



**E-course: Youth and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

**Round II**

**13<sup>th</sup> March – 16<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**Biographies of Experts, Course Coordinators and Instructors**

## **EXPERTS**

**ALISSA CARON (USA)** is the Country Coordinator of Population and Development International - Cambodia. Based in Siem Reap, Alissa oversees the Village Development Partnership (VDP), an integrated health and community development initiative in rural areas. Funded by the Gates Foundation and other partners, the VDP seeks to help rural communities improve their quality of life through community-led activities in health, agriculture, education, income generation, and social mobilization.

Previously, Alissa was the Planning Officer in the health department of the Population and Community Development Association (PDA), Thailand's leading health and development NGO. She managed and supported HIV prevention and socioeconomic development programs in Thailand, Cambodia, and India, and implemented a community health care worker program for primary health care in rural Thai villages.

After graduating from Williams College in the US, Alissa completed two masters degrees in international public health and comparative social policy at Oxford University. Alissa has been an active member of health advocacy organizations in the US and the UK, including the AIDS Action Committee, Health Care for All, Physicians for Human Rights, and the National UK Student Stop AIDS Society, and she has worked on HIV prevention and care programs in Zambia.

**CAITLIN WYNDHAM (AUSTRALIA)** has over eight years of experience in international development. Most recently she was a project manager at Handicap International in Maldives aiming to include people with disabilities in all aspects of the island country's society. Previously, Ms Wyndham worked for several years in Vietnam as a policy and program design specialist in the area of disability and development. Recently she assisted the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Geneva in mapping services for women with disabilities in Vietnam. While living in Hanoi, she also worked in China and Cambodia and conducted training for emerging groups of people with disabilities in Iraq. Ms Wyndham is the author of a guidebook for jobseekers with disabilities and a trainer's manual for conducting workshops for job-seekers with disabilities. Ms. Wyndham holds a master's degree in international and community development from Deakin University in Geelong, Australia; and bachelor's degrees in modern history and human ecology from the Australian National University in Canberra. An experienced consultant who has worked in Australia, South-East Asia and the Middle East, Caitlin specialises in the development of community based vocational training and employment projects, with particular emphasis on strategies to assist disadvantaged groups. Caitlin has excellent communication skills, is an accomplished trainer and facilitator and is skilled in policy and program development.

**LKHAMDULAM NATSAGDORJ (MONGOLIA)** is executive director of People Centered Conservation in Mongolia, a non-governmental organization that develops and implements community-based projects tied to natural resource management and livelihood improvement. Ms. Natsagdorj's organization works closely with New Zealand Nature Institute, an international team of conservation and development practitioners with core competencies in the fields of rural livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. Ms. Natsagdorj has also worked alongside the New

Zealand organization in pursuit of community-based tourism development. Previously, she was the leader of a team that conducted a baseline survey of socioeconomic conditions in Mongolia for the United Nations Development Programme. Ms. Natsagdorj holds an MBA from Hyderabad Central University in India; and a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics and accountancy from the Mongolian State University of Agriculture in Ulaanbaatar

**NOORULLAH JAN AHMADZAI (AFGHANISTAN)**, an expert in local governance and institutional development, working as a Senior Technical Advisor with the Kabul Mayor, he directed a capacity-building program at the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, an agency under the Office of the President. It focuses on service delivery, institution development, and security at the sub-national level. Previously, Ahmadzai worked for national and international organizations such as AusAID, the World Bank, the International Rescue Committee, and a commercial bank. Ahmadzai was exiled to Pakistan as a refugee when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in the 1980s. In 2007, he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration. The following year, he was awarded a Global Ambassador Fellowship from the Republic of Korea, where he completed a master's degree in public policy at the Korea Development Institute School of Public Policy and Management. Last summer, Ahmadzai received a certificate in Leadership and Global Cooperation at the Hansen Summer Institute, San Diego University. Ahmadzai founded and now serves as president of the Afghan Youth Alliance, which mobilizes young people on a state-building agenda. Mr. Ahmadzai participated and lectured in many international forums on MDGs, Transnational security, development, and conflict management more specifically on national and regional issues.

