

BRNET January 2018 Newsletter

Dear BRNET Members and Friends of BRNET:

Thank you for being a part of the Bullying Research Network! In our January newsletter, you will find updates from the network.

Be sure to check out our website at <http://cehs.unl.edu/BRNET/> for additional resources and announcements.

Researcher Spotlight—Dr. Iheoma U. Iruka



Dr. Iheoma U. Iruka, Ph.D., is the Chief Research Innovation Officer and Director of The Center for Early Education Research and Evaluation at HighScope Educational Research Foundation. She earned her B.A. in psychology from Temple University, M.A. in psychology from Boston University, and Ph.D. in applied developmental psychology from the University of Miami, Florida.

Prior to joining HighScope in June of 2017, she was at the Buffet Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska as Director of Research and Evaluation and Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill as Scientist and Associate Director. Iruka's research focuses on determining how early experiences impact poor and ethnic minority children's learning and development, and the role of the family and education environments and systems.

Dr. Iruka's early research focused on the lives and experiences of poor African American families and their children with a particular focus on parenting and family engagement. While some attention focused on parenting and cultural differences, little attention focused on parenting across ethnic minorities and young children. Specifically, the focus on cultural differences in parenting was generally deficit-based and did not consider how cultural variations in parenting approaches may be similar (or different) across cultural groups and for different outcomes. This led her to publish work looking at the extent to which parenting was universal or had some cultural variations and differential impact. This also led her to co-developing a parenting component for a Kellogg-funded grant called, Promoting Academic Success for Boys of Color and engaging in the family engagement aspect of the Educare Implementation Evaluation Study. Educare is a consortium of public-private partnership schools across the country whose focus is to build, develop, and implement high quality early education programs for children placed at risk children,

from birth to age five. Her focus on parenting culminated in her being named as a member for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine committee on Supporting the Parents of Young Children, Birth to 8.

Dr. Iruka's research has expanded into projects and initiatives focused on how evidence-informed policies, systems, and practices in early education can support the optimal development and experiences of low-income, ethnic minority, and immigrant children, such as through family engagement and support, quality rating and improvement systems, and early care and education systems and programs. She is co-PI for a US Department of Education, IES-funded Early Learning Network project (Nebraska site) aimed at identifying malleable factors that support early learning in preschool through Grade 3. Dr. Iruka is particularly focused on practices and policies to support children's early learning and development, but most importantly a pathway to school and life success. This is particularly important for children who are not provided with the opportunities, such as children living in intergenerational poverty, members of a historically disenfranchised group (e.g., indigenous communities, African Americans, Native Americans), and children experiencing adverse childhood experiences (e.g., depressed mother, maltreatment, neglect, incarcerated caregiver).

For example, Dr. Iruka has been engaged in addressing how best to ensure excellence for young diverse learners, especially Black children, such as through development of a classroom observation measure, public policies, and publications geared towards early education practitioners and policymakers. She recently co-edited entitled, *African American Children in Early Childhood Education: Making the Case for Policy Investments in Families, Schools, and Communities*, which focused on what we must do to truly support the healthy development of young Black children. She is also in the process of co-developing an observation measure using an anti-bias cultural-relevant framework to ensure that all children have equitable opportunities to learn in early childhood settings, and authoring a practitioner handbook on how early childhood educators can incorporate anti-bias cultural-relevant practices in their classrooms and programs.

As the chief research officer and director of the research unit at HighScope, Iruka is charged with strengthening and expanding the research and evaluation capacity of HighScope. The mission of HighScope is to lift lives through education. We envision a world in which all settings, including homes and communities, have the opportunity to use evidence-based practices to support children's learning and development, so everyone has a chance to succeed in life and contribute to society. Iruka's priorities are to: 1) ensure HighScope's curriculum, training, and assessment are evidence-based, validated, and culturally-sound; support HighScope's birth to Grade 3 efforts with a focus on promoting equity; promote HighScope as the premier early education resource in Detroit and beyond; sustain and expand on the strong relationship that HighScope has with local agencies and organizations, including the Department of Education; and promote public (state and national) awareness through dissemination of the latest HighScope research.

