



**Dr. Kezevino Aram serves as President of Shanti Ashram**, a development organisation she joined over 20 years ago and has been leading 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 aims to address social issues of relevance and promote community development. Some areas of sustained work over the last three decades have been education, poverty alleviation, healthcare, environment, leadership training for women and youth, inter-faith collaboration and women's entrepreneurship.

At Shanti Ashram, Dr. Aram has helped develop a template for community development pivoted upon active participation by women and children - which has assisted communities move out of poverty, address inequities, build leaders and ensure sustainable development. Today, Shanti Ashram's community work impacts more than 250,000 people in Coimbatore, India. She has sustained her long standing engagement in inter-faith dialogue as a key component of her effort to promote peace building and local initiatives to foster social cohesion.

#### **Academic Background:**

Dr. Aram 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, Coimbatore, India. Subsequently she gained a Master's degree in Public Health from the School of Public Health, Harvard University, with a double major in child and international health.

**Dr. Aram by education is a child health practitioner with a passion for public health and over two decades of experience.** Her first assignment at Shanti Ashram involved the formal integration of community health across all the service programmes. Her focus on child health led to the scaling of the service footprint from 5,000 vulnerable children then to nearly 70,000 today across over 100 villages.

While advancing child health, her 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-centered early childhood programs, and 7) youth participation in integrated child development initiatives.

In 2017, she further established 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 has built many of its programmes around her analysis of the impact of health systems as well as social determinants of child health in India. ICPH is an innovative attempt to find synergies in paediatric care between hospital centered and community centered efforts to impact child health collaboratively and decisively in India. Dr. Aram has maintained close ties with the Harvard School of Public Health through visiting faculty, global public health experts and visiting students. These interactions have directly supported the process for defining the vision and programmes of ICPH. The collaboration with Ecole La Source, Switzerland, one of the oldest nursing schools of Europe, has enabled bilateral exchange of nursing and medical students with focus on community outreach of public health services.

Dr. Aram partners with many **academic institutions** on social projects, hosts study programmes and practicums to get young people actively interested in public health and community development. She also teaches undergraduate and postgraduate medical students as a visiting faculty at PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Coimbatore.

She hosts global health experts regularly from around the world and in 2015 successfully launched the annual 'Global Classroom' and 'India Cares' oration to present the best current thinking from leading minds in medicine and public

health for the benefit of both the medical community as well as leaders from other areas with a stake in good public health outcomes.

Dr. Aram has collaborated with many institutions globally including **Governments** (Govt. of India, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Govt. of Nagaland), **Multilateral Institutions** (UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, WHO, World Bank), **Economic Institutions** (World Economic Forum(WEF)Switzerland, Confederation of Indian Industry(CII)), and **Inter-Faith organizations** (Religions for Peace, Arigatou International(Japan), KAICIID(Vatican, Saudi Arabia, Austria, Spain)).

#### **Notable National Contributions:**

- Served on the working committee for NGO's at the Planning Commission (Niti Aayog)of the Government of India.
- Developed the 'Child Friendly Indicator' for local *Panchayats*(government) with the Planning Commission of the Government of Tamil Nadu. She also was part of the experts group that formulated the framework for health insurance for families living in poverty and the review of the state's routine immunisation policy.
- Served as the lead consultant in 2004 for the very first Human Development Report for the State of Nagaland, India commissioned by UNDP & Government of India.
- Led the expert's team at 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.
- Collaborated extensively with UNICEF India on multiple programs including developing care frameworks for children living with HIV, building child friendly local *Panchayats* (governments) and the active engagement of faith based organizations in health care.

#### **Current public leadership roles:**

Dr.Aram through the public leadership roles has placed her expertise and experience in initiatives that advance the common good both in India and around the world. They have also contributed immensely to her own learning and collaboration with other leaders around Indian and globally.

- Co-Moderator, Religions for Peace - International
- Vice Chair, Advisory Board, Arigatou International
- Board Member, KAICIID International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
- Member, Task force, International Initiative To End Child Poverty
- Member, Social Determinants of Health Advisory Group at World Economic Forum
- Board of Trustees, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation
- Member of the Board, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore Kendra
- Board of Trustees, Keithan Sathya Trust.

#### **Select Awards:**

- Albert Schweitzer Award for Commitment to Public Health Practice (Harvard University, USA)
- Dr. Fan Chin Memorial Award for Innovation (Harvard University, USA)
- Distinguished Alumni award (PSG Institutions,India)
- Best Junior Medical Officer Award (Masonic Medical Centre, India)
- Dharma Chakra Award for Contribution to Child Health
- Outstanding Young Indian Award.

Widely travelled she speaks 8 Indian languages and loves music, reading and family time.

She considers it an honour to have been a witness to the pioneering peace building work of her parents Dr.M.Aram noted Educationist and Nominated member of the Rajya Sabha and Mrs.Minoti Aram, a Gandhian constructive worker with 5 decades of service to women and children in Nagaland and Tamilnadu.

