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The Centre for the Study of Resilience Newsletter

Issue 1/2 for 2019

A biannual newsletter brought to you by The Centre for the Study of Resilience

Harvard-Africa-Asia Partnerships in Health and Healthcare Delivery for Women and Youth

The Africa-Asia Partnerships in Health and Healthcare Delivery for Women and Youth was a two-day, by invitation only symposium organised by Harvard. As part of this important occasion, Prof Liesel Ebersöhn organised a specialist panel that focused on medical humanities perspectives on young people and health in sub-Saharan Africa. The panellists, who were all from the University of Pretoria, included Profs Tharina Guse, Linda Theron and Flavia Senkubuge. The panel was chaired by Prof. Karin Thornber (Harvard).

Prof Theron, a CSR affiliate, reported on some of the early findings of the Resilient Youth in Stressed Environments (RYSE) study. The RYSE findings emphasise that adolescent resilience is a collaborative process to which families and communities make key contributions. These findings fit with medical humanities emphases on people as nested beings and urge mental health practitioners to intervene at the level of the family and community, rather than only at the level of the adolescent



The panel consisting of Prof Flavia Senkubuge, Prof Karin Thornber, Prof Tharina Guse, and Prof Linda Theron responding to the audience's questions

The Centre for the Study of Resilience (CSR), Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria: Advisory Board Meeting



Some of the attendees after the council meeting: Prof Ebersöhn, Ms Ogawa, Prof Mampane, Prof de Beer and Prof van Breda

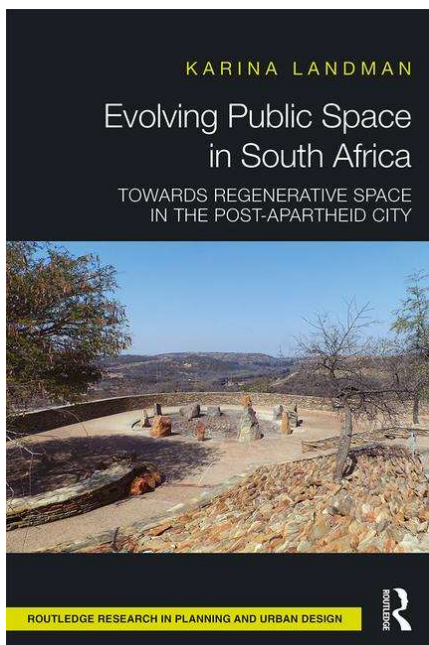
The annual Advisory Board meeting of the Centre for the Study of Resilience was held on 25 February 2019. This meeting was chaired by the Dean of Humanities, Prof Vasu Reddy.

The attendees included Ms Marietjie de Waal (Deputy Director and Representative: Finances, UP), Ms Marlene Ogawa (Program Manager: Synergos Institute), Prof Adrian van Breda (Professor: Department of Social Work, UJ), Prof Alta van der Merwe (Representative & Deputy Dean: Teaching and Learning, UP), Prof Liesel Ebersöhn (Director: The Centre for the Study of Resilience, UP), Prof Ruth Mampane (Head of Department: Department of Educational Psychology, UP), Prof Stephan de Beer (Representative and Professor: Faculty of Theology and Religion, UP), and Prof Stephanie Burton (Vice-Principal: Research and Postgraduate Education, UP).

Evolving Public Space in South Africa: Towards Regenerative Space in the Post-Apartheid City

Prof Karen Landman's *Evolving Public Space in South Africa* discusses the transformation of public space highlighted in the country. Drawing on examples from major cities, the author demonstrates that these spaces are not only becoming wasted space but are also adapting and evolving to accommodate new users and uses in various parts of the city. This process of evolution tends to challenge the more traditional visions and general global views of declining public space in cities and argues that it rather resembles the resilience of these spaces and the potential for regeneration through continuously emerging and mutating forms, functions and meanings.

This publication from 2018 by Routledge includes over 20 black-and-white images. This book would be beneficial to academics and students of urban planning and design and those interested in the regeneration of cities.



Evolving Public Space in South Africa by Prof Karen Landman

Exploring resilience research possibilities with Leicester Institute for Advance Studies

As part of the Newton Mobility Grant that CSR-affiliated Prof Linda Theron holds in collaboration with Dr Diane Levine (Co-director, Leicester Institute for Advance Studies, Leicester University, UK), Prof Theron visited Leicester Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS) from 25 February to 1 March. The primary purpose of this visit was to explore collaboration possibilities for resilience-focused research. To this end, Linda and Diane invited Dr Michael Ungar (Canada Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience; Director, Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University) to join in the exploratory talks.

