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Some 120 researchers, professionals and leaders from third sector organizations in Israel, have gathered for a two-day conference in the Dead Sea Hyatt Hotel for the ICTR Annual Spring Conference, an event that became already a tradition for all Israeli Third Sector scholars and others interested in this domain. The conference featured presentations of new research in six parallel sessions, as well as presentations in three plenary sessions.

The first plenary focused on Boards of Directors in Third Sector organizations, featuring Prof. Margaret Harris, a renowned scholar of international reputation from the UK, as the keynote speaker. Dr. Esther Iecovich followed with a presentation of findings from a recent comprehensive research on boards of nonprofit organizations in Israel. Both presentations led to a lively discussion leaving everybody with the feeling the issue was far from being exhausted and it needs further development.

The second plenary discussed the work of the Committee Reviewing the Functions of the Third Sector in Israel and the Government Policy Towards it. The session presented preliminary findings and asked for the participants’ feedback, which again stirred a heated discussion that came short of resolving the issue.

The third and last plenary focused on social responsibility of business enterprises in Israel; it featured two new studies. Reacting to the presentations were Ms. Raya Strauss from Strauss Ltd., Dr. Haim Iluz-Ayalon, Chair of Amal (an educational network) and Ms. Tali Aharoni, director of MAALA — an organization promoting social responsibility by businesses. Again, the discussion on the issues presented and their meaning continued long after the conclusion of the session.

New studies by Israeli researchers were presented in six parallel sessions. The subjects...
Five years have past since ICTR was inaugurated and this is a good opportunity to summarize what we have accomplished so far.

Upon establishing ICTR we set ourselves four goals: 1. to develop original research on the Israeli third sector and related subjects; 2. to encourage research and teaching on the third sector; 3. to develop policy pertaining to the third sector; 4. to establish databases on this area of activity. During this period ICTR was active in promoting all four goals. Our specific activities are detailed in the recently published booklet: The Israeli Center for Third sector Research: The First Five Years. Tonight I would like to briefly discuss these four goals with a view towards the future.

1. Developing Original Research

Our past work “uncovered” the Israeli Third Sector - its volume, its characteristics and its frameworks. The research questions we explored were mostly descriptive; we tried to answer the questions of “what” and “how much”, not only in the local context but also from the international, comparative perspective. Our research was central in the conceptualization of the two main aspects and main functions of the sector in Israel: Service provision in the framework of the Welfare State and the development of civil society. That was a necessary stage that has not been concluded yet, as there are other aspects of the sector waiting to be “discovered” such as the philanthropic foundations. This is a good opportunity to announce the upcoming study planned on this very issue, as part of the comparative work done in the European community.

At the next stage, we will ask research questions that not only describe the sector, but also attempt to explain its existence and activity — the “why” and “how” questions. Also questions regarding its contribution to the society and economy and more specifically, its unique contributions to areas such as environment or culture (which are not necessarily similar): How do Third Sector organizations contribute to these areas and what are the dynamics they create? What are key factors in this aspects activity (i.e., what is the role of the philanthropic foundations?) and how are they linked to the other two sectors and other forces and processes in the environment.

This kind of research calls for new foci — not only a focus on the macro level but also on the micro one - the single organization and the individual participant in it. Questions regarding civil society development call for addressing issues of attitudes and behavior of individuals as well as patterns of activities and dynamics of specific organizations and we expect our research to develop in that direction.

2. Encouraging research and teaching on Third Sector

Despite the relative advantage ICTR has as (so far) the only center in this area in the country, we never thought of ourselves as having a monopoly in this domain; on the contrary - ICTR emphasized, since its inception, its role as promoter and catalyst of research opportunities on the Third Sector in Israel, not necessarily in connection with us. A public debate on Third Sector issues among scholars could only enrich the field and we welcome any study or conference on the subject; their success is to a certain extent ours too.

We ourselves organize conferences and workshops, award scholarships to research students and conduct an multi-disciplinary forum of young researchers from all universities. The fact that this afternoon we witnessed the establishment of the Israeli Third Sector and Civil Society Researchers Association shows the long way that has already been traveled in this area. Though we initiated its establishment, it is an independent body. ICTR will want to cooperate with the new organization, if it so wishes, possibly organize joint conferences or publish a professional journal that will provide an academic framework for Israeli researchers in this area.

