

Fostering Rights-Based Solutions to Tackle Child Poverty and Social Exclusion across Europe

2nd – 3rd July 2024, Malta

Workshops Abstracts and Presenters' Bios

Day One
July 2nd

1st Session

Workshop 1: Young Children's Participation in Curriculum Development: Educators' Transition from Prescriptive to Emergent Curriculum in Maltese Early Years Settings, *Early Childhood Development Association, Malta*

Aligned with the global goals for a better world by 2030, this study shows how seven teachers in Malta who work with young children (ages 0-7) changed the way they teach. Before, they had to follow prescriptive content about what to teach in the early years. Now, they create learning experiences with the children, giving them a say in their learning (Article 12 of the United Nations, 1989). This change helps young children feel heard, more involved and experience a love for learning.

The workshop explores how the study, which will soon be published in a book, examined the teachers' experiences as they tried this new way of implementing a child-centred curriculum. The authors will discuss the educators' narratives and interview data. They found that when educators used this new approach, it changed their thoughts about teaching and learning, and the children became more involved in making decisions. Those attending the workshop will experience hands-on how these educators go about child participation in curriculum development.

Presenters:

Professor **Carmen Dalli** started her academic career in the Department of Teaching the Early and Middle Years of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. She subsequently joined Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand (NZ) where she is Professor of Early Childhood Studies and Dean of Education. Her research spans early childhood (EC) policy, teacher professionalism, and infants and toddlers in EC services. She has acted as an EC policy consultant for a number of jurisdictions, including as chair of the NZ Ministerial Advisory Group that developed the 10-year Early Learning Action Plan (2019-2029). She co-edits the Springer book series *Policy and Pedagogy with Under-Three-Year Olds: Cross-disciplinary Insights and Innovations*. She is lead investigator on a project investigating how young children negotiate conflict to establish belonging and wellbeing in a multi-ethnic early years setting, and on a cross-sectional 30-year study of ethics and professionalism in early childhood education in NZ.

Dr **Anna Baldacchino** holds a Bachelor Degree in Child and Family Studies and a Master in Education from the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI), Canada, together with a Doctorate from the University of Sheffield (UK), specialising in the Early Years. She has served as a Learning Manager at Holland College and part-time lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the UPEI, (2003-2013). She has delivered various presentations on themes relating to Early Childhood Education and Development in Taiwan, Sweden, Japan, Canada, Australia, Barbados and Grenada. She has a number of articles published in peer-reviewed journals about Early Childhood Education. She is the co-founder and President of the Early Childhood Development Association of Malta (ECDAM), and co-founder of the B&B Early Years Consultancy in the Early Years. Anna currently lectures on curriculum knowledge in the early years and children in society within the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta.

Dr **Charmaine Bonello** is a senior lecturer in Early Childhood and Primary education at the University of Malta. Since 1997, she has worked in and studied early and primary education. She finished her doctoral and master's degrees in early childhood education at the University of Sheffield in the UK. Her current research interests in Early Childhood Education and Care are Emergent Curriculum, Children's Rights, Early Literacy,

Postcolonial Education, Leadership, and Quality Interactions. She is also the co-founder and Vice President of the Early Childhood Development Association of Malta (ECDAM) and a member of the Board of Administrators of the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society. In addition to being the author of the Routledge book *Boys, Early Literacy, and Children's Rights in a Postcolonial Context (Bonello, 2022)*, she is the co-editor of the international refereed journal *Postcolonial Directions in Education*.

Sabina Sixsmith is an accomplished Early Childhood Educator with nearly two decades of experience. She holds a Certificate in Early Childhood Education and worked in childcare for three years before teaching KG2 (4-5-year olds) for 10 years. After earning her Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education and Care, she taught Year 1 (5-6-year olds) for six years. Sabina furthered her expertise with a Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education from the University of Sheffield. Passionate about outdoor learning, she coordinated an Outdoor Learning Programme as a Senior Teacher for two years. Recently, she graduated with a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Management from the University of Malta. Sabina now serves as an Assistant Head at an independent school, where she applies her extensive knowledge and leadership skills to effectively nurture and manage educational environments.

