

VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY



www.viennafamilycommittee.org

Digital Networks:

www.10yearsIYF.org

www.20yearsIYF.org

www.civilsocietynetworks.org

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ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Since its inception in 1985 projects of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family have been supported by:

- ❖ Austrian Federal Government
- ❖ Bank Austria Creditanstalt
- ❖ Berndorf Group
- ❖ Country Womens Association in Lower Austria
- ❖ E.F.T. Transportagency GmbH
- ❖ European Commission
- ❖ Government of Germany
- ❖ Government of Liechtenstein
- ❖ Government of Luxembourg
- ❖ Government of Spain, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands
- ❖ International Non-Governmental Organisations
- ❖ Lower Austrian State Government
- ❖ Lower Austrian Insurance AG
- ❖ OMV Energy Group
- ❖ Rotary International
- ❖ Schoeller-Bleckmann Oilfield Equipment AG
- ❖ Shell Austria AG
- ❖ Siemens
- ❖ United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities



Vienna NGO Committee on the Family



The following quotation from the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the General Assembly on November 21st 2018 (A/74/61-E/2019/4) documents the appreciation of the highest office of the United Nations for the endeavours of our Committee, the Member Organisations and their representatives, for the well-being of families worldwide. “The Vienna NGO Committee on the Family organized two international forums. One, organized in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime, focused on family based prevention of risky behaviours, including substance use disorders and violence. The other, organized in cooperation with the University of Salzburg, raised awareness of socially disadvantaged families and digital media usage. The Committee also published its online quarterly bulletin “Families international” incorporating forum proceedings, and disseminating resources from United Nations agencies relevant to families.”

<http://undocs.org/A/74/61>

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES 2018

In two Full Committee Meetings, representatives of the 42 International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), who are members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, and 22 associate member organisations, discussed various institution-building projects and activities and approved the Plan of Action for 2018. The Board of the Committee worked out a schedule for its implementation, which was realised in co-operation with the support of the member organisations of the Committee and their representatives. The worldwide network of civil society organisations, research and university institutes, government agencies and individuals, continues to be, not only a beneficiary of interactive exchange, but is in many cases, directly involved in the work of the Committee. The Committee understands itself as a bridge between families-oriented Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), The United Nations, Governments of Member States of the United Nations and Academia, as well as between CSOs themselves, through the various digital networks set up and maintained by the Committee.

The following projects were realised in 2018

1. Families International (FI)

Three new Assistant Editors, Christin Kohler, M.A., Karin Kuzmanov & Isabella Nening, B.A., B.A., joined the Editor, Peter Crowley, Ph.D. on the Editorial Committee of FI in 2018 augmenting, inter alia, the research capacities of the Bulletin. Issues, Nos. 105 - 108 of the Quarterly Bulletin of the Committee were published online at www.viennafamilycommittee.org

Special features in FI included: ‘Issues relating to families at the 56th United Nations Commission for Social Development 2018’; The proceedings of an International Forum organized by the Committee, held on May 7th 2018 at the United Nations Vienna International Centre entitled: ‘Family-Based Prevention in the Work of UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime); ‘Families and Inclusive Societies in Africa’ a text by Prof. Monde Makiwane of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in Pretoria, South Africa, emanating from an Expert Group Meeting at the United Nations in New York on ‘Family Policy for Inclusive Societies’ in May 2018; The proceedings of a further International Forum, organized by the Committee held on November 5th 2018 at the United Nations Vienna International Centre entitled: ‘Socially Disadvantaged Families in a Rich Country, With a Special Focus on Mediation Practices’.

Each issue of Families International also included texts submitted by member organizations of the Committee as well as relevant texts from United Nations agencies.

Over three hundred and thirty readers of 'Families International' are informed by the Secretariat of the Committee by e-mail, when the latest issue is available to download.

2. International Forum: 'Family-Based Prevention in the Work of UNODC'

The Committee organised an International Forum, which was held during a Full Committee Meeting, at the United Nations Vienna International Centre on Monday May 7th 2018, to observe the United International Day of Families 2018, entitled 'Family-Based Prevention in the Work of UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime) with a presentation by Dr. Wadih Maalouf from UNDOC, who holds a Doctoral Degree in Epidemiology, specializing in Mental Health and Drug Addiction from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in the U.S.A. The presentation discussed the science behind family-based prevention, showing its effectiveness in preventing a range of risky behaviours, including substance use disorders and violence. Dr. Maalouf, kindly provided various relevant documents, with regard to the presentation, which were included in Issue No. 106 of 'Families International' the quarterly bulletin published online by the Committee.

3. International Forum: 'Socially Disadvantaged Families in a Rich Country – Digital Media Usage and Mediation Practices' Philip Sinner, M.A. University of Salzburg

The Committee organised a second International Forum, which was held during a Full Committee Meeting at the United Nations Vienna International Centre, on Monday November 5th 2018, with Philip Sinner, M.A., who is a research associate and lecturer at the Department of Communications, University of Salzburg and a fellow, since 2011, of Prof. Dr. Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink's longitudinal project on media-socialisation of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents, which was originally launched in 2005. This project was also the basis of his presentation. The proceedings of the International Forum, with a text provided by Prof. Paus-Hasebrink and Philip Sinner, were published in issue No. 108 of 'Families International'. www.viennafamilycommittee.org

4. Cooperation with the United Nations Focal Point on the Family in New York

Further to the opening quotation above, the Board of the Committee keeps its various networks informed with documents of United Nations Resolutions and Reports of the United Nations Secretary-General pertaining to family issues.

