

**Dr. Kezevino Aram wins the
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
2021 Leadership in Public Health Practice Award**



**HARVARD T.H. CHAN
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

FOR PRESS RELEASE



The Harvard T.H. Chan Alumni Association Awards Committee has selected **Dr. Kezevino Aram for the 2021 Leadership Award in Public Health Practice**. Co-Chair of the Committee, Dr. Bernard T. Lee, stated on 8 July 2021 that this was an extremely competitive year; however, Dr. Aram's exceptional career accomplishments impressed the group in many ways. Dr. Aram's award will be presented in the Fall.

The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Leadership Award in Public Health Practice recognizes a graduate of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health who has been an outstanding example of effective leadership in the practice of public health, in the public or private sphere. The award recognizes selfless service and leadership in the practice of public health, significant contributions to the adoption/uptake of public health principles at the local, state, regional, national or international level; and/or demonstrated significant leadership in a government, NGO, or other public service organization.

Dr. Aram, MPH '00, is the first Indian to receive the Leadership Award in Public Health Practice.

Dr. Aram received her Master of Public Health degree from the School of Public Health, Harvard University, with a double major in child health and international health. She received her Medical Degree from the PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research and completed her special training in Paediatrics at the Masonic Medical Centre for Children in Coimbatore, India.

Dr. Kezevino Aram has served as President of Shanti Ashram since 2014. Shanti Ashram, founded in 1986 on Mahatma Gandhi's vision of *Sarvodaya* (progress for all), is an international center for learning, development and collaboration that accompanies communities and individuals in their efforts to move out of poverty, address inequalities, build creative leaders and ensure sustained development. Today, Shanti Ashram serves over 70,000 vulnerable children and their families across 100 villages in Tamil Nadu.

In 2017, Dr. Aram founded the International Center for Child and Public Health (ICPH) in Coimbatore, based on her field experience as well as discussions with fellow public health experts, medical practitioners, and the Government of India. ICPH is an innovative attempt to find synergies in paediatric care between hospital-centred and community-centred efforts to impact child health collaboratively and decisively in India. Dr. Aram has maintained close ties with the Harvard School of Public Health through hosting visiting faculty, global public health experts and visiting students. These interactions have directly supported the process of defining the vision and programmes of ICPH (www.icphhealth.org).

While advancing child health, Dr. Aram's work has focused particularly around 1) childhood immunization, 2) preventive pediatric interventions for vulnerable children, including balanced nutrition, 3) piloting initiatives for care and support of children living with HIV, 4) addressing toxic stress in children living in poverty, 5)

childhood violence and its health consequences in adolescents, 6) integrating health into community-centred early childhood programs, and 7) youth participation in integrated child development initiatives.

Dr. Aram was invited to serve on the 'Experts Committee' of the Government of Tamil Nadu in March 2020 when the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic was observed. Her mandate was to advise on the areas of child health and child protection. In realizing this responsibility, she had to work with the Ministry of Health, the Health Secretary, the Director of Health Services, and Public Health experts including Dr. Sowmya Swaminathan, the Chief Scientist at WHO. Dr. Aram's assessment of the impact of the pandemic on children shaped her policy response that subsequently led to the resuming of the Early Childhood Services and the opening of over 54,000 Anganwadi centres in Tamil Nadu.

Over the last two decades, Dr. Aram has worked with the Government of India to make several notable contributions to India's Public Health landscape. With the Planning Commission (Niti Aayog) of the Government of India, she served on the Working Committee for NGOs, was part of the Expert's Group that formulated the framework for health insurance for families living in poverty and reviewed Tamil Nadu's routine immunisation policy. Dr. Aram also served as the Lead Consultant for the very first Human Development Report for the State of Nagaland commissioned in 2004 by UNDP & Government of India, and led the Expert's Team at the National Foundation of Communal Harmony in 2015 to review and strengthen Government of India's 'Project Assist' programme that helps children affected by communal violence.

Internationally, Dr. Aram has continued to leverage her global leadership positions for the common good. She was invited to serve on the **World Economic Forum's** Advisory Committee on the Social Determinants of Health Platform. Dr. Aram also serves as Co-moderator and Executive Committee Member of **Religions for Peace-International**, where she works closely with **UNICEF**. Dr. Aram is a Board Member of **KAICIID**, and during the pandemic, was elected as Chairperson of this prestigious Inter-Governmental Organization for Interfaith Dialogue. In this capacity, Dr. Aram was invited to speak at the opening of the **G20** Interfaith Forum and be part of the follow-up action. Dr. Aram also serves as the Vice Chair of the Advisory Board of **Arigatou International**. Dr. Aram is also a Trustee at the **M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation**.

Dr. Aram has received two previous awards from Harvard University. She received the **Albert Schweitzer Award for Commitment to Public Health Practice** and the **Dr. Fan Chin Memorial Award for Innovation**. Dr. Aram has also received awards from both her other alma maters; she received the **Distinguished Alumni Award** from the PSG Institutions, and the **Best Junior Medical Officer Award** from Masonic Medical Centre in Coimbatore. Additionally, Dr. Aram received the **Outstanding Young Indian Award** from Junior Chamber International (JCI).

Previous winners of the Leadership Award in Public Health Practice include:

- 2020 - Mandy Cohen, MPH '04, MD
- 2019 - Louise Ivers, MB, BCh, BAO, MPH '05, MD
- 2018 - Shevin T. Jacob, MPH '03, MD
- 2017 - Huey-Jen Jenny Su, MS, SM '87, SD '90
- 2016 - Carolyn S. Langer, MD, JD '92, MPH '92
- 2015 - Mosoka P. Fallah, PhD, MA, MPH '12
- 2014 - Margo G. Wootan SD '93
- 2013 - Adam M. Finkel, AB '79, MPP '84, SD '87
- 2012 - Maura Bluestone, SM '74
Francisco Sy, SM '81
- 2011 - Françoise Bouchard, MD, MPH '86

Learn more about the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Leadership Award in Public Health Practice here: <https://alumni.sph.harvard.edu/s/1319/02-HSPH/20/interior.aspx?sid=1319&gid=2&pgid=405#leadership>