MARYAM EHSANI

Founder and Chief Executive, Child Safe ME · Ambassador, AI Universal Council
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

CANDIDACY FOR THE ISPCAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS, SECOND TERM

In my first term I founded ISPCAN's Child Safeguarding Working Group, which has grown from 35 participants at Vilnius to 62 at Melbourne; chaired the scientific programme of the Edinburgh Congress; secured ISPCAN's first law enforcement country partner; and wrote the GCC chapter of the ISPCAN International Handbook. Behind that sit sixteen years auditing and building safeguarding systems for more than 200 organisations across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, from national police forces and children's hospitals to global faith networks and bilateral aid programmes.

I am currently working on founding the Gulf and Middle East regional hub, drawing on sixteen years building child protection and child safeguarding systems across the region's health, faith, education and technology sectors, and with governments and police forces. I am asking for a second term to complete it, with the structure, partnerships and local ownership to outlast my time on the Board.

SERVICE TO ISPCAN

Executive Board Member ISPCAN
Serving a full term on the Board, leading and supporting several committees.

- Supported the partnership and fundraising strategy, including how ISPCAN presents itself to partners and funders.
- Secured Dubai Police as ISPCAN's first law enforcement country partner.
- Supported the strategic review that reset ISPCAN's direction.
- Contributed to the rewriting of the bylaws.
- Supported ISPCAN NEXT, the early-career network, through the webinar *Child Protection Career Experience* and a speaking session at the Vilnius Congress.
- Full attendance at board and committee meetings.

Scientific Chair, ISPCAN International Congress Edinburgh, September 2023
Set the scientific direction of ISPCAN's 2023 Congress, choosing its five scientific tracks and overseeing the review and selection of the programme. Held with Childlight Global Child Safety Institute and Police Scotland under the theme *Advancements in Data and Solutions for Tackling Child Abuse*, it drew almost 800 delegates from 73 countries.

ISPCAN webinar programme

- *Child Safeguarding Online: Addressing Artificial Intelligence (AI) Risks*.
- *Child Safeguarding and the Role of Faith Leaders*.
- *Child Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility*.

Founder and Chair, ISPCAN Child Safeguarding Working Group ISPCAN
Founded and chaired the working group on *Advancing Child Safeguarding Beyond Formal Education*: safeguarding in after-school programmes, camps, faith-based communities and recreational facilities, settings that sit outside established regimes despite carrying comparable risk. First convened at Vilnius in October 2025 with 35 participants, and again at Melbourne in August 2026 with 62.

Extending its work into *Safeguarding Spotlight*, a podcast launching shortly, bringing organisational leaders and field staff into the international conversation.

Congress and Conference Contributions

ISPCAN International Congress, Melbourne August 2026

- Symposium (90 minutes): *Data Privacy and Consent in AI Systems: Child Safeguarding in the Online World*.
- Paper: *How Policy Makers Can Safeguard Children in the Age of AI*.
- Paper: *Rethinking Child Safety in the Digital World*.

ISPCAN International Congress, Vilnius October 2025

- Speaker, ISPCAN NEXT Working Group: *How Online Safeguarding is Changing*.

5th Arab Regional Conference on the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Dubai 2017

Convened by ISPCAN with the Arab Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Delivered three workshops:

- *Child Safeguarding is a Key Element for All Sectors*.
- *Child Safeguarding is Everyone's Business*.
- *How to Help Faith Leaders Become Child Safeguarding Champions*.

APPOINTMENTS AND SPEAKING

Ambassador, AI Universal Council 2025 to present

Working to place children at the centre of AI governance and responsible AI practice.

Speaker, COP28 UAE, 2023

On empowering vulnerable communities with resilience amidst climate change.

CHILD SAFE ME: FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Dubai, United Arab Emirates · 2019 to present

Specialist assessment and advisory practice serving government entities and NGOs in the UAE, the wider GCC and internationally, with full responsibility for its strategy, budget and financial viability.

