

STEPHEN HANMER D'ELÍA, JD, LMSW

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SUMMARY

With over 25 years of expertise, I have led the creation of innovative policies, strategies, and programs supporting children, youth, and families globally. My journey into social justice commenced with a BA in History from Yale and continued through an MSW in Clinical Social Work and a JD in International Human Rights from Columbia University.

My roles as a therapist, social worker, and lawyer allow me to navigate and bridge diverse contexts and perspectives, employing a multifaceted approach to complex challenges. As a native speaker of Spanish and English with Uruguayan, American, and British citizenships, my professional experiences span over 20 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America.

Currently, as the Founder & CEO of yau.guru consulting and a practicing family therapist, I lead strategic projects and offer client-centered therapeutic services, leveraging my broad expertise and international perspective to make a meaningful impact.

CAREER SNAPSHOTS

- Spearheaded UNICEF's partnerships with legislative branches of governments and religious communities, formulating global policies and strategies for over 160 country offices.
- Directed education, youth, and parent support programs at SCO Family of Services, one of the largest foster care agencies in the United States.
- Oversaw the design, implementation, and monitoring of the International Rescue Committee's child protection programs in West Africa, East Africa, and the Middle East.
- Authored over 15 publications spanning policy development, training modules, and assessments aimed at bolstering support for children, youth, and families impacted by conflict and injustice.

CLIENTS & AFFILIATIONS

Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Aspen Institute
citiesRISE
Columbia University School of Law
Columbia University School of Social Work
Fair Futures

Georgetown University
HDPI Humanitarian Development Partnerships
Human Rights Watch
International Rescue Committee
Lumos Foundation
Mindful Therapy Brooklyn
NYC Administration for Children's Services

Oak Foundation
Ramapo for Children
Roothbert Fund
SCO Family of Services
UNICEF
US Govt Office of Refugee & Resettlement
Yale Child Study Center
Yale University

RECENT NOTABLE PROJECTS

New York City Collaboration: Partnered with the City of New York to design support programs for young individuals transitioning from foster care.

Federal Engagement: Collaborated with the U.S. Government to bolster youth engagement support mechanisms for Unaccompanied Children.

Research and Advocacy: Conducted in-depth research on the effectiveness of restorative justice and mandatory reporting laws on child sexual abuse, informing strategies for a leading global foundation dedicated to addressing child sexual abuse.

SELECT CAREER JOURNEY

YAU.GURU CONSULTING

FOUNDER & CEO, 2022- PRESENT

Program Development & Leadership: Lead the design and launch of programs for non-profits, international organizations, and government agencies, to support children, youth, and families impacted by trauma and injustice.

Policy and Strategy Innovation: Develop and apply comprehensive policies and strategies across sectors and contexts, including training and curriculum development.

MINDFUL THERAPY BROOKLYN

THERAPIST, 2022- PRESENT

Client-Centered Therapeutic Services: Provide therapeutic services to children, adolescents, parents, and adults through an attachment and relational lens focused on acceptance, empathy, and curiosity.

Tailored Therapeutic Modalities: Leverage a comprehensive range of evidence-based therapeutic techniques, such as Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy for enhancing parent-child relationships, Parenting Journey to nurture parental self-awareness and self-care, Safe and Sound Protocol for nervous system regulation, and Play Therapy to support children's emotional expression and healing.

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

CONSULTANT, 2021, 2013

Global Policy Leadership: Authored comprehensive guidelines highlighting the essential role of social service workers in preventing violence against children in educational settings.

Strategic Community Engagement: Developed child protection engagement strategies for Muslim Religious Communities that included strategic consultations at Al-Azhar University in Egypt, bringing together Muslim religious scholars, UNICEF regional leadership, and child protection experts from across the Middle East and North Africa.

PARTNERSHIPS SPECIALIST, 2008–2013

Global Leadership in Collaboration: Spearheaded the development of UNICEF's global policies and strategies with legislative branches of governments and religious communities that included partnerships with more than 50 country offices and 40 external organizations.

