions depending on the specific structure and needs of the local mental health services. However, despite these differences, focus participants share positive expectations towards the concept of peer support.

*Q: What were the biggest challenges when doing these focus group discussions?*

**MH:** For me, the biggest challenge was not so much preparing and holding these groups, but rather the data analysis. There were also some sentences in the transcripts I couldn't fully understand, because as a research worker in Germany I have only little knowledge about other study sites and the context of peer support work. Therefore, I am happy to work closely together with our colleagues in Israel, Tanzania, Uganda, India and the United Kingdom who helped so much in understanding the meaning of the data.

*Q: What are the consequences of the results for the further course of the project?*

**MH:** I think our results provide insights into what is needed for the long-term implementation of peer support, with a special focus on the cooperation of UPSIDES peer support workers with other mental health professionals. What does it take for UPSIDES to be accepted and supported by MHPs? For long-term successful implementation, it is essential to learn more about the worries and needs of mental health staff in order to respond to them adequately.

*Q: What are you looking forward to in UPSIDES in 2021?*

**MH:** I'm really very excited about more qualitative research to come in UPSIDES, e.g. and the interviews with the peer support workers and service users, led by my Israeli colleagues.

**SK:** I'm looking forward to discuss our results with the UPSIDES colleagues from other sites. Most of all, I hope that the pandemic is under control and to be able to meet our partners in the "real" world.