

# MOOC Children's Mental Health: Rights and Perspectives

## LECTURERS AND EXPERTS



UN Special Representative on Violence against Children

### **Najat Maalla M'jid**

Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid has been serving as the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children since 2019.

Dr. M'jid, a medical doctor in paediatrics, has over the last three decades devoted her life to the promotion and protection of children's rights. Among previous appointments, she was Head of the Paediatric Department and Director of the Hay Hassani Mother-Child hospital in Casablanca; a member of the Moroccan National Council on Human Rights; and founder of the non-governmental organisation Bayti, the first programme addressing the situation of children living and working in the streets of Morocco.

From 2008 to 2014, she served as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Dr. M'jid also worked as an Expert-Consultant for national and international projects, strategies and policies relating to child rights' promotion and protection. She has vast experience in the development of national policies on the protection of the child, and has worked with several governments, non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations. Read more [here](#).



MHPSS Global Lead - Save the Children

### **Anne Filorizzo Pla**

Anne Filorizzo Pla, graduated on Child Psychology, Anne started her clinical practice in 2005. Her first humanitarian mission took place in Lebanon leading participatory research on adolescents' mental health.

In 2010, she joined her 1st emergency response in Haiti, coordinating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support interventions. For the past 14 years, she has been advocating for child's rights, building capacity on MHPSS and disability inclusion and, contributing to the development of inter-agency guidance. She is nowadays the Save the Children Global MHPSS Lead. <https://ch.linkedin.com/in/anne-filorizzo-23153271>



Children's Rights Project Manager - Global Campus of Human Rights

### **Thobekile Sithole**

Thobekile Sithole is a legal professional specialising in children's rights, child protection and family law with 12 years' experience gained in legal practice and civil society spaces. She joined the Global Campus in 2022 to manage the children's rights projects under the Global Campus - Right Livelihood cooperation.

She's a registered lawyer in Zimbabwe and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Law and Psychology, a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of Cape Town and a Master of Laws (LLM) in Family, Responsibility and the Law from the University of Sussex. She also took short courses in Child rights and Women's rights at the University of Pretoria and a holds a certificate in Project Management.

Thobekile has programmatic experience in the field of child protection and rights. She has been involved in civil society capacity building, advocacy and influencing initiatives undertaken by the Child Rights Coalition and Girls not brides coalition in Zimbabwe, such as advocating for the constitutional alignment of legislation like the Marriages Bill, Education Amendment Act, Child Justice Bill and the domestication of the SADC Model law in Eradicating Child Marriages and Protecting Children already in marriage.

She contributed to the drafting and compilation of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) Civil society Complementary report 2019, and coordinated the data collection for the drafting of the Zimbabwe Universal Periodic Review 2021 and UNCRC CSO report 2021. Thobekile has a keen interest in child participation having worked closely with the Zimbabwe Junior members of parliament and Junior councillors since 2019.



Children's Rights Officer – Global Campus Africa

#### **Elvis Fokala**

Elvis is the Manager of the Children's Rights Unit at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria. Previously, Elvis worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Stellenbosch as well as a substitute university teacher at the Institute for Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University.

Elvis completed his PhD at the Institute for Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University, with a focus on child participation in family decision-making processes in Africa. He writes and publishes predominantly on children's rights within the African context. His research interests include: International Children's Rights, Public International Law, (relating to Africa), African Human Rights System, Constitutionalism in Africa (relating to vulnerable groups).



Research, Advocacy and Participation Advisor - Terre des Hommes

#### **Kristen Hope**

Kristen Hope is a Research, Advocacy and Participation Advisor at Terre des hommes Foundation. Committed to fostering evidence-based practice and nurturing spaces of multi-disciplinary exchange to bridge silos, she has cultivated a reflective practice in research and advocacy to create positive change for some of the most marginalised and vulnerable children across the globe.

Kristen attempts to transform the principles of participation and empowerment into practice by using action-oriented research and participatory approaches to develop programmes that prevent and respond to violence and increase children's access to justice, whereby both adults and children become active in their own protection and can then advocate for others.

Kristen has over 15 years' experience working with children to help them express their voices, half of which have focused on vulnerable and marginalized groups in the Middle East and North Africa including refugees and ethnic minorities. Her areas of expertise include research methods, community-based child protection mechanisms and legal pluralism. She has partnered with numerous prominent academics in these fields and is author and co-author on several academic publications.