In addition to being a keynote speaker for local and national organizations and agencies and Associate Editor for *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Dr. Iruka serves on numerous national boards, committees, and working groups, including National Association for the Education of Young Children, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Advisory Committee, and National Council for State Legislators

Selected Recent Publications

Iruka, I., U., Brown, D., Jerald, J., & Blicht, K. (in press). Early Steps to School Success (ESSS): Role of home visiting for children and families facing multiple risks. *Child and Youth Care Forum*.

Iruka, I. U., Curenton, S. M., Durden, T. (Eds.) (2017). African American Children in Early Childhood Education: Making the Case for Policy Investments in Families, Schools, and Communities. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Iruka, I. U., De Marco, A., & Garrett-Peters, P. (2018). Profiles of academic/socioemotional competence: Associations with parenting, home, child care, and neighborhood. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 54*, 1-11. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2017.11.002

Iruka, I. U. (2017). Predictors of infant and toddler black boys' early learning: Seizing opportunities and minimizing risks. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 38*(1), 128-142. doi:10.1002/imhj.21615.

Iruka, I. U., Curenton, S. M., & Gardner, S. (2015). How changes in home and neighborhood environment factors are related to change in black children's academic and social development from kindergarten to third grade. *The Journal of Negro Education, 84*(3), 282-297. doi:10.7709/jnegroeducation.84.3.0282

Gardner-Neblett, N., & **Iruka, I. U.** (2015). Oral narrative skills: Explaining the language-emergent literacy link by race/ethnicity and SES. *Developmental Psychology, 51*(7), 889-904. doi:10.1037/a0039274

BRNET New Members!

BRNET has a current total of 202 members! Welcome to the BRNET, **Drs. Mubarak Rahamathulla, Scott Ross, and Ryan Broll.**

Please send recommendations for potential BRNET members (i.e., faculty, researchers, and clinicians who are conducting research on bullying or related topics) to Drs. Shelley Hymel, Susan Swearer, or to bullyresearchnet@gmail.com.

If you have recently joined BRNET and have not yet provided your information, please send the following to bullyresearchnet@gmail.com.

- 1) contact information that can be posted on the website;
- 2) a brief biography of you and your work;
- 3) a list of current/ongoing projects in this area;
- 4) an annotated bibliography of your work in this area (i.e., full reference plus a few sentences about the work), and;
- 5) relevant web-based links you would like to share.

Friends of BRNET

Friends of BRNET is a group of graduate students, administrators, parents, and individuals who are interested in learning more about the Bullying Research Network. Friends of BRNET receive our monthly e-newsletter. If you are interested in becoming a Friend of BRNET or want to refer someone to Friends of BRNET, please email Ana Damme, the BRNET Coordinator, at bullyresearchnet@gmail.com with the following information: name, title, address, and email address.

BRNET Member Grant/Funding Announcements

Receipt of funding facilitates the BRNET mission to conduct interdisciplinary research related to bullying and aggression, with particular attention being paid to the link between basic and applied research. Thus, the BRNET directors are excited to offer members a new opportunity to share grants (and other sources of funding) they have received for their research projects.

Funding varies across countries and is not limited to federal grants. If you are interested in sharing your grants or funding with other BRNET members, please send an abstract of the research funding along with the funding source to bullyresearchnet@gmail.com and we will post the information on our website.

BRNET MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) ISPCAN Thinking Space Research Announcement

Each year ISPCAN identifies a cutting-edge issue through its ISPCAN Thinking Space that impacts child maltreatment globally. This year, ISPCAN has identified violence against children in cyberspace as a key theme for the year 2017. ISPCAN would like to sincerely thank you for taking part in ISPCAN's annual survey and contributing to the Thinking Space. We invite you to share your valuable professional knowledge and experience with the world community of people whose mission is to help prevent child abuse. If you would like to learn more about our research or want to answer questions and provide information for your region, please contact Dr. Mubarak Rahamathulla via email: mubarak@flinders.edu.au.