Past projects

- **SOS Children's Villages Austria and Spain** (Nov 2025 to Jun 2026). Led internal research into the impact of AI systems on child safeguarding, consulting key global stakeholders, and developed the governance measures arising from it for both associations.
- **Terre des Hommes Netherlands** (2024). Member of the Professional Content Advisory Group for *Participatory Methods for Childhood Sexual Violence Research*, a five-module course commissioned by the Sexual Violence Research Initiative on the ethical engagement of children, adolescents, survivors and communities in this research. Advised on content, reviewed drafted modules and sourced material for the team's mapping of participatory methods. Launched January 2025.
- **Dubai Police Headquarters** (Mar 2019 to Jan 2022). An advisory relationship across two departments: the safeguarding assessments underpinning Community Development's strategy, and a national child protection awareness campaign for the education sector covering cyber safety, substance abuse, bullying and corporal punishment.
- **Congregation of the Good Shepherd Foundation** (Feb 2019 to Mar 2020). Assessed strategic direction across the Congregation's global operations, prioritised safeguarding risk against each unit's local context, and developed the framework now in force across all 75 units.
- **Standard Chartered Bank UAE** (2019 to 2020). Developed abuse-prevention and child well-being engagement programmes for clients, staff, parents and caregivers.
- **UAE Ministry of Happiness** (May 2020). Delivered sessions for parents and caregivers on supporting children through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Al Jalila Children's Speciality Hospital** (Jul to Dec 2019). Assessed the hospital's activities and developed its safeguarding policy, procedures and staff roll-out plan with clinical and executive leadership. The policy was adopted hospital-wide.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

London, United Kingdom · 2010 to 2018

Child Safeguarding Network Manager

Joined at the coalition's founding and led a global network of more than 80 governments, international NGOs and corporations, building safeguarding systems and raising the standard of practice across the sector.

Audits and organisational assessments

- Save the Children Uganda (2016) · British Council and Terre des Hommes, UK (2015): led international safeguarding audits and assessments.
- Child Fund Japan, Tokyo (2018): assessed capability against international safeguarding requirements, developed policy and procedures, and defined accountability measures for partnership agreements.

Systems, policy and capacity building

- Charity Commission, UK (2017): co-developed guidance clarifying trustees' safeguarding responsibilities.
- Eurochild (2018): advised on and led child protection reporting and implementation at headquarters and across programmes in Croatia.
- USAID PEPFAR (2012): delivered safeguarding workshops across African and Asian programme countries including Tanzania and Nepal.
- Focal point and leadership training, London (2018): for Terre des Hommes Lausanne, the Open University, Save the Children UK, War Child UK and Holland, Tearfund, Islamic Relief and Embrace the Middle East.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, TEACHING AND PUBLICATION

- **Author**, *Child Abuse in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Evolution of Child Protection*, in *The ISPCAN International Handbook of Child Abuse and Neglect* (Elsevier, October 2026).
- **Sofia's Safe Circle: A Story About Trusted Adults and Speaking Up** (Growing Brave Press). Forthcoming children's book, due December 2026.
- **King's College London**, *Celebrating 30 Years of Child Rights Teaching* (June 2026). Invited back as an alumni speaker, recognised for work in the field of child rights.
- **UNICEF Innocenti**, *Beyond Barriers: Advancing Research for Children with Disabilities* (April 2025). Invited speaker on Theme 2, *Preventing and Protecting Children with Disabilities from All Forms of Violence and Abuse*. Spoke on the duty owed to children with disabilities who take part in studies about violence and abuse, alongside UNICEF's Consultant for Disability Inclusive Child Protection and researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
- **Master Vision Conference** (2019). Keynote on the role of parents and caregivers in building safe communities for children.
- **Dubai Eye Radio**: recurring guest on child mental health, parenting and child development, 2018 to present.
- **King's College London**: guest lecturer (2018) on the duties of governments and organisations under international safeguarding frameworks; contributor to a 2017 study on accountability in international child protection programmes.
- **Gulf News**: subject matter expert and contributing writer on child rights, 2018.
- **UK Parliament** (2014 to 2015). Active participant, Consortium for Street Children All-Party Parliamentary Group.
- **Child Safeguarding Conference, South Africa** (2014). Convened and led the country's first child safeguarding conference: 250 participants from governments, donors and NGOs across 49 countries.
- **Podcast guest**: AI Trust Talks; The AI Social Club.

EDUCATION

- **MSc, International Child Rights**, King's College London, 2012
- **Responsible AI and AI Ethics**, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford
- **BA, Business Management**, Swansea Metropolitan University, 2009