



Werner Otto Graduate Arab Women Program 2021

REPORT 2021

This year, we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Werner Otto Scholarship Program. 20 years ago the German Friends Association initiated the program as a response to the lack of support provided for Arab women studying towards Master's and PhD degrees. Taking into consideration the women's involvement in academic, professional and family matters it became clear that scholarships were strongly needed. Enabling talented Arab female students to pursue their academic careers, our scholarships serve as an important tool for empowerment. Consequently, the program's purpose is not only to overcome the obstacle of resistance that some of the scholars are still facing in their traditional environment, but to promote Arab women within Israeli society as a whole. Up to now we granted a scholarship to over 200 strongly committed women.



We are fortunate to have the Jewish-Arab Center as a reliable partner throughout. This unique institution has gained great recognition for its efforts in fostering Jewish-Arab cooperation. Together with the German Friends it chooses the best applicants and offers assistance to our scholars in dealing with any academic or personal issue.

Last year challenged all of us in different ways and made us re-evaluate what it means to connect with each other. And while the year was in many ways a year of anxiety and distancing, we also experienced the exact opposite: solidarity, support for each other, creativity, patience and closeness. We are glad we could accompany our scholars through these difficult times without anyone dropping out.

I cannot wait to return to the campus of "our" university to meet all our scholars in person. It is so very special to be there. The diverse work in academia and the commitment to society always amazes me. I am looking forward to a brighter future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel
Chairwoman
German Friends Association of the University of Haifa

The Werner Otto Scholarship program is a very important project at the University of Haifa. It is a joint unique sponsorship of the Association of German Friends of the University of Haifa and the Jewish-Arab Center, awarded to outstanding Arab women from diverse academic fields and professions.



The JAC believes that aiding and encouraging our students, especially those who face great barriers will increase the social equality and better our society. Each year the top Arab female students at the University of Haifa are chosen to receive this scholarship and it is always a pleasure to get to know and hear their stories as they reach success and break glass ceilings.

Recent events in our country have emphasized the importance of our center in the public sphere. As violent riots erupted between the Jewish and Arab communities, inside and outside of Israel, it strengthened the understanding that it is vital to continue and form bridges, dialogues and solidarity, among us all. Co- existence and respect must not be just spoken words but a way of life. In the JAC, we stand together, Jews and Arabs, hoping that we can set an example on how to live together and create a better future.

The Werner Otto Scholarship program is a very influential program at our University as it empowers young Arab women and opens up new opportunities for academic collaboration for Jewish and Arab scholars.

The WO network is a significant part of our activities, and we do try to integrate the WO scholarship holders in every event. We are honored to collaborate with them and blessed to have them as part of our Center.

Once again, I want to express my deep gratitude to the German Friends of the University of Haifa for the continuing partnership and support, especially to Mrs. Sonja Lahnstein - Kandel and Ms. Nicola Teuber. Looking forward to continue achieving our shared goals together and improving the lives of our University students as well as others in the State of Israel.

12/12/38

Prof. Adital Ben Ari
Head of the Jewish- Arab center

Alaa Abu Dawoud
MA, Child Development

Alaa is a 31-year-old mother of two girls. She works as a communication clinician in the field of child development. While working as a clinician and raising her own children, she came to the realization that it is impossible to work with children without considering their personal, emotional and cultural context. This understanding impelled her to pursue a master's degree which combines children's' development and their emotional relationships.



At the beginning of her studies, Alaa tried to find academic papers on this subject and discovered that there is a lack of holistic educational content relating to the process of raising a child in the Arabic language. As a result, children from the Arab society experience difficulties with their parents, caregivers and teachers. In addition to that, she also learned of a dire absence in external infrastructure that will meet the everyday needs of children in the Arab localities (for example, there are no playgrounds in residential areas).

Therefore, today she is trying to spread the child's multidisciplinary holistic vision in all levels in which she is involved, starting with the therapeutic level through mentoring caregivers and leading a holistic vision team, up to making holistic psycho-educational knowledge accessible to parents through videos and content files.

Alaa plans to establish an educational journal for parents in Arabic, which will continue the holistic view, and emphasizes the importance of the relationship with the parent for the development of the child.

In addition, she is a part of a local initiative trying to establish an early childhood council in the Arab society, which will address developmental and educational issues in accordance with the needs and nature of this special society.

