

**Agenda**

United Nations online Expert Group Meeting  
New York, 16-18 June 2020  
10:00 AM – 12:30 PM (NY time)

**Families in Development:  
Assessing Progress, Challenges and Emerging Issues:  
Focus on Modalities for IYF+30, Parenting Education  
and the Impact of COVID-19**

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**Bionotes of Speakers**

**Clara Alemann** is the Director of Programs at Promundo. She is a gender specialist with over 15 years of experience in social science research, program design, implementation, and evaluation of governance and social development programs to advance gender equality. In the past decade her work has focused on the integration of gender and violence prevention within social development programs in the areas of early childhood development, youth development, sexual and reproductive health and parenting and caregiver support, as well as engaging men and boys in reproductive, maternal, and child health interventions. She has worked with international development organizations (the United Nations Development Programme, Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank) and is a mentor of The Prevention Collaborative, where she developed tools, guidance, and research on the intersections of violence against women and children, as well as provides technical accompaniment to organizations seeking to strengthen their work on family violence prevention. Clara has a master's degree in Public Policy from the School of International Public Affairs at Columbia University and a BA in Political Science from the University of Buenos Aires. She has worked in different countries primarily in Latin America and Africa.





**Ahmed Aref** is an experienced Research and Public Policy Specialist with 15 years of experience working on evidence-based policy development including; research, interdisciplinary policy analysis, impact assessment and advocacy at national, regional and international levels. Ahmed is currently working as a senior researcher at the Doha International Family Institute, Qatar Foundation. He is a doctoral researcher at the Institute for Policy Research, University of Bath, UK. Prior joining Qatar Foundation, Ahmed worked for UNFPA Arab Regional Office; EU Program on Family and Child Rights, the Egyptian Prime Minister's Office PMO and the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University.

His research focuses on the politics of social policies, social justice and interdisciplinary policy analysis from socio-economic perspective in the Arab region, with a particular emphasis on Gulf studies. His areas of expertise include social protection systems, resilience mechanisms, maternity protection, social inclusion/ exclusion, labour policy transformations, family policies, demography and sustainable development. He published and coauthored peer-reviewed articles, policy briefs and research reports on issues related to disability protection, social welfare system, housing and family formation/dissolution, work-family balance policies, political economy of international aid, monitoring and evaluation under humanitarian circumstances, among others. Ahmed led and contributed to the management of research, policy and advocacy programs in the aforementioned fields and participated as a speaker in numerous national, regional and international conferences and expert meetings.

**Esuna Dugarova** is a Gender Specialist at UNDP, New York, with over 10 years of experience in policy analysis and research on gender equality, social protection and poverty reduction globally and in Asia and Eastern Europe in particular. She has authored over 30 publications in international peer-reviewed journals and books. Prior to UNDP, Esuna worked at UNRISD, World Bank, European Commission and London School of Economics. She holds a PhD in Asian Studies from Cambridge University, and is originally from Buryatia, a region of indigenous people in Siberia.





**Ms. Rosario Esteinou** got her PhD in Sociology at the University of Turin, Italy. She is a family sociologist and has been a researcher for over 30 years at the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS - Center of Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology) in Mexico City. She is fellow of the National System of Research of the National Council of Science and Technology, the Mexican Academy of Sciences, the National Council of Family Relations, and the International Sociological Association. She has published articles, chapters and books about the family in Mexico, especially in the fields of sociology, anthropology, demography, history and social psychology.

Currently, her research interests focus on family and couple relationships, parenting, adolescents and youth, and family policy. She has been a visiting professor at the Centre of Family Research at the University of Cambridge, the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom, the University of Newcastle in Australia, and the University of Nebraska in the United States. She has participated in different Expert Group Meetings organized by the UN and other institutions.

**Dr. Benjamin Freer** is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU). He earned his Ph.D from the University of Kentucky in Experimental Psychology with a specialty in cognitive development. Dr. Freer is set to become the director of the School of Psychology and Counseling at FDU this summer and will be concluding his role as the director of the University Core program on the Metropolitan campus. His research examines how life experiences can influence the ways children, adults, and families perceive and interact with each other and their environment, with specific focus on the response to potentially traumatic events and how this response can be understood through cognitive processes.



He is currently conducting research examining the following: 1) the relationship between corporal punishment, parent-child relationships, and cognition, 2) the role of attention in the process of impulsivity and working memory and whether this relationship is affected by sleep or trauma exposure, 3) perceptions of mental health distress and stigma to mental health services held by adults and whether these perceptions differ for military veterans, 4) the behavioral, cognitive,

and neuropsychological factors related to children and adults with ADHD, and 5) whether and when cognitive deficits occur for individuals who are completing complex tasks. Dr. Freer's research has been published in: *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *School Psychology Review*, *Health Policy*, *Journal of American College Health*, *Journal of Adolescent Trauma, Violence and Victims*, and *Journal of Clinical Psychology: In Session*. In addition, his research has been presented by himself and his research team at organizational conventions, such as: American Psychological Association (APA), Society for Research on Child Development (SRCD), American Psychological Society (APS), Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) American Educational Research Association (AERA), and Institute of Education Sciences (IES). His research teams include graduate, undergraduate, and high school students. Dr. Freer also teaches within the School of Psychology at the graduate and undergraduate level on topics such as research design, cognition, biological bases of behavior, and statistics. Finally, Dr. Freer represents FDU at the United Nations (UN) as a member of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2013 and have served as the co-chair of the NGO Committee on the Family-New York since 2017. Dr. Freer has served as a moderator and expert panelist for several events at the UN. He often takes groups of students to the United Nations for International Days and Commissions.



