



ReAL SUMMIT

ADVANCING REMOTE ASSESSMENT FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION



Save the Children



YALE CHILD
STUDY CENTER

Where discovery inspires care

September 18–19, 2024

BIOGRAPHIES



Linda C. Mayes

Yale Child Study Center

Linda C. Mayes, MD is trained as a pediatrician and psychoanalyst and currently serves as Chair of the Yale Child Study Center in the Yale School of Medicine, in addition to her role as the Arnold Gesell Professor of Child Psychiatry, Pediatrics and Psychology. Her research focuses on stress-response and regulatory mechanisms in young children at both biological and psychosocial risk. She has especially focused on the impact of prenatal substance use on children's long-term outcomes, and she has published widely in the developmental psychology, pediatrics, and child psychiatry literature.



Susan Nicolai

Save the Children

Susan Nicolai is Save the Children International's Global Director for Education/Learn. For over a decade, she was a senior researcher with the global affairs think tank ODI, where her work included evidence and design work leading to Education Cannot Wait and serving as a founding Director with EdTech Hub. She previously led the start-up of the Global Education Cluster, and for many years worked in emergency contexts. She holds expertise in education in conflict and crisis, systems reform, and coherence, having written extensively about these and broader development issues.



Nirmala Rao

University of Hong Kong

Nirmala Rao is Serena H C Yang Professor in Early Childhood Development and Education and Chair Professor of Child Development and Education, and Director of the Consortium for Research on Early Childhood Development and Education (CORE), Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong (HKU). A Developmental and Chartered (Educational) Psychologist by training, her research on early childhood development and education in Asian cultural contexts has been recognised internationally. Her work has focused on the development of psychometrically robust and culturally-sensitive measures of both early childhood development and the quality of Early Childhood Education; early educational policy in the Asia-Pacific; evaluation of early childhood programmes; and culture, policy and pedagogy in the early years. Professor Rao has published widely; serves on the Editorial Board for premier scholarly journals; has participated in high-level international meetings; written advocacy materials, and has undertaken consultancies for international organisations. She has received awards for both research and teaching. Furthermore, she has also had significant administrative leadership roles in the Faculty of Education and at the Graduate School of HKU.



Amy Lightbody **Stanford University/LEVANTE**

Dr. Amy Lightbody holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Psychological Studies in Education, from the University of California Los Angeles. She has spent many years at the intersection of education, neuroscience, genetics, and behavior studying developmental trajectories in children and young adults with both typical and atypical development. More broadly she is interested in research designed to improve learning, educational, and social-emotional outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations. Dr. Lightbody is currently a senior research scholar in the Department of Psychology at Stanford University collaborating on the Jacobs Foundation's Learning Variability Network Exchange initiative.



Sithon Khun

Consultant

Dr. Sithon KHUN has over 20 years of experience in professional and technical leadership roles in Research & Evaluation, including within the education sector. He previously served as the Head of Evidence and Learning at Save the Children International in Cambodia for about five years, where he designed and implemented various education innovations and assessments in localized contexts. Before that, he was the Director of Research at URC – Center for Human Services for USAID Projects in Cambodia for five years. Most recently, he joined Internews as the Regional Research and Evaluation Manager for Asia & Pacific.



David Barth

Save the Children

As Vice President, International Programs, David Barth leads Save the Children US's work in the areas of global health, child protection, education, food security, and youth livelihoods, advancing Save the Children's mission to serve the world's most marginalized and deprived children. The International Programs division develops high-quality, evidence-based programming that ensures the organization is accountable to the women and children it serves globally.

Previously, David directed the Ford Foundation's Global Grants division developing multi-donor initiatives, pioneering new approaches to providing employment and education to Syrian refugees, building a global platform to improve adolescent development science, and leading the Ford Fellowship program.

David's career with USAID spans 20 years holding the positions of Regional Lead Advisor, Director of the Office of Middle East Programs, Director of the Office of Education, A/Deputy Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs, Agency Deputy Chief of Staff and Mission Director in Bosnia-Herzegovina.



Armando Ali **PAL Network**

Armando Ali is the Chief Executive Officer at the PAL Network where he provides overall leadership, a sense of collective ownership and belonging within the network and ensures sustained growth, health and impact. With more than 20 years of experience as an Education Specialist, he has been instrumental in mobilizing citizens to enhance the quality of education.

He is passionate about improving foundational literacy and numeracy skills of children in the early grades. Previously, he initiated and coordinated the Citizen-led Action in Mozambique, Wiixutta Nithweelaka – an approach inspired by Teaching at the Right Level that helps children to improve their reading and arithmetic competencies.

Prior to joining PAL Network, he worked as an education specialist with UNICEF and as a Senior Advisor to Facilidade, an NGO in Mozambique focused on citizen participation in delivering quality public services.

Armando is a member of UNESCO's Spotlight technical review group and the Luminos Fund Advisory Group. He holds a Master's degree in Peace and Development Work from Linnaeus University in Sweden.



Francisco Velasquez **Save the Children**

Francisco Evelio Rodríguez Velásquez is the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Coordinator at Save the Children El Salvador, where he leads MEAL processes to ensure evidence, learning, and quality in humanitarian and development projects. With more than 6 years of experience in the field, he has worked with various international organizations implementing monitoring and evaluation systems in areas such as Education, Poverty, Protection, and Health and Nutrition.