They also invited respected Leicester University researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. The result of these talks was a preliminary resilience-focused funding proposal to the United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) for cross-disciplinary research in South Africa. If successful, the proposed research will build on the Resilient Youth in Stressed Environments (RYSE) study. RYSE (2017-2021), which is funded by CIHR and co-led by Michael and Linda, is investigating the biopsychosocial and environmental determinants of adolescent resilience in a sample of adolescents from Canada and South Africa.

In addition to the promising research talks, Linda, Michael and Diane co-hosted a day-long resilience workshop (27 February). Linda and Michael co-presented a public resilience lecture (28 February). Linda and Diane also managed to find time to advance a publication-in-process documenting their digital story work with RYSE participants in Secunda, South Africa.



Prof Linda Theron and Dr Michael Ungar whilst visiting LIAS.

Parent guidance through mobile technology

Parent participants from two at risk school-communities in Pretoria (Gauteng) were invited to participate in a study that investigates parent guidance on health promotion practices by utilising mobile devices. The study forms part of a broader research project in collaboration with Fordham University in New York City (US), in which learners and parents of two primary schools in the at-risk communities have been participating since 2014.

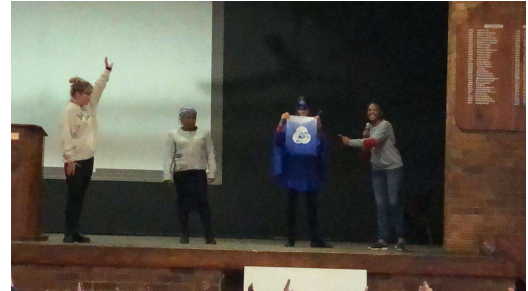
As background to developing short parent guidance messages that will be sent to parents via mobile devices during 2019, two participatory workshops were facilitated at the two respective schools in 2018, exploring parents' needs and expectations. More specifically, this phase of the project focused on exploring parents' ideas in terms of suitable topics to cover in parent guidance messages, in terms of food and nutrition, physical fitness, and child-rearing practices. In addition, we explored preferred modes of delivery for providing parent guidance in the two specific school-communities.



Introducing the project to the learners at one of the schools

During the next phase of the project, we developed WhatsApp messages based on an analysis of the needs and expectations, as voiced by the parents. We then invited all parents of the two schools to join a WhatsApp group, through which we will be sending three messages per week for a period of 26 weeks, commencing June 2019. The messages were compiled by university researchers in the fields of nutrition, physical fitness, psychosocial wellbeing and technology education. The messages will aim to provide information on how parents can support or guide their children in the aforementioned fields. In addition to being part of the WhatsApp groups, parents will be asked to complete short surveys from time to time and at the end of the 26-week period about their experiences and perceptions of being part of the project.

In addition to parents gaining knowledge and parenting skills, other benefits of the project include the possibility of the findings informing future projects, in terms of suitable content and modes of delivery when providing parent guidance on healthy food, nutrition and lifestyle behaviour.



Postgraduate students in action

Teacher Resilience Lab: International partner visit

29 January-5 February 2019

The Teacher Resilience Lab at the Centre for the Study of Resilience, UP focuses on expanding knowledge on pathways to teacher resilience in a challenged African milieu of inherited inequalities and transformation towards equality, equity and quality in education. In the beginning of 2019 professor Liesel Ebersöhn spent time with professor Caroline Mansfield (Dean of Education, University of Notre Dame, Australia) to explore collaboration.

Ebersöhn and Mansfield have collaborated over the last decade to contemplate knowledge from the southern hemisphere for the emerging body of knowledge on teacher resilience. This collaboration has seen publications, shared invited symposia sessions at international conferences (including AERA and ECER), examination of postgraduate student dissertations, and development of teacher resilience measures.