It is also important for Alaa to continue her academic studies in any program that will allow her to advance her developmental vision and adapt it to the needs of her society.

Donia Sussan,
M.A. Clinical Psychology

Donia was born and raised in a small village called Tarshiha, which is a part of a larger city called Ma'alot-Tarshiha located in the north district of Israel. She moved to Haifa a few years ago to study for her B.A. in Psychology at the University of Haifa, and has been living there since.



As a B.A. student, Donia worked as a research assistant in two different labs, she conducted and summarized literature reviews for research and statistical analysis and ran participants for clinical trials. Moreover, Donia had participated in a volunteering program and in a fieldwork seminar in which she took part in weekly meetings with teenagers suffering from various mental health issues. After graduation, Donia

worked as a Clinical Counselor in an Adult eating disorder ward where she supervised patients during meal-hours and provided emotional guidance and support during treatment hours.

During her M.A. studies, in each academic year she worked as a supervised therapist in a public mental health clinic, she conducted psychodynamic therapy for children and adults who suffer from various emotional difficulties and mental disorders. In the academic field, Donia joined the Experimental Psychopathology lab of Dr. Noam Weinbach, a psychotherapist and researcher, and she is currently conducting research for her thesis work under his supervision. Donia's research focuses on studying the perceptual biases of food's quantity and distance among a population of restrained eaters (also called 'chronic dieter'). The results of her study have the potential to shed light on factors that contribute to the success or failure to restrict food intake among chronic dieters, and might advance our understanding on potential mechanisms that differentiate subgroups of eating disorders. In the future, she wishes to work as a therapist with the clinical eating disorders population and continue her research work of sub- and clinical eating disorders populations. Donia takes part in the adaptation and translations of assessment tests and questionnaires to the Arabic language, which is set to increase the accessibility of assessment and research to the Arab population.

Hadeel Samara **MA, The Department of Human Biology**

Hadeel is at the second year of her M.Sc. in the Human Biology Department at the University of Haifa. Hadeel is conducting her research at Dr. Dalit Barkan laboratory of tumor dormancy and metastasis. The aim of her thesis is to develop a new approach to combat breast cancer recurrence. Given the fact that it is a pioneer research, it makes it exceedingly a challenging one.

Recurrence of breast cancer as a metastatic disease can occur 5-20 years after mastectomy and adjuvant therapy and is the major cause of mortality of breast cancer patients. Metastatic recurrence arises from dormant tumor cells that disseminated at early stage of the disease to distant organs such as bone marrow and lymph nodes. Hence, understanding the mechanisms of tumor dormancy to overt metastasis may provide the premise for development of new drugs that will prevent or treat recurrent metastatic disease.

In 2017, Hadeel has completed her B.Sc in Medical Laboratory Science at Hadassah Academic College with honors for high academic achievement. During her Master's pursuit, she is working as a Medical Laboratory Technician at Saint Vincent De Paul-French Hospital in Nazareth, and as a Biochemistry Lab tutor for B.Sc students at the University. In previous years, she worked as a Medical Laboratory Technician in the blood bank at BNAI-ZION Medical Center in Haifa. During her work, she gained practical experience in the Laboratory of Molecular Biology and Microbiology at Emek Medical Center, Afula. While she was a student at the Hadassah Academic College, Jerusalem, she



worked as a tutor for first-year students. During her gap year after high school, she worked as Medical Secretary in the radiology department at Nazareth French Hospital.

Hadeel's study will not come to an end with the accomplishment of this exciting project. She has set her heart on further education to obtain a PhD degree. She is totally convinced that it was for a greater purpose that she has been following this path. She does not value her research as mere work, which provides an additional step to advance her personal life, it is her life goal to help and support women who are suffering. The findings of her project will provide hope for many unfortunate women in her country and particularly for the Arab women among whom she will be working and serving. Joyfully, Hadeel endures the challenges because she sees where her path leads.

Rozan Daniel-Copti

M.A. The Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences

Rozan lives in Nazareth. She completed her secondary education in Nazareth, and pursued higher education at Tel-Aviv University, where she graduated with a B.A. in Occupational Therapy with high honors.

