



# Rima J. Hatoum

(Lebanon)

## **Winner of the UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize To Promote Quality Education for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities 2009**

Ms Rima J. Hatoum is a Ph. D. level professional in the field of disabilities, with expertise in the areas of assessment, curriculum development, positive behavioral support, inclusive education, teacher training, and research. She has a BA in Psychology, Teaching Diploma in Elementary Education, MA in Guidance and Counseling from the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, and a Ph. D. in Special Education with minors in Educational Research and Educational Administration from Florida State University (2010). She is qualified to teach children with intellectual, emotional, physical or visual disabilities as well as severe multiple disabilities or chronic illnesses. She is also certified in Applied Behavior Analysis and is a charter member of the Florida Positive Behavioral Support State Training Team. She has been engaged in teaching, program development, teacher training, research, and consulting in the field of disabilities for over 35 years. Her experience includes:

*Classroom Teaching:* She has taught students with various disabilities at all levels in private and public schools as well as in institutional and forensic settings for 10 years (Lebanon, UK, and USA).

*Program Development:* As a Program Specialist at the Florida Department of Education (DOE), Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students (BEES) for 8 years, she was responsible for providing technical assistance and monitoring statewide programs including the following:

- (1) Programs for students with severe or profound disabilities (severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, dual sensory impairments, multiple disabilities) with emphasis on inclusion, quality of life issues, developing functional skills, and positive behavioral support.
- (2) Programs for students who are homebound or hospitalized due to acute or chronic illnesses with emphasis on providing the least restrictive service delivery methods for students who are chronically ill, medically fragile or technology dependent.

*Teacher Training:* She has taught university courses in special education and supervised practicum students as well as student teachers (interns) working with students with low incidence or high incidence disabilities at all levels. As part of her duties at DOE/BEES and later as a freelance consultant for UNESCO and other international agencies operating in the Middle East as well as for Lebanese Non-Governmental Organizations, she designed and implemented in-service training programs to prepare teachers to include students with disabilities in their classrooms. These comprised of in-service training programs in Lebanon (all disabilities), Syria (visual impairments), and Yemen (all disabilities).

*Training Resources Development:* She has participated in and coordinated the development, field testing, revising, and finalizing of (1) a series of five in-service training manuals on educating children with severe or profound disabilities and (2) a series of 16 research-based modules on community-referenced positive behavioral support for persons with disabilities.

Besides maintaining a global view on disability issues, her work is motivated by a strong commitment to (1) children's rights, (2) promotion of inclusive communities through advocacy, education and research, and (3) development of equitable systems of service delivery and support that enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities and that are built on self advocates' and parents' perspectives.