Meeting at Bathers Beach, a stone-throw away from the Faculty of Education, University of Norte Dame

Teacher Resilience Lab Meetings

29 January 2019; 1 March 2019; 27 March 2019: Proposal Presentation: 13 March 2019

Teacher resilience presents a current and important focus in educational research and as a result the Teacher Resilience Lab, Centre for the Study of Resilience, provides a valuable space for University of Pretoria postgraduate students to participate in knowledge generation. The Teacher Resilience lab aims to study pathways to teacher resilience in a transforming, postcolonial society – constructing knowledge from Africa with meaning for global education discourses. The focus on teacher resilience denotes investigating pathways that support teachers to remain in the profession, experience job satisfaction and provide quality education – despite severe challenges in a space of structural disparity.



Teacher Resilience Lab postgraduate students, Carine Jonker, Zahné Bosch, and Irene Seaworyeh with Professor Ebersöhn

The Teacher Resilience Lab @ the Centre for the Study of Resilience is led by Professor Liesel Ebersöhn with Dr Surette van Staden and Dr Marien Graham as co-investigators, as well as postgraduate students - two doctoral students (Carine Jonker and Jessica Versfeld) and three master's students (Joanne Tomlinson, Irene Seaworyeh and Zahné Bosch).

The Teacher Resilience Lab also builds on existing international teacher resilience networks (including Professor Caroline Mansfield, University of Notre Dame, and Dr Qing Gu, University College London) to build research collaboration. The group comprises of.

The first Teacher Resilience Lab meeting took place on 29 January 2019 at the Centre for the Study of Resilience (CSR) and provided the lab members with an opportunity get acquainted with each other as well as their respective studies and set the tone for future sessions. In addition to the meeting, on 1 March 2019, a working session took place at CSR with the specific purpose of using readings to contextualise teacher resilience research in a Global South context.

Whereas the doctoral students are making steady progress towards the defences of their proposals, the proposals of the three master's students were approved following presentation of to an expert panel in the Department of Educational Psychology on 13 March 2019. An additional Teacher Resilience Lab meeting focused on content and processes related to literature review, as well as drafting a methodology and introductory chapter for dissertations. All three master's students have submitted at least first drafts of two chapters

Social connectedness as pathway to teacher resilience: The Isithebe intervention

15 March 2019

Teacher resilience denotes retention of teachers, job satisfaction (wellbeing), and quality education. Isithebe investigates the extent to which an intentional social connectedness intervention with teachers can enable teacher resilience.



Some of the activities teachers engaged in during the arts-based intervention

This mixed-method intervention study, funded by Synergos, explores pathways to teacher resilience in collaboration with IMBUMBA YABEFUNDISINTSA-PHO (teachers working together as a family), constituting researchers, funders and 38 teachers (2 males, 36

females) from six primary schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropoli – indicative of schools confronted by challenges characteristic of structural disparity in a transforming, postcolonial society. The baseline assessment took place in September 2018 and the intervention training to use the Isithebe-kit in March 2019. Over six months teachers meet monthly to engage with each other using Isithebe-kits to guide the gatherings. The post-intervention assessment will take place on 21 September 2019.



Mr Luvuyo Mbambo, Mr Mlungani Tunce, Ms Phumla Masinda, Ms Nomkita Sankant and Ms Phumla Mgcuba

The Isithebe-intervention is designed to use art therapy techniques during joint teacher sessions to foster fellowship and social connectedness between teachers, peers and significant others. The development of the intervention was an interactive process where both researchers and teacher participants learn and develop from each other. The intervention is called ISITHEBE – symbolising sharing and coming together by using the image of a wooden tray or woven mat to serve meat at gatherings.



Participants after the intervention training session

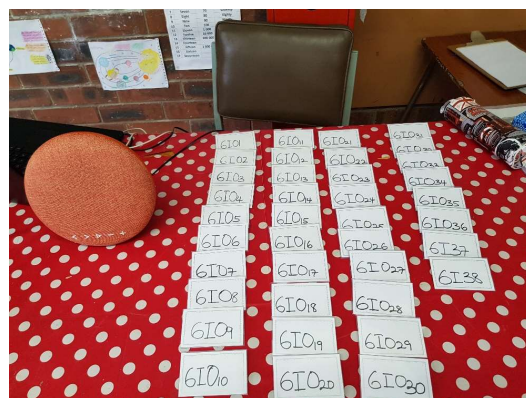
Data Collection Commences on Multilingualism Project

Significant progress has been made with the data collection on the Primary Learners Multilingualism Project. The first phase of teacher interviews has been completed. Classroom observations have been conducted in four schools in Gauteng. The multilingual intervention also commenced in four Grade 5 and four Grade 6 classes in two schools and two townships (Mamelodi and Laudium). This will continue as soon as schools resumes in July 2019.