**KAMANI JINDHASA (SRI LANKA)** Kamani was formerly the Manager Go Beyond and Women's Advocacy at MAS Holdings Private Ltd, Sri Lanka, which required her to manage a programme that targeted 35,000 rural female employees from 23 plants both in Sri Lanka and India.

Prior to joining Care International, Kamani was the Facilitator of the Forum against Gender-based Violence at UNFPA. As a volunteer she has worked on numerous projects as a member of the Junior Bar Association, Youth Committee Chairperson of the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka (FPASL), an NGO and was a founding director of the National Youth Coalition on Sexual and Reproductive Rights. She is currently Hon. Secretary of FPASL and also works closely with Positive Women's Network, an NGO that supports People living with HIV/AIDS. Kamani holds an MBA from the University of Western Sydney, Australia, a post graduate diploma in International Trade Law from Sri Lanka Law College and is an Attorney-at-Law.

**DR. MALALAY AHMADZAI (AFGHANISTAN)**, Safe Motherhood and Child Specialist, UNICEF Cambodia.

**RODICA IANOLE (ROMANIA)** is a doctoral student working on health and behavioral economics, with a specific focus on consumption habits. She is a strong believer in inter and transdisciplinary approaches, with a profound fascination for human behavior.

Her early volunteer work in local youth organizations was focalized on cultural and social issues, and it was continued at the academic and research level through an intense participation to numerous international conferences and workshops regarding applied economics to areas like higher education,

health and well-being. Currently, Ms. Ianole serves a position of Research and Teaching Assistant at "Nicolae Titulescu" University of Bucharest.

She is part of the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF) Alumni Network (after graduating a summer program in public health and vulnerable groups), The International Confederation for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics and Economic Psychology and Hansen Fellow for Leadership and International Cooperation (San Diego, USA). Ms. Ianole holds two Master degrees, one in Quantitative Economics and Cybernetics and the other in Human Resources Management, following a Bachelor degree in Business Administration, completed at the University of Bucharest, Romania.

**JOSHUA COOPER (United States)** teaches university courses covering issues tied to political science, international human rights law, Pacific Island studies, peace studies and journalism as a lecturer at the University of Hawai'i's West O'ahu campus and Leeward Community College. Mr. Cooper is pursuing a doctorate in international human rights law at the National University of Ireland in Galway, and a master's degree in Pacific Island studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He holds a master's degree in international relations and bachelor's degree (with high honors and distinction) in political science and journalism from UH-Manoa. Mr. Cooper pursued advocacy work that pushed for adoption of the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was approved in September 2007. Also, in partnership with indigenous peoples, he has presented human-rights violations matters to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and Discrimination Against Women as well as the UN Human Rights Committee

**JENNI PRISK (USA)**, An award-winning, international motivational speaker, communications coach and trainer, Jenni Prisk founded Prisk Communication in 1990. Following the September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001, Jenni founded Voices of Women (VOW), to expand knowledge of global issues, advocate for human rights, and support the equal participation of women and men in advancing human security.

Since its founding, VOW has staged 60 educational events, supported AWEC (Afghan Women's Educational Center) in Kabul, sponsored a woman living in poverty in Sudan, raised several thousand dollars for human rights organizations, partnered with national and international NGOs, and conceived the annual Beyond Borders Benefit where an Award is given to a person who champions human rights. And, beginning in 2010, VOW is supporting the Daraja Academy for Girls in Kenya. Voices of Women is on the Honor Roll created by Project Concern International for the work undertaken for Afghanistan women and girls. In 2010, she was a faculty lecturer at the East West Center at the University of Hawaii, teaching communication and public speaking skills to 40 students from the Pacific Rim countries. Annually, four women who are global peacemakers take up temporary residence at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at USD. Jenni provides pro bono public speaking training for them, to insure their comfort and confidence. In addition, she has hosted meetings in her home to give others the opportunity to learn from the women. (Two women who were hosted, Wahu Kaara of Kenya and Rubina Bhatti of Pakistan, were Nobel Peace Prize nominees.) Through her Rotary Club in San Diego, Jenni is involved in interviewing and mentoring at-risk youth in order to assist them to gain a place in high school. She is also on the committee for Camp Enterprise, held annually, when 80 high school kids participate in

a weekend-long exercise in building businesses that are ethically viable, and that will give back to their communities.

