

International webinar “ECD under COVID-19 A global and local perspective”

10 December 2020

Speaker biographies

Rima Salah, PhD, served as a Member of the United Nations High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (2014-15), and as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, U.N. Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). In addition, Dr. Salah has had a distinguished career with UNICEF. Her service includes: Deputy Executive Director for UNICEF (2004-2007, 2011-2012), Regional Director for West and Central Africa (1999-2004), and UNICEF representative in several countries including Vietnam, Burkina Faso as well as head of office in Queta, Pakistan.

As a highly effective advocate for the rights of children and women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, she contributed to Security Council (SC) Resolution 1612 on child rights violations and Security Council (SC) resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security. Dr. Salah has received many awards of distinction from several non-governmental organizations and U.N. Member States, including the French Legion of Honor.

In October 2015, Dr. Salah was elected to Chair the newly formed Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC) of which Yale and UNICEF are founding members. The ECPC, launched at UNICEF HQ in September 2013, brought together leaders from international organizations, academia, practice, philanthropy, networks media and development.

Dr. Salah is at the Child Study Center, Yale School of Medicine. She is co-editor of the volume at MIT Press, “Pathways to Peace: The Transformative Power of Children and Families”.

Siobhán Fitzpatrick, CBE, MBA, MSSC, CQSW, BSc, has had a distinguished career in the early childhood sector for 40 years. She currently serves as Chairperson for The International Network on Peace Building with Young Children, which brings early years research on inclusion, respecting differences and peace building to global areas affected by conflict. For 30 years, she served as Chief Executive Officer of Early Years - The Organisation for Young Children, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Her other notable services include European representative to the World Forum Foundation for Early Years Care and

Education, President of the International Step by Step Association for Eastern Europe and former CIS countries.

She is senior co-author of the ECPC publication “The Contributions of Early Childhood Development Services to Promoting Sustainable Peace and Development”. In 2010, she was awarded a CBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours for her services in early childhood and community development.

Professor Maher Natsheh is President of An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine. Professor Natsheh holds a PhD In Physical and Polymer Chemistry from UMIST, MSc In Petrochemical and Hydrocarbon Chemistry from University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Professor Natsheh is a leading academic figure in Palestine more than 28 publications in international scientific journals and have received a number of awards for scientific contribution in the technical and academic fields.

James F. Leckman, MD, PhD, has served on the faculty at Yale University since 1980. He has pursued an academic career in large part focused on Tourette syndrome and Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). His work on OCD led him to explore evolutionarily conserved obsessive-compulsive behaviors associated with parenting and romantic love. This in turn led him to explore the question whether strengthening families and enhancing child development can be a path to peace and violence prevention. His focus on the transformative power of early childhood development (ECD) led to the convening of the 15th Ernst Strüngmann Forum, “Pathways to Peace: The Transformative Power of Children and Families,” as well as the formation of the ECPC, currently being led by Rima Salah. At present, he is working on ECD projects with colleagues in Ireland, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Mali, Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam, Timor-Leste, Colombia and Brazil.

Ghassan Issa, MD is a Lebanese pediatrician graduate of the American University Medical Center of Beirut in 1980. He is the General Coordinator of the Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD), and the Arab Resource Collective (ARC).

Also, he is member of the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) executive board, regional advisor for the ECPC, member of the World Health Organization (WHO) East Mediterranean Regional Certification Commission (RCC) of Poliomyelitis Eradication, WHO Advisor for the development group of Improving Early Childhood Development guidelines, WHO advisor for the Nurturing Care Framework (NCF), member of the Middle East and

North Africa Health Policy Forum, advisor of the editorial board on Early Childhood Development of the Global platform “Apolitical,” board member of the International Developmental Pediatrics Association (IDPA), and member of the International advisory board of the Palestine Child Institute of Al-Najah University-Palestine.

Umaiye Mousa Khammash, MD, MPH is a doctor and senior public health specialist with over 35 years of experience in all aspects of primary healthcare, from practicing medicine in West Bank hospitals to running different local and international health programs. Dr. Khammash currently serves as a Director for Juzoor for Health and Social development a Palestinian working to promote the health and well-being of the population by addressing social economic determinist of health. Prior to this post and for more than 10 years Dr. Khammash served as Chief of Field Health Programs for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the West Bank.

He is intimately familiar with the Reproductive Child Health/Family Planning/Nutrition needs of the Palestinian population, and the difficulties in working in a politically fluid environment.

Dr. Khammash is author of several books and articles on health and social topics and published several research papers on nutrition, reproductive health, and mental health as co- principle.

Professor Josh Feder—National Merit Scholar Joshua D. Feder, MD is a child and family psychiatrist in Solana Beach, California, Editor in Chief of the Carlat Child Psychiatry Report, and Medical Director at Positive Development, the fastest growing company in the United States providing the most effective care for children with autism.

Dr. Feder co-authored the first Practice Parameter for the assessment and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder with the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He has served as Chief of Child Psychiatry at the National Naval Medical Center and served on the faculty of the Uniformed University of the Health Sciences, University of California at San Diego School of Medicine, and Fielding Graduate University program in Infant and Early Childhood Development where he developed and runs a research incubator.

Dr. Feder helped develop Project Impact for Toddlers, an autism intervention methodology that has bridged the divide between developmental-relationship based approaches and traditional behavioral treatments for autism, and he is

currently running a controlled trial of an early childhood self-regulation and resilience intervention with the Early Years in Northern Ireland, as a Senior Associate Member in the programmatic division of the International Network on Peace Building with Young Children.

Dr. Feder also serves as Medical Director in the SymPlay division at Quicksilver Software, Inc., developing technology to support relationship-based interventions, and he is active in legislative and policy advocacy on behalf of early childhood mental health and education. Dr. Feder is currently working with the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee on a plan to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and he has received humanitarian service awards from the State of California and the United States House of Representatives.

Dr. Ali Shaar—Dr. Shaar is the director of the Palestinian Child Institute at An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine. He is a member of the ECPC advisory board and a co-founder and executive committee member of the INPB with children. He is a public health and health systems specialist with a MD degree and master's in public health with special experience and qualification in system strengthening and quality improvement. For many years, Ali served in Palestine and the Arab region and has developed a good capacity in addressing issues of children, women and marginalized groups in conditions of war and conflict. During the COVID-19 crisis, Ali and his team have demonstrated high resilience and succeeded in addressing issues of ECD especially with children living with autism and developmental disorders.