

July 2025

Aya Almog-Zaken, PhD, MSW

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Professional Summary

Social work scholar specializing in child welfare, child maltreatment, and youth at risk, with extensive experience in mixed-methods research, program evaluation, and academic teaching. Published in leading journals and experienced in national and international collaborations.

Academic Positions

2022- present	Sapir Academic College Department of Social Work Lecturer (Teaching Associate)
2022- 2025	'Meida'os' – The Social Work Union Journal in Israel Associate Editor
2022- 2024	Hadassah Academic Center Department of Social Work Lecturer (Teaching Associate)
2022	University of Haifa School of Social Work Lecturer (Teaching Associate)
2015-2022	Meyers-Joint-Brookdale Institute- Children & Youth department Associate Researcher
2011-2013	Haruv Institute, Jerusalem Research Assistance
2011-2013	Hebrew University in Jerusalem, The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare Teaching Assistant

Education

2025	The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Social Work Dissertation title: 'Sibling's Salvation?!': Personal perspectives of children who grew up in Goel Ratzon's polygamist cult. Thesis advisors: Prof. Asher Ben-Arieh & Prof. Dafna Tener Approved January 27, 2025
2013	The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel Master of Science in Social Work (MSW) Thesis title: 'Growing up in a different family': the relationship between different families' structures and the subjective well-being of children. Thesis advisor: Prof. Asher Ben-Arieh

2010

The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel
Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSW)

Academic & Research Experience

2015-2022- Research associate, Children & Youth team, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem.

2013-2015- Head of Evaluation and measurement department, 'Machshava Tova'- association for Technology promoting opportunities to reduce social gaps to create a more equal society in Israel

2011-2013- Research & teaching assistance. Haruv Institute, Jerusalem.

2010-2013- Research & teaching assistance. The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Research Interests

Child subjective well-being, Child neglect and abuse, Children & youth perspectives in various cultural contexts, Children's rights, Youth sex trafficking, Ritual sexual abuse (RSA), Impacts of collective trauma on children and families

Teaching Interests

Child welfare, Human trafficking, Research (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, applied social research, and program evaluation), Methodology-based interventions, Stress crisis situations and trauma in the Family, Social deviance, Collective trauma.

Publications

Peer reviewed papers

Sorek, Y., Szabo-Lael, R., & **Almog-Zaken, A.** (2024). "Welfare used to mean darkness—Now it's beaming with light": Professionals and parents' perceptions of a family preservation program in Israel. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 159, 107524.

Book Chapters

Gross-Manos, D., Melkman, E., & **Almog-Zaken, A.** (2023). Child protection in Israel. In J. D. Berrick, N. Gilbert, & M. Skivenes (Eds.), *International Handbook of Child Protection Systems*. Oxford University Press.

Tener, D., Marmor, A. Lusky-Weisrose, E., **Almog-Zaken, A.**, Melamed-Filtser, T., & Turjeman, S. (2020). Disclosing sexual abuse in religious communities in Israel: Lessons learned by the research group on child sexual abuse. In: D. Roer-Strier & Y. Nadan (Eds.), *Context-Informed Perspectives of Child Risk and Protection in Israel*, 289-304.

Research reports

Zohar, L., Sharvit, Z. O., Zilka, R., **Almog-Zaken, A.**, Rivkin, D., & Sorek, Y. (2021). *Parenting Options for LGBT and Single Parents: An International Review of Policy and Practice* (Hebrew). Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem. [Parenting Options for](#)

[LGBT and Single Parents: An International Review of Policy and Practice » Brookdale : Brookdale \(jdc.org.il\)](#)

