

Marshall Weinberg Fund for Professional Collaboration and Development September 2016

The Marshall Weinberg Fund for Professional Collaboration and Development was established at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute in 2001, according to the following goals:

- ◆ Enhancing efforts on behalf of the disadvantaged, whose social, health, educational, and economic needs are not being met. This includes the poor, the disabled, frail elderly, children and youth at risk, disadvantaged immigrants, and abused and marginalized women.
- ◆ Promoting programs with a focus on Israel's Arab population and on Middle East cooperation.
- ◆ Promoting synergy among the public, voluntary, and private sectors by bringing together policymakers, political figures, professionals, academics, and leaders of international organizations.
- ◆ Supporting international collaborative efforts and exchange to develop new applied knowledge for the benefit of the people of Israel and the international community.
- ◆ Promoting ongoing staff and organizational development at MJB, to assure our position as Israel's leading applied social policy research institute, by updating and expanding the staff's professional knowledge and skills.

International Professional Collaboration

- ◆ **International Collaboration on Arab Higher Education.** Arabs in Israel often face difficulty in accessing and completing higher education. To address this challenge, the Council for Higher Education has introduced a comprehensive, multi-year initiative to increase their access to higher education and rates of completion through a comprehensive package of academic and social supports. MJB is evaluating this landmark program. A chapter on the program and its evaluation will appear in an international volume on access to higher education for minority groups, published by Routledge. The chapter was written together with Prof. Faisal Azaiza, the Chairman of the 5-Year Plan Steering Committee. The research was also presented in December at an international conference in Wales of the Society for Research into Higher Education, and to a forum of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues this June.
- ◆ **The Israel Global Initiative** is an effort backed by MASHAV, Israel's Foreign Ministry international aid organization, to showcase excellence in key sectors in Israel and explain how they can contribute to the developing world. MJB submitted a case study on the Council of Higher Education's 5-year plan to increase accessibility and promote success in higher education among Arab students. The case study reviews the major interventions designed to increase access and promote success, with an emphasis on the Institute's role in monitoring and evaluating the national program. It stresses how a comprehensive and holistic approach, together with a national commitment to ongoing evaluation and learning, can be applied to other countries where there is a desire to promote the integration of minorities through education and employment. The case will be part of an international presentation on social innovations in Israel.
- ◆ **MJB in China.** For a range of economic, political and strategic reasons, the Israeli government is eager to cultivate ties with China. Recently, MJB and Bar Ilan University signed a multi-year partnership with the national China Youth University in Beijing. This is the second phase in our ongoing cooperation on research to promote the wellbeing of children and youth. In addition, several months ago, the Vice Premier of China visited Israel for meetings with the Israeli prime minister and signed agreements to foster cooperation in several sectors, including health and education. Digital health was one of the areas prioritized by the Israeli and Chinese Ministries of Health. Prior to this visit, Dr. Bruce Rosen, head of the MJB Health Policy Research Division, gave the opening plenary presentation on the Israeli Health System at a very successful Israel-China conference

on digital health in Hangzhou, China, (posted on YouTube in English & Mandarin). The Chinese are interested in learning from the Start-up Nation about how to foster innovation in health care and education.

- ◆ **International Collaboration on Apprenticeship and Vocational Training.** MJB is facilitating collaboration between the Ministry of Economy and the German government. This collaboration is focused on developing a parallel institute in Israel to the German BIBB Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, in order to develop standards for vocational training in partnership with employers and labor unions. Final recommendations are now being drafted. Furthermore, there is growing interest all over the world in the development of apprenticeship programs as a cornerstone of the vocational training system, combining formal instruction with on-the-job experience guided by an assigned mentor. MJB is facilitating a collaboration between the Ministry of Economy and the OECD designed to strengthen apprenticeship and vocational training programs in Israel. The Institute is preparing a national status report, and will be consulting with the expert OECD team during their visit in December.

Professional Study Tours & International Conferences

The Weinberg Fund enables MJB staff to expand their professional knowledge and skills through international study tours and conferences, and promote professional exchange with international colleagues.

