

Editorial introduction 2014 Newsletter

Ruthi Senesh, Nevat PhD

We are happy to share the highlights of NEVET's activities as a multi-generational, multi-disciplinary, and multi-cultural research community. This year the NEVET community has grown thanks to the addition of new researchers including graduate students, doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, mentors, and members of the advisory committee. We expanded the spectrum of research disciplines and diverse populations. We developed new partnerships with local and international researchers. This newsletter aims to share the personal experiences of students, scholars, and visitors at NEVET along with the fruitful process of learning in the field of children at risk in cross-cultural and context-informed perspectives.

Nevat Seminar



Prof. Andrea Chambon's lecture at NEVET seminar

By Rivki Keesing, a graduate student in Social Work school at the Hebrew University conducting research supervised by Dr. Esther Bamberger on "risk perceptions among mothers of children in the orthodox society":

"I joined the master students' seminar as a young researcher in the first semester of 2013-14. At the very beginning I discovered a diverse group of students from different national and international universities as well as from different communities. At NEVET we met together with PhD students, senior professors, and masters students, and it turned out to be a professional sharing and learning group. In every encounter, discussions highlighted another aspect in our important role as researchers focusing on multi-disciplinary and context informed perspectives. The group's impressive growth was also reflected in the number of new members joining during the year, such as the group of 12 masters students who joined the NEVET community in the second semester. While meeting throughout the year we were exposed to various areas of knowledge in the area of child development, risks for children, and different research methods: As part of NEVET Seminar we met every two weeks throughout the year - **Dr. Hiltrud Otto** presented her research from Cameroon on attachment study with young children in a cultural context . We heard from **Prof. Dorit Roer-Strier** about the challenging process that occurs when researchers and respondents come from groups that are in political or ideological conflict. **Dr. Yael**



Discourse Analysis workshop delivered by Dr. Carolin Demuth

Dayan shared her experience researching with young children and **Prof. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian** presented her article on the subject of arrest of Palestinian children. We also had the opportunity to hear fascinating lectures from International professors hosted at NEVET such as: NEVET's co-director **Prof. Heidi Keller** from Germany, **Prof. Andrea Chambon** from Canada, **Prof. Tiia Tulviste** from Estonia, and **Prof. Vije Franchi** from South Africa. In addition to these fascinating meetings we found time to catch up and share developments in our own research projects and discuss challenges. We further deepened our knowledge on research methods during the year. **Yael Ponizovsky** taught us about mix methods research, **Dr. Orya Tishby** discussed challenges in conducting interviews, and we participated in a three days comprehensive workshop on Discourse Analysis by **Dr. Carolin Demuth** from Denmark. We also learned from **Dr. Nira Wahle** on studies using the Photo Voice technique. All these experiences promoted my creativity as a young researcher and gave me tools and knowledge far beyond the specific area that I study. These experiences have led my colleagues and I towards fascinating, comprehensive, and professional research”.

Thesis Seminar and the mentoring program for graduate students

Boaz Cohen, a graduate student in social work, is writing his thesis on the perceptions of medical staff in the neonatal unit at Soroka hospital, which works with Bedouin parents. Boaz sums up his impressions of the NEVET thesis seminar.

“The NEVET thesis seminar began this year in February. When we started the second semester, we were told that we were going to take part in an innovative experiment. We discovered that NEVET researchers prepared a special meeting and offered us inclusion in their research projects. In addition, as part of the orientation and the transition to the different academic reality in NEVET greenhouse, we began the process of finding the area of research of our choice and also received explanations about the mentoring program: This program actually takes into account the difficulties of the entrance to the research world and enables young researchers to grow under the umbrella of NEVET greenhouse. As beginning researchers we get a rare opportunity to experience the research while receiving close guidance from a senior researcher in the greenhouse. Yan Serdtse, who initiated the program, is responsible for follow up and monitoring.