Chantelle Xuereb is an Early Years Educator who has worked with children from 3-7 years, both in Kindergarten and currently in the Early Primary Sector. Throughout her career she has always worked with an Emergent Curriculum, where she observes children at play to detect their interests and together with them creates a learning project about the said interests. She has also formed part of the Early Childhood Development Association of Malta's committee for several years- an association that organises talks and workshops for the continuous professional development of ECEC practitioners. Chantelle has had various opportunities to share her practice in training sessions for local Kindergarten and Primary Educators and has been a tutor and fieldwork examiner for ECEC students at the University of Malta. Chantelle is a part-time Early Childhood Consultant who gives workshops to educators working in childcare centres.

Workshop 2: Empowering Communities: A Holistic Approach to Tackling Generational Child Poverty, Concordia, Austria

This workshop will show how the Day Centre Model by CONCORDIA helps children and families in Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Kosovo, and Moldova. Participants will learn through discussions and activities about new ways to help children and their families. The goal of the workshop are to explain how the Day Centre Model helps fight child poverty, discuss how different services can work together to support families, and provide practical tools to help participants start similar projects in their areas. Activities will include studying real-life cases of children and families facing poverty and group brainstorming to find ways to solve these issues together. The workshop is designed for people who work with children, such as social workers, teachers, community leaders, and policymakers. We want people to better understand how services can work together to reduce child poverty, help them to use these ideas in their work, and learn from each other.

Presenters:

Martina Raytchinova is CONCORDIA's International Programme Director. She is responsible for developing and steering the programmes on a cross-country level, as well as supporting the successful institutional fundraising process aligned to the strategy of the organisation. One important part of her portfolio is to ensure an evidence-based approach in the programme development, long-term impact leading to systemic change in social welfare, as well as child safety at all levels of CONCORDIA. Before joining CONCORDIA, she worked for Caritas Bulgaria. She has a Master in Communication Studies.

Eva Okonofua is a Senior Programme Advisor at CONCORDIA Social Projects. She contributes to the development of the programmes of the organisation in Austria, Bulgaria, Kosovo, the Republic of Moldova and Romania. She provides technical advisory and mentorship services for existing programmes and services and newly developed projects and contributes to initiatives within advocacy and MEAL. She has a Master in African Studies and Development Studies and worked in several NGO and international organisations in Africa, Germany and Austria.

Workshop 3: Child-family separation issues between poverty and marginalisation and the children's rights to family and protection - Know-how Centre for Alternative Care for Children, New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria

In 2024 the Know-how Centre for Alternative Care for Children and the Childhood 2025 Coalition in Bulgaria jointly initiated a study on the reasons for child-family separation in Bulgaria. The research is part of the long-term engagement of the Coalition's members to focus professional and public attention on the topic and to add the more and more pressing need to develop measures and practices for effective prevention to the list of priorities of the national and local social, educational and mental-health policies. The research collected and analysed the experience of 80+ specialists working directly with children and families on 1400+ family separation cases in the last 5 years. The analysis shows that the child-family separation issues in Bulgaria are closely associated with poverty and social exclusion. The families living in economic insecurity and social isolation (often in marginalized communities) experience mental health problems and addictions and different forms of violence and as a result the parents neglect their parental role. In the workshop, we will address the problems related to the reactions of the child protection system and the professionals; the experience of parents and children and the various attitudes and mind-sets that shape these.

Presenter:

Evgeniya Toneva, MA in Philosophy, PhD candidate in Social Work and Social Policy. Mrs Toneva has 10+ years of professional experience in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and interventions in the field of alternative care for children, children's rights and social work with children and families at risk. Since 2017 she works as a researcher at the KHC, NBU coordinating the research work for two national studies of the deinstitutionalization reform in Bulgaria. She has been involved in KHC's most recent study on the reasons for family separation in the country.

Workshop 4: An integrated approach to protecting children's rights online, Eurochild

Children do not only have the right to be safe online, they also deserve to be empowered to enjoy fun and enriching experiences online. This means that any action to protect and empower children must be seen from different points of view and worked on by different people and organisations. Protecting children online is like putting the right pieces of a puzzle together. This workshop will explain how some of those different pieces can create a safer internet for children: (1) children themselves; (2) politicians and those making the laws; (3) organisations doing campaigns about risks online for children and parents.

Presenters:

Fabiola Bas Palomares is Lead Policy and Advocacy Officer – Online Safety at Eurochild. She is responsible for monitoring and influencing EU policy and engaging with Eurochild members and children regarding children's rights in the digital environment.