Jenni founded a program with East African refugee women living in San Diego and in 2011 VOW will embark on training and coaching in business and life skills, culminating in a conference. In 2010, Jenni visited Uganda, where she developed workshops focused on businesses for local women in order to help them gain fiscal responsibility and experience. In May, 2006, Jenni received a Living Legacy Award from the Women's International Center (WIC). In March, 2008, Jenni received a Community Leader Award from the UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinic Project. She was a nominee in 2009 in San Diego Magazine's Women of Worth Awards.

**SELENE BIFFI (ITALY)** is the founder of Youth Action for Change. She served with the UN, Amnesty International and AEGEE in the past in different capacities, supervising projects aimed at empowering young people in different areas. She contributed to a few published works on youth inclusion and participation and youth policies, and has been profiled in several national and international media outlets for her work. She has organised national and international consultations on youth participation on behalf of UNESCO and the World Bank. She was also included in 'Fighting for our Future: Tribute to Young Women inspiring Change' by MADRE, and received awards such as the "Young Woman of the Year Award" in 2004 by the European Academy of Civil Society, the prestigious 'Premio Isimbardi' of the Province of Milan (Italy) and has been selected as 'ChangeMaker of the Month' by Ashoka, the leading organisation supporting social entrepreneurs worldwide. She holds a Degree in International Economics and Management from Università Bocconi (Italy), and is pursuing NOHA Master in International Humanitarian Action in Ireland. She is currently launching her book in India.

**SADIA ATTA MEHMOOD, (PAKISTAN)** is the overall technical and financial advisor of this course. She is working as a National Programme Officer, Youth program of at United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Ms. Mehmood is passionate about working for the promotion of rights for the children and youth of Pakistan. She is also qualified in the field of Social Work. Ms. Mehmood has participated in various levels of national and international leadership programs in the field of sexual and reproductive health. She also has an extensive background in designing creative development programs for children and young people. A special leadership program for youth, which she designed, focuses on awareness, spirituality and interfaith harmony in order to address the sexual and reproductive health needs of all young people on an equal basis.

Her interest in interfaith work has led her to conduct research projects on exploring the role of religions such as Islam, Christianity and Hinduism in the shaping of young people's sexuality. She has also compiled verses from different faiths on peace, tolerance and harmony. Ms. Mehmood has worked for a number of different organizations in project management, training, research, and community development. She is the Honorary Chairperson of the Child Development Organization, an NGO based in the Sindh province of Pakistan. Ms. Mehmood has published numerous articles, journals and research papers on youth issues.

**NIDA MUSHTAQ (PAKISTAN)** Currently involved with Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights as one of the members of Board of Directors, Ms. Mushtaq has been working as an advocate and activist for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) of young people since last five years.

Initially working with organizations such as World Population Foundation, Save the Children and Pakistan AIDS Control Federation, Ms. Mushtaq is now involved in international advocacy initiatives related to SRHR of young people. Ms. Mushtaq's key areas of interest and experience in the SRHR field include Comprehensive Sexuality Education, training young people to become self-advocates and strategizing to promote meaningful youth participation in SRHR related policy making and implementation. Ms. Mushtaq is currently studying in a postgraduate programme at University of Melbourne, Australia. On completion of her degree, she plans to return to Pakistan and work on youth development issues in the country through innovative approaches like social enterprising and campaigning.

## **Course Coordinators**

**SHAHSHEEN JAYAWEERA** (Australia) Shasheen shares a passion for youth empowerment and economic development and was recognised as a finalist in the 'Young Australian of the Year' award in New South Wales in 2007 for his commitment to assisting developing nations. Shasheen co-founded Pacificayouth in 2004 which became the largest network empowering Pacific Islands youth. He has worked for the World Bank and the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific Islands and also as an economist in Mongolia. Shasheen currently works as management consultant for a global firm during the day and has also worked for some of Australia's largest corporations in various strategy and analytical roles. He was a member of the Government's National Youth Roundtable, the Oxfam International Youth Parliament and a delegate to two World Youth Congresses. Shasheen has a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Economics with first class honours from the University of New South Wales, Australia.