During the workshop we learned about the research proposal structure and made preliminary investigations (Pilot), which clarified the study's focus. In the next stage, we formulated research questions and started writing the literature review, research method, and ethical issues. Next, we delved into our field of research and gained exposure to a new and intriguing world. Towards the middle of the semester the work became hard! We submitted and revised research proposals. Despite great pressure and the masters students' lack of experience, NEVET's mentoring system created a safe environment. The mentoring plan included long hours of consultations and back and forth correspondence into the night until the goals were reached. Throughout this intense period and in the midst of submissions, a war started. The situation in the country became explosive and all of us, graduate students and senior researchers from Palestinian, Jewish, Orthodox, and German communities, were exposed to the threatening reality. All of us felt challenged by endless bad news and struggles with personal views experiences and losses. Despite the difficult time, the group continued to meet regularly all summer, maintained open communication, and developed a unique dialogue between the near and the far, the similar and the different. This open discussion set the stage to a heartwarming process. We felt empowered in our attempt to cross barriers and extend our empathy".



NEVET members' conference participation and travel



IACCP Conference, Reims, France, July 2014

In July 2014 the NEVET delegation



NEVET in Russia: October, 2014

NEVET PhD students (Natalie Ulitza, Ruthi Senesh, Yan Serdtse, and Yael Ponizovsky),

participated in the 22nd international conference organized by International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP), which took place in Reims, France. The group was honored to be included as an "invited symposium" on the topic: "Child development and culture: A cultural milestone-the critical age of 3 months". Dr. Hiltrud Otto, a post-doctoral fellow and one of NEVET co-directors, led the session. This symposium presented empirical research related to one of the most important human developmental milestones: the first formation of a social matrix.

Saija Kuittinen (PhD student), presented data from a cultural context that poses extreme challenges for caretakers, the war-ridden Gaza strip in Palestine. Niklas Dworazik (PhD student, Osnbruck University, Germany) presented the use of a modified spot observation technique to highlight cultural differences in daily interactions between caretakers and three-month old infants in three cultural communities: Middle class families from Germany and Israel as well as Russian Jewish migrant families in Israel. The third presentation, prepared by Ruthi Senesh and Yan Serdtse (PhD candidates, Hebrew University of Jerusalem), discussed the underlying parental ethno-theories of the Israeli, German, and Russian migrant caretakers; it illustrated that conceptions of good parenting and conceptions of social relationships vary across cultures. Natalie Ulitsa (PhD student, Hebrew University of Jerusalem) presented a discourse analysis approach to studying mother-infant dialogues in an everyday play situation among Russian migrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel.

The audience filled the lecture hall and showed interest in the presented topics throughout the successful symposium. In addition, the delegation attended lectures and other scholars' presentations, learned about new studies in the field, and made new research contacts for future collaboration.

"If someone had told me a year ago that in the summer of 2014 I will present at an international conference in English - I would

Prof. Dorit Roer-Strier and Prof. Tiia Tulviste, a member of NEVET's international advisory board, participated in an exchange program with Moscow Governmental Regional University (MGOU). This exchange was supported by the TACHY WE project- a transnational academic careers in child and youth welfare, a project of TEMPUS European Commission. The delegation presented NEVET research projects at the Pedagogic Social Work faculty, MGOU, and visited various child welfare settings in Moscow. Moreover, the NEVET team utilized the unique opportunity provided by TEMPUS to establish additional research collaborations in Russia. Among others, seminars were held at the Psychology Institute - Russian Academy of Sciences (RAN), The Cross-Cultural Research Lab at Higher School of Economics, and Saint Petersburg State University. Researchers presented various topics including: (1) Risk and protection perceptions of very young children (Yael Ponizovsky); (2) the subjective experience of motherhood (Ruthie Senesh); (3) The perception of fatherhood among native Israelis and immigrants from the former USSR (Yan Serdtse); (4) Attachment experiences and parental perceptions of risk among immigrant families from the former USSR (Natalie Ulitsa). As part of their personal journey, the delegation visited the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow.

Ruthi Senesh writes about her personal experience during her journey to Russia as part of the NEVET delegation: "Our trip to Russia had dual meaning for me. While investigating the subjective experience of early motherhood among immigrants from the former USSR, I found it very important to experience the contemporary Russian culture alongside its historical roots firsthand. My exposure to the cultural context in each meeting in the various educational frameworks, deepened my understanding of Russian culture and values. This experience clarifies the challenges Russians immigrants experience when migrating to a country like Israel. Our trip allowed the research team to initiate future collaborations with leading academic institutions. We presented our research in

not believe it. Today, after the fact, I am grateful for the support and guidance I was given in the NEVET greenhouse. I found the courage to manage hours of rehearsals and preparation. At the end, I presented my emerging work and received significant feedback from the audience members. I can summarize by saying that traveling to France and participating in an international conference is a constitutive milestone in my development as a researcher. Thanks to this experience, I now will definitely apply to international conferences in the near future".

