



IRN:
Minority and Minoritised Teachers:
Exploring Social Justice in Schools Around
the World

Newsletter #1 – December 2024

Dear WERA Members and Friends,

We are thrilled to introduce the activities of our International Research Network (IRN), which we co-founded and titled "Minority and Minoritised Teachers: Exploring Social Justice in Schools Around the World."

Our network is a global collaboration, proudly representing scholars from 11 countries across continents, including Argentina, South Africa, Germany, New Zealand, Israel, and Ukraine.

The primary objectives of our IRN are:

1. To explore the lived experiences of minority and minoritised teachers, including pre-service teachers, across the globe.
2. To analyze the social and institutional processes that marginalise teachers, addressing discrimination in its many forms, including racism, ableism, classism, and sexism.
3. To foster international comparative research and cross-cultural dialogue through a dynamic virtual network.
4. To promote context-sensitive methodologies that account for historical, geopolitical, and societal factors—such as the impact of war-torn regions on educators.

Our work is already contributing to critical conversations about equity, diversity, and inclusion in education. For example, we have examined systemic challenges faced by minority and minoritised teachers and introduced innovative frameworks for understanding how educators navigate barriers worldwide. Our findings are featured in the edited book "To Be a Minority Teacher in a Foreign Culture: Empirical Evidence from an International Perspective".

We take pride in our collaboration between established and emerging scholars, including those working under conditions of war, displacement, and adversity. By fostering these cross-cultural dialogues, we aim to advance educational research and practice to promote social justice globally. We warmly invite you to join us – whether as a member, collaborator, or partner – to expand this vital work. Together, we can deepen understanding and drive meaningful change for teachers and students worldwide.

On behalf of the IRN

Mary Gutman, Lisa Rosen (Convenors) and

Drorit Lengyel (Co-Convenor, responsible for the Newsletter# 1 of the IRN)



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How to subscribe to the Newsletter:

To subscribe to our newsletter and follow 13th IRN activities, please fill out [the form](#) .

Upcoming events of the IRN

Webinar “Minority Teachers Abroad: Ukrainian Educators’ Challenges and Success Stories”

Monday, December 9th, 2024, 3 – 5 p.m. CET

Organized by our IRN Members Nataliia Lazebna (Universität Würzburg, Germany) and Kateryna Lut (National University „Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic“, Ukraine)

Join Zoom meeting: <https://deusto.zoom.us/j/95792938901>

Meeting ID: 957 9293 8901

Description: Join us for an insightful webinar that delves into the experiences and challenges faced by minority teachers from Ukraine. This event aims to foster a deeper understanding of the unique perspectives and contributions of these educators within the transnational context and difficulties they encounter on their professional path.

Key Topics:

Cultural Integration: Exploring how minority teachers navigate and integrate into different educational systems.

Challenges and Resilience: Discussing the obstacles faced by minority teachers and the resilience they demonstrate.

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Educational Impact: Understanding the influence of minority teachers on students and educational practices.

Support Systems: Identifying the support mechanisms available and needed for minority teachers to thrive.

Speakers:

Dr. habil. Nataliia Lazebna, Julius-Maximilian Universität Würzburg (**Germany**)

Dr. Kateryna Lut, National University „Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic“ (**Ukraine**)

Prof. Dr.habil. Tetyana Kozlova, Zaporizhzhia National University (**Ukraine**)

Prof. Dr. habil. Yuriy Kovbasko, King Danylo University (**Ukraine**) / Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste (**Brazil**)

Dr. habil. Olena Gordiyenko, University of Manitoba (**Canada**)

Dr. Lilia Bepalaya, Oxford University (**England**)

...and other Ukrainian Educators from different parts of the world!

Who Should Attend: Educators and administrators interested in diversity and inclusion; Policy makers and advocates for minority rights in education; Researchers and students in the field of education and social sciences; Anyone interested in the educational experiences of minority groups.

Format: The webinar will include presentations, panel discussions, and a Q&A session to engage participants and provide a platform for sharing insights and experiences.

