



### Participating Organizations

Alexandria for Palestine

Alliance of Baptists—Justice for Palestine and Israel

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

American Muslims for Palestine

Appalachian Peace Education Center

Arab American Association of Central Virginia

Central Atlantic Conference (UCC) Palestine/Israel Network

Defenders for Freedom, Justice, and Equality

Episcopal Peace Fellowship — National Capital Regional Chapter

Hampton Roads For Palestine Here4TheKids

Palestine Justice Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Jewish Voice for Peace

Muslims for Just Futures

National Arab American Women's Association

New Dominion PAC

Northern Virginians for Peace & Justice

Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace

Peace Study/Action Group of Bon Air Presbyterian Church

Plowshares Peace & Justice Center

Richmonders for Peace in Palestine

Unitarian Universalists for Justice the Middle East—Northern Virginia Chapter

United Methodists for Kairos Response

US Campaign for Palestinian Rights

Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace

Governor Abigail Spanberger - <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/contact/>  
 Connor Andrews, VBOE Co-chair - [connor.andrews@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:connor.andrews@doe.virginia.gov)  
 Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi - [ltGOV43@ltgov.virginia.gov](mailto:ltGOV43@ltgov.virginia.gov)  
 Sam Rasoul, Chair of House Education Committee - [DelSRasoul@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelSRasoul@house.virginia.gov)  
 Barbara Favola, Chair, Senate Education Committee - [Senatorfavola@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:Senatorfavola@senate.virginia.gov)

Dear Governor Spanberger, VBOE Co-chair Andrews, Lt. Gov. Hashmi, Del. Rasoul, and Senator Favola,

The Virginia Coalition for Human Rights (VCHR), a group of 25 affiliate organizations that support human rights for all Virginians, hereby nominates and supports Dr. Ilham Nasser to serve on the Virginia Board of Education when a position becomes available in June 2026.

With more than thirty years' experience in local, regional, and international educational settings, Dr. Nasser would be an asset to the Board. She has expertise in many fields, including early childhood education, curriculum and instructional design, and educator professional development. We believe these qualifications support Board goals in both its Vision and Mission Statements: the creation of a system of public education that prepares all students to become engaged, enlightened, and self-reliant citizens in global society.

Details of Dr. Nasser's relevant career experience follow:

- With her position on VDOE's Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee in 2021, Dr. Nasser drew attention to the omission of cultural/religious, racial, and ethnic diversity in the Standards of Learning (SOL) and recommended revisions.
- With her sensitivity to the absence of some minority voices in the SOLs and the Instructional Guides, Dr. Nasser would strongly support a culturally responsive classroom.
- With her content knowledge of the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region, Dr. Nasser would help ensure that SOLs contain appropriate and relevant academic knowledge, which is needed for students, and which supports the Profile of a Virginia Graduate.
- With her partnership with Fairfax and Loudoun County schools, Dr. Nasser designed and conducted social studies workshops for educators, identified textbook language biases, and provided fact-based alternative materials.
- With her research in the areas of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation education, Dr. Nasser would help facilitate productive dialogue and encourage enlightened decision-making, program creation, and curriculum development.

In addition to bringing expertise, experience, and diversity to the Board, Dr. Nasser possesses a collegial and conciliatory manner that would help facilitate the Board's efforts to support Governor Spanberger's "Strengthening Virginia Schools Plan".

In sum, and considering the above, we ask you to support the candidacy of Dr. Ilham Nasser to the Virginia Board of Education. We attach her curriculum vitae for your review.

Sincerely,

Paul Noursi  
 Co-Chair, Virginia Coalition for Human Rights

**Curriculum Vitae**  
**Ilham Nasser, Ph.D. [inasser63@gmail.com](mailto:inasser63@gmail.com)**

Over thirty years in education, in the fields of teaching and research, that bridged educational theory and practice in local, regional, and international settings.

A focus on thinking globally and acting locally in teaching, in training, and in analyzing History and Social Sciences Standards of Learning (SOLs) in VDOE- and university-sponsored educational positions that promoted culturally relevant practices and child-centered education.

Doctor of Philosophy, 1997. University of Maryland, College Park, Human Development and Child Study, School of Education.