Mr. Yan Serdse. Ph.D Candidate in NEVET Greenhouse.

various universities and languages, adapting to the different contexts while learning from previous encounters. On a more personal note, that was the first time for me, as well as for the other members of the delegation, to return to Russia after migrating to Israel as children, many years ago. We had the opportunity to process the immigration experience on a deeper and different level. We shared our memories from our childhood in Russia and become more familiar with each other".



Ongoing research activities and collaborations

A. The Joint Lower Saxony – Israeli Research Project: Development of relationships during infancy: Risk and protective factors in minority and majority families in Germany and Israel
(Funded by the State of Lower-Saxony, Hannover, Germany)

Under the joint supervision of Prof. Keller, Prof. Roer-Strier, Dr. Tishby, and Dr. Otto,

NEVET's flagship project is advancing in its second year. The doctoral students in Israel (Ruthi Senesh, Yan Serdtse, Hannah Bartl, and Natalie Ulitsa) and in Germany (Niklas Dworazik) are collecting and analyzing data. The assessments started when babies were 10 weeks old and included phone spot observations as well as home visits with interviews and videotaping. We successfully presented our preliminary results at the IACCP conference in France. The project got a big push this summer when Prof. Heidi Keller, NEVET's co-director, came to Israel on a Lady Davis Fellowship and stayed with NEVET for three months. The group traveled to Germany in October, spent time in Berlin in order to promote the data collection within the local Jewish Russian community, and participated in a seminar on the project at the University of Osnabruck.

B. Designing Context-Informed Interventions: The Case of Arab Bedouin Children at Risk

(Funded by the Greenway Foundation for Research of Mental Health in Children and Adolescents, Israel)

This project, which combines basic and applied research, is run by Dr. Bamberger and Dr. Otto and supported by project coordinator Ibtisam Marey. In order to identify risk factors for child development from within the Bedouin community in the Negev, focus group discussions and individual interviews have been carried out with practitioners working in the Bedouin community (e.g. social workers, teachers), and Bedouin mothers. With the help of two very engaged MA students, Malak Garrah, who is fluent in Arabic, and Galit Itzik from the Paul Bearwald School of Social Work, data collection is progressing. Next, the project will involve Bedouin fathers, who are not only the family heads, but also important decision makers in this community.

C. ISF Grant: Young Children's Perspectives of Risk and Protection: A Context Informed Study

(Funded by the Israeli Science Foundation)

This project aims to capture the perspectives of 450 young children (ages 3-6) from diverse communities on risk and protection. The methodology includes children's photographs, drawings, and verbal explanations. Prof. Roer-Strier together with Dr. Wahle, Yael Ponizovsky, and Dr. Otto lead this project with the guidance of Dr. Yael Dayan. A group of NEVET masters students are also involved with this project. (Yaara Shilo, Nomie Benchimol, Yael Lanzkron-Rubinstein, Elichen Amitay, Orly Erlichman). We hope to inform both parents and professionals working with young children on the children perspectives, which should be taken into account in planning and providing interventions, services and policies.

D. Seed Money to promote cooperation between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel and the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

(Funded by the Joint Seed Money Funding Scheme, FU Berlin and HU Jerusalem)

Researchers from the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the Department of Education and Psychology at FU, Berlin (Prof. Röttger – Rössler, Prof. Liebal, Prof. Scheithauer, and Gabriel Scheidecker) and researchers from the HUJI school of Social Work and Social Welfare, (Prof. Ajzenstadt, Prof. Roer-Strier, Prof. Keller, Dr. Otto, Yael Ponizovsky, and Hannah Bartl) participate in this venture. We received the grant to carry out joint workshops in 2014 and 2015 and plan joint research projects. The workshops aim to create paths conceptualizing human development as based in social and ecological conditions by bringing together senior and junior researchers from the fields of psychology,

cultural, and social sciences. The first workshop, which was held in October 21st, 2014 in Berlin, focused on the development of early social relationships from a cultural perspective; the second workshop will be held in April, 2015 in Jerusalem and will discuss methodical challenges in cross-cultural research.

