

## Josephine “Jody” Olsen, School of Social Work, Director United States Peace Corps

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*Jody Olsen photograph from the UMB School of Social Work's Faculty page.*

Continuing our Women’s History Month celebration is the School of Social Work’s, Jody Olsen, PhD, MSW and current Director of the Peace Corps. Olsen’s career with the Peace Corps began six decades ago as a volunteer in Tunisia, where she taught English after graduating from the University of Utah in 1965. She remained in Tunisia until 1968, when she returned to the United States and made Baltimore her home.

Olsen earned her Masters of Social Work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) School of Social Work in 1972 and her PhD in Human Development in 1979 from the University of Maryland, College Park’s College of Education. After earning her PhD, Olsen continued her work with the Peace Corps as Country Director for Togo, a position she held until 1981 when she became Regional

Director for North Africa, the Near East, Asia and the Pacific, holding this position until 1984. Olsen continued her leadership positions in the Peace Corps as Chief of Staff from 1989 to 1992 and Deputy and Acting Director from 2002 to 2009. In 2018, she was nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate as the Director of the Peace Corps.

Olsen has also served the University of Maryland, Baltimore for many years as a visiting professor in the School of Social Work. Her research interest and coursework has included international social work, global social policy and issues in global women and children’s health. Olsen has organized Social Work student research trips to Malawi and has served as director of the Center for Global Education Initiatives and a co-chair of the Global Health Interprofessional Council. Jody Olsen represents a current UMB woman leader making an impressive impact both within the University and around the world.

### References:

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