Centre for Trauma, Asylum and Refugees

Activities January - December 2013

December 2013

Between 13 and 15 December, Renos Papadopoulos was in Thessaloniki, Greece as an invited guest speaker at an end-of-project symposium organised by the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki. The European funded three year project addressed the phenomenon of refugee and migrant children in schools involving school staff, pupils, their parents and their wider communities. Based on an innovative theoretical framework (informed by Renos’ approach to a considerable degree), the project developed guidelines for psychosocial interventions to improve not only the facilitative climate at schools but also the community inter-cultural communication and the appreciation of otherness. The symposium was attended by over 250 persons.

On 5 December, Frank Röhricht and Renos Papadopoulos submitted an application along with the Refugee Council for a grant from MIND for a project on 'Improving Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Migrants'. The Refugee Council identified lead for this project is Angelina Jalonen who is the Therapeutic Casework Services Manager.

On 4 December, Renos Papadopoulos offered a training workshop on 'Working therapeutically' to a group of staff from various services of the Refugee Council at their headquarters in Stratford. This activity is part of the ongoing collaboration between CTAR and the Refugee Council as ensured by the 'Memorandum of Understanding' between these two bodies.

November 2013

On 14 November Renos Papadopoulos was interviewed on BBC Radio Essex about the recent typhoon in the Philippines and the humanitarian relief effort that is currently underway.

Frank Röhricht and Renos Papadopoulos submitted an application for a new research grant to the SHINE foundation (project in partnership between CPS/University of Essex, East London NHS Foundation Trust and Refugee council UK); Project title: Primary Prevention Refugee Outreach mental health service (PROMISE).

On 29 November, Renos Papadopoulos offered consultation to the charity 'Safe Ground' in connection with their work in prisons. More specifically, one of the main issues that this consultation was focused upon was on the development of a modified form of the 'Adversity Grid' to enhance the quality of their work.

October 2013

On Tuesday 29 October, Renos Papadopoulos was an invited speaker at the 'Big Idea' event at the Royal Court Theatre. The title of the event was 'Young, angry and throwing stones; political and religious radicalisation in Kashmir' and it was a discussion of the play by Abhishek Majumdar 'The Djinns of Eidgah'. The panel, consisting of the playwright and
Renos, was chaired by Victoria Schofield. The event was transmitted live-stream both in audio and video format.

Between 23 and 28 October Renos was in Istanbul as an invited plenary speaker of the 8th Congress of the European Family Therapy Association (EFTA). The Congress was attended by more than 900 participants from about forty countries including from outside Europe. The Congress theme was ‘Opportunities in the Time of Crisis: The Role of the Family’. Renos’ presentation was on ‘Families in Involuntary Dislocation’ and it was offered in the last Plenary Session that was entitled ‘Facing the Challenges of Sociocultural Changes in Europe: Systemic Practices “Outside the Box”’. During his stay in Istanbul, in addition to having meetings with colleagues working in the same field, Renos also consulted to two projects in Turkey that provide care for refugees and for street children.

August 2013

On 6 August, Renos Papadopoulos was invited to be the external consultant running the Away Day of ‘Safe Ground’ that was held in the headquarters of Clifford Chance in Canary Warf. 'Safe Ground' is a charity that ' works to reduce the risk of offending and reoffending based on a continually developing understanding of the origins and impact of crime and a commitment to empowering people to change, whether in prison or the community'. Following the success of his input, Renos was asked to consult to 'Safe Ground' on a more regular basis.

May 2013

On 31 May Renos Papadopoulos was at Hay-on-Wye where he was invited to speak at the Hay Festival. His presentation was based on one of the themes he is addressing in his new book, that is to say, the way societal discourses present and represent public tragedies, how these are affected by the traumatic nature of these experiences and how they impact on our professional discourses, conceptualisations and practices. Due to an unexpected increase of registrations, the venue had to be changed to accommodate the enlarged audience.

April 2013

On 24 and 25 April, Renos Papadopoulos was in Amsterdam where he had planning consultations with the War Trauma Foundation (WTF) in connection with the training project at AHFAD Trauma, Treatment and Training Centre in Sudan where he was asked to lead the preparation of a Training Manual. Our University has already signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the WTF.

On 26 April Renos was in Prague where, as an invited consultant, he presented at the UNHCR regional event on the response to vulnerability in asylum; his presentation was entitled 'The experience of trauma in the asylum process'.

On 27 April, Renos was invited to present the first Jafar Kareem Memorial Lecture at the NAFSIYAT Intercultural Therapy Centre's Conference to celebrate the 30 years of their founding. The conference, entitled Migrant Journeys: Therapeutic Approaches, was held at Regents College in London and the title of Renos’ lecture was Intercultural therapeutic communication with the other: trauma and resilience.
March 2013

Between 15 and 16 March Renos Papadopoulos was at Durham University (Dept of Theology) where he was external examiner of a PhD on the interface between Philokalia and Modern Psychotherapy. Following the viva, he discussed research collaboration with the department on a theme of the same area as that of the examined PhD.

On 14 March, Renos Papadopoulos was invited by UNHCR to present and discuss his work on the issues of vulnerability of asylum seekers and he was asked to participate in a European project on this subject. He had a planning meeting to develop a project with the Refugee Council and Professor Frank Rohricht (Clinical Director of Newham Adult Mental Health services) to assist asylum seekers and refugees so that their appropriate needs are met thus reducing inappropriate use of NHS services. Renos gave a half-day training workshop on Working with Involuntarily Dislocated Persons; issues of diversity and cultural competence at The Place To Be in London, to trainee school-counsellors who already work with children who experience a wide variety of emotional and other psychosocial difficulties.

From 6 to 10 March, Renos Papadopoulos was in Pisa offering training at the Annual School on Psychosocial Interventions in Emergency Displacement co-organised by the University of Santa Anna and the International Organisation for Migration. Renos is one of the three co-directors of this unique and much sought-after two-week residential course. This is the third consecutive year that the course is offered and again it was attended by thirty senior staff of international (mainly UN) organisations operating in many different parts of the world who are directly responsible for responding to emergency displacement. This year, again, participants included also staff from places with current instability such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen.

January 2013

Between 2 and 18 January, Renos Papadopoulos was in South Africa. During his visit he worked in African Townships and gave two lectures. He continued his work in Gugulethu and Khayelitsha, the African Townships near Cape Town, on the Nontsikelelo Arts Project mainly consulting to Ntombi Magantsela, the project director, and Evgenia Sofianos, a senior consultant to the project; in addition, he consulted to the staff at Bonne Esperance - Refugee Shelter for Women and Children in Philippi (another Township in the same region) that is run by the NGO Catholic Welfare and Development (CWD), and the new high school at the Imizamo Yethu Township in Hout Bay (also near Cape Town), known as 'Mandela Park'. The person in charge of the mental health section of the CWD is Robyn Rowe who completed the MA Refugee Care in 2007. On 10 January Renos gave a public lecture on Dying and Bereavement. A Perspective from Psychology and the Eastern Christian Orthodox Tradition to over 200 mental health and other professionals as well as members of religious organisations and of the general public. On 15 January he gave a presentation on Jung and Ethnopsychology: From confused certainty to thoughtful uncertainty at the Jung Centre in Cape Town, organised by the South African Association of Jungian Analysts.