Short
notice

Meeting of the IRN Members

Monday, December 9th, 2024, 5:30 – 6:00 p.m. CET

<https://uni-kl-de.zoom-x.de/j/61201477732?pwd=GZDJiBybYmnZlEzGsSw3a8IRLnEEg4.1>

Meeting ID: 612 0147 7732;

Code: Lc6?5=cS

Symposium “Challenges in preparing Arab Teachers from Minority Communities to become Expert Teachers - Case Study from a Peripheral College in the South of Israel”

Wednesday, January 29th, 2025, 3 – 4:30 p.m. CET

Organized by our IRN Member Orit Avidov-Ungar (Dean of Faculty of Leadership and Education, Achva Academic College, Israel)



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The goal of this symposium is to examine the phenomenon of minority student teachers in becoming part of the Arab Educational System and the challenges and opportunities in preparing Arab teachers for roles as Agents of Social Leaders in their schools.

Presenters:

Dr. Adva Margaliot, Use of AI in preparing Arab teachers for becoming innovative educators in their traditional schools

Dr. Merav Aizenberg, Preparing Arab teachers for kindergarten roles through professional communities that involve local kindergartens in Arab settlements and academic staff from the college

Dr. Saleem Abu Jaber, Challenges of Arabic student teachers in becoming part of the multi-cultural college, and the social difficulties

Dr. Omer Fallik, How we deal with preparing Arab student teachers to become science teachers in traditional communities

Prof. Orit Avidov-Ungar, Personalized approach to help Arab academic staff to be part of the cultural community in the college

Dr. Enas Easa, How to evaluate Arab student teachers in innovative ways for preparing them to be expert teachers

We will choose 4-5 presenters from this repertoire.

The presentations are followed by a discussion with the participants on the challenges and opportunities in preparing Arab teachers for roles as Agents of Social Leaders in their schools.

IRN-symposium at European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) 2025 in Belgrade

The ECER will take place from Sept.8th – 12th, 2025. The theme is “Charting the Way Forward: Education, Research, Potentials and Perspectives”. The submission period lasts until Jan.31st, 2025. For more information: <https://eera-ecer.de/conferences/ecer-2025-belgrade>

Carola Mantel, one of our IRN Members, will organize a symposium on the thematic field of the IRN. **If you are planning to come to the ECER next year and are interested in contributing a paper to our symposium, please get in contact with Carola Mantel until Dec 15th.**



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Recent Publications of the IRN

Members

Gutman, M. (2023). Teachers of Ethiopian origin in Israel: early career journeys and obstacles to being a teacher in the shadow of affirmative action. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2023.2217968>

Gutman, M. (2023). Ethiopian Origin Teachers in Israel: Prejudices, Pedagogical Expectations and the Pygmalion Effect in the Shadow of the COVID-19. In: **M. Gutman**, W. Jayusi, M. Beck, & Z. Bekerman (eds), *To Be a Minority Teacher in a Foreign Culture: Empirical Evidence from an International Perspective* (pp. 15-25). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25584-7_2

Gutman, M. (ed). (2025). Challenges facing Education Leadership in the shadow of War: International and Multicultural Perspectives from Zones of Conflict. London: Routledge. (Part 1: Educational Leadership of Resilience in Specific Conflict Zones and Communities) <https://katzr.net/4ba290>

Frei-Landau, R., & **Avidov-Ungar, O.**, Heaysman, O., Abu-Sareya, A., & Idan, L. (2023). Conceptualizing Bedouin teachers' social-emotional learning in the context of teaching children with neurodevelopmental disorder. *Teaching Education* 35(3), 235-258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2023.2261385>.

Arslan, S., & **Lengyel, D.** (2023). An "Intellectual" Migration: Educational Backgrounds, Purposes, And Needs. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 7(1), 73-93. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/12819>

Rosen, L., & Lengyel, D. (2023). Research on Minority Teachers in Germany: Developments, Focal Points and Current Trends from the Perspective of Intercultural Education. In: **M. Gutman**, W. Jayusi, M. Beck, & Z. Bekerman (eds), *To Be a Minority Teacher in a Foreign Culture: Empirical Evidence from an International Perspective* (pp. 107-123). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25584-7_8

Recent and Ongoing Research Activities of the IRN Members

Gutman, M., 2023: Study "The Truth of Ethiopian Teachers: Human Capital, Barriers, and Support Programs in Early Career Stages" (funded by Mofet Foundation)

Abstract: The study investigated Ethiopian teachers' integration into the Israeli education system, focusing on their human capital, barriers, and the impact of support programs. It analyzed experiences from training to professional placement, highlighting challenges like social stereotypes, first-generation higher education struggles, and systemic inequalities. Using qualitative methods, it identified themes around cultural identity, training efficacy, supplementary support programs, and career barriers. The findings, interpreted through sociocultural theories, emphasize the need for systemic reform to enhance the inclusion and professional advancement of Ethiopian teachers.