**VICTORIA WONG LI LENG** is a Youth Volunteer and Advocate for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights issues. She has been actively involved in volunteering for the past 6 years. Currently, she is the Regional Youth Representative for International Planned Parenthood Federation of East, South East Asia and the Oceania Region and the youth volunteer for Federation of Reproductive Health Association Malaysia, as well as Perak Family Health Association, Malaysia. Li Leng is a Psychology Graduate with First Class Honours.

Li Leng has also participated and conducted trainings both nationally and internationally. Apart from submitting abstracts to conferences, she was also an abstract viewer for the recent XVIII International AIDS Conference in Vienna. Her focus is not only on SRHR issues but also including working towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition to that, Li Leng also practices the process from designing, implementing and evaluating programme and projects.

## Course Instructors

**HIRA HAFEEZ-UR-REHMAN (PAKISTAN)** Ms. Hira Hafeez Ur Rehman is a co-founder of Youth Dividend. Seeking to promote Gender rights, healthy child development and active participation of youth in the Pakistan, Hira invested her education in community and volunteer experience working with several National and International development organizations for the past four years. Gender Equality, Youth rights and participation, and Reproductive Health and HIV & AIDS are the core areas of her interest and experience. Currently she is working at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for poverty and gender projects in Pakistan, she is also actively involved in the Youth Programme of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) working as a Coordinator for Youth Advisory panel advocating for active youth participation at policy level. Hira practiced leadership through international experiences speaking and advocating about poverty, HIV & AIDS prevention and education, Conflict resolution, Youth and Gender rights and basic child rights. Hira has spent considerable time working at United Nations Headquarters in New York as the youngest Pakistani where she worked at the Policy support and coordination branch, UN DESA providing research support for 63rd Session of the General Assembly, writing research based documents on Global Health with focus on MDG's 4, 5 and 6 has been a critical part of her training. Hira is currently running a project with street children in Islamabad where she provides basic health training to children with a group of volunteers. Hira served as a Hansen Peace Fellow in San Diego, California, She holds a BSc (hons) Economics and Finance, and MBA in Finance from Lahore School of Economics, Pakistan.

**HAJRA HAFEEZ-UR-REHMAN (PAKISTAN)** Ms. Hafeez ur Rehman is an East West Center Fellow who served as an Asia Pacific Leadership Fellow in Honolulu, Hawaii in 2009-2010. Ms. Hafeez ur Rehman has four years of experience working in the international development sector with organizations addressing social, health, environment, education and entrepreneurship issues. In South East Asia she has extensive grassroots experience with Population and Community Development Association (PDA), Institute of Tropical Biology in Vietnam and United Nations. Her experiences include on an eco-tourism management plan for a national park in South Vietnam, innovating family planning and HIV AIDS community based prevention plan for sex workers in Thailand, mapping and analysis tied to the issue of violence against women in Pakistan, and assisting with clinics at which doctors provide free medical facilities to women in Pakistan slum areas.

Ms. Hafeez-ur-Rehman holds an MBA in finance and a bachelor's degree in economics and finance, both from Lahore School of Economics in Pakistan. Last year, she was a keynote speaker at REACH Youth Conference on Gender, HIV and AIDS in Sri Lanka and Asia Pacific Young Leaders Summit in Cambodia. This summer she served as a Hansen Peace Fellow at San Diego State University.

Ms. Hafeez ur Rehman is currently serving a research position at Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) HIV AIDS Surveillance Project where she is working with most at risk populations conducting a biological and behavioral mapping. Ms. Hafeez ur Rehman recently founded her own movement called 'Youth Dividend' a dynamic youth-led idea in Pakistan working to develop, inform, inspire and mobilize young people through SRHR education, life skills training, leadership training, peer education, awareness raising, skill building, policy and advocacy.

**COURSE COORDINATORS:**

**ABIKHA NAWAZ (PAKISTAN)**

**MALEEHA MANSOOR (PAKISTAN)**