The success we had in developing research on the Third Sector in Israeli is, we believe, related to the fact that the ICTR was established as a multi-disciplinary center. Linking this domain of activity to a specific discipline or to one academic unit would have considerably restricted it as well as its potential for knowledge development. Multi-disciplinarity should continue to be a major principle for operation of the center. But in order to deepen the knowledge in this new area of research, it is most important that faculty members specializing in third sector and civil society will be appointed to academic departments in Israeli universities and colleges. They will study and teach the subject in the framework of their disciplines and contribute their insight to the inter-disciplinary framework. I am happy to share with you the fact that here, at BGU, we have been instrumental in the process by which academic units appointed faculty members with a third sector research interest. Furthermore, there are plans to develop curricula and training in this area. In addition to my department, Social Work, Third Sector has “representatives” in three other units in the university. The first is Dr. Daniel Gottlieb, who is about to join the Department of Economics and will be doing research and teaching on third sector related issues. Dr. Paula Kabalo from the Ben Gurion Heritage Center in Sde Boker and the Department of Israeli History, after a study period in the US, will work and teach on our area there. And finally, we are glad to announce that the School of Management received a planning grant in order to initiate a training program for a specialization in Nonprofit Management within its MBA program. The actual program is scheduled to open in the academic year 2003/2004.

These are all examples of the synergetic process accompanying the establishment of a center such as ours, and the dynamics it creates. The significance of these appointments goes far beyond our area and those engaged in it. It means that students in history, economics and management and in the future hopefully political science, behavioral sciences and philosophy, will acquire as part of their general studies, knowledge on the third sector.

3. Developing government policy on the Third Sector

The absence of a clear-cut policy in this area prompted us to initiate a committee to examine
the issue. Its activities and recommendations are detailed in another part in this newsletter. The Committee, which is doing an extremely thorough job, will submit its report in a few months time, and barring any other events that will catch the public interest, it will probably evoke considerable interest, as it deals with an important issue that was never before the subject of any comprehensive examination.

The mere fact that the Center has initiated the work of such a committee to examine government policy, without being asked to do so by any official body, raises a question: Is initiating such measures part of the tasks of an academic research center? Our answer is a definitely in the affirmative.

As an institution engaged in developing knowledge (both local and comparative) relevant for the development of policy on a specific issue, we cannot remain indifferent to global currents on the matter. The need to structure the Third Sector in a way that will allow it to attain the social goals it could potentially attain, should be in every Israeli citizen’s interest, and even more so for those who are close to the issue. Moreover, research centers dedicated to a certain topic, periodically publish position papers on policy issues in their areas of expertise, and we therefore are no different than such standard practice. The reaction by the public to this initiative will steer our way on how to conduct our affairs in the matter.

4. Developing databases

We set up this goal because no on going Sector-specific data existed, and without data, no research and policy development can be realized. Developing The Israeli Third Sector Database required a Herculean effort of obtaining (from various sources), classifying, arranging, cleaning and organizing the existing data. Yet, at present our database contains only a small portion of what is should and could contain. We would like to note in this context the tremendous work by Hagai Katz, the first Database director.

The database was intended from the outset to serve not only ICTR and its researchers but also the entire research community and practically anybody in Israel or abroad interested in its products. In the process of opening this service to the public we are encountering a variety of problems, as this system is not entirely transparent to the public. For some parts of our Database there are legal problems in obtaining them, and objections to share it with us and even more so with a third party. We are determined to overcome these problems and have decided that as of April 2002, for a period of six months, to allow access to the database for a fee (see separate item on this service).

But this is not the only announcement we have tonight on databases. Data on the Third Sector are not just economic. The activities of the organizations, their members and leaders, as well as their policy are all crucial to understanding of the sector. Dr. Paula Kabalo from the Ben Gurion Heritage Center and I share a common dream, namely, to establish The Third Sector Archive in Sde Boker. Interested organizations will be able to deposit their organizational documents in the archive where they will be organized and properly kept, and where researchers on this domain will be able to work in an appropriate environment. There are many issues that need resolving on the path to realize this dream, the first of which being donation for that cause, but I somehow have the feeling that this is an idea that will materialize.

