

Early Childhood Education and Development expert focused on research, government policies, strategy development, private sector, and philanthropy. Over 20 years of international experience working *in* philanthropic and non-profit organizations and *with* governments, the private sector, and bilateral and multilateral organizations. Research focus: young children and families in crisis contexts (ie. conflict, climate, migration)

EDUCATION

The Institute of Education, University College, London PhD – Education	December 2016
The George Washington University, Washington, D.C Masters of Arts, International Development <i>Concentration:</i> International Education	May 2005
Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania Bachelor of Arts, Psychology	May 1999
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts Executive Education Certificate, Scaling Early Childhood Initiatives	April 2017

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Brookings Institution (Washington, DC) <i>Fellow</i> -Lead research and policy work on Early Childhood Education and Development through the Center for Universal Education. -Lead a multi-year global Early Childhood Education initiative that aims to provide research and policy recommendations to governments around the world to reach SDG 4.2 focused on equal access to quality early childhood education and development.	February 2024 to present
Georgetown University, Collaborative on Children’s Issues (Washington, DC) <i>Fellow</i> Investigate Issues related to Children and Families on the Move (migrants, refugees) due to conflict, political upheaval and/or climate change.	September 2023 to present
ChildArise (Washington, DC) <i>Co-Founder and Board Member</i> - Set up a 501 c 3 organization (www.childarise.org) that seeks to transform the lives of young children and families affected by crisis. Set up a Board of Directors, financial, administration, human resources, and legal systems for the organization. Established website, visual branding, and fundraising plan. (www.childarise.org) - Developed \$1 million project focused on children’s storytelling for advocacy and social change with the Moving Minds Alliance and the International Rescue Committee.	July 2022 to present
Sweta Shah, LLC (Washington, DC) <i>Founder and Senior Consultant</i> -Established my own Consultancy firm. Clients include: ○ UNICEF Gulf Area Office Develop an ECD Center of Excellence concept based in Saudi Arabia with UNICEF, the Saudi Arabian government, and a Saudi donor based on a literature/policy review of current gaps and opportunities for ECD globally and in the Gulf region. Conduct Key Informant interviews and lead an in-person workshop to identify priorities and find alignment among stakeholders. Prepare a concept note and proposition for Saudi government and Saudi donor. ○ Childhood Education International ECD Technical Lead for a CEI consultancy on developing a learning legacy toolkit for the LEGO Foundation funded 5-year ECD in emergencies grant implemented by Sesame Workshop, BRAC, IRC, NYU. ○ Sesame Workshop	August 2021 to January 2024 <i>May 2023 to present</i> <i>May 2023 to present</i> <i>June 2023 to present</i>

Support Sesame Workshop in developing the next phase strategy for their Welcome Sesame project strategy. Welcome Sesame focuses on the use of media for young children's learning and development in crisis, including support for parents.

○ Elevate Children Funders Group

August 2021 to January 2022

Mapped and analyzed philanthropic investments into Parenting programs that have aim to improve children's development and well-being. Developed a strategy for ELEVATE Children Funders Group to convene donors and increase financial support for Parenting programs. Authored "[Philanthropic Funding: For Parent, Caregiver, and Family Support Programs in the Global South](#)"

The LEGO Foundation, (Washington, DC)

April 2021 to October 2022

Senior Program and Evidence Specialist

- Grantmaking through Refugee Playful Beginnings Initiative which was the largest investment for Early Childhood Development in Emergencies. (Supported investments in Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon, Colombia, and Nigeria which totaled over USD \$120 million). Technical support to other initiatives focusing on Ethiopia, Uganda, and United States.
- Led the development and update of the initiative's Program and Evidence (MERL) direction, strategy, and investments and supported the development of the initiative's Advocacy and Programming strategy, and direction.
- Support in developing a strategy for LEGO Foundation's investments in Colombia and a strategy for a new initiative called "Children on the Move".
- Operationalizing LEGO Foundation's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with USAID Colombia and supporting the MOU with USAID Global.
- Translating learnings and data from investments for program directions and advocacy and policy influence.
- Supporting grantees to develop plans to generate learnings and evidence that align with the foundation's strategic goals.
- Managing and supporting partners/grants in Colombia, USA, Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Nigeria.
- Led convening of donors at the LEGO Ideas conference focused on Early Childhood Education and Development, Parenting, and Child Care.

Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Washington, DC

January 2018 to March 2021

Global Lead, Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Global organizational lead that established and led a team of ECD specialists and managed an ECD portfolio in 13 countries across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Raised AKF's profile in ECD through keynote speeches at fundraisers, panel presentations, media interviews, social media (twitter, linked in, Facebook), blogs and articles. Represented AKF at various global fora for ECD and beyond including the Moving Minds Alliance, Nurturing Care Framework working group, ECD funders group, INEE ECD in emergencies Team.