A background note, entitled; 'Families and Inclusive Societies' was prepared by the Focal Point on the Family, of the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD), at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), of the United Nations Secretariat. This theme was chosen for the United Nations, International Day of Families 2018. A panel discussion on this theme, was held at the United Nations in New York. The background note was also included in Families International Issue No. 106.

United Nations International Day of Families May 15th 2018: 'Families for Inclusive Societies'
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/international-day-of-families/2018idf.html>

United Nations Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on 'Families for Inclusive Societies'.
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/2018/04/23/egm-on-family-policies-for-inclusive-societies-15-16-may-2018/>

For further information on the EGM: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/meetings-events/family-policies-for-inclusive-societies.html>

An eighty page report, of a study update entitled: ‘Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisation to the Well-Being of Families’ by Dr. Peter Crowley, then Secretary of the Committee, in cooperation with the United Nations Focal Point on the Family, which was presented by the author, at the United Nations in New York, to observe the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations International Year of the Family, is available to download, on the United Nations website:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/international-day-of-families/2014-3.html>

5. Website of the Committee

www.viennafamilycommittee.org

This website, which was set up in 2000 is, amongst others, the main vehicle to publish our quarterly bulletin ‘Families International’. Issues Nos.105 to 108, which were published in 2018, may be downloaded from our website without cost to the reader.

6. The Three Digital Networks of the Committee [203 CSOs Networked - 92 in Sub-Saharan Africa]

A so-called ‘Digital Divide’ exists between those connected and not connected to the Internet. Statistics from the United Nations International Telecommunications Union based in Geneva, for 2016, show that only 43.% of the World’s present population of 7.67 billion are connected to the world wide web, leaving over 56.6%, or more than half the world’s population, not connected. In the continent of Africa alone, 74.9% were offline.

92 CSOs, or 45.3% of the total, of 203 CSOs in the three Digital Networks, set up and maintained by the Committee, are based in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is particularly affected by the ‘Digital Divide’. These 92 CSOs offer important knowledge resources for the well-being of families, especially in the first 1000 days of a child’s life, which are so important for its future development, as UNESCO pointed out in 2014. These digital knowledge networks expand the concept of Civil Society being more an advocacy and discourse entity, to also being a resource entity, especially of knowledge.

www.10yearsIYF.org

This website continues to experience interest, as a digital network, and also as a resource archive for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 2004, with many relevant links to other sources. It resulted out of the participation of the then Chairperson of the Committee in a consultative meeting of international and regional Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) set up by the United Nations Secretariat in New York, in 2002, to implement a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly to observe the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 2004. There it was agreed to prepare a study, under the chairmanship of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family on: ‘Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families’ since 1994. The original study, in which thirty two CSOs, from eighteen countries in five continents participated, was also published in book form with the financial support of the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities in 1994, under the title: ‘Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families’ and edited by P. Crowley. The book was submitted to the members of the special session of the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations on Dec. 6th 2004, in order to officially observe the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

The United Nations Secretary General referred to the above publication in his Report to the 59th Session of the General Assembly (A/59/176, 2004). The contents of the book, which also includes a comparative perspective of international, national, and local families-oriented civil society organisations enhancing social justice, are also available to download at www.10yearsIYF.org

www.20yearsIYF.org

To facilitate the implementation of an update of the above-mentioned study, originally carried out at www.10yearsIYF.org a further website was set up by the Committee at www.20yearsIYF.org to gather data entered by the twenty-eight participating CSOs, from seventeen countries in four continents. This network now further offers a knowledge resource on family issues for visitors to the website, by creating a so-called ‘Cyber Street’ of websites of families-oriented CSOs, which deal with eight categories relevant for families: ‘Children; Economic-Financial; Education; Gender; Health Issues; Organisation; Parents; and Subsistence-Services.’ This website is also a further digital network and includes a series of links, inter alia, to the United Nations Focal Point on the Family in New York.

www.civilsocietynetworks.org

An Interactive-Internet-Forum for civil society organisations world-wide, including local, national and international CSOs, as well as academic and research institutions, was set up at the request of many organisations from around the globe, and went online in August 2004 at www.civilsocietynetworks.org. This Network had 143 member organisations from 25 countries in 2018 having incorporated the Interactive-Forums the Committee had originally set up with civil society organisations in Eastern African and in Central and Eastern European Countries, between 2000 and 2004, and then extended and opened up, as a further digital network, to worldwide membership in 2004. Civil Society Organisations worldwide can join, and participate in this Forum, free of cost, by contacting the Committee at: contact@viennafamilycommittee.org

Each organisation receives an individual User-Identity and Password and is able to enter and change data as necessary. The Forum also includes a discussion board, internal e-mail and online conference facilities, as well as a newsletter function, for each individual member organisation of the network.

The above outlined facts and figures, reflect perhaps, the ever-increasing interest generated by issues relating to families and also speak for themselves, with regard to the continued and increasing endeavours worldwide of the Committee, which observed in 2018 the 33rd Anniversary of its inception in 1985.

6. The Members of the Board of the Committee for 2016 - 2019

Board Officers:

Chairperson: Mag. Wolfgang Engelmaier, Kolping International,
Deputy Secretary: Dr. Peter Crowley, International Council of Psychologists,
Treasurer: Mag. Alexandra Lugert, European Union of Women

Board Members:

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Mazal, University of Vienna,
Dr. Maria Riehl, Women’s Federation for World Peace,
Dr. Eleonora Teixeira Da Costa Rossoll, Federation of Catholic Family Associations.
Gerald Williams, Latter Day Saints Charities.

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