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Gutman, M. et al, 2025: Study “USA-Origin Teacher Educators in a Haredi (Orthodox-Religious) College in Jerusalem”

Abstract: This study explores the professional journeys of five U.S.-born teacher educators integrated into the Leadership and Management of Educational Systems program at a Haredi college in Jerusalem. Using life story methodology, the research traces their professional identity reconstruction over their career timelines, focusing on key challenges and cultural adaptations in transitioning from the U.S. to Israeli-Haredi educational context. The findings reveal a process of professional identity reshaping, characterized by balancing their prior educational philosophies with the cultural expectations of the students from a Haredi community (who serve as school teachers and start their higher education journey for advance to an educational managerial and leadership position). Participants highlighted the dual challenges of cultural integration and maintaining their professional integrity, emphasizing the role of sensitivity to religious and cultural norms in fostering meaningful connections with students. Their perceived contributions include broadening students’ perspectives on leadership, introducing global pedagogical insights, and enriching the field of school principal development in Israel. This study underscores the mutual benefits of integrating immigrant educators into higher education institutions, offering practical implications for supporting cross-cultural educational exchange. It concludes by highlighting the transformative potential of diverse perspectives in shaping leadership development programs and contributing to the inclusivity of Israel’s higher education system.

Publication in preparation: Bridging Cultures in Higher Education: The Leadership Journeys of USA-Origin Teacher Educators in a Haredi College in Jerusalem (Gutman et al, 2025.)

Gutman, M., 2025: Study “Challenges and Opportunities in Integrating Psychological-Educational Staff of Ukrainian Origin in Urban and Rural Schools in Israel”

Abstract: This study, funded by the Mofet Institute Foundation, explores the integration of psychological-educational staff of Ukrainian origin—social workers, educational counselors, and youth psychologists—into Israeli schools. It examines both the opportunities these professionals bring and the bureaucratic challenges faced in their recruitment, particularly for those who recently immigrated following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Many of these newcomers have yet to complete diploma recognition and validation within the Israeli education system. The research involved interviews with 22 stakeholders, including school principals, coordinators for new immigrant students, and coordinators for foreign students in the Na’aleh program. Additionally, semi-structured questionnaires were used to assess the involvement and impact of these minority staff members. Key areas of focus included their contribution to emotional support for Ukrainian students who have recently immigrated, their integration into the broader educational system, and the factors enabling or hindering their professional integration. The findings highlight an urgent need for these professionals, particularly those who share the students’ experiences of trauma and displacement. Their presence offers unique value for fostering trust, empathy, and emotional healing. Participants underscored the potential for mutual growth, as both students and educators navigate their shared crisis. Examples



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were provided of how these staff members empower Ukrainian immigrant students through culturally relevant educational strategies and therapeutic practices rooted in their shared heritage. This study underscores the critical role of these educators in bridging cultural and emotional gaps, offering insights into how schools can better support immigrant students and leverage the unique strengths of minority educational staff.

Publication in preparation: Higher Education of Minority School-Based PLC Participants to Support Newly Immigrant Students from Russia and Ukraine: Lessons from Urban and Youth Village Schools in Israel (Gutman, 2025)

Němec, Z., 2023 – 2025: Study “Roma Teaching Staff and Their Experience with the Educational System in the Czech Republic”

Abstract: Roma represents one of the largest and most socially disadvantaged minorities in Europe. This study focuses on the experiences of Roma teaching staff with the educational system in the Czech Republic. The specific objectives of the study are: 1) To map the pathways of Roma to employment in the educational system (with an emphasis on barriers and significant sources of support). 2) To describe the experiences of Roma teaching staff with prejudice and racism. 3) To describe the significance of minority ethnicity in education from the perspective of Roma teaching staff. 4) To identify the most significant barriers in the education of Roma students from the perspective of Roma teaching staff and to suggest measures to remove these barriers. The research investigation is conducted in a qualitative form, with the main research method being interviews with Roma educators (teachers, teacher assistants and other teaching staff). The results of the research will contribute to the expansion of knowledge in the field of education of socially disadvantaged Roma students, as well as in the employment of Roma educators, and will help specify effective tools for overcoming barriers to the involvement of Roma in education.