**Soohyun Kim** is a Postdoctoral Research Scientist at the Department of Epidemiology, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Her research focuses on family policies for working caregivers, such as paid family leave, and their effects on inequalities in work, eldercare, and health in old age. Currently, she is studying cognitive aging in relation to disparities in the labor market and policy coverage. Kim received her Ph.D. in social work from Columbia University. She has served as a national delegate to the OECD Working Party on Social Policy and a country focal point on social policy to the UN ESCAP.

**Dr. Mihaela Robila** is Professor of Human Development and Family Science at Queens College, City University of New York. Her scholarship is focused on international families and policies. Besides publishing peer-reviewed articles, she edited the [\*Handbook of Family Policies across the Globe\*](#) (Springer, 2014), and *Families in Eastern Europe* (Elsevier, 2004), wrote *Eastern European Immigrant Families* (Routledge, 2008) and co-edited [\*Global Perspectives on Family Life Education\*](#) (Springer, 2018). Recently, she co-authored a global research report coordinated by UNICEF Office of Research on [\*“Families, Family Policy and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)”\*](#). Her work has been supported by grants from U.S. Dept. of State - American Councils for International Education, Fulbright, Spencer Foundation, Fahs Beck Fund for Research, Jacobs Foundation, and CUNY, among others. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association Divisions 52 (International Psychology), 43 (Family Psychology), and 37 (Child and Family Policy and Practice). She is the Past-Chair of the International Section of National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) (2019-2021) and NCFR Representative at the United Nations.



**Mr. Ignacio Socias** is a Ph. D. in Law by the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain). He works as Director of International Relations of the International Federation for Family Development, an umbrella organization for more than 250 Family Enrichment Centers that operates in 70 countries, benefits over 90,000 people annually and has been granted reclassification of the consultative status at ECOSOC from special to general. His job involves the design, team coordination and direction of activities: with United Nations and other agencies; in the European Union, through its participation in research and dissemination programmes, as well as negotiation and intermediation with European Parliament members and intergroups; with local, regional and national governments of the countries where the Federation operates.



As Chief Executive Officer at the Vanier Institute, **Nora Spinks** works those that study, serve and support families to enhance the national understanding of families in Canada and mobilize research to practice. Nora has dedicated her career to creating innovative policies and programs focusing on health and well-being, caregiving, workplace flexibility and work-life harmony, having served as an advisor and consultant to leaders in business, law, labour, government and community. A strategic leader, Nora has contributed to the success of a variety of federal, provincial, community and workplace programs across diverse sectors, industries and professions. Recognized internationally as a leader in families and work, Nora is a recipient of many awards celebrating her

contribution to workplaces and communities across Canada.

**Dr. Bahira Trask** is Professor and Chair of Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Delaware. She holds a B.A. in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations from Yale University and a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on globalization, women's employment and family change in Western and non-Western countries, and she presents regularly on these topics at international forums. Dr. Trask has authored and edited a number of books including *Women, Work, and Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities* (Routledge, 2014), *Globalization and Families: Accelerated Systemic Social Change*, (Springer, 2010) and *Cultural Diversity and Families* (Sage, 2007). In 2019, in recognition of her intellectual contributions, she was awarded the *NCFR Jan Trost award* for "outstanding contributions to international family scholarship," in 2018 she received an Erasmus fellowship to Greece, and in 2015 she was elected a *fellow* in NCFR, an honor accorded to 3 percent of the membership.





As the United Nations representative of the International Federation for Family Development, **José Alejandro (Alex) Vázquez Alarcon** opens the line of communication between Member States, the Academia, the UN-System, families and various Civil Society actors to highlight a family perspective and child protection scope in the design of various social policy recommendations. With a PhD in Political Thought and Development, Alex brings a substantial contribution to the global discussion and a practical engagement among stakeholders. At the United Nations, he has been the project manager of the comprehensive evidence-based Global Report on Families, Family Policies and the Sustainable Development Goals in partnership with Unicef, Caixa Bank and Stiftung Maienburg, He is the co-founder and head of communications of “Cidesoc”, an interdisciplinary and global think tank for the research and dissemination of social studies. Alex has been a visiting scholar of the European Institute of Columbia University in the City of

New York and holds a M.A. in Governme and Culture of the Organizations at the Enterprise and Humanism Institute of the University of Navarra, Spain. He is also the co-chair of the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the United Nations Children’s Fund as the entity officially mandated to represent civil society and interact with Unicef’s Executive Board. Alex has advocated for work-family balance, shared responsibility at home and parenting education programmes and support at various United Nations Conferences.