Key Accomplishments:

- Strategic Leadership: Set the organizational strategy and direction for ECD (including parenting) based on the Nurturing Care Framework. Established a Center of Excellence within the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Led the establishment of 5-year national ECD operational strategies across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Influenced AKDN agencies including Aga Khan Health Services and Aga Khan University to invest more in ECD, particularly through health, nutrition, and learning for 0-6 years.
- Developed and led Strategic Partnerships: Led the development of a global MOU with UNICEF and WHO; Co-led the establishment of a multi-donor consortium and a global technical advisory group for Schools 2020 (a 10-year, 10-country, over \$20 million ECD and education initiative aimed at empowering students, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders in finding innovative and sustainable solutions to ECD and Education challenges).
- Raised Funds: Increased ECD portfolio by 100% to \$21 million; Supported Education portfolio raise over \$20 million.
- Built and Managed Teams: Hired and established an ECD team at the regional and country levels in collaboration with Regional and Country Directors.
- Established an organizational Monitoring and Evaluation System: to capture outcome and impact-level data for children, parents and the ECD workforce.
- Capacity Building and workforce Development: Set the foundation for the establishment and launch of the ECD Workforce Development Hub (based at Aga Khan University's Institute for Human Development in Kenya). Led the development of two online Parent support courses and a course on ECD for Policy Makers.

Bernard Van Leer Foundation (BvLF), Washington, DC

September 2016 to October 2017

Senior Early Childhood Development Advisor

Managed Early Childhood Education and Development grants and partners in Cote d'Ivoire, India, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon Brazil, and Peru. Supported the development of the Parents+ strategy of the foundation. Led Monitoring, Evaluation and Research within the foundation, supported the production of the Early Childhood Matters Journal, Developed partnerships with the private sector, government departments, other foundations, and global and regional networks.

Key Accomplishments:

- Increased Investment from the private sector: Influenced 5 cocoa companies to co-invest in Early Childhood Education and Development in Cote d'Ivoire
- Established and manage a technical support function for BvLF to easily engage with expert consultants on various topics of relevance.
- Co-developed BvLF's strategy on Parenting.

Plan International, Washington, DC

December 2010 to August 2016

Global Education and ECD in Emergencies Lead

Organizational global lead for Education and ECD in Emergencies. Provided global technical support and leadership for ECD and Education in emergencies programs. Deployed to countries during acute emergencies to led assessments, emergency response teams and developed programs. Supported fundraising efforts across the organization for ECD and Education in emergencies.

Key Accomplishments:

- Influenced and supported Plan International to integrate ECD (education, nutrition, health, and child protection) as a core element of its Global Humanitarian Strategy.
- Led the growth of Plan's Education and ECD in emergencies programs in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia (49 countries for education; 35 countries for ECD. ECD in emergencies portfolio of Euros 118 million. Education in emergencies portfolio of Euros 99 million.)
- Established and co-led ECD and Education communities of practice within the organization.
- Led a process with Human Resources to hire technical Education and ECD in Emergencies staff and established an emergency roster for Education and ECD professionals.
- Developed strategic partnerships (ie. INEE, UN, NGOs, private sector, governments, academia, Education Cannot Wait)

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

June 2009 to September 2010 *Training*

and Capacity Building Consultant: Developed and supported INEE members with face to face and online training on education in emergencies (including ECD). Contributed to the update of the INEE Minimum Standards and Sphere handbooks. Supported INEE's ECD task teams: Teaching and Learning Initiative and Adolescent and Youth Task Team.

UNICEF, NEPAL

June 2009 to July 2009

Emergency Education Consultant: Led the national Education Cluster with the Ministry of Education. Supported and facilitated the development of the Education Cluster's national and local Contingency plans. Advocated to various government ministries and sectors to ensure education was prioritized in emergencies.

International Rescue Committee (IRC), NEPAL

September 2006 to April 2009

Child and Youth Protection and Development Coordinator

Led IRC Nepal's Child and Youth Protection and Development program as part of IRC Nepal's Senior Management team, reporting to the Country Director. Represented IRC at the national and international levels with government ministries, political parties, armed groups, the UN and donors. Represented IRC and actively contributed to the work of the Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC) working group, the Education and Child Protection clusters and Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).

Key Accomplishments:

- Involved in Country program strategic planning, led the development of Child and Youth Protection and Development (CYPD) program sector strategy.
- Started, implemented, and managed IRC's children and youth conflict and natural hazard emergency program in 12 districts of Nepal. Managed 20 national staff, 5 sub-grantees and a budget of over \$2,000,000.
- Led IRC's Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration program for former child soldiers (from early childhood to adolescence) through the provision of services (ie. psychosocial support, Healing Classrooms education) and family tracing and reunification.

Christian Children's Fund (CCF) (Now Child Fund), CHAD

September 2005 to August 2006

Child Protection Coordinator/Head of Iriba field Office: Managed a staff of 40. Managed ECD, education and child protection activities in 4 refugee camps and 4 Chadian villages. Represented CCF at key coordination meetings and with donors.