Manon Baert is the EU Advocacy and Policy Officer at 5Rights Foundation where she focuses on the implementation of Children's Rights within EU digital policy. She previously worked in EU affairs within a non-profit and a consultancy, with a focus on human rights and sustainability. Manon was also a legal trainee at the EU Delegation to the Council of Europe and has a background in European Law and International Affairs.

Altin Hazizaj is the General Director of CRCA/ECPAT Albania, one of the major child and youth organisations in Albania, that advocates for policy and legislative improvement related to children and youth rights, capacity building for the Albanian government, research and provision of services for the children most in need. Working on protecting human rights since 1993, he has been an expert in several policy documents and member of working groups of the Albanian Government for the preparation of the National Strategy for Children in Albania, National Strategy for Youth in Albania, the National Human Rights Reports etc.

2nd Session

Workshop 5: Designing and Playing "Snakes and Ladders" of Children's Lives at Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion, The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, Malta

Did you know that 20 million children in Europe are having a hard time because they don't have enough money, or help? This workshop is about making things better for kids who are struggling. We're going to play Snakes and Ladders to understand the ups and downs of children living in poverty. You'll get to be a child who is living in poverty and discuss and design the ladders of the game by finding things that help different children, like good schools, safe homes, and other stepping stones for success. But you'll also discuss and design snakes that make life harder, like not having enough food. By playing this game, grown-ups can learn how to make life better for deprived children, list new rules that help children climb up the ladders and avoid the snakes. Let's work and play together!

Presenters:

Dr Bernadine Satariano is a Senior Lecturer in Geography. She has an Undergraduate and Master's degree in Geography from the University of Malta and a PhD in Health Geography from Durham University. Her main area of interest explores how important place (natural and built) is for human health and wellbeing. Her empirical interests include: social determinants of health, health inequalities, children's geographies, therapeutic landscapes and socio-cultural environments. She has presented works at several international universities and published extensively in her field.

Angela Caruana is a Senior member of the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society. She coordinates the Children's Hub within the Foundation. The Children's Hub facilitates activities and projects focused on the wellbeing of children and young people in Malta and Gozo. Angie is a graduate in Arts conservation and a diploma in Gestalt Psychotherapy. She previously worked at the National Commission for Child Policy and Strategy within the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity and has extensive experience in the field of migration.

Workshop 6: Innovative Solutions for Child Mental Health: Lessons from Greece, The Smile of the Child, Greece

This workshop will start with a presentation focusing on the difficulties that professionals face in Greece, who work with abused children, due to lack of child protection procedures within the community. Additionally, we will present the Day Centre "House of the Child" as a good practice that works with abused and traumatized children. After the presentation, similar experiences can be shared in an open discussion with anyone that feels like doing so, on an attempt to share the difficulties each of us faces within working in the child protection context or good practices that our communities have in place to help traumatized children. The aim of the workshop will be to present good practices and discuss challenges, while brainstorming and forming an understanding of the further steps that we can take to prevent and deal with child abuse, aiming for safer communities.

Presenter:

Laurance Menetian is a Psychologist – Psychotherapist (MSc) and Scientific Manager of the Day Center "House of the Child" in the Organisation Smile of the Child. She has been trained in CBT and is a member of the European Association of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapies. She has been working with children and adults since 2011 within the Refugee context, in refugee camps, police stations, day centers, etc. Additionally, she has worked with children as a School Psychologist. She has cooperated with the Hellenic Ministry of Civil Protection as a Mental Health worker working with refugees, with the Hellenic Ministry of Justice, having cooperated as an Expert for the system of justice, helping abused children during legal procedures and with the Hellenic Ministry of Migration working closely for unaccompanied minors. Currently, she works in the Smile of the Child, being the Scientific Manager of the day center, where traumatized and abused children seek therapies such as psychotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapies, etc, while she has a private practice since 2013, working with adults.

Workshop 7: Leveraging EU influence to deliver change for families in adversity in Bulgaria, Eurochild

If we are here, we all agree that children in most cases feel safer emotionally when they are with their families. The stability that growing up in a loving and caring family provides not only assures that children have better opportunities when it comes to their education, but also fosters an environment of cooperation and harmony, protection, and belonging.

