

COMMISSION ON THE  
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Organisation Mondiale pour L'Éducation Préscolaire  
World Organization for Early Childhood Education  
Organización Mundial para la Educación Preescolar

# ACHIEVING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND CARE

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## MODERATOR

**Jessica Essary, PhD** is an Associate Professor of Education at Cazenovia College. She is an NGO representative on the United Nations -- on behalf of the World Organization for Early Childhood Education. Jess is an academic activist locally as well (e.g. supporting families on a local Lead Poisoning Review Board). She taught 1st and 4th grade in Florida before teaching 3-5-year-old children as the lead teacher of an Early Childhood Research Center in Buffalo, NY. As an international expat, early in her career she taught at Zayed University in Dubai for 4.5 years before returning stateside to teach at Ole Miss and author additional articles pertaining to diversity teacher preparation. Among Dr. Essary's publications, she has authored advice to help guardians engage in newborn activities which are beneficial for early development.

## INVESTING IN THE EARLY YEARS OF LIFE : A DOUBLE DIVIDEND, TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS.

**Dr. Rima Salah, Ph.D.**, served as a Member of the United Nations High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (2014-15), and as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, U.N. Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). In addition, Dr. Salah has had a distinguished career with UNICEF. Her service includes: Deputy Executive Director for UNICEF (2004-2007, 2011-2012), Regional Director for West and Central Africa (1999-2004), and UNICEF representative in several countries including Vietnam, Burkina Faso as well as head of office in Queta, Pakistan. As a highly effective advocate for the rights of children and women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, she contributed to Security Council (SC) Resolution 1612 on child rights violations and Security Council (SC) resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security. Dr. Salah has received many awards of distinction from several non-governmental organizations and U.N. Member States, including the French Legion of Honor. In October 2015, Dr. Salah was elected to Chair the newly formed Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC) of which Yale and UNICEF are founding members. The ECPC, launched at UNICEF HQ in September 2013, brought together leaders from international organizations, academia, practice, philanthropy, networks media and development. Dr. Salah is at the Child Study Center, Yale School of Medicine. She is co-editor of the volume at MIT Press, Pathways to Peace: The Transformative Power of Children and Families.

## ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD.

**Mercedes Mayol Lassalle** is OMEP World President since January 1, 2020. She holds a degree in Primary Education, later Educational Sciences, University of Buenos Aires. Ex- Director of the Early Childhood Education Area of the City of Buenos Aires. Ex-senior consultant for the United Nations Development Program. Today, she is a Professor in the Master Early Childhood Education at the University of Buenos Aires and also part of the Regional Training Program in Educational Policy Planning and Management, IIPÉ-UNESCO Buenos Aires, Office for Latin America. Mercedes is an elected member of the Coordination Group of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EDUCATION 2030 - CCNGO/ED 2030.

## PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY AND RIGHTS FROM THE START. A LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE.

**Raul Mercer** is a member of ISSOP (International Society of Social Pediatrics) and Member of the Lancet-UNICEF-WHO Commission: A Future for the World's Children? He has authored various books and articles, namely: "Gender Tool" (WHO / EU) for the promotion of gender equity in child and adolescent health programs, "From the right to identity to the right to identities" (Journal of the Chilean Society of Pediatrics), "Gender Perspectives in Medicine" (2019, Spain). Raul has also coordinated various projects and programs, namely -- The Gender and Childhood Seminar, FLACSO, Argentina, The "I Hear You" Project that promotes rights and gender equity in health services (UNICEF-FLACSO, Argentina). Currently, he is working on a report on Gender & Health during COVID-19 in the Americas, PAHO/WHO.

## VALUING UNPAID EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CARE FOR DEVELOPMENT & PEACE, CHILDREN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

**Anne-Claire de Liedekerke** is President of Make Mothers Matter. She holds a Master Degree in Art History from UCLouvain Belgium and as an expatriate for 12 years, she had the opportunity of pursuing several experiences in the field of art and education in the United States and in Canada. After returning to Belgium in 1992, Anne-Claire worked in the Société des expositions of the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels and co-created a guide "Expats in Brussels". Anne-Claire's deep conviction that mothers have a crucial role in society and in its global development led her to join MMM. She became head of the MMM delegation at the European Union in 2008 and involved MMM in two major EU- funded research programs. For the Family Platform, she conducted a major survey 'What European mothers want', reaching out to nearly 12 000 mothers in 16 EU countries. With the Dorian program, which focused on maternal obesity, Anne-Claire invited MMM to choose mothers and health as one of its working lines. Since she became the MMM president in 2014, she is dedicated to re-enforcing the thrust of MMM's advocacy work and grounding it through collaboration with an expanding network of grassroots member associations and partners. She is the mother of 3 children and grandmother of 8 grandchildren.

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