The project leader is Dr Funke Omidire (University of Pretoria) and the main collaborators are Prof Liesel Ebersöhn (University of Pretoria) and Prof Karen Murphy (Penn State University). The Masters students working on the project are Pribashnie Naidoo, Clifford Dihangoane, Colleen Makolane, Kirstin Anthony, Keamogetswe Mekgwe, and Keryn Fredricks and the Doctoral student is Sameera Ayob.



A photo of one of the classrooms where the data collection takes place



A Photo showing the preparations for data collection in a Grade 6 class in a partner school.

Resilience Think Tank at the University of Cape Town

The African Climate and Development Initiative (UCT) and the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition (US) hosted a resilience think tank at UCT on 28 March. The focus for the think tanks was 'Interrogating Resilience in Different Contexts'. The organisers invited Professor Oonsie Biggs (who holds a DST/NRF South African Research Chair in Social-Ecological Systems and Resilience and is affiliated with the Stockholm Resilience Centre in Sweden) and CSR-affiliated Professor Linda Theron to be the Think Tank's keynote speakers. Oonsie's keynote was titled 'Tackling the Anthropocene challenge: Social-ecological resilience thinking'.

Linda's was titled 'Innovations in the theory and practice of psychological resilience'. In addition to these two contrasting keynote perspectives on resilience, the organisers invited academic panellists from diverse disciplines (e.g., urban governance; securities studies; disaster risk reduction; business studies) as well as practitioner panellists (including from government). The result was a day of inspiring, cutting-edge deliberations that promise to take the study of resilience in South Africa forward.



Profs Oonsie Biggs and Linda Theron

CSR Representatives at the Annual American Education Research Association Conference

The American Education Research Association's annual conference took place from 6-10 April in Toronto, Canada this year. Dr Funke Omidire and Prof Ruth Mampane attended it and had a poster presentation. Their poster presentation was titled - Inequality in education policy in post-truth era: Spotlight on language realities in a rural school.



Dr Funke Omidire with the poster presentation



Prof Joanna Madalinska-Michalak, Prof Bee Leng Chua, Prof Ruth Mampane & Dr Funke Omidire National Institute of Education, Singapore (An Institute of Nanyang Technological University) Breakfast Reception at the AERA Annual Meeting in Toronto, Canada.

Fordham-UP HIV stigma research collaboration June 2018 – July 2019

This collaboration builds on the relationships between Fordham and the University of Pretoria, and brings together our overlapping interests in HIV stigma, sexual orientation and resilience. A pilot study, it explores the role of HIV stigma in discordant gay male couples, where one is HIV positive and the other negative. We are interviewing the HIV negative partner to understand how they view the role of stigma and how as a couple they negotiate this and manage the impact of it in their lives.

In late February 2019 Dr Eric Chen visited UP and the research partners were able to touch base about their research process and to plan for the analysis of data and how the writing up process would work. Dr Chen and his Fordham assistant, Douglas Boyd, have completed their interviews while the South Africa interviews are nearing completion. They are being conducted by Prof Pierre

Brouard who is drawing on LGBTI social media networks for the South Africa sample.

An interesting challenge in the South African sample is the diversity of backgrounds reflected in the sample so far: a preliminary reflection is that HIV stigma still persists and that couple strategies to manage it include selective disclosure and reputation management. We look forward to a more comprehensive analysis.



Prof Pierre Brouard, Dr Eric Chen & Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

Chairing a G-STIC panel on sustainable development in Brussels

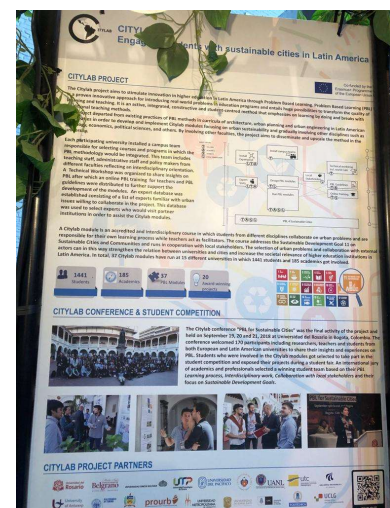
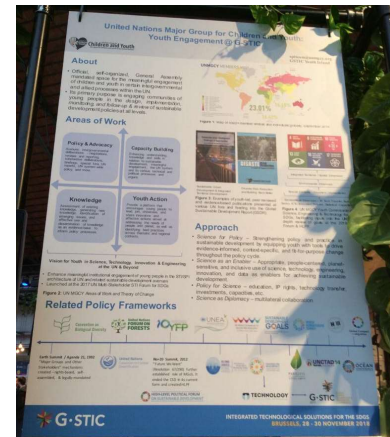
Professor Liesel Ebersöhn was invited to chair a panel on STI strategies for educational systems in rural, remote and urban areas within the UN Strategy on Practical Technological Applications in Education (Brussels, 29 November 2018)