To ensure that all children and their families are given an opportunity to have an equitable experience, the workshop will cover the root causes of child-family separation, effective strategies for EU and national level influence, and highlight best practices for civil society engagement. Attendees will participate in interactive sessions, including group activities to identify key areas for EU intervention and brainstorming sessions to develop tailored advocacy agendas outlining immediate next steps. This workshop seeks to equip participants with the tools and insights needed to drive meaningful change for families in adversity with specific examples from Eurochild's experience.

Presenter:

Reneta Krivonozova is Policy and Advocacy Officer at Eurochild. She tracks and helps influence EU policy developments on child poverty, with particular focus on Roma children and families. Supports alliance building at EU level, and in Bulgaria at national, regional and local levels.

Workshop 8: Child Participation, Eurochild Children's Council

This workshop will be facilitated by the incoming and outgoing Eurochild Children's Councils who will share their experiences influencing decision-makers at local, national and European level.

Presenters:

Members of the Eurochild Children's Councils.

3rd Session

Workshop 9: Mental Health Specialists' Archipelago, National Network for Children, Bulgaria

Children have the right to the best mental health possible and should be supported to have positive mental well-being. The Mental Health Specialists' Archipelago makes use of psychodrama, a method that uses dramatic techniques, such as role-playing, to help people understand and resolve emotional conflicts. Participants would act as both children and specialists, sharing perspectives and insights on mental health and proposing solutions. After discussing children's mental issues, discussing, and finding common experiences in their own childhood, participants will join separate rooms according to the most common mental issues and share concrete messages and techniques with other groups. Participants will leave the workshop with insights and tools to address children's mental health. This interactive session is led by experienced psychologists and psychodrama specialists from the National Network for Children, Bulgaria.

Presenters:

Bella Damyanova is Child Policies Coordinator with the NNC; MD in Clinical and consultative psychology; Psychodrama assistant and psychodrama therapist with Berhard Ahterberg Institute for Psychodrama and Group Therapy, Associate member of Association Bulgarian psychoanalytic space. Bella has experience in different positions in the social field – direct work with children and families (including vulnerable groups) as psychologist and social worker.

Diana Andreeva is Education Coordinator with the NNC; MD in Developmental and Social Psychology; Psychodrama assistant with Berhard Ahterberg Institute for Psychodrama and Group Therapy; Diana has vast experience as school psychologist, vice-principal of a National school in Sofia and trainer in different topics.

Workshop 10: Putting early childhood development on the political agenda: advocacy and campaigning at the national level, Eurochild

In this workshop we will share experiences of advocating for decision-makers to pay more attention to early childhood development (ECD), and to increase public investment in the services and support needed by very young children and their families and caregivers. The presentations and discussion will highlight the challenges and opportunities in raising the importance of investing in ECD among government representatives, parliamentarians and other policy-makers.

The workshop will include presentations from civil society organisations with experience of campaigning to make ECD a greater priority in public policy in their country and beyond. They will share their experiences and provide thoughts on how organisations can work in coalition to advocate for systems and services that address inequalities in early childhood and that support families and caregivers to provide nurturing care for all infants and young children.

Presenters:

Savelina Roussinova is a Senior research and advocacy expert at For Our Children Foundation. In this capacity, she was part of the research team which produced *The Deep Dive Analysis of Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in Bulgaria*, commissioned by UNICEF Bulgaria. The Deep Dive provided information and evidence base for the development of the National Plan for the implementation of the European Child Guarantee. On behalf of For Our Children Foundation, Savelina participated in the national working group which elaborated the ECG plan. In 2023, she conducted research for the National Child Strategy in her capacity as member of the national expert group, and for the National Plan for early childhood development.

Aljosa Rudas is a Program Manager at the International Step by Step Association (ISSA), the early childhood regional network for Europe and Central Asia. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and a Master's degree in Child Development. With over 15 years of experience, Aljosa has dedicated his career to working with and for young children, their families, and communities in various capacities within the field of early childhood. His expertise focuses primarily on issues related to quality and equitable early childhood programs and services for children under 6 years of age and their families, with extensive experience in program design, management, and implementation, as well as in knowledge brokering and creation aimed at translating theory into practice and determine long-lasting changes in children's learning environments. Aljosa's work portfolio includes contributions to innovative program design and facilitating professional development opportunities at the international level for different professionals working in the early childhood field. He designs and implements trainings and workshops for professionals and trainers across Europe, covering a range of topics such as [Psychological First Aid](#), [Quality Pedagogy](#), [Child-centered methodology](#), and inclusive approaches to education in the early years, and is part of the team in ISSA supporting the implementation of the [Primokiz](#) approach to working with local governments across different countries in Europe. Aljosa coordinates ISSA's Europe-wide initiative, the [Romani Early Years Network](#), which promotes access to quality early childhood development for Roma children, professionalism in early years services, and better representation of Roma in the early childhood workforce. He is a vocal advocate for creating quality nurturing environments for all children, particularly for the most disadvantaged ones.