Expertise: Education research, child development, curriculum and instruction, teacher development.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE in DMV**

**Chair**, Education Outreach Program, National Arab American Women Association (2018–Current)

- Worked with Fairfax and Loudoun counties on social studies curriculum.
- Organized workshops for social studies teachers.
- Identified textbook language biases.

**Member of VDOE Standards Subcommittee**, Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee, Virginia Department of Education (2021).

- Applied knowledge of 2015 History and Social Studies (HSS) Standards of Learning (SOLs) and knowledge of culturally appropriate educational practices to the 2021-2022 review of the HSS SOLs.
- Recommended standards to VDOE that were considered by the Virginia Board of Education.

**Teacher Trainer**, Teacher Education program (2018–2019).

- In-service teacher development training in Virginia private schools on socio-emotional learning.
- Examined elementary social studies curriculum

**Researcher, Promoting and Sustaining Intentional Teaching (PASIT)** (2009–2011).

- Developed and conducted training sessions on intentional teaching and culturally responsive practice as part of a team working on a university and Head Start partnership model in Virginia.

**Associate Professor** (Fall 2010–2016).

- Early Childhood Education and Teacher Education, College of Education and Human Development, George Mason University, Virginia.

**Assistant Professor** (Fall 2005–2010).

- Early Childhood Education, College of Education and Human Development, George Mason University, Virginia.

**Assistant Professor** (Fall 2000–2004).

- Early Childhood Education, School of Education, Trinity College, Washington D.C.

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Senior Education Advisor and Researcher** (October 2024–Current).

- Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, Washington, D.C.

**Senior Advisor in Education for Development** (January 2023–Sept. 2024).

- Creative Associates International, Washington D.C.

**Director and Senior Researcher** (January 2018–Dec. 2022).

- Advancing Education in Muslim Societies. International Institute of Islamic Thought, Virginia.

**Senior Researcher and Education Specialist** (June 2016–June 2018).

Salam Institute for Peace and Justice. Conducted research on training for democracy in conflict areas for a USAID-funded study on critical thinking and emotional literacy skills among refugee youth in non-formal education settings.

**Lead Specialist**, National Curriculum for Kindergarten Teachers, (January 2016–August 2017).

- Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Palestine. Lead author and coordinator of the task force on kindergarten curriculum. Funded by Save the Children and UNICEF.

**Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Palestine** (February 2015–May 2016).

- Designed curriculum framework and standards for preschools in Palestine. Funded by American Near East Refugee Aid in Ramallah, Palestine.

**Senior Advisor/ Consultant/ UNICEF, Iraq** (June 2015–March 2016).

- Redesigned and updated curriculum and conducted teacher training workshops in Iraq (Central and Kurdish Regions), Erbil, Iraq.

**Education Advisor** (Fall 2005–Spring 2016).

- Consulted on teacher training programs and planned, implemented and evaluated professional development workshops in Gaza and the West Bank for the American Near East Refugee Aid organization (ANERA).

**Teacher Education Consultant** (January to May 2013).

- Consulted on the project titled “Student-centered and Democratic Teaching of Teachers and Principals in Islamic Schools” in Chad, Ndjamen.

**Education Program Evaluator** (January to September 2010).

- Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Palestine. Evaluated a World Bank-funded-project titled “Unit for Accreditation and Quality Assurance” in two Palestinian universities (West Bank and Gaza).

**Education Consultant** (March 2003–March 2004).

- American University Center for Global Peace. Consulted on the project titled “Revitalize and Improve Services in Education” (RISE). Iraq’s Project on Education.

**Evaluation Coordinator** (1999–2002).

- ARISE, AmeriCorp Refugee Project, VA. Developed a methodology to evaluate the impact of the AmeriCorp program on refugee and immigrant services provided by seven agencies in Northern Virginia.

**Curriculum Developer** (2011–December 2014).

- Developed curriculum for “Teaching for Forgiveness in the Arab World: A Curriculum for 6-10 Classrooms”, which was implemented for teachers and school counselors in Palestine.