E. Future collaboration with the Hunter College, New York, USA

Dr. Otto, who is a Fellow with the Martin Buber Society and one of NEVET's co-directors, has the opportunity to spend several months in 2015 in the USA, working with Prof. Tricia Striano from Hunter College, New York. Dr. Otto will guide two masters' students in collaborating with NEVET's researchers.

F. Parents and professionals' perceptions of child risk and safety within a multicultural context

Dr. Yochay Nadan joined the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the NEVET greenhouse in 2014. Dr. Nadan completed his Ph.D at the School of Social Work, University of Haifa, followed by a Haruv post-doctoral fellowship at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Nadan focuses on cultural and cross-cultural aspects of research, direct practice and training in social work, cultural aspects of children in at-risk situations, including abuse and neglect, and clinical social work. At NEVET, Dr. Nadan leads the research group addressing the perceptions of child risk and safety by parents and professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The research is based on an ecological perspective, which suggests that child risk and safety cannot be properly assessed and managed without understanding the central role of culture and the socio-political-economic contexts. The group studies parents and professionals' perceptions of the concepts of "risk", "abuse" and "neglect," as well as the ways in which they respond to these situations. Currently, we are interviewing parents from Ethiopian and Russian communities in Israel, as well as ultra-Orthodox parents in Israel and in the US. In the future, we aim to expand the study to other groups in Israel and abroad. The research group members are: Dr. Esther Bamberger, Netanel Gemara, Bat-Chen Karni, Rivki Keesing, Prof. Jill Korbin, Dr. Yochay Nadan, Prof. Dorit Roer-Strier, and Lital Yona.

G. Context aware service for the Bedouin parents in the the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in Soroka Hospital, Israel

The majority of mothers who give birth in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in Soroka hospital are Bedouins. The research thus targets the encounter between the Bedouin parents and the mostly Jewish medical team with the goal of designing a context – informed work model. This model will account for the environmental, political, and contextual challenges and the experiences of Bedouin parents as well as their norms and beliefs. It will also consider the views, goals, and practices of the NICU staff who want to provide the best treatment possible for the premature babies and mothers in their care. This project was initiated by the head doctor in the NICU and is carried out by Dr. Nira Whale and Boaz Cohen.

H. Children's arrest and accessibility to Justice in East Jerusalem

Increasing arrests and detention of local children, ranging from traumatizing events such as night raids and reported abuse of arrested children, augmented the dire situation of children in East Jerusalem. Due to the alarming increase in incidences of child arrest in East Jerusalem, the researchers, in partnership with the Terre des Hommes foundation and

Academy-Community Partnership from the Hebrew University lead by Prof. Daphna Golan from the Faculty of Law, have organized and facilitated two expert round table and discussions on the topic. Representatives from the Hebrew University, Ben- Gurion University, and NGOs operating in East Jerusalem participated. The findings and recommendations from these round tables will be utilized to advance the research and its potential impact to inform policy and improve current practices.

Carmen Münz, a psychologist from Germany who visited NEVET, shares her impressions

“I heard of the NEVET Greenhouse in Jerusalem through Prof. Heidi Keller. She told me that it is quite a young institution, very interesting... and that I should come and see for myself. And so I did. It was a great experience. It felt as if all the scientists who are working here belong to a big family, the NEVET-family. Although they come from different disciplines, they have the same spirit. My impression was that all of them must have wide knowledge, respect, and sensitivity towards their study subjects. They have an enormous intuition for all different kind of people and social situations. Most impressively, they do so without any judgment! They do not accept scientists who only want to study the surface of the matter/problem. Here you find the opposite: they almost go to live with their subjects - they try to identify with the people they want to learn about and thus can create a comfortable atmosphere and really go into the matter. They all have the same goal: In order to understand the highly complex society, the scientists fulfill an illuminative change of perspectives. There is a strong will to really expand the understanding of diversity, to be open to it... Sincere thanks to all the people who have dedicated their free time to me in order to answer all my questions. I hope there will be a chance to meet again soon”.

Carmen Münz



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