



# International Section Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

We hope you are looking forward to the 2019 NCFR Conference in Fort Worth, Texas! The International Section has a great opportunity to contribute to the 2019 Conference theme of *Family Sustainability: Contextualizing Relationships within Evolving Systems* through its international and global focus. We are planning the 2019 International Section (IN) Program for the NCFR Conference and I want to encourage you to submit and review proposals for the International Section. Many thanks in advance!

We hope you had a great time at the 2018 NCFR Conference in sunny San Diego! We also hope you enjoyed the 2018 IN Section Business Meeting. We were delighted to have Dr. Mahvash Alami Rad share with us information about the services that *Survivors of Torture International* provide in the San Diego area.



*Dr. Mahvash Alami Rad*



*Dr. Sylvia Asay*



*Dr. Mark Hutter*

Dr. Sylvia Asay, the Chair of the *Eastern European Families Focus Group*, provided updates on the group's activities. Drs. Mark Hutter and Mihaela Robila shared thoughts and memories of Dr. Jan Trost, co-founder of International Section and one of its Chairs, who passed away in 2018.

I look forward to seeing you at the International Section Business Meeting at the 2019 NCFR Conference. Thank you very much for all your contributions to increasing the understanding of families around the world!

Mihaela Robila, Ph.D., CFLE, IN Section Chair (2017-2019)  
Professor, Human Development and Family Science  
Queens College, City University of New York

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## INTERNATIONAL SECTION AWARDS

Dr. Grace H. Chung, IN Awards Committee Chair

### ***INTERNATIONAL SECTION 2019 AWARDS - CALL FOR APPLICATIONS DEADLINE JUNE 15TH, 2019***

#### **Jan Trost Award**

In recognition of outstanding contributions in International Family Studies, this award is given in honor of Jan Trost, Uppsala University, Sweden. He was one of the founding members of NCFR's International Section and a past section chair.

Please submit application to

Dr. Yan Xia at [rxia2@unl.edu](mailto:rxia2@unl.edu)

#### **Annual Conference Travel Scholarship and**

#### **Student / New Professional Annual Conference Travel Scholarship**

The International (IN) Section seeks to encourage scholarship with a focus on international families by offering scholarships to assist with travel expenses to present original research at the NCFR Annual Conference.

Please submit application to

Dr. Mihaela Robila at [Mihaela.Robila@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:Mihaela.Robila@qc.cuny.edu)

### ***CONGRATULATIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION 2018 AWARDS WINNERS!***

#### ***CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2018 JAN TROST AWARD RECIPIENT***

***Dr. Dominic Richardson***



**Dominic Richardson** is a Senior Education Specialist at UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, Italy, where he leads research on issues of equity in education and the relationships between school systems, policy and family contexts, school outcomes and child well-being. Present projects include: Time to Teach, a study of the determinants of teacher absenteeism in Sub-Saharan Africa; the Role and Effects of Private Education in South Asia, Financing Early Child Development in Low and Middle Income Countries, and programs to address Violence in Schools in Latin America. Dr. Richardson previously worked with OECD Social Policy Division on child well-being, family policies, and studies of extreme poverty and vulnerability. He has recently coordinated a global project on Families, Family Policies and the SDGs (2018), launched with co-authors at an event at the United Nations.

Dr. Richardson delivered the plenary on *Child Well-Being, Poverty, and Family Policy Across the Life Course: Lessons From High-Income Countries* at the 2018 NCFR Conference.

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT**

### ***Dr. Gizem Erdem***

**Gizem Erdem** is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Koc University in Istanbul, Turkey. She is interested in program evaluation of interventions targeting at-risk marginalized adolescents and their families and cross-cultural research and theory examining mentoring and family relationships of marginalized youth. Currently, she coordinates trainings and supervision sessions for probation officers to implement evidence based family therapy for substance abusing juveniles and their families in Turkey.



## **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2018 STUDENT / NEW PROFESSIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

### ***Cheong-Ah Huh and Ahyeong Kim***

**Cheong-Ah Huh** is a doctoral student in the Department of Child Development and Family Studies at Seoul National University. She earned a master's degree (2014) in the same department. She is a global fellowship recipient of the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) for her research on "Social integration of multicultural children: Implications on their adjustment according to community characteristics". She is interested in the adjustment of multicultural adolescents, positive youth development, and the effect of the community environment.

**Ahyeong Kim** is a master's student in Child Development & Family Studies at Seoul National University in Korea. Her research interest is the relationship of local community/neighborhood and mental health of family and currently she is working on the project of Seoul Family Report with Dr. Meejung Chin and Dr. Jaerim Lee.



*Cheong-Ah Huh and Grace Chung*



*Ahyeong Kim and Grace Chung*

## INTERNATIONAL SECTION MEMBERS' RESEARCH

### *ARAB FAMILY STRENGTHS IN QATAR, JORDAN AND TUNISIA*

Dr. Sylvia Asay, Professor, University of Nebraska-Kearney

Around the world, the family is valued and celebrated. For this reason, it is imperative to protect and strengthen families. And though the structure of the family may vary around the world, the value of *family* endures. The International Family Strengths perspective is a world-view or orientation toward life and families that is positive and optimistic, grounded in research conducted around the world. Similarities that are found through research with families globally point to a set of qualities that commonly describe the characteristics of strong families.