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

### BOOKS, BOOK CHAPTERS, REPORTS

- Nasser, I. (2022). *Transformative Education in Muslim Societies: A Discourse of Hope*, (Edited Volume). Indiana University Press.
- Nasser, I. Saroughi, M. & Shelby, L. (2021). *Advancing Education in Muslim Societies: Mapping the Terrain of Education Report (2019-2020)*. International Institute of Islamic Thought. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.47816/mtt.2019-2020-march2021>
- Nasser, I. & Abu-Nimer, M. (2020). Forgiveness Education: Rationalization among Arab Educators in the Middle East. In Karamehic-Muratovic, A. & Kromjak, L. (eds.). *Remembrance and Forgiveness*. Routledge, UK.
- Nasser, I. Cheema, J., & Saroughi, M. (2019). *Advancing Education in Muslim Societies: Mapping the Terrain of Education Report 2018-2019*. International Institute of Islamic Thought. <http://doi.org/10.47816/mtt.2018.2019>
- Abu-Nimer, M. & Nasser, I. (2019). Reconciliation and Forgiveness: Theoretical and Research Based Interactions. In Butcher, C. & Hallward, M.C. (eds.) *Understanding International Conflict Management*, 1 Edition. Routledge, UK.
- Kidd, K.J., Burns, S.M., Nasser, I. (2018). *Learn It: Professional Development on Intentional Teaching*. Brookes Publishing Co., MD.
- Austin, T., Pirbhai-Illich, F. Grant, R., Wong, S., Tinker Sachs, G, Nasser, I. & Kumagai, Y. (2016). From research to transformative action: Interpreting research critically. In Bhopal, K. & Deuchar, R. (eds.). *Researching Marginalized Groups*. Routledge NY. & London (183-196).
- Abunimer, M., & Nasser, I. (2014). Linking peace building and child development: A basic framework. In Leckman, J. F., Panter-Brick, C., & Salah, R. (eds). *Pathways to Peace: The Transformative Power of Children and Families*. The MIT Press.
- Nasser, I, Berlin, L. & Wong, S. (2011). *Education, media, and dialogue under occupation: The case of Palestine and Israel*. UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Nasser, I. & Haser, S. (2005). *Year-round education: Change and choice for schools and teachers*. MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.

### REFEREED JOURNALS

- Nasser, I. (2025). Strengthening Hope and Psychosocial Competencies Within Education Communities in Muslim Societies. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 20(2), 202-217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166251355746> (Original work published 2025)
- Nasser, I. & Cheema, J. (2021). Religiosity as a mediator of forgiveness among educators and parents in seven Muslim communities. *Journal of beliefs and Values*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2021.1930930>
- Nasser, I., Miller-Idriss, C. & Alwani, A. (2019). Reconceptualizing Education. Transformation in Muslim Societies: The Human Development Approach. *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies*. V.1, (1). 3-26. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Indiana University Press.
- Birch, B. & Nasser, I. (2017). Forgiveness as Pedagogy in the English Classroom. British Council volume on *English along the Fracture Lines*. British Council.
- Abu-Nimer, M. & Nasser, I. (2017). Building peace education in the Islamic educational context. *International Review of Education*. doi:10.1007/s11159-017-9632-7. Pp.115.
- Elbilawi, N. & Nasser, I. (2017). Teachers' professional development as a pathway for educational reform in Egypt. *Reflective Practice*. 18:2, 147 160, DOI: [10.1080/14623943.2016.1251406](https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2016.1251406)

