

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 2019

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
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- ❖ International Non-Governmental Organisations
- ❖ Lower Austrian State Government
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- ❖ 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 26th 2019 (A/75/61-E/2020/4) on page fifteen, 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 in 2019. One forum, held in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime, was focused on the global effort to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030, in the light of Sustainable Development Goal 3. The other, which was focused on child and youth media protection, from the perspective of parents, was the third of in a series of three forums dealing with families and digital media usage, organized in cooperation with the University of Salzburg. The Committee also published its online quarterly bulletin, “Families international”, incorporating forum proceedings, with a focus on endeavours to eliminate the practice of child marriage.” <http://undocs.org/A/75/61>

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES 2019

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 2019. 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 institutions, 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 Vienna Committee on the Family, understands itself as a non-political, non-denominational umbrella organisation, and continues to put a global focus on the well-being of families worldwide, providing 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 2019

1. Families International (FI)

The Editorial Committee Deputy Editors, Karin Kuzmanov B.A. & Isabella Nening, M.A., Assistant Editor, Christin Kohler, M.A. and Editor, Peter Crowley, Ph.D. were joined on the Editorial Committee of FI in 2019, by Assistant Editor Julia Birner, augmenting, inter alia, the research capacities of the Bulletin. Issues, Nos. 109 - 112 of the Quarterly Bulletin of the Committee were published online in 2019 at www.viennafamilycommittee.org

Special features in FI included: ‘Issues relating to families at the 57th United Nations Commission for Social Development 2019’; The proceedings of an International Forum organized by the Committee, held on May 6th 2019 at the United Nations Vienna International Centre entitled: “The Fight against HIV/AIDS” – What we have achieved and what still needs to be done, with Dr Ehab Salah, Advisor, HIV/AIDS Section, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Endeavours to End Child Marriage in Light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 – Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All women and Girls; The proceedings on an International Forum entitled: ‘Child & youth Media Protection from the Perspective of Parents’ with Christin Kohler M.A.

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 four hundred and fifty 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 - May 6th 2019:

The Committee organised an International Forum, which was held during a Full Committee Meeting, at the United Nations Vienna International Centre on Monday May 6th 2019, to observe the United International Day of Families 2019, entitled: "The Fight Against HIV/AIDS – What we have achieved and what still needs to be done." with a presentation by Dr Ehab Salah, Advisor, HIV/AIDS Section, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The presentation discussed the global efforts to end the AIDS epidemic, in light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages, and its target 3.3 to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030, along with other communicable diseases. The presentation also highlighted the UNAIDS 2016-2021 strategy on the Fast-Track to end AIDS, aiming to reach people being left behind, to close the testing gap and protect the health of the millions of people living with HIV who are still not accessing treatment.

While significant progress in ending the AIDS epidemic has been made in recent decades, the presentation discussed persisting gaps and shortcomings of the response to HIV/AIDS, especially with regard to HIV key populations. Dr. Salah provided presentation material for inclusion in FI No. 110.

3. International Forum – November 4th 2019:

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 4th 2019, with Christin Kohler M.A., who studied Communication Science at the University of Bamberg (B.A.) in Germany and at the University of Salzburg (M.A.) in Austria. During her studies, Christin continuously dealt with the topic of children and media, as well as media use in families. The research focus of her master thesis was on child and youth media protection, from the perspective of parents. The presentation was based on the research and the results of the master thesis. Christin Kohler M.A. provided a text based on her presentation for inclusion in Families International No. 112.

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

Further to the opening quotation above from the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General, 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, as well as texts of United Nations Agencies, relevant for families.

A background note, entitled; 'Families and Climate Action: Focus on SDG 13' 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 2019.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2019/04/idf-2019-backgroundnote.pdf> & <https://www.un.org/en/events/familyday/>

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, 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 in 2014, 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.109 to 112, which were published in 2019, may be downloaded from our website without cost to the reader. A new button entitled 'Families Online' was added to the above homepage, with a direct link to the proceedings of three International Forums organised by the Committee, dealing with families and digital media usage from 2017 to 2019.

6. The Three Digital Networks of the Committee

203 CSOs Networked - 92 CSOs 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 (ITU) based in Geneva, for 2019, show that only 53.6% or an estimated 4.1 billion of the World's present population of 7.6 billion are connected to the world wide web, leaving 46.4%, or close to half the world's population, not connected. In the continent of Africa alone, 71.8% were offline, with only 19% online in least developed countries. (ITU, 2019)

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2019.pdf>

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, as just mentioned, is particularly affected by the 'Digital Divide'. These 92 CSOs, which are online, offer important knowledge resources for the well-being of families, especially in the first 1000 days of a child's life, from conception to a child's second birthday, 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 an advocacy and discourse entity, to also being a resource entity, especially of knowledge.

www.10yearsIYF.org

This website continues to experience regular 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. This 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 2004, under the title: 'Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families' and edited by the Secretary of the Committee Peter 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, 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 <https://undocs.org/A/59/176> 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 of CSOs and includes a series of links, inter alia, to the United Nations Focal Point on the Family in New York. The full 80 page report of this study update is also available at www.20yearsIYF.org

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 2019 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, as a number have done since 2004 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 2019 the 34th Anniversary of its inception in 1985.

6. The Members of the Board of the Committee for 2019 - 2022

The following is the composition of the Board of the Committee, as a result of an election during the Full Committee Meeting on November 4th 2019 and the resultant initial Board Meeting:

Board Officers:

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

Board Members:

Julia Birner, Families International (co-opted)
Christin Kohler M.A., Families International (co-opted)
Karin Kuzmanov B.A., Families International (co-opted)
Oskar McConkie, Latter Day Saints Charities
Isabella Nening M.A., Families International (co-opted)
Dr. Eleonora Reis Teixeira Da Costa Rossoll, Federation of Catholic Family Associations.
Dr. Maria Riehl, Women’s Federation for World Peace,

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