Strategic International Advocacy: Represented UNICEF in high-level discussions, providing strategic counsel to senior leadership and collaborating closely with the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Violence Against Children.

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, YOUTH, & PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS, 2014–2020

Leadership and Team Management: Directed a team of over 35 professionals in education, youth, and parent support at one of the United States' largest foster care agencies.

Program Development and Integration: Innovatively restructured and merged youth and parent support programs into a unified department, significantly enhancing operational efficiency and service coherence. Led the development of a comprehensive education program, spanning from early childhood to college.

Stakeholder Engagement: Served as the organization's primary representative in critical interactions with government, civil society, and academic stakeholders. Included media appearances and delivering testimony at New York City Council public hearings.

Therapeutic Program Design: Collaboratively designed and implemented an evidence-informed therapeutic group program for youth in foster care.

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

CHILD PROTECTION ADVISER, 2005–2008

Strategic Program Leadership: Oversaw strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of humanitarian and refugee child protection programs across West Africa, East Africa, and the Middle East.

Impactful Child Protection Initiatives: Spearheaded major child protection efforts in Liberia, leading a team of 57 professionals focused on critical rehabilitation and reintegration of children and families impacted by armed conflict.

PROGRAM OFFICER, 1998–1999

Community Empowerment through Education: Led the design and oversight of community-based education and skills training projects for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Innovative Health Education Curriculum Development: Created and launched a pioneering kindergarten health education at a 60,000-person refugee camp in Kenya.

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Authentic Engagement within the Unaccompanied Children Program: Encounter, Connection, and Action. Office of Refugee Resettlement. An Office of the Administration for Children & Families. 2024.

Qualitative Assessment Approaches for the Protection of Children with Disabilities Within Humanitarian Contexts, The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2023.

The Catholic Church and Child Rights Organizations: Finding Common Ground to Avoid Preventable Child-family separation, Global Collaborative on Children’s Issues, Georgetown University, 2023.

Identifying & Prioritizing Protective & Risk Factors to Strengthen Preventive Approaches in Humanitarian Action, The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2023.

Social Service Workers in Schools: Their Role Addressing Violence Against Children and Other Child Protection Concerns, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, UNICEF, 2022.

Empowering Parents so Children can Succeed: a Toolkit to support Parent Involvement in Education when their children are in Foster Care, Advocates for Children and SCO Family of Services, Co-Author, 2017.

Engaging Religious Communities to Protect Children from Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation, Child Abuse & Neglect, Volume 38, Issue 4, Pages 600-611, Co-Author, 2014.

Partnering with Religious Communities for Children, UNICEF, Co-Author, 2012 (translated into Arabic, French, Portuguese, Spanish).

UNICEF Guide to working with Parliaments, UNICEF, Co-Author, 2010 (translated into Arabic, French, Spanish).

Real Dungeons: Juvenile Detention in the State of Rio de Janeiro, Human Rights Watch, Co-Author, 2004.

ADVISORY ROLES

Georgetown University, Collaborative on Global Children's Issues, Research Fellow
Columbia University School of Law, International Human Rights Senior Career Advisor
Aspen Institute, American Express Leadership Academy for Nonprofit Leaders, Fellow
Akanksha Education Fund, Board of Directors
Roothbert Fund, Board of Directors
HDPI Humanitarian Development Partnerships, Affiliate

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
DOCTOR OF LAW, 2005

Specialization: International Human Rights.

Honors & Awards: Lowenstein Public Interest Fellowship, Parker School Recognition of Achievement, Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar, Robert Noxan Toppan Prize.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK, 2002

Specialization: Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice.

Honors & Awards: Dean's Advisory Council, Barbara Smith Fellowship, Roothbert Fund Fellowship.

YALE UNIVERSITY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN HISTORY, 1998

Honors & Awards: Andrew White Prize, Phi Alpha Theta History Society, Founder of Children's Theater Therapeutic Group.