- Sorek, Y., **Almog-Zaken, A.**, & Konstantinov, V. (2021). *A Permanent and Nurturing Family: An Evaluation Study* (Hebrew). Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem. [A Permanent and Nurturing Family: An Evaluation Study » Brookdale : Brookdale \(jdc.org.il\)](#)
- Szabo-Lael, R., **Almog-Zaken, A.**, & Sorek, Y. (2020). *Family Preservation Model: An Evaluation Study* (Hebrew). Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem. [Family Preservation Model: An Evaluation Study » Brookdale : Brookdale \(jdc.org.il\)](#)
- Almog-Zaken, A.**, & Sorek, Y. (2020). *Community Responses for Families and Individuals in Vulnerable Neighborhoods during the COVID-19 Crisis: The Case of the 'Better Together' Program in Kiryat Shemona and Arrabe*. Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem. [Community Responses for Families and Individuals in Vulnerable Neighborhoods during the COVID-19 Crisis: The Case of the Better Together Program in Kiryat Shemona and Arrabe » Brookdale : Brookdale \(jdc.org.il\)](#)
- Sorek, Y., **Almog-Zaken, A.**, Zohar, L., Nijim-Ektelat, F., & Gilad, A. (2020). *Coping with the Increase in Risk Situations of Children and Youth during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An International Review* (Hebrew). Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem. [Coping with the Increase in Risk Situations of Children and Youth during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An International Review » Brookdale : Brookdale \(jdc.org.il\)](#)
- Sorek, Y., Haran, D., **Almog-Zaken, A.**, Gordon, A., Gerasimenko, A., Zohar Gilad, A. L., Gilad, A., & Nijim-Ektelat, F. (2020). *How Divorced and Separated Families are Managing during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An International Review* (Hebrew). Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem. [How Divorced and Separated Families are Managing during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An International Review » Brookdale : Brookdale \(jdc.org.il\)](#)
- Somekh, S., **Almog-Zaken, A.**, & Ben-Rabi, D. (2018). *Creating Community Resilience to Improve the Well-being of Children and Youth in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods in Israel* (Hebrew). Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem. [Creating Community Resilience to Improve the Well-being of Children and Youth in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods in Israel » Brookdale : Brookdale \(jdc.org.il\)](#)

Other Publications

- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2025). Scholarly Article Summary: "So, You're a Zionist?": Reflections on Philosophy, Theory, Ethics and Values in Social Work Education and Social Justice Advocacy By Dr. Mary Twiss. *Meida'os, special issue: 'Social work & Politics: Relationship & Boundaries*. (February). (Hebrew). <https://www.davar1.co.il/583874/>
- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2025). 'Forty Years of Politics in the Service of Social Work in Israel: Social Workers as Agents of Social Change'. Special Editorial interview with Prof. Asher Ben-Arieh. *Meida'os, special issue: 'Social work & Politics: Relationship & Boundaries*. (February). (Hebrew). <https://www.davar1.co.il/583858/>
- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2024). Book Review: finding a place for the soul: Volume B. Editor: Alfandari, R. *Meida'os, 104*, 55-57. (Hebrew). <https://meidaos.socialwork.org.il/105/54/>
- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2023). "The children of all of us": Between subjective well-being of children and collective resilience. *Meida'os, special emergency issue* (December). (Hebrew). <https://www.davar1.co.il/470859/>
- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2022). 'Meida'os Reflects the face of the profession' - on the professional arm and the value arm - an interview with the chairman of the social workers union in Israel. *Meida'os* (Hebrew), *100*, 8-10.
- Ben-Shahar, I., **Almog-Zaken, A.** & Michaeli, N. (2022). 'Formulating a Vision for Meidaos Journal : A Multi-generational Discussion of Editors and Board Members . *Meida'os* (Hebrew), *100*, 11-13.

- Almog-Zaken, A., & Wieler, J., (2013).** "Alone in Front of Everyone": The Phenomenon of Social Rejection - boycott - among children in schools. *Nekudat-Mifgash* (Hebrew) ,5, 19-23. Haruv Institute, Jerusalem.
- Almog-Zaken, A. (2013).** Sexually Abusive Girls: Assessment and Therapeutic Issues. *Nekudat-Mifgash* (Hebrew),5, 48-49. Haruv Institute, Jerusalem.

Manuscripts in Review & Preparation

In Review:

- Szabo-Lael, R., **Almog-Zaken, A., & Sorek, Y.** Evaluating a pilot program for improving Israel's national family preservation policy: Outcomes of a randomized controlled trial. Submitted to: *Children and Youth Services Review*.
- Almog-Zaken, A., Sorek, Y., & Yilma, Sh.** Mobilizing community resources in socio-economically challenged neighborhoods during the COVID-19 Crisis: The Case of the 'Better Together' Program in Israel. Submitted to: *The International Journal of Community and Social Development*.