Key Accomplishments:

- Led the development of CCF Chad's ECD, Education and Child Protection country strategy.
- Helped raise over \$1.4 million.
- Established child friendly spaces, a mobile library in the camps, a case management and referral system for child protection cases.
- Led teacher and ECD facilitator training and led refugee women's empowerment groups.

Consultant- Education Technical Writer: Co-developed and co-wrote a proposal that resulted in a \$6 million grant from the US Department of Labor for Liberia and Sierra Leone that aims to combat the worst forms of child labor through education. Conducted field assessment in Liberia, designed education program, completed a technical budget, found local partners.

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), Spanish (Professional Proficiency), French (Intermediate), Nepali (Intermediate), Hindi (Intermediate), Gujarati (mother tongue - spoken fluency)

PUBLICATIONS, BLOGS, INTERVIEWS, MEDIA

Co-Edit book (2023), [Young Children in Humanitarian and COVID-19 Crises: Innovations and Lessons from the Global South](#), Routledge, UK

Co-authored blog "[Power of the Smallest Storytellers](#)" (2023), ChildArise

Co-authored blog "[After an earthquake, children need more than just basic services](#)" (2023), ChildArise.

Authored report "[Philanthropic Funding: For Parent, Caregiver, and Family Support Programs in the Global South](#)" (2022), ELEVATE Children Funders Group.

Co-edited Special Issue on ECD in emergencies (2021) with the [Journal on Education in Emergencies](#)

Authored blog "[New Evidence Calls for Greater Investment in the Early Years of Children in Humanitarian Situations](#)" (2021), The LEGO Foundation.

Co-authored blog "[Revisiting Humanitarian Action Early: Planting the Seeds for a New Generation](#)", (2021), Early Childhood Development Network.

Authored blog "[Importance of a Father's Nurture and Care](#)" (2021), Early Childhood Development Action Network

Authored blog "[A Celebration of Parents Around the World and a Call to Action to Support Them](#)" (2021), Early Childhood Development Action Network

Authored blog "[Creating Early Childhood Development Champions – targeting government policymakers to scale Nurturing Care](#)" (2021), Aga Khan Foundation

Authored blog "[The transformative power of parents – AKF launches two new courses to underscore the vital role that parents play in child development](#)" (2021), Aga Khan Foundation

Co-authored article "[Reorienting Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Kenya: A Review](#)" (2020), Journal on Environmental Research Public Health

Co-authored "[No Time to Wait: A Call to Increase Investments for Young Children and Families Facing COVID-19 and Displacement](#)" (2020), on behalf of ECDAN, INEE and Moving Minds Alliance.

Authored Book "[Early Childhood Development in Humanitarian Crises: South Sudanese refugees in Uganda](#)" (2020), Routledge, UK.

INEE Podcast, "[Looking Ahead: Previewing JEiE Special Issues on ECD and PSS/SEL](#)" (2020)

Authored blog "[Putting Play at the Heart of Children's Development](#)" (2019), Aga Khan Development Network, Geneva.

Panelist for Deeply Talks: Refugee Children and Resilience (2019)

Co-authored article "Scaling nurturing care through a multi-sectoral, bottom-up approach in the Kyrgyz Republic" (2019), Early Childhood Matters, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, Netherlands.

TV Interview with CTV Morning Live (2018), <https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1646556>

Authored report "Falling through the Cracks: Young Children in Emergencies", (2017), Promising Practices in Refugee Education.

Authored report "Early Childhood Development and Nutrition in Emergencies: Technical note" (2016), Working: Plan International and UNICEF.

Authored report "Early Childhood Development and Child Protection in Emergencies: Technical note" (2016), Working: Plan International and UNICEF.

Authored report "Early childhood development (ECD) in emergencies", (2016), Reading pack, HEART: DFID.

Authored article "Inequality in Central African Republic: ECD in Emergencies as an Entry Point for National Level Policies" Case Study 8, Global Report on Equity and Early Childhood, (2016).

Authored report "Falling through the Cracks: Barriers to Conflict Affected Malian Children's Education" (2014), Dublin: Plan Ireland.

Authored report "Investing in the Youngest: Early Childhood Care and Development in Emergencies" (2013), Working: Plan International.

Authored blog, "Key Tips for Entering the Education in Emergencies Field", for INEE.

Advisory group and Contributed to "Early childhood care and development in emergencies: A programme guide" (2013), Working: Plan International.

Co-authored "Introducing the IASC Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Guidelines in Emergencies in Nepal: A process description", Intervention: International Journal of Mental Health, Psychosocial Work and Counseling in Areas of Armed Conflict, March 2010, Volume 8, Number 1, pgs. 52-63.

Co-authored report "Youth on the Streets: The Importance of Social Interactions on Psychosocial Well-being in an African Context" (2005), USAID.

Authored INEE's Education in Emergencies E-learning <http://www.ineesite.org/en/training-capacity-development/e-learning>

Co-authored INEE/Education Cluster Education in Emergencies Training modules 0-11; Authored module 19 on Early Childhood Development in Emergencies http://toolkit.ineesite.org/inee_minimum_standards/education_in_emergencies_training_materials