Current global family strengths studies and continued work on the model have combined evidence from multiple cultures around the world to further enhance the International Family Strengths Perspective. Recently, the Doha International Family Institute released the results of a study to identify Arab family strengths and challenges, and how Arab families use their strengths to meet life's challenges. Qualitative focus group discussions as well as in-depth interviews were conducted in each of three Arab nations. NCFR and International Section members **Drs. John DeFrain** and **Sylvia Asay** served as consultants for the project.



*Dr. John DeFrain*

The goal throughout the research process was to accurately assess Arab family strengths and challenges from an Arab perspective. Findings from this study were used to construct an Arab Family Strengths Inventory. This new research instrument will be used during a larger quantitative study of the Arab family, aiming for gathering samples of Arab families in all 22 countries of the Arab world.

**Family Strengths.** Results show seven especially important themes emerged across all focus groups: 1) The theme of **responsibility** was identified by the participants as providing security and protection, education, holding the family together, commitment, and integrity. 2) The theme of **support** was identified as a strength for the family as loyalty, cooperation, sharing and helping each other. 3) The theme of **good communication** was identified as a strength by statements including listening, mutual understanding, harmony, constructive dialogue, transparency, and good problem solving. 4) The theme of **respect** emerged as a theme with statements such as accepting differences, patience, fairness, and trust. 5) **Conveying traditions** was a strength identified as teaching children traditions, passing on religious foundations and values, and providing a model of traditions. 6) **Resilience** was another theme that can be identified through statements such as working through problems, perseverance, confidence, and strong will. 7) Finally, the theme of **love** was identified through statements such as showing affection, caring, kindness, and showing mercy although few participants talked about love directly. families.

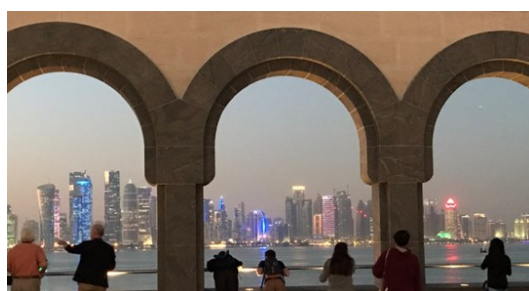


**Family Challenges.** Participants were also asked to identify and tell about a time in their family that led to a negative experience, as well as to identify the challenges that their family experiences. Together these yielded six common themes: 1) *societal changes*, including breakdown of traditions, generational differences, and isolation due to the social media; 2) *inequality of women*, including lack of independence and opportunities; 3) *absent or disengaged fathers* including fathers who are absent because of their work; fathers who are not connected to the family because they live in separate areas in the home; or fathers who spend time away from the home. 4) *financial problems*, including materialism and jealousy, competition, unemployment, and poverty; 5) *interference from extended family members* which include a lack of respect for different opinions and for privacy; and 6) *conflict in the family and poor communication*, including a lack of transparency. Challenges can threaten the strengths of families and prohibit them from reaching their potential.

Qualitative analysis for the current study, clearly shows salient similarities with previous studies on family strengths conducted earlier in 37 other countries around the world in all major geocultural areas. The information from this study and future studies will most likely have significant relevance to specific areas and particular fields in the effort to provide support for families. Applications in the areas of family services, family education, marital and family therapy, and governmental social policy will be discussed.

Support and funding for this project was provided by the Doha International Family Institute, Doha Qatar. For the full report, see the Doha International Family Institute publication at:

<https://www.difi.org.qa/publications/the-arab-family-strength-in-qatar-jordan-and-tunisia/>



*Doha, Qatar*

## Colleagues at the International Section Business Meeting at NCFR Conference 2018



## INTERNATIONAL SECTION MEMBERS' RESEARCH

### *COMPARING REUNIFIED AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY CHILDREN'S WELLBEING IN GHANA: THE ROLE OF HOPE*

Dr. Spencer James, Associate Professor, Brigham Young University

Dr. Spencer James conducted research on child wellbeing in Ghana. Below please see the Abstract for the article and the full citation.

The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) stipulates children are entitled to “a family environment...of happiness, love and understanding”. Recent work on deinstitutionalization of children from residential care has found important child wellbeing differences, particularly around hope. Using data from Ghana—a country that has initiated reintegration of children from residential care facilities, therefore providing a natural opportunity for comparative research—we used hope, whether the child has been reunified with family/caregivers or remained in the care facility, and a statistical interaction of the two, along with controls, to predict the Child Status Index, an internationally-established measure of child wellbeing. We found hope was associated with greater wellbeing for both groups; the influence of hope, however, was stronger among reunified children. We briefly articulate mechanisms explaining why this may be and suggest that psychological wellbeing, particularly hope, may function as a moderator to help provide children with an important means of negotiating their environments.



James, S. L. & Roby, J.L. (2019). Comparing Reunified and Residential Care Facility Children's Wellbeing in Ghana: The Role of Hope. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 96, 316-325.

### Colleagues at the International Section Business Meeting at NCFR Conference 2018



### *INTERNATIONAL SECTION OFFICERS*

Section Chair – Mihaela Robila, Ph.D., CFLE (2019)  
Past Section Chair – Yan Ruth Xia, Ph.D., CFLE (2019)  
Section Chair Elect – Grace H. Chung, Ph.D. (2019)  
Secretary/Treasurer – Jane Rose Njue, Ph.D., CFLE (2019)  
Students & New Professionals Representative - Cagla Giray (2019)