As Chair of the panel she opened the session by arguing that long-term partnerships between higher education institutions (HEI) and remote schools a practical technological applications strategy for educational systems in remote settings is. She leveraged insights based on longitudinal data over a ten-year time frame of higher education engagement with teachers in six remote schools (high schools = 2; primary schools = 4).

Given adversity in a postcolonial space (limited services and support and isolated from such scant services, varied levels of teacher preparedness/qualifications, high levels of illiteracy in households, multilingual classrooms with a non-home-language as language of teaching and learning, high demands on psychosocial support given health, socio-economic deprivation), she posited that high inequality also means limited structural opportunities for teacher professional development and limited access to

(scant) resources that support teaching, learning and wellbeing. This is especially evident in remote schools.

Higher education engagement brings professional development and cutting-edge teaching and learning resources to isolated teachers. HEI-students and researchers provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their competence, culminating in better than expected outcomes of teacher competence, confidence and motivation.



Examples of knowledge shared in the G-STIC exhibition hall, Brussels November 2018

New resilience related publications

Arabomen, O.J., Chirwa, P.W., & Babalola, F.D. (2019) Willingness-to-pay for Environmental Services Provided by Trees in Core and Fringe Areas of Benin City, Nigeria. *International Forestry Review*, 21: 23-36. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1505/146554819825863717>

Araia, M.G. & Chirwa, P.W. (2019) Revealing the Predominance of Culture over the Ecological Abundance of Resources in Shaping Local People's Forest and Tree Species Use Behaviour: The Case of the Vhavenda People, South Africa. *Sustainability* 11(11): 3143; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11113143>

Chichinye, A., Geldenhuys, C.J & Chirwa P.W. (2019) Land-use impacts on the composition and diversity of the *Baikiaea*–*Guibourtia*–*Pterocarpus* woodlands of North-Western Zimbabwe, *Southern Forests: a Journal of Forest Science* 81: 151-165, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2989/20702620.2018.1531278>

Chirwa P.W. & Adeyemi O. (2019) Deforestation in Africa: Implications on Food and Nutritional Security. In: Leal Filho W., Azul A., Brandli L., Özuyar P., Wall T. (eds) *Zero Hunger. Encyclopaedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. Springer, Cham. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69626-3>

Mampane, R., Omidire, F. & Aluko, R. (2018) Decolonising higher education in Africa: Arriving at a global solution. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(4) pp1-9.

Mampane, R. & Omidire, F. (2018). The role of community care workers and the coping strategies they adopt in high-risk contexts. *Social Work Review* Vol 4

Nel, D., du Plessis, C. and Landman, K. 2018. Planning for dynamic cities: introducing a framework to understand urban change from a complex adaptive systems approach. *International Planning Studies*, 23 (3):250-263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563475.2018.1439370>

Ofoegbu C/ & Chirwa, P.W. (2018). Analysis of rural people's attitude towards the management of tribal forests in South Africa. *Journal of Sustainable Forestry*, DOI: 10.1080/10549811.2018.1554495 To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10549811.2018.1554495>

Omidire, F., Ayob, S., Mampane, R. & Sefotho, M., (2018) 'Using structured movement educational activities to teach mathematics and language concepts to pre-schoolers', *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 8(1), a513 DOI. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v8i1.513>

Omidire, F., Ebersöhn, L., Leask, M., & Du Plessis, A. (2018) A South African case study of teaching English in two rural schools. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 36(18) pp 277-290.

Sagona, W.C.J., Chirwa, P.W. & Sajidu, S.M. (2019) The miracle mix of Moringa: Status of Moringa research and development in Malawi, *South African Journal of Botany*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sajb.2019.03.021>

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