



**60 seconds with Ariella Rosita King**

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**Dr Ariella (Ariel) Rosita King (PhD Public Health and Policy, 2002) is the Founder and President of The Ariel Foundation International. We asked her about her role, projects she is working on and some quick-fire questions.**

**What is your role and what does it involve?**

I started the Ariel Foundation International (AFI) in 2000; however, it was registered as a non-profit organisation in 2002. The basis for creating this foundation was the difficulties that children and youth suffered daily. We are legally based in Switzerland, France, and the USA, yet we work all over the world.

The aim is to open channels and opportunities for the youth to prosper and take control of the future. It aims to involve the children and youth in decision making, leadership, entrepreneurship, and improving the lives of young people and their families at local, national and international levels.

All my efforts are focused on the foundation and the work that we do.

**What is a typical day for you?**

A typical day is quite long because we are in communication with young Changemakers from all over the world, there is no separation of hours or days. I work every day from morning until late evening depending on the activities that need to be accomplished.

**Tell us about a project you are currently working on?**

We are currently working on our AFI Changemakers being a part of UN meetings online, and also developing a Children's World Humanitarian Forum with our young people for January 2021. We have also just completed several publications on COVID-19 on African, Youth and Older Persons Day, and also AFI Changemakers at the World Humanitarian Forum. All our publications, 42 thus far are written by children and young people. Their publications are reflective of the UN, EU and international issues important to and for children and young people.

**What three words would you use to describe your role?**

My role is to inspire, dream and to be a "positive change architect."

**What is your favourite thing about working there?**

Working with children and the youth in building the world they want to see and be an important part of.

**What challenges have you had to overcome?**

The challenges I have faced are mainly related to executing the ideas of the organisation. While having a vision is great, it is hard to implement these ideas, as it requires a lot of teamwork, commitment, and patience. The drive is to see young people participating at all levels of our society be given the same importance as gender equity at all levels of society. I believe that I am preparing the youth to have a seat at any table and contribute positively to the group's success.

Another challenge was the model of the foundation as it was solely dependent on volunteers. Now the model is more focused on funding so that we can continue to provide opportunities to young people, enabling them to take leadership positions within the organisation and represent the organisation. The youth are also incorporated into the board of directors so that they can have a say in the running of the Ariel Foundation.

**What is your proudest career achievement?**

Some key moments of my career and the accomplishments of the foundation have been when I received a Special Economic and Social Counsel (ECOSOC) status with the United Nation (New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna and Nairobi), we were the first in history to accredit children and young people as delegates to represent themselves and the foundation at official UN meetings, and we developed the International Community Children's Camps to address trauma in Botswana, Liberia, and Morocco.

**What lessons could young people learn from your journey?**

Find a way to adapt to those in power so you can have a say, figure out how to be at the table of power and don't wait for an invitation, preparation is key to success, be part of the change you want to see around you, never give up and always be yourself!

**Where are you from?**

I was born in New York, USA and have lived in Europe for most of my adult life (over 35 years).

**Who is your biggest inspiration?**

My biggest influence in my life is my recently late mother, Dr Margo G. King. I am her only child in a long line of Matriarchs in our family. During my entire life my mother was the most prominent figure in my life and this is where I draw my inspiration and strength from daily.

My mother had me at an early age. However, that didn't deter her from pursuing an education with a doctorate in psychology. I always saw my grandmother (Dr Margo King) with books and this is where my love for learning started.

She set the tone for me to start my foundation and continue the journey of helping people all over the world.

**When I'm not working...**

I am spending time with my children and family, travelling, learning (humanitarian law and golf) and I have been a Rotarian for over 30 years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

As a child, I wanted to develop and own an alternative school for bright children.

**What three words would you use to describe yourself?**

In motion, dedicated, and tenacious.

**What is your favourite book?**

Dr Maya Angelou, "I Know Why The Caged Birds Sing".

**What is your most treasured possession?**

A personalised signed photo from the late President Nelson Mandela and a photo of my daughter, Ariana jumping on Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

**What is your favourite place?**

I have travelled to over 70 countries and have lived in 12 countries. There is something wonderful about all the countries. Their diversity of culture, history, food and daily life gives them all positive memories.

**What would it surprise people to know about you?**

Both Dr Peter Piot (when he was at UNAIDS) and I were Committee Members for the Expert Group on HIV/AIDS as a part of the Gates Foundation and Health Service Research Agency (in South Africa) in the 90s.



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