

"I soon realized that most of the young offenders dropped out of school at a very early stage. I couldn't understand how, in the entire educational system, nobody tried to prevent their failure or help them to break the circle of poverty and weakness," she said. "I believed that schooling could make a difference in the lives of those young, doomed children. I decided to work at a school in order to reach those children before they dropped out from the school system and lost their chance to become part of the mainstream of society."

After graduation, she went back to the same neighborhood to work as a school counselor. "It was a great challenge in those years — the mid '60s — to introduce the 'newborn pro-

fession' into a rigid school system," she said. With much hard work, she was appointed to a managerial position, supervising more than 100 counselors in the region. "In this position, I had the opportunity to institutionalize school counseling by developing both preventive and developmental programs as well as developing the administrative aspects of counseling, such as documentation and teamwork."

Throughout Erhard's career, she has attempted to differentiate school counseling from other helping professions by reconstructing and reformulating its focus on human development rather than on maladjustment and psychopathology. "When I entered the profession in the early 1970s, the teacher-counselor role was nar-

rowly defined and attuned mainly to 'problematic' students. This limited definition appeared to me to negate the profession's primary goals of furthering students' emotional, social and developmental needs in addition to their learning needs."

During the next decade, she worked to steer counselors away from individual counseling, and guide them toward a comprehensive, systemic, clearly defined and accountable program. "Throughout the 1990s, I painstakingly continued to develop a proactive, comprehensive perspective toward the profession and its objectives — enhancement of personal well-being in a changing social environment. I worked to shift the paradigm of school counseling

from services that benefit some students to programs that benefit every stakeholder — students, teachers, staff and parents."

Erhard is proud of the fact that she was instrumental in preparing a training program for counselors working in kindergartens and day-care centers. In 2002, the Ministry of Education validated the new specialization in counseling and allocated positions and funds to employ counselors in the early childhood school systems.

Today, after more than 30 years of activity in her profession, she feels that her dedication, leadership skills and persistence have left a long-lasting imprint in the development of counseling in Israel.

Global teamwork

Currently, Erhard is collaborating with ACA members Rita Chi-Ying Chung, an associate professor in the Counseling and Development Program at George Mason University, and Fred Bemak, professor and program coordinator for the Counseling and Development Program at GMU. The team is working on an international research project focusing on how social justice in different countries manifests itself in counseling. "We want to look at equity discrimination, oppression and to explore how counselors are working toward those values of social justice. It's fascinating because different countries are doing that in different ways, and we can learn from them all," Bemak said.

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Faculty exchange program promotes counseling globalization

BY ANGELA KENNEDY
STAFF WRITER

The Junior Faculty Development Program is a non-degree, professional development program that provides promising junior university faculty in other countries with the opportunity to shadow their American counterparts. The program allows participants, or Fellows, to broaden their teaching skills and techniques by personally observing United States educators. The program encourages them to develop new courses and implement curriculum reform in their homeland.

Fellows spend nine months in the non-degree program, where they attend courses, develop curricula, gather resource materials, attend conferences, collaborate with U.S. colleagues, give presentations and possibly co-teach. For the last two months of the program, the Fellows will undertake an internship in a practical work environment in his or her field of study.

Currently, George Washington University in Washington, D.C., is hosting two JFDP Fellows who are observing classes pertaining to counseling, psychology and education.

"The program allows for exchange of ideas and methods in both teaching and practicing

counseling. Because they are hosted at an academic department, they have opportunities to learn about (such topics as) counseling and psychology education in the United States and share (that) information at home in Russia," said Denise Ifkovic, JFDP program director. "Like any other exchange program, JFDP provides a window to the world for both the Fellows who participate and the people with whom they interact in the United States."

However, JFDP differs from other exchange programs that host high school and college students, because the it brings university educators who are perhaps in a greater position to effect change in their home countries and institutions.

"They have the chance for greater impact at home through reaching out to their students and colleagues with fresh perspectives in their disciplines," she said, adding that likewise,

JFDP Fellows have greater knowledge about how their disciplines are taught and practiced at home and are therefore in unique positions to share such perspectives with their host institutions and communities in the States.

One Fellow, Sergei Kremen, is the associate professor in the Department of Pedagogics at the Smolensk State Teacher-



Sergei Kremen

Training University in Moscow; he holds his doctorate from there as well. He applied for the JFDP to learn more about Western career and school counseling. "I am very interested in the training and preparation of school counselors and the principles, forms and methods of consultation in career guidance," he said. "I am also interested in the theoretical and practical components of post-graduate education and the improvement of teacher qualifications. My goal is to inject a career counseling component into our program of teacher education."

Pat Schwallie-Giddis, assistant professor of counseling at GWU and a former executive director of the American Counseling Association, serves as the academic adviser to Kremen.

"It has been a great experience. He has just been a delight. He is like a sponge, soaking up every word he hears about school counseling — what we do, the materials we use and the approaches we take. He really makes a great addition to the class," she said. "It's been a real mutually beneficial experience for him and for me."

She added that making international connections in the counseling profession is a must.

"It's really critically important that we become more aware of our partners around the world and that we share with each other what is working, what's not working and how we might collaborate with each other," she said.

"For me it is a great honor to work with Dr. Schwallie-Giddis. I hope that I will be able to effectively apply the experiences that I receive here in the United States. when I return to my own university."

Though Russia has a rich history of counseling, during the reign of former Soviet leader, Josef Stalin, the counseling system was practically destroyed. Kremen said a new interest in counseling arose during the reforms of the past 20 years. Because the profession has basically started over, it is still struggling with licen-

sure issues and training problems. "In my opinion, it is very difficult to compare well-adjusted and effectively working counseling systems in the United States with new, but dynamically developing, counseling systems in Russia."

He was surprised to see the variety of specialties in counseling here in the States and how counselors can help clients make successful and productive decisions in almost all areas of life. He said he is excited to return home with new ideas, but he is remaining practical about his abilities to foster change.

"I have no pretensions to radically change the development of education and counseling in Russia after participating in the program. However, I think that some special part of the program should be devoted to the development of students and career counseling, and it should be included into university curriculum, especially in teacher-training universities," he said.

Kremen is scheduled to return to Russia in July. For more information on the Junior Faculty Development Program, visit www.jfdp.org. ■