Publications in preparation:

Roma Teaching Staff and Their Own Paths to Work in Education: Experiences from the Czech Republic (Němec, Z., 2025)

Prejudice, Racism, and Anti-Gypsyism: The Experiences of Roma Educators in the Czech Republic (Němec, Z., 2025)



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Upcoming presentations of IRN Members at International Conferences

Avidov-Ungar, O.: Personalization in a Personal Digital Professional Space (PDPS) as a Personalized Process for Teachers in an Academic Program - Differences between Jewish and Arab Students'

Presentation at 20th Education and Development Conference [EDC2025], March 2025, in Bangkok, Thailand

Abstract: This study investigates the development and implementation of Personal Digital Professional Spaces (PDPSs) within an undergraduate teacher education program serving Jewish and Arab students. PDPSs are personalized online platforms that students create throughout their studies to document their professional growth. By the program's conclusion, students have crafted unique portfolios featuring a personal profile, educational vision, core values, and a range of projects and lesson plans. Grounded in personalization principles, these platforms allow students to tailor content to their individual needs and aspirations, showcasing their professional competencies and creativity. The research aims to explore students' perceptions of PDPSs and their utility, focusing on differences between Jewish and Arab students' experiences while addressing multicultural challenges in teacher training. A qualitative methodology, informed by Grounded Theory, was used to analyze data from reflective questionnaires completed by 154 Arabic-speaking and 385 Hebrew-speaking students, representing 70% of the program's participants. Open-ended questions provided insights into how students perceive the advantages of PDPSs and their impact on professional self-presentation. Findings highlight key competencies developed through PDPSs, such as creativity in presenting materials, organizational skills in structuring lesson plans, and the ability to implement personalized learning. Moreover, students demonstrated readiness to lead digital innovation and commitment to ongoing professional growth. The presentation will discuss differences in Jewish and Arab students' responses, emphasizing how PDPSs address multicultural challenges and contribute to preparing minority and minoritized teachers for advancing social justice in schools globally.

Avidov-Ungar, O.: Personal Digital Professional Space (PDPS) for Pre-service Teachers in an Academic Program in a Multicultural College

Presentation at IAIE- International Association for Intercultural Education, Currents in Education: Navigating Change in Languages, Cultures, and Communities. [IAIE](#), Budapest, July 2025

Abstract: This study focuses on the integration of Personal Digital Professional Spaces (PDPSs) in a teacher education program at a multicultural college serving Jewish and Arab students. The PDPS is an individualized online platform that students develop throughout their undergraduate studies to



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document their professional journey. By the program's end, each student creates a unique portfolio, including personal profiles, educational visions, core values, and lesson plans. Grounded in personalization principles, the PDPS allows students to tailor content to their personal and professional aspirations, highlighting their strengths and achievements. The research investigates how students perceive the PDPS as a tool for professional growth, with particular attention to differences between Jewish and Arab students' experiences. It also examines the multicultural challenges inherent in teacher training within a diverse educational context. Using qualitative methods, data were collected through reflective questionnaires completed by 154 Arabic-speaking and 385 Hebrew-speaking students. Participants shared insights about the benefits of using PDPSs, including creativity, organization, and innovation, as well as their role in personalized learning and professional development. Analysis using a narrative approach provided an in-depth understanding of how PDPSs support students' self-presentation and readiness for teaching roles. Preliminary findings highlight the PDPS as a significant tool for fostering skills such as creativity, digital innovation, and personalized teaching strategies. The presentation will also explore cultural differences in students' responses, emphasizing the PDPS's potential to address multicultural challenges and promote equity in teacher education.

Call for Chapter Proposals for the book “Educators in Emergencies and Crises: Perspectives from Minority and Minoritized Communities”

Educators play a vital role in fostering stability and resilience in educational settings, particularly in minority and minoritized communities during emergencies. These educators navigate resource limitations, cultural complexities, and urgent crises while supporting students, staff, and their communities. This edited volume will explore global perspectives on these challenges and strategies, emphasizing resilience-building and innovation in these contexts. We invite scholars and practitioners to contribute chapters that provide theoretical, empirical, qualitative, or quantitative insights into the roles and practices of educators in schools within these communities. For more details, please contact the secretariat: netta.reuveni2023@gmail.com

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