High-Conflict Domestic Disputes. Dr. Tali Topilsky presented at the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington. Over 1,000 judges, lawyers, mediators, psychologists and researchers attended the international conference. Tali lectured on the subject of social service interventions to help resolve high-conflict domestic disputes successfully outside of the courtroom. The Honorable Philip Marcus, Jerusalem Family Court (Ret.) and Anat Inbar, National Commissioner for Welfare Units in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, responded regarding the implications of the research and its impact on the interventions.

Child Maltreatment. Yoa Sorek participated in a study tour this Spring in Korea on Child Maltreatment in Korea and Israel from a comparative perspective, led by Prof. Asher Ben-Arieh of the Hebrew University and the Haruv Institute. The tour focused on policies and services, and included lectures and site visits. The Korean delegation made a reciprocal visit to Israel in June. Yoa shared findings from the accumulative research of the Institute in discussions on residential care, foster care, and adoption in Israel. Both delegations shared a common emphasis on the rehabilitation of biological families in the efforts to provide these children permanent homes within the community.

Innovations in Research on Education. Ronli Rotem attended the European Conference on Educational Research in Dublin, Ireland, last month. Ronli presented on the impact of training on teachers working with ultra-Orthodox students at risk. Ronli's work sheds light on one effort to reintroduce relationship into the educational arena, by making supportive relationships between teachers and youth a goal and a catalyst that influences positive change in the lives of students and teachers alike.

People with Disabilities. Yoav Loeff presented at the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity in Honolulu, Hawaii, this April. Yoav addressed the problem of lack of use of services by people with intellectual disabilities. He also participated in a round-table discussion concerning issues of safety and equality for refugees and migrants with disabilities.

Patient-Centered Care. Tamar Medina traveled to New York and Washington this March where she met with leading American experts on the health care experience from the consumer's perspective, particularly in the sensitive fields of fertility, and women's health and wellbeing. She also explored opportunities for new collaborations between MJB and US colleagues. Tamar's research further develops MJB's work in the area of patient-centered care.

Professional Development

- ◆ **MJB Impact Initiative.** Over the last two years, MJB has consolidated an Institute-wide strategy to enhance the impact of our work among our clients and other target audiences. One issue explored is increasing the involvement and empowerment of subjects from disadvantaged populations in the research process, by including their voices in the process of shaping social policies and interventions.
- ◆ **Advanced Methods in Qualitative Evaluation.** MJB's high level of research quality is crucial to ensuring our effectiveness and impact. For many years, the Weinberg Fund has supported ongoing in-house training to help maintain our cutting-edge knowledge and research skills. This year, MJB researchers participated in two courses in advanced qualitative methodology.
- ◆ **Enhancing Professional English Proficiency.** MJB staff read, write and present in both Hebrew and English. The Weinberg Fund supports one-on-one tutoring and group courses in professional English to help our staff maintain their English at the highest professional level.
- ◆ **Marshall Weinberg Doctoral Fellows.** The Weinberg Fund promotes highly promising young MJB researchers, and enables them to pursue and complete their doctoral studies. This is an important means to broaden the base of future MJB leadership. This year's Weinberg fellows are:
 - Yitzchak Shnoor** (Thesis topic: "Quality of Life and Well-Being among Aging Disabled IDF Veterans") Yitzchak completed his dissertation this June. His work provides an innovative practical contribution to the effective rehabilitation of IDF veterans with disabilities.
 - Dafna Haran** (Thesis topic: Mental Health (MH) Service Utilization by the Seriously Mentally Ill: Implications of the Mental Health Insurance Reform.)
 - Tamar Medina** (Thesis topic: Patient-Centered Care and the Wellbeing of Women that undergo Fertility Treatments.)
 - Ruth Waitzberg** (Thesis topic: The Effect of Hospital Reimbursement Methods on the Behavior of Hospitals and Physicians.)
 - Yoa Sorek** (Thesis topic: Risk and Resilience Factors in the Wellbeing of Children of Divorced Parents.)
 - Ruth Baruj** (Thesis topic: Efforts to Prevent School Disengagement and Dropout in the Education System.)