For the last eleven years, she has served as an occupational therapist working with Arab children and parents in various institutions. Now she is working in Ebdaa, special education school, for adolescents with Learning Disorders diagnosis. Her job includes: one on one treatments; group treatments; intervention in the classrooms; interdisciplinary workshops; parents workshops. Additionally, and as a precedent in Ebdaa, the school principal appointed Rozan (an occupational therapist) as a class educator. This year, also as precedent in Ebdaa, the school principal promoted Rozan as a grade level coordinator.

Rozan is an M.A. student at the Department of Social Welfare and Health Sciences, University of Haifa. Rozan chose to combine her M.A. degree with research work (thesis) that focuses on adolescents with Learning Disorders and their daily difficulties that are related to executive functions and time organization, plus to investigate their health condition from their perspective, a research which intrigued her even before starting her Master's degree.

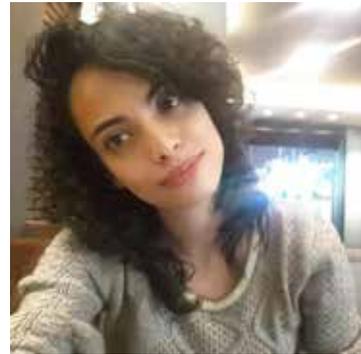
Rozan's main interest is to increase the awareness, among the Arab community as well as in education systems, regarding the uniqueness and important role of occupational therapy in improving the individual's health and well-being.



Tasneem Morshed

MA, The Department of English Literature

Tasneem is a third year Master's student at the Department of English Literature - University of Haifa. She is currently writing her thesis, which explores men's desire for artificial reproduction through science in the Gothic novel. Her body of work includes three Gothic novels that incorporate science into them. In addressing such texts, Tasneem will explore the reasons behind these men's desire for artificial reproduction and how it ultimately leads to the displacement of women. Although her thesis includes a text written as early as almost 200 years ago, she couldn't help but notice the relevance to women today, and how women are constantly displaced in society.



As for her job, Tasneem works as a student program coordinator and sessions' facilitator at an organization called MEET, which stands for The Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow. It is an excellence program that provides students from the region who have just finished the 9th grade knowledge in computer programming, technology, business and entrepreneurship as well as offers its students various skills including leadership, teamwork, creativity and problem solving. Tasneem admires this organization as it strives to educate and empower tomorrow's most promising Palestinian and Israeli leaders to take action towards creating positive social and political impact in the Middle East. The program is fully conducted in English, whether for facilitators, students or visitors, fostering a welcoming atmosphere that aims to eliminate a sense of alienation due to language barriers. Tasneem is thrilled to be part of these future leaders' journey. Whether it is from selecting them through the recruitment process to building their curriculum and supporting them throughout their three-year process, every second is an adventure for her.

Abeer Omari-Mourad

MA, Special Education, the Division of Emotional disorder and Behavioral problems

Abeer is 27 years old, from Yafia' (Yaffat Al-Nasira). She is a special education teacher for the deaf and hard of hearing students and a certified Israeli Sign Language Interpreter; interpreting in courts, hospitals, universities, schools and education centers, presentations, ceremonies and more. Since 2018, she also lectures at Ariel University in a course titled "Israeli Sign Language Interpreting" which focuses on the Arabic language and Arab deaf community in Israel.



Currently, Abeer is working on completing her PhD thesis under the supervision of Carmit-Noa Shpigelman. Relying on Pearlin's repression process model, Abeer's research aims to check the association between family burden and wellbeing among hearing women married to deaf spouses, compared to deaf women married to deaf spouses in the Arab society in

Israel in terms of moderation and mediation variables- psychological distress, social support and religious belief.

During her professional career, Abeer participated in different volunteering projects within the deaf community and won outstanding instructor awards and scholarships due to her social engagement. In addition, she was a member in AMAL (the Hebrew acronym for "Spoken Arabic for All") organization that works to mainstream Arab culture and refute the negative stigma towards it in the Israeli society by teaching spoken Arabic in Hebrew-speaking Israeli schools. By making the knowledge of Arabic and Arab culture more accessible to Jewish, non-Arabic speaking children, she aims to promote an atmosphere of peace, tolerance and mutual respect between Jews and Arabs in the Israeli society.

**Haya Kaabeya,
MA, Sagol Department of Neurobiology**

Haya is from Shafa-amr, a city in the Northern District of Israel. She completed her bachelor's degree in physical therapy from Tel-Aviv University. Later on, she worked as a children's physical therapist for almost a decade of her life. During her tenure, Haya became a coordinator as well as an instructor in the group she was working in.