In Preparation:

- Almog-Zaken, A., Ben Arie, A. & Tener, D.** 'Cultural Dissociation': Defining Identity Processes in Second-Generation former Cult Members through the Case of Goel Ratzon's Polygamist Cult in Israel". (Planned for submission, Summer 2025- for *Child neglect & Abuse Journal*).
- Almog-Zaken, A., Enosh, G., Bier-Topilsky, T. & Neuman, H.** Decision-making in the child protection system in Israel: Individual Vs. committees group decisions. A mixed methods study. (Planned for submission, Summer 2025 for *child and youth service review journal*).
- Jedwab, M., **Almog-Zaken, A., & Serdtse, Y.** The Relationship Between Objective Exposure to Traumatic Events and Post-Traumatic Growth: The Mediating Role of Subjective Perception and Resilience. (Planned for submission, Fall 2025).
- Almog-Zaken, A.** 'Re-examining the Self-Evident': An Autoethnography of a Researcher Studying Children Born and Raised in Cults". (Planned for submission, spring 2026).

Grants & Contracts Experience

2025	\$20,000	PI	Child and Youth Rights Program (ChYRP)- The Minerva Center for Human Rights Research Grant: Understanding Ritual Sexual Abuse of Children in Israel: A Phenomenological Study of Survivor Experiences and Systemic Barriers to Care	Under Review
2025	\$60,000	Co-PI	The Israel National Institute for Health Policy Research and the Schusterman fund Research Grant: " The Revolving Door in the Healthcare System": Analyzing Recurrent Referrals of Suspected Child Abuse Cases to Hospital Child Protection Teams and Their Reporting to Authorities	Funded

Academic Awards, Scholarships & Honorarium

2023: PhD. Candidates' traveling scholarship for abroad conference presentation, Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

2023: PhD. Candidates' scholarship for academic achievements, Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

2018-2022: Marshel Wienberg's- Meyers-JDC-Brookdale Scholarship for academic education.

2009: Dean's List, completes a bachelor's degree with honors, Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Teaching Experience

Sapir Academic College

- SOWO 2401026: Social Work Practice Seminar 2nd year in BSW. Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025. *Instructor*
- SOWO 2401039: Research Seminar (BSW, Year 3): Family Stress and Crisis among Adolescents and Young Adults. Fall 2024, Spring 2025. *Instructor; Developed course.*
- SOWO 2402037-1: Research Seminar (MSW's final Project): 'Parent- child relationship outcomes and values on well-being in uprooted families, duo to October 7th war in Israel'- Mixed Methods Research design. Spring 2024, Spring 2025. *Instructor; Developed course.*
- SOWO 2402038-1: Methodology-Based Interventions (Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods), MSW. Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Spring 2025. *Instructor; Developed course.*
- SOWO 2401039: Research Seminar (BSW, Year 3): Youth and Young Adult Employment experience and perspectives. Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2023, Spring 2024. *Instructor; Developed course.*
- SOWO 2401043: Qualitative Research Methods. Spring 2022, Fall 2023. *Instructor.*
- SOWO 2401023: The Individual in Its Environment – Theory and Practice in Social Work. Fall 2022, Spring 2023. *Instructor.*

Ha'ddassa Academic Center

- SOWO 110700342: Social Deviance A. Fall 2022, Fall 2023. *Instructor.*
- SOWO 110700352: Social Deviance B. Spring 2023, Spring 2024. *Instructor.*

University of Haifa

- SOWO 2884192-2: Treatment Seminar- Working with Children & Adolescents. Spring 2022.