Since the age of 11, Francisco has been involved in NGO work as a human rights activist and in children's networks. He holds a degree in Industrial Engineering from the Central American University "José Simeón Cañas," where he presented research in scientific journals, and a master's degree in Design, Management, and Direction of International Cooperation Projects. His studies have enabled him to develop expertise in the use of statistics applied to evaluation, implementing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to measure the impact of projects in various contexts.



Ali Shaar

Health Policy Advisor to the Palestinian Prime Minister

Ali Nashat Shaar, a Palestinian physician with qualifications and experience in public health and health system development. Currently, Dr. Shaar serves as a health policy advisor to the Palestinian prime Minister office and is a member of the advisory board of early childhood peace consortium and the executive board of the Arab early childhood development network.

Within the global ReAL validation process, Dr. Shaar developed the concept, design and operational plan for the local research and lead Palestinian team conducting validation field work in Palestine.



Karon Harden **RTI International**

Karon Harden is a senior researcher with the International Development Group at RTI International. She has more than 25 years' experience in the education sector, including in teaching, curriculum and materials development, teacher training and coaching, assessment, research, and monitoring and evaluation.

At RTI Ms. Harden provides technical support to a diverse portfolio of foundational literacy programs and research agendas across Africa and Asia. Her interest in assessment in low- and middle-income countries includes extensive work with the Early Grade Reading Assessment, Group-Administered Literacy Assessment, national reading assessments, and formative and summative assessments in the classroom. She served as technical advisor for the development of the Self-Administered EGRA, which has been piloted in four countries and two languages in Africa, as well as of the Teacher Language and Literacy Assessment in three languages.

Prior to RTI, Ms. Harden led primary education projects in the Central African Republic and Nigeria and taught linguistics and English as a second language at the secondary and tertiary levels in the U.S. and Africa. She holds master's degrees in both linguistics and reading education.



James Cox **Save the Children**

James leads the Save the Children's global education policy and advocacy policy across the movement. With over a decade of expertise managing advocacy, policy, campaigns and communications campaigns – including the leading the civil society coalition that campaigned for the creation of Education Cannot Wait – to secure progress in education and child rights.



Sarin Sar

Cambodia Education Quality Inspection Department (EQID)

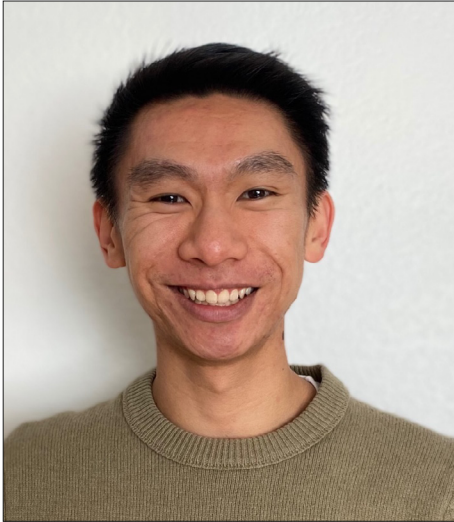
Mr. SARIN Sar is the current Deputy Director of Education Quality Inspection Department (EQID), Ministry of Education Youth and Sport of the Kingdom of Cambodia. He has been serving as Educational Official for 26 years with professional background in Education Leadership, General Management and Educational Assessment. Mr. SARIN completed Bachelor of English in 2003 and Mater of General Management in 2012 at Build Bright University, Cambodia. He has been attending the program for Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Leadership (Ph.D.-EAL) since 2020 at Beltie International University, Cambodia. Mr. SARIN has been working in Educational Sector since 1998. He was a Primary Teacher in 1998, Secondary Teacher in 2003 and High School Teacher in 2011. He has been involved in Large-Scale Assessments since 2012 as Item Developer, Sampling Manager, Survey Operation Manager and Data Management Team for National Learning Assessment (NLA), Regional Assessment (SEA-PLM) and International Assessment (PISA-D & PISA). Mr. SARIN is teaching Assessment Subject in Educational Inspector course at National Institute of Education (NIE) and Teacher and School Leadership Upgrading Program at Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP).



Jessica Hoffmann

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Jessica Hoffmann, Ph.D., is the Director of Implementation Science at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and an Assistant Professor at the Child Study Center in the Yale School of Medicine. Jessica received her B.A. in psychology and sociology from Brandeis University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in clinical psychology from Case Western Reserve University. Jessica specializes in working within school settings to develop approaches and programming (RULER and inspirED) aimed at enhancing children's creativity, promoting positive school climates, and enhancing mental health. Her current research focuses on the efficacy of RULER and inspirED for secondary schools, including the impact of emotion skills instruction on school climate, creative problem solving, and emotion regulation ability.



Jonathan Kwok **International Rescue Committee**

Jonathan Kwok is the Regional Research and Learning Coordinator for the PlayMatters project with the IRC. He's coordinates and manages the successful implementation of the PlayMatters Research Agenda, including mixed-methods complementary studies across Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda ranging from formative research to impact evaluations. He also leads learning for the Consortium, ensuring evidence generation and use is core to project refinement, implementation, advocacy, and scale.