To conclude, as the first and only academic center on the Third Sector, the four goals we set out to achieve, constitute “niches” not addressed by others. The more other institutions will show interest in some of these areas and focus on them, we will be able to leave them and focus on the others. We certainly hope this will happen.

After five years, we can honestly look back with satisfaction for building the infrastructure for this new academic domain. Building such a base, with all the risks involved, could not have been realized without proper institutional, financial and human support. This is a good opportunity to thank all those who took part in this creation, individually and collectively. To our institutional framework, Ben Gurion University, and especially to its two leaders — the President, Prof. Avishai Braverman, and the Rector — Prof. Nahum Finger, not just for their decision to establish ICTR but also for the decision to structure it as an interdisciplinary Center. This is truly a special tribute to a visionary academic leadership.

Another aspect in the institutional framework is ICTR’s Steering Committee that guides its activities and determines its policy. I have to confess that it is a real pleasure working with such a supportive and considerate committee. Its members, Dr. Hadara Bar-Mor, Prof. Avishai Henik, Prof. Jimmy Weinblatt, Prof. Rivka Carmi, Prof. Arie Reichel and Prof. Dov Shin’ar, as individuals and as a collective, are lending a very warm hand in steering the Center. They are always there to say a good word, to give good advice and have never rejected any request.

The other institution that deserves special thanks for its support of ICTR is the Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation, especially its former president Prof. Joel Fleishman: A man of vision in developing research on the Third Sector in many countries and a true friend of the Center and the university, who helped us in many direct as well as indirect ways.

Aside from these institutions and units at the background of the Center, the volunteers and staff affiliated with it have a tremendous part in its success. We feel fortunate as these are not just excellent people, but they are also highly motivated, enthusiastic and committed to the idea. My thanks go to the members of the “Policy Committee” headed by Prof. Izhak Galnoor: Ms. Ariela Ophir, Prof. Arie Arnon, Ms. Rachel Lieb, Dr. Bassel Qattash, Mr. Yoram Gabai, Ms. Sara Silverstein, Adv. Ophir Katz, Mr. Nissan Limor, Adv. Avi Armoni, Prof. Joseph Katon, Ms. Varda Shiffer and Mr. Emanuel Sharon who volunteer many hours of their time to this endeavor and to Ms. Michal Bar who coordinates with much talent this complicated and important work.

To the past and present team in charge of the Database: Ms. Rinat Ben-Noon, Dr. Daniel Gottlieb, Mr. Yaron Hazai, Mr. Hagai Katz and Mr. Ronen Massad.

And last but not least, our past and present administrative assistants: Ms. Smadar Kra-Moreno, Ms. Efrat Nativ-Ronen and Ms. Efrat Keinan for their dedication to this complicated, versatile and sometimes stressful job, for their exceptional professionalism and for always keeping their posture and welcome all those who come a-knocking on our door.

Benjamin Gidron, Director
Plenary session: Nonprofit Boards and the Governance of Third Sector Organisations

By Raviv Schwartz

The afternoon of the first day of the ICTR Spring conference was devoted to the “Role of Nonprofit Boards in the Governance of Third Sector Organisations”. Chaired by Devora Bloom, herself a pioneer in the training of board members in Israel’s Third Sector, this particular session was an attempt to address this complex issue from a variety of epistemological perspectives. The keynote address, entitled “The Governance of Third Sector Organizations: What, Why and How?” was delivered by of Prof. Margaret Harris, of the Aston Business School in Birmingham, UK.

Nonprofit Boards and Governance: Theoretical Perspective
Prof. Harris observed that, despite the growth in understanding about the organisation of the third sector and the role it can play nationally and globally, governance is an issue that has received scant scholarly and popular attention. While boards of nonprofit and voluntary organisations are not synonymous with “governance”, they are a critical part of the governance concept and one of the key mechanisms through which governance is achieved. According to what Prof. Harris referred to as “espoused theory”, voluntary boards are a key organizational and legal component of nonprofits. They are legally accountable for the organization, responsible for establishing and maintaining the organization’s mission and charged with achieving legitimacy among its internal and external constituencies or stakeholders. However, in stark contrast to the espoused theory of boards in nonprofit organizational governance, “theory in use” conceptualizes boards as often irrelevant to organizational functioning and as constituting a drain on scarce organizational resources. Three main reasons for this are the ignorance of board members with respect to the board’s prescribed functions, the contingent nature of the board role in relation to staff, and variations in the power that boards are able to exercise relative to other key groupings. Despite the lack of clarity and ambivalence of many organizational actors toward boards, Prof. Harris reaffirmed their centrality to the very existence and vitality of the third sector.

In concluding, Prof. Harris emphasized that governance is not the sole responsibility of boards. Stakeholders, as well as values and moral principles are also indispensable elements of the process of governance. Furthermore, governance may no longer be divorced from the external environment within which the organization operates. Indeed, the concept is increasingly being applied well beyond the third sector itself to the ways in which organisations in all sectors need to network and form partnerships, thus underscoring its fundamentally collaborative nature.

Nonprofit Boards and Governance in Israel: Empirical Research

The next portion of the session featured Dr. Esther Iecovich, (Dept. of Social Work, Ben Gurion University) who presented the findings from a research project entitled, “Nonprofit Boards of Third Sector Organizations in Israel”, conducted under the auspices of ICTR. Together with her colleagues, Dr. Mike Naphtali, (Elem and Tel Aviv University), Dr. Hadara Bar-Mor, (Netanya College) and Prof. Benjamin Gidron, Dr. Iecovich examined the structural, and organizational features of nonprofit boards in Israel as well as their functioning. Surveyed were 282 organizations in a layered sample that represented the following areas of activity: 70 culture and recreation; 46 education and research; 42 health; 62 welfare; and 62 advocacy. Some of the main findings presented included:

♦ The older and larger the organization, the larger its board, and the higher the frequency of its board meetings, the more committees it tends to feature.
♦ As foreshadowed in the remarks by Prof. Harris, in most of these Israeli organizations,
of orientation nor do they take part in any training program for this purpose.

As for the roles fulfilled by boards, in a majority of the organizations studied, the board plays an active role in the internal management of the organization, i.e. approving budget, appointing senior staff, and determining regulations and procedures. However, in only a minority does the board systematically interface with the organizational environment in tasks such as resource development, advocacy and lobbying. Dr. Iecovich noted that this research project affords a preliminary look at the various structural characteristics and patterns of functioning of nonprofit boards in Israel and expressed the hope that it would contribute to the promotion of democratization processes in voluntary organizations and a greater responsiveness on their part to the needs of the constituents they serve.

Reflections from the Field
Invited to comment on the keynote address by Prof. Harris and the research findings presented by Dr. Iecovich were two prominent practitioners from Israel’s third sector.

Adv. Avi Armoni, a businessman and the former director of the New Israel Fund, in addressing Prof. Harris’ reference to the perceived role confusion often existing between boards and professional staff, claimed that any organization featuring this type of board-staff relations is, by definition, an unhealthy one. He argued that an effective board must be “lean and mean”. While acknowledging the importance of enabling other stakeholders, such as clients, to play a role in organizational governance, he categorically rejected the recruitment of board members motivated by a desire for quotas or “tokenism”. The second discussant, Ayala Lavi, emphasized the centrality of the senior professional staff to the functioning and governance of nonprofits in Israel. Though she too welcomed the undertaking of research on this critically important topic, she cautioned against adopting recommendations that might have the unintended effect of undermining the authority and integrity of the organization’s director.

In the questions from the audience that followed the presentations, it became very clear that the many theoretical and professional perspectives represented among this diverse group of practitioners and researchers resulted in vastly different interpretations of the desired role of nonprofit boards in governance. And while the session was adjourned with no definitive recommendations or conclusions having been adopted, all those who took part no doubt came away with a significantly more nuanced understanding of the complex and problematic nature of nonprofit boards, board-staff relations and organizational governance.

ICTR congratulates
Prof. Jimmy Weinblatt,
member of the Center’s Steering Committee, on his election as the new Rector of Ben Gurion University.

The 5th ICTR Conference
Continued from page A

they covered spanned from managing volunteers to economic and legal issues, civil society and social change processes. Participants in those sessions gave the presenters invaluable feedback in their suggestions, objections and personal examples. This framework of personal interaction between scholars and professionals in the field, allows the former to receive first hand intelligent feedback that promotes the relevance of their works. The professionals gained important insight that would help them in their work.

Beside the academic debates, the conference featured two festive occasions. The first, a dinner honored by BGU Rector, Prof. N. Finger, who congratulated ICTR on its 5 years of accomplishments and also awarded scholarships to research students engaged in studying the third sector. The second was a luncheon that took place the following day, honored by BGU President Prof. Braverman, Innovation in Third Sector Research. Both occasions gave everybody a chance to socialize in a lively upbeat event. The variety of issues presented at the conference on nearly every topic related to the activity of the Third Sector left everybody with “a taste for more”. This conference promoted new initiatives and enriched ongoing ones with new data and ideas, which will undoubtedly be the focus of our next year’s conference.
Summary of Plenary: Business Social Responsibility in Israel

The plenary focused on the relationships between the Business and Third Sectors in Israel in recent years. The plenary attempted to shed light on the main issues characterizing this relationship: Who are the participants in this process, what motivates them, which are the areas of their involvement and how are they involved. The panelists, chaired by Prof. Amos Drori, represented different points of view: Academic — Prof. Arie Reichel and Prof. Benjamin Gidron; Third Sector consultants — Ms. Nirit Rossler and Mr. Patrick Levi from Shatil; an adviser to the business sector — Ms. Taliya Aharoni from Ma’a’la; and senior managers who engage in developing the relationship between the sectors — Ms. Raya Strauss from Strauss Ltd. representing a business firm and Dr. Haim Ayalon—Iluz representing the Amal network — a Third Sector organization engaged in education.

Prof. Reichel and Gidron presented results from a pilot study based on a non-representative sample of 19 business organizations. Their work identified main patterns and concepts in this sphere that may serve future focused works. Ms. Rossler and Mr. Levi followed with a paper based on data gathered by Shatil while helping Third Sector organizations to locate business enterprises that might be interested in their endeavor. This study was based on a sample of 330 business organizations.

The dominant fields supported by donations of business enterprise are: Health, education, welfare, art, culture and sports, IDF, social change, the environment and drug-related projects. Businesses usually prefer to support issues that are in social consensus such as: children with special needs, health, education, the needy, IDF and domestic violence.

An interesting finding in both studies points the hi-tech area, and they are also willing to adopt and back long-term projects.

The studies pointed at several support methods: money, product or service provided by the business; volunteering of management and/ or staff. The preferred type of support of business (in a downward scale) is: products or services, money, involvement of staff, public campaign, one-time project and support of individuals.

Ms. Talya Aharoni from Ma’ala added that a recent survey conducted by Mina Tzemach, found that businesses are inclined to support education. She also noted that the business enterprises are ambivalent about advertising their contribution. Ms. Raya Strauss talked about the change in the giving tradition Strauss has adopted, from support following a family tradition to a formation of a clear-cut policy that involves all the company staff. She believes the change improved the organizational atmosphere and the staff belief in the interest of Strauss in the community. Dr. Ayalon—Iluz emphasized the importance of the relationship between industry and community as exemplified in the successful cooperation between the Amal network and a car import company. He noted the need for mutual benefit for both parties to ensure a successful cooperation. The audience raised other issues that call for further research: Could the involvement of businesses in the Third Sector limit the responsibility of the state towards its citizens? How can the state supervise allocation of resources of business organizations on social issues? Do business enterprises treat Third Sector organizations in a paternalistic way? Is there a way to encourage business enterprises to support controversial issues, which are not in the public consensus?

The plenary no doubt, provided us with an appetizer for the discussion on the issue of business social responsibility that calls for further studies and discussions in the future.
Main Issues and Dilemmas Regarding Policy towards the Third Sector in Israel: From the Work of the Policy Committee

Michal Bar

In the session devoted to this issue, Prof. Itzhak Gal-Noor and Ms. Michal Bar presented several dilemmas and their derived policy alternatives as reflected in the work of the Committee of the Development Policy for Israel’s Third Sector. The Committee, established in 2000, includes 17 prominent experts on the third sector in Israel. During its work the Committee heard reports and testimonies from different individuals involved in formulating government policy towards the third sector in Israel. These included representatives of government units that deal with third sector organizations (registrars, supervisors etc.), third sector organizations, foundations and representatives from the business sector. At present the Committee is engaged in summarizing its findings and formulating its recommendations.

The session presented dilemmas encountered by the Committee around a number of issues. The first was the dilemma on policy: Is there a need to develop policy towards the Third Sector? On the one hand this is a sector characterized by pluralism, a variety of forms of activity, different organizational frameworks and forms of communication with different bodies; thus, forming a specific policy might harm these unique characteristics. Notable in this context is the fact that the Israeli Third Sector has grown and expanded during the past two decades without any guided government policy. Yet, the questionable image of the Third Sector in the public opinion, the complexity of contracting with government, the different arrangements applied by the supervising agencies, the opportunities for abuse, make the activity of Israeli Third Sector organizations difficult. This results in tension between the desire to put the relationship between the third sector and government in order, and the potential hurdles such as “over interference” and disrupting the pluralism of Third Sector organizations as a result of an orderly and uniform policy.

The political alternative raised in this context was the formulation of a formal, clear-cut, transparent and consistent policy towards the Third Sector, a policy that expresses governmental recognition of the unique contribution of Third Sector organizations to the Israeli society and economy. Such recognition should be based on the distinction between the different activity patterns of the three sectors: government, business and Third, and their cooperation in order to realize mutual social goals. This recognition should emphasize the unique characteristics of Third Sector organizations, to be preserved and nurtured. This also should constitute the government and Third Sector’s declaration to structure the relationships between them while preserving the independence of Third Sector organizations.

A second issue had to do with the definition of the Third Sector for the purpose of formulating policy towards it. The common definition, based on the international definition of the Hopkins Project, lumps together many and different types of organizations under one framework. In the context of policy, there is a difference in Israel between organizations that enjoy legal or decreed policy arrangements and the large group of organizations lacking such arrangements with the government. The Committee chose not to include in its deliberations Third Sector organizations providing higher education and primary health (Kupot Holim) services, which activity, roles and relationship with the government are legally regulated. Even when both these groups are excluded, a large and varied group of organizations still remains, differing significantly from each other. Some consider this variety as one of the main strong points of the Third Sector in Israel, yet at the same time the ability to create a comprehensive policy, which could answer the needs and special characteristics of this great variety of organizations, still remains questionable.

Another issue has to do with the government attitude towards the Third Sector in Israel, especially the issue of supervising its activity. No doubt the public has the right and even the duty (through the state) to supervise those organizations that enjoy public financial support. Yet the question still remains, what should be the appropriate supervision mode of organizations that do not enjoy public support, and whether the small group of organizations that went astray calls for meticulous and comprehensive supervision on all, which sometimes entails rude interference in their activities.

ICTR data indicate that the majority (80%) of Third Sector organizations in Israel do not enjoy any public support and only a small number (20%) receive it. These data and the problematic relationship that has been developing during recent years between the supervising agents and the sector’s organizations, call for a re-evaluation of the supervision nature and methods. The policy alternative suggested in this context is the handling of the coordination and supervision by one governmental body that will be in charge of Third Sector issues and will address all public and governmental aspects. As part of formulating this body, there is a need to address the question of registration of these organizations as well as the supervision of their activities and their internal procedures. There is a need to address the issue of the inspection authorization, its methods and criteria, cooperating in this process with Third Sector organizations. The activity of the supervising body should be accompanied and guided by a public council. Forming such a council to include representatives of the Sector and public figures should secure the Third Sector’s independent activity.

Another alternative is the formation of a public body to act together with the Registrar of Associations as a “super-structure” that will determine, integrate and update the relevant supervision rules of Third Sector organizations. This body will guide the Registrar in its activities and set up regulations for supervision and examination of associations.

A third alternative is forming a statutory entity of Third Sector organizations with registry, supervision, control and representation authority towards government institutions. This form of supervision will allow significant room for self-organizing and supervising of Third Sector organizations. This body will promote the development of standards for proper management of Third Sector organizations and their relationship with governmental institutions, as well as implement these standards. The jurisdiction as well as
The discussants, Dr. Neri Horowitz, Prof. Samy Samooha, as well as the audience, focused on the need to re-examine the functions of the Third Sector in Israel, the division of labor between the Sector and the government and the need to distinguish between different organizations in terms of policy. It was argued that there is a need for a critical evaluation of the Third Sector, its relations with the government and the business sector. Such evaluation assumes the existence of conflictual relations between Third Sector organizations and the government and is opposed to the idea of cooperation between the two. Such evaluation further assumes the existence of a heterogeneous third sector, in which organizations are engaged in different areas and operate by different methods. It therefore emphasizes the need to distinguish between service-provision organizations with government support, and those engaged in social change. It was further argued that there is a need to develop differential policy to different types of organizations.

Furthermore, the attempt to create organizational categories according to areas of activity, functions or contractual methods in order to formulate differential policy that would correspond to each of the categories, might be counter-productive, as third sector organizations are dynamic and their contractual links with the government as well as their modes of action and areas of activity, change during the organization’s life cycle. Most organizations are engaged in a number of activity areas simultaneously, contract with the government in different ways and are engaged in social change as well as in service provision. It is important to address these dynamics in the context of policy formulation towards the Third Sector. Other remarks emphasized the need to reaffirm the responsibility and accountability of the public and the Third sectors, and the need to enforce existing regulations in this area. The need to simplify the complicated bureaucratic procedures enacted by different bodies that deal with Third Sector organizations, was emphasized, as they encumber third sector organizations in their registration, connections with the tax authorities and their daily activity.

An Israeli Third Sector and Civil Society Researchers’ Association was formed

During the ICTR Spring Conference, the Israeli Third Sector and Civil Society Researchers’ Association was formed. Third Sector Researchers’ Associations exist in numerous countries around the world, including the UK, Ireland, Japan, India, German-speaking countries and the Scandinavian countries. In addition, there are international associations — ISTR and Arnova. These associations see as their goal to build communication lines among scholars, exchange information, update their members about academic events, organize conferences and research forums and in general, provide legitimization to this new research area.

At the meeting held at the ICTR Conference, a large number of scholars working in different research areas and disciplines, representing most universities and colleges in the country expressed interest to join the association. An Interim Committee was elected to represent the different disciplines and institutions. The committee members are: Chair: Dr. Hadara bar-mor, Law School, Netanya Academic Collage, Mr. Nissan Di’ab, Director of Amutat Zohour Algd, Ms. Debbi Shaski Levental, Schwartz Program and M.A. in Management of Community and Non-Profit Organizations, Paul Baerwald School of Social Work, The Hebrew University, Dr. Esther Iecovitz, Social Work Department, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Adv. Ophir Katz, “Ophir Katz & Co.”, Mr. Nissan Limor, former CEO of the Council for Higher Education, Dr. Rita Mano-Negrin, Humen services Dept., Haifa University, Adv. Eitan Tsachor, Eitan Tsachor & Co-Law Office. Its role is to prepare the by-laws for the new association, which will include its goals and procedures. The idea is to establish an independent association; it will coordinate its activities with ICTR, if it so wishes. An online Internet discussion group is about to be inaugurated, that will present ideas to which participants will be able to respond.

Potential participants who did not attend the conference and wish to join the group can (at this stage) register through ICTR.

Nissan Limor, former CEO of the Council for Higher Education, is joining the Center as a consultant. Among his duties will be assisting in the development of the Center’s strategic plan for the coming five years.

New publication

Public Boards of Third Sector Organizations in Israel: Structural, Functional and Organizational Characteristics.
(In Hebrew)

By:
Dr. Esther Iecovitch
Dr. Mike Naftali
Prof. Benjamin Gidron
& Dr. Hadara Bar-Mor

Suheil Di’ab
In this column we will present new academic publications (books, articles) on the Israeli Third Sector/Civil society. We urge authors whose research was published to notify us about it.

Benjamin Gidron, Stanley. N. Katz and Yeheskel Hasenfeld (eds.) *Mobilizing for Peace: Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine and South Africa*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002

The book summarizes findings from an international study of "Peace/Conflict Resolution Organizations". The study took place around three major international violent conflicts in which a process of negotiations between the warring parties has begun in mid-1990’s: Northern Ireland, South Africa and Israel/Palestine. The study focuses on the characteristics of these (third sector) organizations that were active during the period that preceded the breakthroughs in all three conflicts. There were a great variety of organizations studied, those engaged in advocacy, dialog, service provision, etc., all of them attempted to persuade or push their respective societies and governments to adopt alternative strategies to deal with the conflict to the violent ones used. The book analyzes these organizations twice: Once in their local context and once in the international/ comparative context.

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