

Academic education

1985–1991: Master of Laws (LL.M) in Dutch Private Law, with additional specialisation in International Law, Immigration Law and Administrative Law, VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Professional activities

Work at national level

2014- present : Independent strategic adviser, coach and trainer on Equity, Inclusiveness and Diversity.

1989–present: Freelance trainer, consultant and keynote speaker in the areas of transcultural and inclusive leadership; transcultural communication; diversity management; equal treatment and anti-discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, LGBTI, handicap and chronic illness. Expert also on migration, diaspora and refugee issues

2014–present: Vice-Chair, Geschillencommissie Passend Onderwijs (Commission for Disputes on Inclusive Education), Utrecht.

2014–2017: Deputy Human Rights Commissioner, Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, Utrecht, Netherlands.

January 2015–December 2015: Interim Director, Stichting Vrolijkheid, a foundation that organises art projects for children, young adults and their parents in centres for asylum-seekers around the Netherlands.

2012–2014: Human Rights Commissioner, Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, Utrecht.

2005–2012: Equal Treatment Commissioner, Dutch Equal Treatment Commission, Utrecht.

International work

2009–2013: Executive Board member, Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, Brussels.

2012: Responsible for the contribution of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights to the second cycle of the UPR submission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

2010: Co-organised and addressed the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Mexico.

1997–1998: Project coordinator, Immigration and Naturalisation Department, Ministry of Justice for the project “Facilitated Return of Rejected Asylum Seekers from Angola and Ethiopia”.

Other work

2018- present: Board member at the Martin Luther King speech Foundation, Amsterdam

2017- present: Member of the Advisory Board of Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, (Knowledge Institute on gender equality and women's history) Amsterdam

2014–present: Member of the Supervisory Board of Nidos Foundation, The guardianship organisation responsible for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in The Netherlands, Utrecht.

2012–2020: Member of the Advisory Board of ProDemos Huis van Democratie en Rechtsstaat (House for Democracy and the Rule of Law), The Hague, Netherlands.

1999–present: Deputy Judge, District Court of Amsterdam, including for the Chamber of Immigration Law up to 2001.

2000–2016: Member of the Club of the Hague, a network of International experts and prominent persons in the field of refugee and migration policy. The network was created as a follow-up to and implementing body of the “Declaration of The Hague on the Future of Refugee and Migration Policy”, The Hague.

1985–present: Co-founder, board member of several refugee (women’s) grass-roots organisations and think-tanks of the African diaspora.

2006–2013: Independent member of the Selection Commission for the Judiciary, The Hague. My position was meant as a contribution to enhance the diversity of the judiciary and contribute to a selection procedure free from cultural bias.

Publications

Author of numerous publications (books, articles and other works in Italian and other languages) on diaspora, hybrid identity, refugee issues, diversity and human rights.)

Language skills

Dutch, fluent; English, fluent; Italian, fluent; Tigrinya, fluent; Amharic, fluent; French, basic.

Other relevant information

2017: Recipient of the Black Achievement Award for the category Human Rights and Politics, by The National Institute for the study of Dutch slavery and its legacy (NiNsee), Amsterdam.

1995: Recipient of the Clara Meijer-Wichmann medal 1995, a human rights prize awarded by the League of Human Rights, Amsterdam.