(2) Can Schools Prevent Mass Shootings? Sandy Hook Parents Train Teachers to Help At-risk Students

PBS NewsHour did a story about Sandy Hook Promise and its school-wide prevention program as well as its use of Dr. Dewey Cornell's threat assessment model. You can watch the video here:

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/can-schools-prevent-mass-shootings-sandy-hook-parents-train-teachers-to-help-at-risk-students>

(3) PREVNet's National Youth Advisory Committee Initiative to #SpreadKindness

PREVNet's National Youth Advisory Committee has been working very hard for the past year to create **six integrated campaigns** that encourage youth, parents and caregivers to **#SpreadKindness**. The planned launch was on **November 15th at 4:30pm EST** in Ottawa at the live and virtual **Youth Town Hall**. In partnership with Facebook Canada, the town hall discussion will feature virtual and live components, allowing youth voices from across Canada to participate in this important conversation on what healthy relationships look like and how they can be supported. Additionally, PREVNet's National Youth Advisory Committee will officially launch their evidence-based, public education campaign, **#Spreadkindness**, about the importance of healthy relationships. Youth will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the campaign and discuss ways that they too can be part of this initiative in their own communities. Instagram will also be sharing strategies for youth about digital engagement and how to build kind communities. See attached flyer for more information.

(4) So You Want to Study Bullying? Recommendations to Enhance the Validity, Transparency, and Compatibility of Bullying Research

Dr. Anthony Volk, Dr. Rene Veenstra, and Dr. Dorothy Espelage recently had their manuscript accepted to the journal of *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. The paper aims to promote thoughts and insights about the critical issues and concepts facing those who seek to gain a better understanding of bullying. The researchers advocate that bullying researchers produce data that are more easily communicable to the broader community. **Congratulations!**

(5) Bullying in Australian Schools: The Perceptions of Victims and Other Students

Dr. Ken Rigby is currently an Adjust Research Professor in the School of Education at the University of South Australia. He also conducts research through the Hawke Research Institute and he recently published *Bullying in Australian Schools: The Perceptions of Victims and Other Students* and he requested to share the article with fellow BRNET members.

https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s11218-017-9372-3?author_access_token=QXg_KcSd6fIbjIjPRJDE5ve4RwlQNchNByi7wbcMAY5KylyD111sa4xcGhPOqoZ_c-EY_W2t7YY7zRuxTFWko173gi8sGjdBv1Ve4EGKb45CEW_vuISg-TugYRzADiiRHjCqStJAxE_yJYPmrRID1A

(6) Cyber Bullying: A Critical Overview by Dr. Dan Olweus

Dr. Olweus has a new book chapter (position paper), *Cyber Bullying: A Critical Overview*, that you might be interested in reading. A shortened version of the paper with Dr. Sue Limber as co-author is in press in *Current Opinions in Psychology*. The following aspects are highlighted in the book chapter:

- research on cyberbullying is plagued by inconsistent findings and exaggerate claims;
- a consensual definition is important to build a coherent body of knowledge;
- cyberbullying greatly overlaps with traditional bullying;
- it is important to measure cyberbullying in a bullying context, and;
- cyberbullying should (tentatively) be regarded as a subcategory of bullying.

If you are interested in getting a copy of the book chapter, you can send an email to olweus@uni.no.

Thank you for your involvement in the Bullying Research Network! If you have any news, information, research, suggestions for new members, or other materials that our members would find useful, please do not hesitate to email us at bullyresearchnet@gmail.com and we will include it in our newsletter and/or on our website.

Most sincerely,



Dr. Shelley Hymel
University of British Columbia
BRNET Co-Director



Dr. Susan Swearer
University of Nebraska - Lincoln
BRNET Co-Director