- Nasser, I., & Abu-Nimer, M. (2016). Examining views and attitudes about forgiveness among teachers in the Arab world: A Comparison between five communities. *Journal for Peace and Change*. 41 (2). 194-220.
- Abu-Nimer, M., Nasser, I. & Ouboulahcen, S. (2016). Introducing Values of Peace. Education in Quranic Schools in Western Africa: Advantages and Challenges of the Islamic Peace-Building Model. *Religion Education*.
- Nasser, I., Kidd, J. K., Burns, M.S., & Campbell, T. (2015). Head Start classroom teachers and assistant teachers' perceptions of professional development using a LEARN framework. *Professional Development in Education*. 41(2), 344-365.
- Nasser, I., Abu-Nimer, M., & Mahmoud, O. (2014). Contextual and pedagogical considerations in teaching for forgiveness in the Arab world. *Compare, Journal of Comparative Education*. 44 (1), 32-52, DOI: 10.1080/03057925.2013.859884.
- Samaras, A., Karczmarczyk, D., Smith, L., Woodville, L., Harmon, L., Nasser, I., Parsons, S., Smith, T., Borne, K., Constantine, L., Roman Mendoza, E., Suh, J., & Swanson, R., (2014). The shark in the vitrine: Experiencing our practice from the inside out with cross-disciplinary lenses. *Journal of Transformative Education*.
- Abu-Nimer, M., & Nasser, I. (2013). Forgiveness in the Arab and Islamic contexts: Between theology and practice. *Journal of Religious Ethics* 41(3). 474-494.
- Nasser, I., & Wong, S. (2013) Examining social-political contexts in teacher preparation in Palestine. *Teacher Education*. DOI: 10.1080/10476210.2012.739600.
- Burns, M. S., Kidd, J. K., Nasser, I., Aier, D., & Stechuk, R. (2012). An interaction, a conversation, often in the context of play: Constructing intentional teaching in early childhood play. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field*, 15 (3), 1-14.
- Nasser, I. & Abu-Nimer, M (2012). Perceptions of forgiveness among Palestinian teachers in Israel. *Journal of Peace Education*, 9(1), 1-15.
- Samaras, A. P., Smith, L., Harmon, L., Nasser, I., Smith, T., Borne, K., Parsons, S., Woodville, L., Constantine, L., Roman-Mendoza, E., Suh, J., Swanson, R., & Karczmarczyk, D. (2012). Reforming in the first-person plural: Explorations of a faculty self-study collaborative. In J. Young, L. Erickson, & S. Pinnegar (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices*. East Sussex, England.
- Nasser, I. (2010). Perspectives on bilingual and bi-national schooling among Palestinian and Jewish parents in Israel: Views about peace education. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*.
- Nasser, I. & Assaf, M. (2008). Dialogue under occupation. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 10(2), 247-255.
- Nasser, I. & Abunimer, M. (2007). Peace education in a bilingual and bi-ethnic school for Palestinians and Jews in Israel: Lessons and challenges. In Z. Bekerman & C. McGlyn (Eds.), *Addressing ethnic conflict through peace education: International perspectives*. Germany: Palgrave and Macmillan.
- Haser, S. & Nasser, I (2003). Teacher job satisfaction in a year-round school. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 65-68.
- Nasser, I. & Haser, S. (2002). Year-round education and teacher motivation: A case study of one public elementary school. *ERS Spectrum*, 20(3), 19-23.

## **SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS**

- Nasser, I. (2020). Advancing Education in Muslim Societies: Empirical Lessons: A presentation to the International Soft Skills Measurement Work Group (Virtual).
- Nasser, I. Cynthia, Miller-Idress (2019). Presentation of Mapping the Terrain Study (2018–2019) findings. The American University Global Education Forum organized by the International Training and Education Program (ITEP). Washington, DC.
- Nasser, I. (2019). Socio emotional learning and its implications for curriculum and pedagogy, Center for Research, Beshkik, Kyrgystan.
- Nasser, I. (2019). Mapping the Terrain of Education in Muslim Societies: Keynote Speaker, Lilly School conference on Philanthropy and education. Indiana University.
- Nasser, I. (2019). International Conference on Advancing Education in Muslim Societies, 15 countries study results on wellbeing, organizer and presenter. In Istanbul, Turkey.
- Nasser, I. (2017). Testing the effectiveness of tailored interventions outside of the formal education system in promoting critical thinking and emotional literacy in the Middle East. International Network of Emergency Education (INEE), PSS-SEL Round Table on “Psychosocial Support and Social and Emotional Learning in crisis-affected contexts”.
- Nasser, I. (2017). Presentation of the kindergarten national curriculum. Ramallah, West Bank. Organized by the Ministry of Education.
- Nasser, I. (2015). What and how should we accompany the child to become a global citizen? A presentation at a Round Table Discussion organized by Arigatu International in Tokyo, Japan.
- Nasser, I. & Shami, M. (spring, 2015). Early childhood education in Palestine through the lens of preschool supervisors. Presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Conference, Philadelphia.
- Nasser, I. & Abunimer, M. (spring, 2015). Reasoning about forgiveness among Arab teachers. Comparative International Education Society conference. Washington DC.
- Nasser, I. (spring, 2015). Considerations and challenges in curriculum reform. A keynote presentation at a closed session on curriculum reform hosted by the Minister of Education, Palestine, Ramallah.
- Nasser, I. (fall, 2014). Promoting intercultural and interfaith learning in early childhood settings. Ethics Education for Children. The missing piece in Interfaith Education and Peacebuilding Efforts. Church Center for the United Nations, NYC.
- Nasser, I. & Abunimer, M. (2014). Teaching for forgiveness in Arab Schools: The Case of Iraq. Presented at the American Education Research Association annual meeting, Philadelphia.
- Nasser, I. & Abunimer, M. (2013). Teaching for forgiveness in Arab Schools: Comparison between countries and religions. Presented at the American Education Research Association annual meeting, San Francisco.
- Nasser, I. & Abunimer, M. (May 2013). A presentation on conducting research on forgiveness in Arab schools. DC Interfaith Group, <http://www.fd.iofc.org/node/70886>.
- Nasser, I. (2012). Teachers’ views about teaching for forgiveness in Arab schools. A presentation at the Alliance for International education, Doha, Qatar.
- Samaras, A. P., Smith, L., Harmon, L., Nasser, I., Smith, T., Borne, K., Parsons, S., Woodville, L., Constantine, L., Roman-Mendoza, E., Suh, J., Swanson, R., & Karczmarczyk, D. (2012, August). Reforming in the first-person plural: Explorations of a faculty self- study collaborative. Paper presented at the Ninth International Conference on the Self- Study of Teacher Education Practices, East Sussex, England.
- Burns, M. S., Kidd, J. K., & Nasser, I. (2012, June). Differentiated coaching as a key component of mentoring in Head Start. Presented at Head Start’s 11th National Research Conference, Washington, DC.