Guest Lectures

- July 2025, Haruv Institute, “I Wanted to Be Saved, but I Got Hurt”: Research-Based Practice for Identifying, Treating, and Preventing Abuse among Children from Cult Backgrounds. Online Lecturer via Zoom.
- May 2025, Bar-Ilan University, ‘The Researcher as a Traveler: Reflexive Processes in Research with Vulnerable Populations’ in the Course: Rehabilitation and Wellness for MSW, Instructor: Dr. Ofra Aran.
- June 2023, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, ‘Ethics & Reflection in qualitative research’. In the course: Qualitative methods (MSW) Instructors: Dr. Amiti Marmor & Dr. Ohad Gilbar.
- January 2021, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, ‘Ethics & Reflection in qualitative research’. In the course: Qualitative methods (MSW) Instructors: Dr. Efrat Lusky-Weiserose.

Professional Social Work Practice Experience

2013-2015: Social worker, Child-Parent supervised visitation center, Department of Social, Maale- Adumim municipality. Israel.

2011-2012: Social worker, treatment plan coordinator, "Reut" company for mental health rehabilitation. Jerusalem, Israel.

Consultant Activities

2018-2022: Consultant in a governmental committee for intervention with children at risk “Family on the Path to Growth” and “A permanent safe family”- the Ministry of Social Affairs.

2013-2014: Consultant (Research assistance) to Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel for building children & youth survey in Household survey (סקר משקי בית בלשכה המרכזית לסטטיסטיקה).

2012: Consultant (Research assistance) to professional committee for building work-plan for Diagnosing children in risk situations in a divorce crisis for the purpose of reducing risk and abuse. Collaboration between Ministry of Social Affairs & Haruv Institute.

Conferences & Presentations

Almog-Zaken, A. (2026, January). “*Sibling’s Salvation?!: Personal Perspectives of Children Who Grew Up in Goel Ratson’s Polygamist Cult in Israel*”. Brief & Brilliant format. SSWR (Society for Social Work and Research) Annual Conference in Washington, DC., United States. (Application abstract pending).

Almog-Zaken, A. (2024, September). “*Sibling’s Salvation?!: Personal Perspectives of Children Who Grew Up in Goel Ratson’s Polygamist Cult in Israel*”. Oral Presentation. The 20th Conference of the Social Work in Israel. Jerusalem.

Almog-Zaken, A. (2024, September). “*Practice Worth Writing About*” – From Vision to Publication: Guidelines for Writing a Professional Article. Meida’os Publication. Panel Chair. The 20th Conference of the Social Work in Israel. Jerusalem.

- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2024, April 8th). Panel Moderator: Parent/Child Therapy for Trauma. International Conference Early Childhood in times of war. Zoom Conference for Exchange of Best Practices in Educational and Psychosocial Work with Children in the context of ongoing wars in Ukraine and Israel. [Conference Program V sofi olami.pdf - Google Drive](#)
- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2023, September 24-27). *'I Wanted to be Saved, but I got Hurt!': Personal Perspectives of Children who Grew up in Goel Ratzon's Polygamist Cult in Israel.* ISPICAN Edinburgh Congress (Poster Presentation), Edinburgh, United Kingdom.
- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2023, May 18). *'Sibling's Salvation?!': Personal perspectives of children who grew up in Goel Ratzon's cult.* The 3rd Haruv Institute International Conference on Child Maltreatment, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel.
- Almog-Zaken, A., & Sorek, Y.** (2020, September 15). *Community solutions for individuals and families in two neighborhoods in the social and geographical periphery of Israel.* The activities of the 'Better Together' program in Kiryat Shmona and Araba during Covid-19": The Power of a Community in Crisis and Routine times.(Zoom Conference). Jerusalem, Israel.
- Almog-Zaken, A., Enosh, G., & Bier-Topilsky, T.** (2020, January 17). *Effect of exposure to client-aggression on professional decision-making in child protection system.* SSWR (Society for Social Work and Research) Annual Conference in Washington, DC., United States.
- Somekh, S., **Almog-Zaken, A., & Ben-Rabi, D.** (2018, July 10). *Between building and empowering neighborhood's community": the contribution of the 'Better Together's' evaluation study.* The annual conference of the Engelberg Center for Children and Youth at Risk. Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.
- Almog-Zaken, A.** (2017, December 7). *Everything starts at home: How can home-based intervention programs monitor and reduce risk factors among infants?* The 2nd Haruv Institute International Conference on Child Maltreatment, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel.