Biographies
One-on-One Mentors

Sign up for a 10-minute conversation with senior global health professionals. Ask your questions about their areas of expertise, career advice, and more.

Nizami Ahverdiyev is the Director of Finance and Participant Support at Global Health Fellow Program II/Public Health Institute. He has over 15 years of international development experience. At GFFP-II, he oversees financial and participant support of the program. Before joining GHFP-II, Nizami worked for WWF, the largest non-profit conservation organization, managing programs in Africa and providing programmatic support to the local partners in implementation US and European donor funded programs. He worked in Afghanistan and Pakistan for United Methodist Committee on Relief, managing health clinics construction in Kabul Area. He started his career in Azerbaijan, working in refugee camps by distributing essential medicines and training health care workers. He obtained his master’s degree in public administration at East Carolina University with a minor in health care management with his thesis work on social health insurance in the developing world.

Dr. Felice Apter currently serves as an Adjunct Professor at the Georgetown University Medical School, Department of Microbiology and Immunology. She is an expert in global health programming and policy, with a deep understanding of advancing complex international development efforts across multiple sectors. She has been passionately engaged in policy analysis, the rapidly evolving donor landscape and international programming paradigms. With more than five years’ residential experience in Asia and Africa, she brings a field-based pragmatism along with robust technical expertise to the Global Health Community. Overall, Dr. Apter has more than 25 years’ experience in leadership positions across the USG, the NGO community and academia. Most recently, (2/16-2/17), Felice served as a Senior Program Officer, United States Policy, Advocacy and Communications at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Prior to this position Dr. Apter worked as a consultant to the Foundation from 2007 through 2014. Before her engagement with the Foundation, Felice was the Vice President of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation’s Research and Programs Department, and spent more than 10 years with USAID (1992-2003) in a variety of positions, serving as a Senior-level coordinating role within USAID, represented the Agency within USG Inter-agency processes and as a Representative of the USG in many international settings. Dr. Apter holds a PhD in Medical Sciences from Harvard University and a BA in Biological Sciences from the University of California at Santa Cruz. From 1994-1999, she was an Adjunct Lecturer and Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

Vince Blaser is the Director of the Frontline Health Workers Coalition (FHWC), an alliance of more than 35 US-based public and private organizations working together to urge greater and more strategic US investment in frontline health workers in developing countries as a cost-effective way to save lives and
foster a healthier, safer and more prosperous world. He is also Advocacy Advisor for IntraHealth International, where the FHWC secretariat is housed. For more than 12 years, Vince has focused on translating a policy and journalism background to provide strategic analysis and visibility to the policy and communications priorities of major global health and development coalitions and organizations. Previously, he worked in advocacy, policy and communications roles at the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) in New York and the Global Health Council (GHC) in Washington. Vince also has written and edited for the Kaiser Family Foundation’s daily reports on global health, HIV/AIDS and women’s health, held several positions as a newspaper reporter in Washington DC and Colorado, and worked at the British Houses of Parliament in London. Vince has a BA in political science and journalism from Colorado State University and an MA in international education development from Columbia University.

Dr. Craig Burgess joined JSI Research and Training Institute Inc. in August 2015 and works in the immunization center and USAID’s Maternal Child Survival Project. His work includes immunization, Universal Health Coverage, health systems strengthening, integration and equity. Over the last 25 years, he has worked on a broad range of public health issues related to equity, integration, primary health care, infectious disease control and health sector coordination. He has worked in civil war torn contexts, chronic crises, emerging economies and high income countries at community, district, national, regional and global levels. This has included work with National Health Services, Médecins sans Frontières, MERLIN, UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF and the Gavi Vaccine Alliance secretariat. He has lived and worked in India, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Viet Nam, South Sudan, UK, Australia, Switzerland and the USA. He received his medical training at Saint Andrews and Manchester Universities in the UK and has a Masters in Health Policy, Planning and Financing from London School of Economics, an MBA from the Open University and a Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene from Liverpool University. He also has post graduate qualifications in Child Health, Obstetrics & Gynecology and General Practice.

Nasserie Carew is the Director of Global Communications & Office of Public Affairs for the Broadcasting Board of Directors. Prior to her current role, she served as the Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs and to the State Department’s Ebola Coordination Unit (ECU). Ms. Carew led the bureau’s Ebola communications and other outreach efforts. Ms. Carew served from 2010-2014 as the Managing Director of Public Affairs at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a U.S. Government foreign assistance agency, where she implemented a broad range of communications functions, working with leadership in the White House and across government agencies. From 2005-2010, she oversaw strategic messaging on sustainable development issues and humanitarian emergencies as the Senior Director of Public Relations at InterAction, the largest coalition of U.S. based international humanitarian and development organizations. A veteran of issues management, Ms. Carew has led strategic communications for international and national media, major stakeholders, and policy makers over the past 20 years. She established digital communication strategies, major alliances, reputation management programs and integrated global branding processes. Ms. Carew also managed communications and advertising for the multimillion dollar national re-brand and positioning for YWCA USA. Ms. Carew earned a B.Sc. from the University of Iowa and a Master’s degree from Howard University.

Christine Fu is a social and behavioral scientist with eight years of experience evaluating public health and poverty reduction programs in resource-poor settings internationally. Dr. Fu has conducted social science research and evaluation of child well-being programs, such as disaster mental health and psychosocial supports of children and youth in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery of out-of-school youth in Liberia, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence in sub-saharan Africa and peer networks and social capital among HIV positive youth in the Caribbean. She is passionate about generating and translating research into better health and well-being outcomes for orphans and vulnerable children, their families and communities.
Angelina Gordon is Director of Communications, Outreach, and Diversity for the Global Health Fellows Program (GHFP) II at the Public Health Institute. In this role, she oversees the communications and inclusion strategies that demonstrate USAID’s thought-leadership in workforce development. She leads the project’s outreach and diversity efforts by producing multimedia products for key audiences, including communities underrepresented in global health. Angelina previously served as Knowledge Management Specialist with the Feed the Future (FTF) Global Initiative, as well as Senior Specialist in Knowledge Management & Documentation at Save the Children US. There she created the organization’s first Knowledge Management strategy that is still utilized. Angelina has worked in Africa and the Middle East and holds an MA in International Development Policy from Georgetown University.

Jennifer Kaindi has more than nine years of international recruitment experience specializing in the global health and international development professions. She is the Lead for recruitment with the Global Health Fellows Program II (GHFP-II). Led by the Public Health Institute, GHFP-II helps USAID address its immediate and emerging human capital needs by developing a diverse group of global health professionals to support and sustain the effectiveness of the Agency's current and future health programs. The GHFP-II Team identifies, recruits, hires and manages the performance and professional development of fellows and interns at all levels. Jennifer received her MBA from Morgan State University and her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Lincoln University. She has experience working with both non-profits and for profits/government contractors within the international development space.

Dr. Rebecca Katz is an Associate Professor of International Health and Co-Director of the Center for Global Health Science and Security at Georgetown University. Prior to coming to Georgetown, she spent ten years at The George Washington University as faculty in the Milken Institute School of Public Health. Her research is focused on global health security, public health preparedness and health diplomacy. Since 2007, much of her work has been on the domestic and global implementation of the International Health Regulations. Since 2004, Dr. Katz has been a consultant to the Department of State, working on issues related to the Biological Weapons Convention, pandemic influenza and disease surveillance. Dr. Katz received her undergraduate degree from Swarthmore College, an MPH from Yale University, and a PhD from Princeton University.

Rebecca Kohler provides vision and leadership for the successful execution of IntraHealth’s multi-year organizational strategy, including formulation of strategic alliances and achievement of revenue goals. Over a 25-year career devoted to fostering solutions to health care challenges, Kohler has held key leadership, management, technical, and advisory positions in the US and around the world. A seasoned global health practitioner, Kohler has hands-on experience working on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, safe motherhood, and child survival programs in more than 20 countries across several continents, including long-term, resident assignments in Tanzania, Kenya, Eritrea and Armenia. Kohler holds a Master’s in Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Bachelor’s of Science from Duke University.

Dr. Keith Martin is a physician who, since Sept. 2012, has served as the founding Executive Director of the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) based in Washington, DC. The Consortium is a rapidly growing organization of over 130 academic institutions from around the world. It harnesses the capabilities of these institutions across research, education, advocacy and service to address global challenges. It is particularly focused on improving health outcomes for the global poor and strengthening academic global health programs. Between 1993-2011, Dr. Martin served as a Member of Parliament in Canada’s House of Commons representing a riding on Vancouver Island. During that time he held shadow ministerial portfolios in foreign affairs, international development, and health. He also served as Canada’s Parliamentary Secretary for Defense. His main areas of focus are in global health, foreign policy, security,
international development, conservation and the environment. He is particularly interested in strengthening human resources capabilities and scaling up initiatives in low-income settings that improve environmental sustainability and human security. As a parliamentarian, Dr. Martin created CanadaAid.ca, an online platform to facilitate partnerships between universities, governments, multilateral institutions, NGOs, and the private sector. Dr. Martin has been on numerous diplomatic missions to areas in crisis including Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Colombia, and the Middle East. He served as a physician in South Africa on the Mozambique border during that country’s civil war. Dr. Martin is the author of more than 150 editorial pieces published in Canada’s major newspapers and has appeared frequently as a political and social commentator on television and radio. He has contributed to the Lancet Commission on the Global Surgery Deficit, is a current commissioner on the Lancet-ISMMS Commission on Pollution, Health and Development and is a member of the Global Sepsis Alliance.

John McPhail is Senior Director of Partnership and Business Development at CORE Group. He has over 23 years of experience in organizational leadership involving strategic development, partnership building, management & administration of community development programs, and stakeholder engagement, including sixteen as a country and regional director and team leader for social sector and faith-based nonprofits. He has held leadership roles on boards of six networks and nonprofit organizations, providing organizational development and operational and strategic direction, including leading eight strategic planning processes. John studied Civil Engineering with a minor in Asian Political Science at MIT and has a Master’s Degree from the University of Illinois / Urbana-Champaign in Civil Engineering, with a concentration in construction management and design. He has advanced technology and computer skills and is fluent in English and Spanish and has a basic working knowledge of French.

Jeff Meer is the Executive Director of Handicap International, a nonprofit based in Silver Spring, MD that is part of the Handicap International Federation. Handicap International assists people with disabilities and other vulnerable people in 60 countries to achieve their full potential. Among Handicap International’s areas of emphasis is global health, including rehabilitation. Until February 2015, he served as the Special Advisor for Global Health Policy and Development at the Public Health Institute (PHI), where he worked to build PHI’s global health practice and conducted the organization’s global health advocacy in Washington. He also co-chaired the Non-communicable Diseases Roundtable. Before joining PHI, Mr. Meer worked for Planned Parenthood of America as Director of International Advocacy, including representing the organization in Washington on international reproductive and sexual rights issues. He also led external relations for the nonprofit CHF International, now known as Global Communities. As Executive Director of the U.S. Association for UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Meer was responsible for all fundraising, program, advocacy and administrative functions. At the UN Foundation, he was the founding program officer for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Previously, Mr. Meer had been a career Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. Department of State, where he served as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs for human rights and refugee issues. He worked and traveled extensively overseas, and held U.S. Diplomatic and Consular postings in China and Germany. He was previously a journalist, writing about mental health. Mr. Meer graduated from Dartmouth College with a degree in French Language and Literature. In addition to English, Mr. Meer speaks French, German and Cantonese Chinese.

Judith Rowland is the U.S. policy and advocacy manager for Global Citizen, where she speaks on behalf of Global Citizens around the world who are taking action to solve some of the world’s biggest challenges. Over the last five years, more than 8 million registered Global Citizens have contacted world leaders and elected officials to secure major policy commitments on issues including gender equality, health, education, food and hunger, water and sanitation, and climate change, set to affect the lives of more than 1 billion people. In her role, Rowland helped secure more than 100 co-sponsors on the 2014 Water for the
World Act and played a key part in seeing the bill pass through both chambers and be signed into law by President Barack Obama. Rowland also worked in close partnership with the White House on the launch of First Lady Michelle Obama’s #62MillionGirls campaign. Additionally, Rowland was instrumental in securing the passage of the Global Food Security Act, which was signed into law by President Obama in July 2016. Rowland’s advocacy work has taken her to more than 80 countries and has lived in Ghana, China, England, and Puerto Rico. She holds an undergraduate degree in political science from Missouri State University and a graduate degree in development studies from the London School of Economics.

**Dr. Edmund Rutta** is a seasoned global health expert with over 15 years of experience in providing multidisciplinary technical advisory, strategic design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation services for health programs in developing countries. He currently serves as a Senior TB Technical Advisor for USAID Global Health Infectious Disease TB Division in Washington, DC where he provides technical assistance to national TB programs implementation and scale-up of various TB interventions such as introduction of new drugs and new regimens for multi drug resistance TB treatment and management of any medicine related side effects (pharmacovigilance) program. He also provides technical support to USAID Mission and national TB program strategy and program guidance including assisting with the preparation and/or review of national strategic plans, Global Fund grants implementation as well support national TB programs activities on pharmaceutical management and supply chain. Prior to joining USAID, Dr Rutta experience working in over 18 countries in Asia and Africa where he lead Pharmaceutical and Supply Chain Management and Refugee Health programs.

**Dr. Inon Schenker** began his global public health journey as a volunteer graduate student, training school teachers in HIV/AIDS education during the early days of the epidemic in Latin America. He next teamed up with professionals from the Middle East to develop and implement an innovative “HIV/AIDS as a Bridge for Peace” model. As World Health Organization scientist and later at UNESCO in Geneva he applied lessons learned from his PhD research to advance a UN strategy on HIV prevention in adolescence and school AIDS education. Passionate about supporting young professionals and students in Global Health employment and internships he founded the ‘Geneva Seminar on Health and Globalization' and 'Think Global' initiatives to promote health and medical professionals’ engagement in global health through employment, volunteering and interning in UN agencies. As a senior global health consultant to governments, civil society, legislative bodies, UN and international organizations his country expertise expanded. He has also held teaching positions at universities in the U.S. and Israel. Currently, Inon is Senior Director Public Health at Teva Global Headquarters. His primary responsibilities are in developing and directing a new corporate Global Public Health Program. Inon graduated from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with a PhD in Public Health and Science Education, a MPH and a BA in Sociology and Political Science. In February 2017 he was honored with only five other organizations and individuals by the Society for International Development (SID) with a special recognition for supporting sustainable health for Africa.

**Brant Silvers** is the Managing Director for Planned Parenthood Global - the international arm of Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) - where he works with over 100 local, non-profit partner organizations in 12 focus countries in Africa and Latin America to advocate for greater access to and delivery of reproductive health services. After nearly 20 years managing public health programs, Brant knows that durable change begins with local ownership and solutions that are connected to people. As Managing Director, Mr. Silvers ensures smooth programmatic function and finance and operations oversight across both regions, serves as part of the senior management team for Planned Parenthood Global, and works on longer term strategy for the division. Mr. Silvers’ career has spanned work in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. He has a background in international development and public health including employment with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Global
HIV Vaccine Enterprise, Population Services International (PSI), Abt Associates, and Columbia University’s International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (ICAP). Mr. Silvers has regional experience in Africa [Angola, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo], Asia [China, India, Indonesia, Nepal] and Latin America [Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru]. Mr. Silvers began his international career serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cote d’Ivoire. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and English from Tufts University and a Masters in International Development and Economics from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

Brett Tolman works as the Global health Advisor for LGBTI and gender integration with USAID's human rights team. He is currently helping to lead the Agency's efforts to incorporate inclusive development considerations across all programming and policy guidance with a focus on reaching marginalized populations. Brett has over seven years’ experience living and working in Asia and Africa on gender and social inclusion programs with national governments and local communities. He holds a BA in Political Science from Linfield College, an MA in Global Affairs from Yale University, and was a Fulbright Scholar in Sri Lanka.