- Nasser, I. & Abunimer, M. (2012, May). Teaching for forgiveness in the Arab world. Panel presentation at the conference of Dialogue under Occupation, Beirut, Lebanon.
- Parsons, S., Nasser, I., Samaras, A., Smith, T., & Suh, J. (2012, April). Scholars of studying teaching collaborative (SoSTC): A cross-disciplinary initiative to improve our practice as university instructors. Presented at the annual meeting of American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, Canada.
- Nasser, I., Abunimer, M., & Wong, S. (2012, April). Teaching for forgiveness in four Arab countries. Presented at the annual meeting of American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, Canada.
- Burns, M. S., Kidd, J. K., Nasser, I., Assaf, M., Aier, D., & McGowan, K. (2011, April). Intentional teaching in Head Start classrooms: Construct definition and measurement. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.
- Kidd, J., Burns, M. S., Nasser, I., & Muccio, L. (2011, February). Promoting and Sustaining Intentional Teaching (PASIT): A Model Development Project. Presented at the annual George Mason University College of Education and Human Development, VA. CEHD Research Symposium.
- Burns, M. S., Stechuk, R., Assaf, M., Kidd, J. K., Nasser, I., Aier, D., & Muccio, L. (2010, June). Intentional teaching in Head Start classrooms: Exploring construct definition and measurement. Paper presented at the Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.
- Nasser, I., Abunimer, M., & Abbass, N. (2010, April). Exploring concepts of forgiveness among Palestinian teachers in Israel. Presented at the annual meeting of American Educational Research Association, Peace Education Special Interest Group, Denver, Colorado.
- Nasser, I. & Grant, R. (2009, February). Creating cultures of peace in the K-12 classroom. Presented at the TESOL conference Building a Culture of Peace, Fairfax, VA.

### **TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION (SELECTED)**

- Teaching critical thinking and emotional intelligence to Arab youth in Non-Formal Education: Teacher development in Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine, 2016-2017.
- Training of trainers: "Learning to Live Together" training of community activists, teachers, and academicians on tolerance, dialogue, and communication. 2016, St. Bernard, France. 24 participants from 12 countries.
- Teaching forgiveness in the Arab world: Teacher and counselor training on implementing the Forgiveness Curriculum for the Arab Child. December 2014, and 2016. Nazareth.
- Teaching forgiveness in the Arab world: Teacher training workshops on best strategies to teach and incorporate forgiveness in Arab curriculum. (2011, 2012, 2014). Salam Institute, Alhayat Center, and Jordan University, Amman.
- Promoting and Sustaining Intentional Teaching (PASIT) professional development. (2009-2011). Developed and conducted training sessions on intentional teaching and culturally responsive practice as part of a team working on a university and Head Start partnership model.