At present, Haya is pursuing her master's degree in the field of neuroscience from the University of Haifa. In her first year, she had completed all of her courses, which included biochemistry, molecular biology, electrophysiology, neuroanatomy, statistics etc. Currently, Haya is in her final year, and she is working in Dr. Shani Stern's lab for precision disease modelling. In her lab, she is working with a specific mutation that causes early onset of Parkinson's disease, which means onset before the age of 40. Parkinson's disease is a chronic neurodegenerative disorder, caused by progressive loss of neurons that produce the neurotransmitter dopamine in the Substantia nigra Pars Compacta (SNpc), brain region responsible for controlling body movements. Thus, the disease is mainly characterized by motor deficits and usually appears around the age of 65-70. Haya's project aims to characterize the pathogenicity of this mutation on the genetic and functional level using induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) from patient derived fibroblasts.



Dana Masharka**M.Sc. The Department of Economics**

Dana is studying for her M.Sc. in economics, in the joint program of the Technion and University of Haifa. In 2018, she obtained her B.A in economics and IT Management at the University of Haifa. Dana finished her master's courses with an average grade of 91. Dana received an excellent academic scholarship at her second year in M.Sc.

Dana first met the subject life satisfaction in economics at her first semester in Macroeconomics course with Prof. Bar-Ilan Avner, during the course's requirement to present an article about life satisfaction. After reading articles about life



satisfaction in economic research, she was fascinated with the subject and wondered about the factors affecting life and financial satisfaction of Israeli citizens, and if there are differences between ethnic groups. In addition, since Israel is a young country with many security events, Dana was interested to learn if life and financial satisfaction was affected by the security events and see if there are differences between ethnic groups.

To study the factors affecting life and financial satisfaction and study the security events on Israeli citizens, Dana focused in her thesis on the 2006 Lebanon war and 2014 Gaza-Israel conflict under the supervision Professor Bar-Ilan Avner and Dr. Aiche Avishay. Dana's long-term goal is to pursue a Ph.D.

Efat Hamza**PhD, Geography and Environmental Sciences**

Efat completed her B.A. in Archeology and Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 2012, she obtained her M.A. in Geography and Environmental Sciences from the University of Haifa. During her M.A. thesis, she investigated the Arab Vernacular Architecture and it's Adaptation to the Mediterranean Climatic Zones in Israel. The study highlighted the methods of adaptation, of the local Arab society in Israel to the climatic environment by identifying the variety of climatic strategies and principles on which the traditional house was based.



The results revealed that the simple, traditional climatic ideas that characterize the traditional architecture that have been documented can be used in future building initiatives as thermal comfort and energy saving. They should be the essence of any building design, especially when the emerging current world energy and environmental crisis demand a substantial revolution of building design strategies, and management methods.

As parts of her academic activities, she published, as a co-author, two papers in accredited scientific journals in the field of environmental awareness.

In March 2019, Efat began her PhD studies at University of Haifa in Geography and Environmental Sciences, where she is conducting research titled " Examination of “Place” Based Educational Initiatives in the Arab Education System in Israel". The research focuses on following the principles of place-based learning that are reflected in educational initiatives; defining success according to the initiative leaders, identifying the success factors that enable the goals to be achieved when dealing with the issue of sustainability, or alternatively, identifying the barriers that prevent them from being achieved. The importance of this research is its focus on examining place-based educational initiatives in schools in the Arab society in Israel, which have rarely been systematically studied in the context of sustainability education, which may become an opening for the expression of one dimension of multiculturalism in sustainability education in Israel's education system. During her professional career, Efat led two place-based educational initiatives for which she was awarded by the Educational Fund for Boosting Educational Initiatives, one focused on wine press from the Roman period (2014 – 2015), the second centered on the Spring of Sakhneen (2018). She also received The Arab Community Distinguished Teacher Award in F.N.S and G.I programs (2015).

Ruqaia Abbas

PhD, Molecular Biology, Department of Human Biology

Ruqaia’s primary research is the study of apoptosis-programmed cell death and its involvement in promoting cancer. Understanding the underlying mechanism of this molecular pathway enables the developing of new cancer therapies. Her academic training and research experience in gene expression and therapy during her baccalaureate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem provided Ruqaia with an excellent background in molecular biology. While in high school, she was fortunate to major in Biology, Chemistry and Biotechnology. This combination helped her gain a solid understanding in basic science and in fundamental research. For Ruqaia’s graduate project at the University of Haifa, she chose the field of molecular biology and cancer research, mainly researching the main players in the apoptotic pathway, under the supervision of Prof. Sarit Larisch, which is an internationally respected researcher in the field of apoptosis.

Ruqaia became the first woman in her family to study science and be accepted for a doctoral track. She is very excited to keep pushing forward and break boundaries with her education, as education helps us build and reshape our opinions and opens a wide horizon to develop our character. Overall, she feels that her choice of research project and the training she will get during her master's and doctorate will provide her with a solid foundation to become a scientific researcher.



Yasmeen Bayaa
PhD, School of Business Administration

Yasmeen is 30 years old and a mother of two beautiful children: two and four years old.

Learning has always been an integral part of her life, enabling her to develop and advance in the fields she loves and values.

Yasmeen received her B.A in Accounting and Economics from Tel Aviv University, and got her CPA (Certified Public Accountant) license after that.

She also has a M.A. degree in Economics, specialization in Finance with thesis from the University of Haifa. She

completed both degrees “with great distinction” thanks to her aspiration for excellence.

Furthermore, she has succeeded in publishing the paper from her thesis in a Q1 Journal.

At present, Yasmeen is a PhD student in Finance at the University of Haifa School of Business Administration.

In her study, she looks at the difference between the yields on long- and short-term treasury securities -as an indication of where the economy is heading. Her study is set to extend the literature by examining the yield curve’s ability to predict the short-term prices of oil and other energy products.

Along with writing her dissertation, Yasmeen also works as an instructor and teaching assistant at the School for Business Administration, at the University of Haifa.

She is extremely interested to continue and develop an academic career; to continue her post-doctoral studies and to work as a researcher and lecturer between the halls of the university.

In addition, as a lecturer and researcher, she is also interested in contributing to society and to the Arab sector by helping and accompanying Arab women to advance on a personal level as well as on a social level.



Rana Hijazi
PhD, Department of Public Health

Rana is currently in her third year as a PhD student in the Department of Public Health at the University of Haifa, and she is a research assistant at the Health and Risk Communication Research Center. Her interests include: health and risk communication, social media and edutainment. The focus of her PhD study is on developing theoretically applied communication strategies for health organizations to correct misinformation and communicate uncertainty during emerging infectious diseases, adapted to groups with different attitudes toward vaccines. The research

topic is essential to our daily lives because the issue of vaccination is one of the major health concerns raised in social media. This discourse consists of doubts and concerns, as



well as anti-vaccination messages in social media which may influence vaccination decisions and increase vaccination hesitancy and refusal among parents, which have been on the rise in recent years. In light of the COVID-19 global outbreak and in light of the fact that there is very little empirical research on how health organizations should correct misinformation and communicate uncertainty, this research wishes to fill that void and contribute to the risk communication literature by developing theoretically applied risk communication strategies.

Rana works as a pharmacist. She holds a B.Sc.Pharm from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a Master's degree in Public Health (MPH) - health promotion program from the University of Haifa. She wrote her thesis on "The Magic Pill: The Branding of Impotence and the Positioning of Viagra as its Solution through Edutainment" and an article was published about her thesis. Her thesis exposed the "hidden" branding strategies used by pharmaceutical companies and provoked critical public discourse and regulatory in-depth discussion.

Social Activities in the Werner Otto Scholarship Network

On Tuesday 17.11.2020, the Jewish-Arab Center in collaboration with the Roed Association organized a unique zoom conference with the WO recipients called “**A Gateway to the Academia & A Bridge towards Proper Employment**”. The event had two main goals, one was to give the WO recipients a stage to present their life stories, and success as researches especially in this difficult time, and the second was to introduce young students to the academic world.

The scholarship recipients shared their personal life stories and success in the academia with 300 high school student from the Arab community.

The conference started with the opening words of Prof. Adital Ben Ari, the Head of the Jewish-Arab Center. Prof Ben Ari emphasized the importance of the continuum between choosing an academic field of study and finding a suitable and respectful employment in the workforce market.

Following her remarks, the Director of Roed association, Mr. Ashraf Jabour' explained the contribution of this conference and the importance of talking in Arabic and Hebrew and integrating in the academia.

The panel of the conference included the WO scholars Dr. Frida Abu Rass, Dr. Shem Hamze, Dr. Reifa Jebrain and Dr. Janan Saba. Each talked about their life in the academia and the barriers they had to overcome. Through this meeting, the students were exposed to inspirational stories and the possibilities they face if they choose the path of academia.

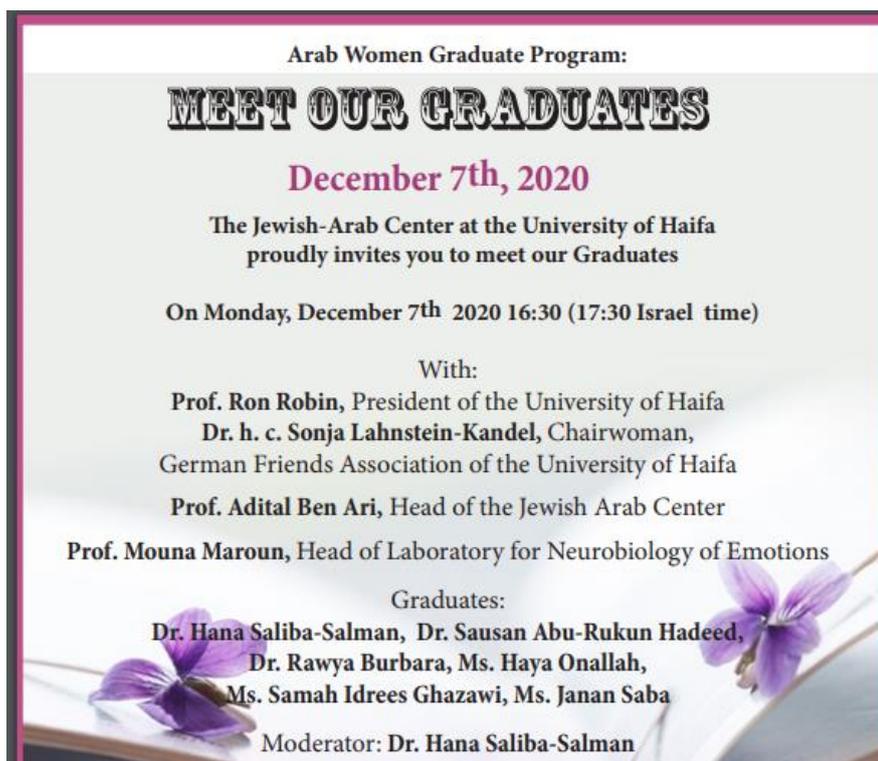
Network Meetings

Throughout this year, we stayed in touch with our WO recipients and checked with them to see how they are dealing with the lockdowns and epidemic, and if they need any help or assistance in their research. We called each of the 2020 scholars and talked to them

personally. In addition to that, we also had a special Zoom meeting with the new WO recipients and got to know them.

Meeting with our WO Graduates

On Monday, December 7, 2020 the Arab-Jewish Center, in collaboration with the German Friends Association, held a special virtual meeting with the Werner Otto Program the graduates and the members of the association from Germany. At the meeting, the scholars shared their personal stories as Arab women who study for advanced degrees; they spoke about the experiences and challenges they faced in the academia and even elaborated on how they deal with the challenging time of COVID-19. This event highlighted the importance of academia in reducing social gaps and increasing equality.



Arab Women Graduate Program:

MEET OUR GRADUATES

December 7th, 2020

The Jewish-Arab Center at the University of Haifa
proudly invites you to meet our Graduates

On Monday, December 7th 2020 16:30 (17:30 Israel time)

With:

Prof. Ron Robin, President of the University of Haifa
Dr. h. c. Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel, Chairwoman,
German Friends Association of the University of Haifa
Prof. Adital Ben Ari, Head of the Jewish Arab Center
Prof. Mouna Maroun, Head of Laboratory for Neurobiology of Emotions

Graduates:

Dr. Hana Saliba-Salman, Dr. Sausan Abu-Rukun Hadeed,
Dr. Rawya Burbara, Ms. Haya Onallah,
Ms. Samah Idrees Ghazawi, Ms. Janan Saba

Moderator: Dr. Hana Saliba-Salman

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