Young child rights advocate from Nepal

**Amrit Rijal**

Amrit is a young child rights advocate from Nepal engaged in the field since 2015. He is a medical student at Kathmandu University, a research enthusiast and also an actively advocating medical education campaigner. Amrit is a Peer Mentor at [#CovidUnder19](#) Initiative, where he works on child rights-based research and advocacy. He aspires to create a World that is both safe and welcoming to children.



Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

**Philip Jaffé**

Philip D. Jaffé: professor University of Geneva; founding director of its Centre for Children's Rights Studies, member UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Clinical and forensic psychologist trained in Switzerland and the USA. Practicing clinical (licensed psychotherapist) and forensic psychologist, court-appointed expert witness.

Beyond the traditional "teach, research, publish or perish missions", his vision of academic life is to branch out in the community at large as a science practitioner and educator.



Child Protection Specialist - UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

**Eshani Ruwanpura**

Eshani is a Child Protection Specialist at the UNICEF Regional Office in South Asia (ROSA) and focuses on child labour, child migration and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). Eshani has worked in several countries in the region, including Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and has experience in both development and humanitarian settings. She has supported programming for adolescents and youth, Comprehensive Sexuality Education, strengthening of sexual and reproductive health and information and services to young people and the prevention of child marriage. Eshani has her bachelor's in psychology from Washington

College, Maryland, USA; her MPhil in Social and Development Psychology from the University of Cambridge, UK and her Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the University of Edinburgh, UK.



Health Specialist - UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

**Arjanne Rietsema**

Arjanne Rietsema is a health specialist at the Unicef Regional Office in South Asia (ROSA). She focuses on Child and Adolescent Health and Primary Health Care. She is a nurse by profession and holds a Masters degree in Mother and Child Health from the Institute of Child Health in London and a Masters Degree in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. She has worked in various capacities in countries in Africa, Asia and South America. Injustice in the world motivates her to work in global health, where she is hoping to make a contribution to improving access to quality health services for everyone.



2021 Right Livelihood Laureate

### **Marthe Wandou**

Marthe Wandou is a Cameroonian activist working to improve the wellbeing of girls and women, including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Through community-based intervention, she has campaigned to change harmful cultural practices, such as early marriage, giving girls more options for their future. She has also assisted survivors of violence by the Boko Haram extremist group operating in the Lake Chad Basin, cementing her as one of the leading voices for the protection of girls and women in the region. Through her organisation Action Locale pour un Développement Participatif et Autogéré (ALDEPA), which she founded in 1998, Wandou has supported the wellbeing of girls through a holistic approach based on education, psychosocial care and legal assistance. Read more [here](#). Image and bio © [Right Livelihood](#)



Focal point for child and adolescent mental health at WHO Headquarters

### **Chiara Servili**

Dr. Chiara Servili, MD, MPH, Ph.D. is a child neuropsychiatrist by training obtained an MPH at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and a Ph.D. at the Università di Modena. She is acting as a technical focal point for the UNICEF WHO Joint Programme on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing and development of children and adolescents (2020-2030). Her work focused on the development of guidance and implementation tools for child and adolescent mental health promotion and protection and providing technical advice to countries. Prior to joining WHO Headquarters in 2010, she served the organization in the African and Eastern Mediterranean regions.



Lived experience mental health advocate from Rwanda

### **Grace Gatera**

Grace Gatera is a passionate lived experience mental health advocate residing in Kigali, Rwanda.

With her roles as a Wellcome Lived Experience Advisor, UNICEF Leading Minds young leader, and a member of My Mind Our Humanity, which started as a Lancet Commission youth campaign, Grace tirelessly champions the cause of mental health for young people, particularly those in vulnerable and marginalized communities worldwide.

She fervently advocates for their access to specialized, quality mental health care and medication, while also striving for their inclusion in crucial high-level policy and decision-making processes pertaining to mental health.





Children's Rights Regional Officer - Global Campus Caucasus

**Mariam Muradyan**

Mariam is in charge of coordinating the children's rights activities in the Caucasus region based at the Center for European Studies in Yerevan State University (Armenia). Part of these activities include the follow up on the Global Study recommendations and implementation of grant projects on children's rights.

Mariam's background is in social work and for several years she worked as a child protection coordinator at *World Vision Armenia* (2010-2015). She also worked with the Ministry of Healthcare and Global Fund (HIV/AIDs and TB), the Ombudsman Office of Artsakh and in local CSOs in Armenia in the field of human rights, with a special focus on children's rights.

Mariam is an alumna of the Master's programme in Human Rights and Democratisation in the Caucasus (2012-2014) and an alumna of College of Europe, Natolin (MA) in 2016-2017. She holds a bachelor degree in philology and social work.