

Education Development Center

Education Development Center, Inc.

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Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) is a global non-profit research and development organization committed to addressing some of the world's most urgent challenges in education, health, and economic opportunity. Founded in 1958, EDC currently manages 250 projects in 22 countries, is comprised of over 1,200 staff and has an annual funding level of approximately US\$150 million (FY 2016). We are comprised of both a U.S. Division and an International Division and our focal areas are organized across eight distinct but interconnected portfolios.

EDC's diverse programs harness the power of people and systems to improve education, health promotion and care, workforce preparation, communications technologies, and civic engagement. Our projects range from seed and experimental initiatives to large-scale national and international efforts. EDC enjoys a worldwide reputation for its excellence in program and fiscal management and for the impact of its work. Part of EDC's mission is to create innovations that promote healthy human development worldwide. Our efforts span the continuum from health promotion to disease prevention, intervention, and care, especially among people in vulnerable conditions. We concentrate on major interrelated health issues such as violence, suicide, and unintentional injuries; alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; mental health promotion and prevention of disorders; HIV and sexually transmitted diseases; reproductive health; and nutrition and fitness. Since 1985, EDC has pioneered new approaches to violence prevention across health, education, and community settings.

EDC's violence work is housed within the Injury, Violence, and Suicide Portfolio and is implemented across projects throughout both the U.S. and International Divisions. We address many forms of violence including child physical and sexual abuse and exploitation; partner abuse; youth interpersonal violence; suicide; sexual assault; and hate crimes. We utilize a multidisciplinary, public health approach to violence prevention which involves social science and education, health and mental health, community mobilization, and justice and law enforcement to address violence in all its forms. We are especially attuned to the interrelationship of trauma and violence constructs within families and across individuals' lifespans. We have expertise in working with both those who experience violence and those who use violence against others. Through use of both public health and evidence-based mental health strategies, we aim to both provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people and to ensure sustainability is the guiding principle of any promising intervention.

VPA Focal Person

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Heidi Kar, PhD, MHS, the lead of the violence and trauma team at the Education Development Center. A licensed clinical psychologist and international public health specialist, her areas of expertise are the prevention and treatment of trauma disorders, violent behavior, substance use disorders, and suicide. Dr. Kar serves as the principal investigator and subject matter expert across both domestic and international projects involving community-, school-, and health system-based program and intervention development. She has a broad cross-cultural background and is experienced in working with diverse populations, including veterans, domestic violence survivors, violence perpetrators, vulnerable youth, forensic populations, and American Indian and Alaskan Native communities.

Dr. Kar has worked as a frontline clinician, providing evidence-based individual, group, and couples psychotherapies and has lived and worked across Africa, Asia, Central America, and the United States to design programs and train professionals in violence, suicide, and trauma-focused prevention and intervention program development and evaluation. Previously, Dr. Kar has held positions with the International Center for Research on Women, the International Rescue Committee, Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health, and with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

She is an active member of the World Health Organization's Violence Prevention Alliance, the National Academy of the Sciences and Engineering Global Forum on Violence, the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapy, and the American Psychological Association. Dr. Kar holds a PhD in clinical psychology from Stony Brook University and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in trauma and substance use disorders at the San Francisco VA Medical Center. She holds an MHS in international health from the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and a BA in neuroscience from Smith College.