



*Consolato Generale d'Italia  
Johannesburg*



## Italian Research Day in the World

*Johannesburg, 9 May 2025*

**Maria Marchetti-Mercer**  
Clinical Psychologist

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WITWATERSRAND



Prof. Maria Chiara Marchetti-Mercer is a **clinical psychologist** with over 30 years of experience in academia, research, and academic leadership. Currently a Professor of Psychology and Assistant Dean of Research in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, she previously served as Head of the School of Human and Community Development at Wits and Head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria, where she was the first woman appointed to the role.

She is a NRF C1-rated scholar and she has received numerous accolades, most notably the Order of the Star of Italy. She also received the Outstanding International Contribution to School-Based Family Counseling Award from the University of San Francisco (2008) and the Best Poster Award at the European Family Therapy Conference in Paris(2010).

**INNOVATION:** *Her research focuses on **migration, family therapy, and identity**, shaped by her own migration experience and Italian heritage. She has trained generations of clinical and counseling psychologists, drawing on advanced training in Italy under renowned experts Mara Selvini Palazzoli and Maurizio Andolfi. Her work on transnational families and information and communication technologies (ICTs) is highlighted in her recent co-edited book "Transnational Families in Africa: Migrants and the Role of Information Communication Technologies (2023)". She also co-authored "The Italian Diaspora in South Africa: Nostalgia, Identity, and Belonging in the Second and Third Generations" (Routledge) with Prof Anita Virga.*