

McDonnell International Scholars Academy
Washington University in St. Louis
Event Description

Event title: Challenges and Opportunities in Developing Child Savings Programs in Israel and Uganda

Event date: 10:00-11:30 a.m. (CST) on October 15

Event duration: 1.5 hours

Event medium: Zoom Webinar

Audience composition: Academics, practitioners, students (global)

Approximate number of attendees: 60+

Speakers:

- **Michael Sherraden**, director, Center for Social Development (CSD); director, Next Age Institute (NAI); George Warren Brown Distinguished University Professor, Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis. sherrad@wustl.edu
- **Michal Grinstein-Weiss**, director, Social Policy Institute (SPI); Shanti K. Khinduka Distinguished professor, Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis. michalgw@wustl.edu
- **Fred Ssewamala**, director, International Center for Child Health and Development (ICHAD); director, Strengthening Mental Health and Research Training (SMART) Africa Center; William E. Gordon Distinguished professor, Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis. fmsl@wustl.edu
- **John Gal**, professor, The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; senior researcher, the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel. john.gal@mail.huji.ac.il
- **Timothy Opobo**, executive director, AfriChild Centre, Makerere University-Kampala-Uganda. topobo@africhild.or.ug
- **Ozge Sensoy Bahar**, research assistant professor, Brown School; co-director; International Center for Child Health and Development (ICHAD), Washington University in St. Louis. ozge.sensoybahar@wustl.edu

Event Description:

Savings play a unique role in shaping the financial security of individuals and families in high- and low-income countries. Sufficient amount of savings can help families maintain adequate levels of consumption, provide a buffer against financial shocks, and enable long-term investments in higher education or homeownership. Ultimately, having enough economic resources can help advance intergenerational economic mobility.

One solution several countries around the world have explored are specialized child savings account (CSA) programs. CSAs are savings or investment accounts typically opened in the name of a child at birth or young age that aim to promote savings and asset accumulation for long-term purposes, such as post-secondary education. The programs have the potential to help families overcome barriers to saving and improve asset-building efforts.

Join the Social Policy Institute (SPI), the International Center for Child Health and Development (ICHAD), and the Next Age Institute (NAI) for a discussion about asset building for long-term child development and CSA programs—with the particular focus on CSAs in Israel and Uganda, which differ greatly in their structure.

Israel's national CSA program is universal: every Israeli child gets a savings account opened in their name, and the government deposits approximately USD 14 per month to these accounts. Participating parents can transfer additional funds from a separate child allowance into the long-term savings accounts and select a specific savings account for their children. In Uganda, ICHAD leads five NIH-funded applied research studies in Southwestern Uganda that seek to improve health and educational outcomes in communities heavily affected by poverty and HIV/AIDS. To this end, the team utilizes combination interventions that include a CSA component. ICHAD seeks to use this data-driven research to guide the national discussion around the benefits of CSAs.

The speakers will present the recent empirical evidence on CSA programs, as well as discuss the challenges and opportunities in implementing the child savings programs in the two countries.

Event Structure:

10.00–10.05: Opening remarks: Michal Grinstein-Weiss (5 min)

- Welcoming event attendees
- Introducing the speakers and the moderator

10.05–10.20: Presentation by Michael Sherraden – Introduction to CSAs (15 min)

- What are CSAs? Which countries currently have public CSA programs? How about private initiatives?
- What is the most recent global evidence on the impact of such programs?
- What are the general, common challenges to developing CSA programs?

10.20–10.50: Presentation by Michal Grinstein-Weiss and John Gal – Research and Policy Perspective in Israel (20 min) + Q&A (10 min)

- Description of the CSA program in Israel. How did the program come into existence? What were the key challenges and opportunities in developing this program?
- What is the empirical evidence on this program? Its benefits?
- What is the current policy landscape and policy discussions related to this program?
- What challenges is the program facing at the moment?
- What are the opportunities of the program? Where do we go from here?

10.50–11.20: Presentation by Fred Ssewamala and Timothy Opobo – Research and Policy Perspective Uganda (20 min) + Q&A (10 min)

- Description of the CSA program in Uganda. How did the program come into existence? What were the key challenges and opportunities in developing this program?
- What is the empirical evidence on this program? Its benefits?
- What is the current policy landscape and policy discussions related to this program?
- What challenges is the program facing at the moment?
- What are the opportunities of the program? Where do we go from here?

11.20–11.30: Closing remarks: Ozge Sensoy Bahar (5 min)

- What is next for the CSA programs?
- Final notes to event attendees

Moderating Q&A after each country's presentation: Olga Kondratjeva

Notes to Speakers:

- Speakers will be invited to a 30 minutes run through the week before the event.

- Speakers will be asked to log into the event at 9:30 am (CT) on Oct. 15 to test audio/tech
- Speakers will be responsible for sharing their own slides. Contact Sarah Cowart if you prefer not to manage your slides (cowart@wustl.edu).
- Speakers have 10 minutes to present.
- We will host a brief Q&A after each country's presentation (10 minutes each). We will accept Q&A from audience, moderated.