Dr Jane Spiteri is a Lecturer in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, at the University of Malta. Her academic teaching focuses on early childhood education for sustainability (ECEFS), outdoor learning, climate change education and climate anxiety in early childhood, in addition to gifted and talented education. She is particularly interested in teacher education and the development of children's worldviews around environmental sustainability and climate change in the early years. Before becoming a lecturer, Jane has worked in education for over 20 years. Jane read for her BEduc (Hons) at the University of Malta; a Master degree at Ca' Foscari University, Italy; a PhD in early childhood education for sustainability at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland; and a postgraduate diploma in gifted and talented education at Radboud University, The Netherlands. Jane's research applies mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative approaches, to early childhood studies. In 2020, she was awarded the OMEP Scholar Award in recognition for her research in ECEFS. Her scholarly outputs include several peer-reviewed articles published in Q1 and Q2 ranked journals. Jane has published two books: *Educating for Sustainability in a Small Island Nation: Voices from Early Childhood Education*, published by Springer. Her forthcoming book, *Children's Voices and*

Agency: Ways of Listening in Early Childhood Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research, will be published in July by Cambridge University Press. Jane has presented her research at several national and international conferences.

Dr **Rita Melia** is a lecturer in Early Childhood Education and Care at Atlantic Technological University Ireland. Rita has worked in ECEC in practice, research, and policy for over 30 years. As an owner manager of a full day care service, a quality mentor, national policy advisor and director of training and practice, Rita's experience also includes working with the Early Years regulator. In her role as lecturer in ECEC Rita focuses on all children's rights to quality ECEC experiences, she works on projects at policy level in Ireland, with a particular interest in the regulation of ECEC provision and professionalisation of the workforce to support children's quality experiences as a catalyst to tackling child poverty and social exclusion. Rita undertook her PhD studies in Child and Youth Research at UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre University of Galway Ireland, her research title was; ['My self-image and your interactions': The influence of the preschool educator's image of the child as a learner on children's wellbeing and involvement \(universityofgalway.ie\)](#)

Giorgiana Rosa, Advocacy Consultant, [First Years First Priority Campaign](#).

Workshop 11: Put Children First: End Orphanage Volunteering and the Institutionalisation of Children, International Federation of Social Workers Europe

Orphanage volunteering is a key driver for the institutionalisation of children, with orphanages in some countries being created to meet the demand from well-meaning tourists, volunteers, and donors. Yet, there is a lot of research now that clearly highlights institutions have a negative impact on children. Despite well-intentioned motives, people continue to seek out volunteer opportunities in orphanages believing they are making a positive contribution. This presentation will explore the issues of orphanage care and orphanage volunteering, making the connection between these and international instruments such as the UNCRC. Drawing on the experiences of the 'End Orphanage Tourism Working Group' and its 'Put Children First' campaign based in Ireland it will provide participants with a detailed understanding of the role of education and awareness, and of advocacy at government level in reducing orphanage volunteering and the institutionalisation of children.

Presenter:

Valerie Philpott is a qualified Social Worker and holds membership with the Social Work Registration Board of Ireland (CORU). She is also a member of the Irish Association of Social Workers. She has extensive experience working with children within the non-profit and statutory sectors. Valerie is passionate about child welfare and children's rights and has spent much of her professional life working to improve outcomes for disadvantaged and marginalised children in child protection, adoption & foster care, and disability services. She currently works as a Safeguarding Advisor for Mísean Cara, an international development organisation based in Dublin, Ireland. Valerie has qualifications in anthropology, social policy, and social work and is due to complete a Master of Law's (LLM) in Children's Rights and Family Law from University College Cork in August 2024.

Workshop 12: Right Outcomes – How can children participate in assessing the realisation of their rights?, Central Union for Child Welfare, Finland and the Dutch NGO Coalition for Children's Rights, The Netherlands

Children have the right to participate in every decision-making process that may affect their lives – and the reporting cycle of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is no exception. The question we would like to discuss during this workshop is: How can children participate in assessing the realisation of their rights, specifically around the reporting to the UN Committee? How to produce for example child-friendly versions of the UNCRC and the concluding observations? What works and what not?

During this workshop we want to share good examples and learn from each other, also through learning from mistakes. We invite everyone who a) has experience in promoting children's participation in the reporting process or in assessing the realisation of their rights OR b) is interested in promoting it, and c) young people of course.

Presenters:

Ira Custódio is senior advisor at the Central Union for Child Welfare. She has over ten years of experience in communicating children's rights to different audiences and in promoting dialogue between different stakeholders, including children and young people. Central Union for Child Welfare is responsible for coordinating the NGO report to the UN CRC and currently looking for ways to promote children's participation in the reporting process. CUCW want to share the questions we are asking in this process and look for answers together with the participants.

Brigitte Boswinkel is coordinator of the Dutch NGO Coalition for Children's Rights (Kinderrechtcollectief). In that role she coordinated the NGO reporting to the UN CRC with the input of 100 organisations and the reporting to the Human Rights Council under the UPR. The Coalition translated the UNCRC Recommendations into Child Friendly Language and developed a methodology to monitor the Recommendations on a yearly basis involving five ministries in a yearly National Dialogue on Children's Rights.

Day Two – July 3rd

Workshop 13: "Be My Friend", Society "Our Children" Opatija, Croatia

Through the workshop „Be my friend“ children learn how to be a good friend, which qualities are required in order to be a good friend, how to include all children, and help one another through advocating for Children's Rights and by recognizing joint problems and finding solutions together.

Play is an integral part of a child's life and represents the most natural and very significant activity of a child. A child's desire to play comes from an inner need for action and exploration. In the game, the child spontaneously exercises and develops his cognitive, emotional, motor, social, communication and language abilities. Play is important for learning because in play the child is motivated by activity and therefore learns the most.

The most important characteristic of the game is that the child enjoys the game! Adults should respect this feature of the game. The game creates closeness, brings happiness and satisfaction and encourages the development of the child's abilities through joint exploring, exchange of experiences and inclusion! Through this project children learn how to relax, learn through play and exploring various types of activities and how to include one another through exploring themselves and the UNCRC.

Presenter:

Antonia Katić, mentor of Children's City Council of Opatija, Children's Forum and NEF Croatia, Educator and sensoric therapist.

Workshop 14: - Exploring and scaling models to institutionalise children's participation in democratic life at local level, experiences from Budapest and Naples, Family, Child, Youth Association, Hungary and Fondazione l'Albero della Vita, Italy

Young children have a right to participate in all matters affecting them. Their parents and caretakers should ask them about their wishes, opinions activities, like play, food, clothing. The same goes for decisions made in their communities, their schools, and their neighbourhoods.

Presenters:

Dr Maria Herczog, has been the chair and program director of the Family Child Youth Association in Budapest, Hungary since 1993. Maria is an economist, sociologist, and a visiting senior lecturer at ELTE Budapest Law Faculty post-graduate courses on child rights, alternative conflict resolution techniques, and child protection. Recently, Maria led a team for a child rights implementation project funded by the EU in Turkey (2021-2023), and worked as a senior policy analyst at the Institute for Human Services, Columbus, Ohio (2018-2023). For more than 30 years, Maria has carried out research and teaching courses, and has authored several books, chapters and journal articles, on topics ranging from child welfare, child protection,

child rights, family matters, conflict resolution, and frequently speaks at international conferences and with media on these topics. She has worked with UNICEF, Council of Europe, WHO, and as a temporary scientific expert. She was a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Child between 2007-2015, and a founding member of Eurochild and president of it between 2010-2016. She has been the member and later the president of the Executive Committee of the Child Rights Connect since 2019-2024. Maria was elected as president of Missing Children Europe in December 2023 for 3 years, while also serving as a Board member of Learning for Wellbeing for Children and Hope and Homes for Children and as an Ally at the International Parent Advocacy Network.

Fanni Mátyók is the project lead of the Child Citizens project of Józsefváros Municipality Budapest. After many years of working abroad on children's rights education and child participation in Vienna, Cyprus, Brussels and Cambodia she returned to Budapest and created her own initiative WellBee, which promotes an inclusive and overarching approach of children's wellbeing in non-formal education settings. She graduated from ELTE Budapest Law School in 2017 in Hungary and took part in the Master of Human Rights program at Abo Academy, Finland. She is currently in her first year of Psychology Bachelor studies in Budapest.

Nicoletta Errichiello is a project manager, specialised in immigration from sub-Saharan Africa, gender issues, and minors. Nicoletta is dedicated to the inclusion of minors in school and to entrepreneurship for women victims of sexual trafficking. She is currently project manager of the DAY project for Fondazione L'Albero della Vita ETS in Naples, Italy. Nicoletta graduated in International Cooperation for the Middle East and Africa, she obtained a master's degree in project management which led her to be an intern for UNICEF and Save the Children at the international portfolio management. Following these experiences she was a junior project manager in Sierra Leone where she followed projects in the educational sector. Coming back to Italy, Nicoletta coordinated the territorial center for migrants in Castel Volturno, Italy for a project financed with EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Funds in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration. She has also been a supervisor for a Neapolitan cooperative for immigrant families with children with disabilities.

Workshop 15: Navigating Trauma: Advocacy and training for professionals in traumatized care systems and why trauma informed schools ensure educational success for all children, Roots Research Center, Greece and Gareth Williams-James, UK based independent education specialist

The purpose of this workshop is to help members understand how trauma affects all those involved in children's care services and what can be done to ensure good outcomes for children whilst sustaining good health for those working in the services. The workshop will focus on two areas:

- Tatiana Gorney will lead on helping the people who take care of children. It's important to know what these helpers need when they work with children and families who have had very difficult experiences, especially if they've lived in places other than their own homes.
- Gareth Williams-James will lead on how teachers can make lessons and school life better for all children by taking account of the difficult experiences that many children will have had.

Presenters:

Tatiana E. Gorney earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Lancaster University UK. She obtained a Certificate and Diploma in Person Centered Counseling from the Institute of Counseling and Psychological Studies of Greece in collaboration with Strathclyde University of Glasgow. She continued her studies in the education of children and young people on the autism spectrum disorder at Arizona State University USA, where she received her Masters of Education (Med) with honors. Since 2008 she has collaborated with Roots Research Center NGO, member of the European Network Eurochild and she is currently a member of the board. She has been trained in issues of deinstitutionalization from esteemed colleagues of the Eurochild network and from specialists of international organizations such as IFCO, FICE, Hope and Homes and more. She has specialized in developmental trauma and attachment for children with no parental care. She conducts training seminars for current or prospective foster parents and parents who have or want to adopt children and to professional that work in the field of institutional care with the goal of an effective alternative care in Greece. Since 2023 she is a board member of the Institute of Dyadic Developmental Practice Worldwide

(DDPI). She continues her education in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and practice (DDP) which specializes in developmental trauma, family therapy and the therapy of children and young people with a history of abuse or neglect (DDP Level 1 and 2). In 2024 she became a trainee DDP PACE Trainer, supported by DDPI.

Gareth Williams-James is a UK based independent education specialist whose focus for the past twenty years has been on improving the educational outcomes for children in alternative care. He established one of the first “virtual schools” for children in the care of local authorities in 2005. This particular service (which is not an online school but a way of tracking and supporting the children in their physical schools) was used to model the specification for a 2007-2009 pilot by central government’s Department for Children, Schools and Families. Following the success of the pilot, Gareth was a member of the steering group which worked with civil servants and ministers to develop legislation, which came into force in 2014, requiring all local authorities in England to appoint a person to oversee the education of children in alternative care. From 2015 to 2022, Gareth worked in a number of local authorities on an interim basis, either fulfilling the required role (known as a Virtual School Head) or supporting the postholder. Now retired from local government work, Gareth continues in mostly voluntary activity supporting educational success for care experienced young people. Prior to his work outlined above, Gareth was, for twenty four years, a school teacher and school leader with experience in both primary and secondary phase as well as in special education. He has a B.Ed. in Special Educational Needs and a B.A. in Mathematics. Gareth has been an individual member of Eurochild since 2020 and he is committed to sharing his experiences of how schools can provide educational success for every child.