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Dear Readers of Families International,

The successful and comprehensive achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set for 2030, will surely need a concerted effort by the United Nations and its various agencies, the commitment of governments of member states of the United Nations, the input of academics and academic institutions, as well as a bottom-up approach by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) world-wide.

This 104th issue of Families International hence focuses, on two texts emanating from a United Nations Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on 'Family Policies and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.' One text is by Prof. Zitha Mokomane, from the University of Pretoria and the other by Annemie Drieskens, President, & Liz Gosme, Director of COFACE (The Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union).

Both the importance and need for families-oriented policies in developing countries in order to achieve e.g. poverty and hunger reduction, as well as the role of CSOs in achieving the SDGs, in general, are reflected on. COFACE is also a member of the online network www.civilsocietynetworks.org of 143 CSOs, set up and maintained by the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, and open to join, cost free, to families-oriented CSOs world-wide.

Further included in this issue No. 104 are texts from Member Organisations of the Committee, as well as a list of recent and upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Peter Crowley Ph.D.

Editor

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From the United Nations

Family-oriented policies for poverty and hunger reduction in developing countries and indicators of progress¹

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Introduction

When the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted in 1990, 35% of the world's population on less than US\$1.90 a day which is an indicator of extreme poverty or the severe deprivation of not only income but also of basic human needs including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information (United Nations, 1995). It was largely against this background and the recognition of the strong link between poverty, unemployment, and hunger (Shah, 2010) that the first MDG which aimed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 had the following three targets: (i) to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty; (ii) to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all; and (iii) to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

To achieve these targets many developing countries designed and implemented a number of poverty reduction strategies including social protection programmes. Described as “policies and programmes that protect people against risk and vulnerability, mitigate the impact of shocks, and support people from chronic incapacities to secure basic livelihoods” (Adato & Hoddinott, 2008), social protection programmes have been shown to

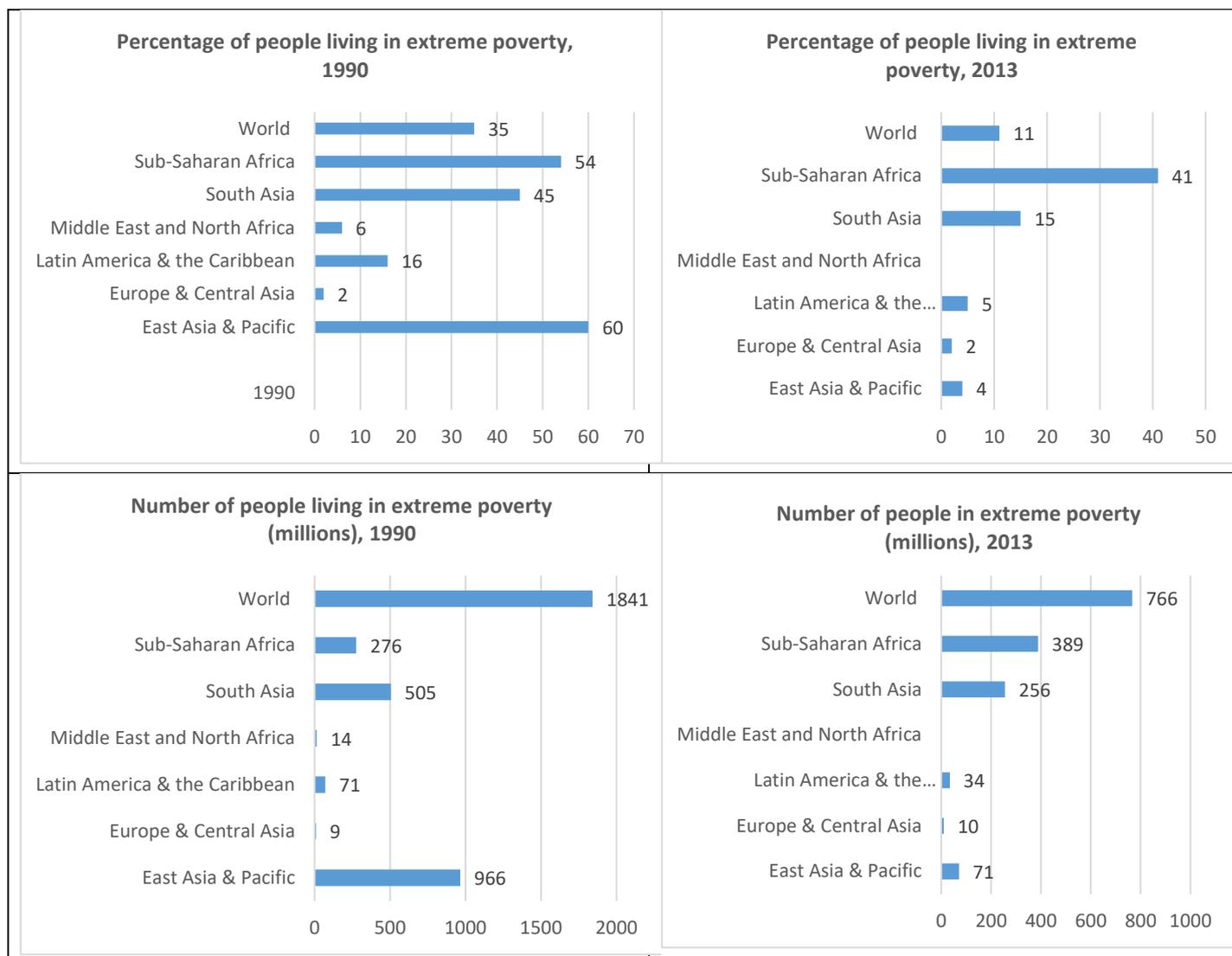
have wide-ranging benefits that include: promoting economic growth as well as access to nutrition, health services and education (Asian Development Bank, 2011). Largely as a result of these programmes extreme poverty was significantly reduced over the following two decades and MGD 1's target of halving the 1990 poverty rate was achieved in 2010, five years ahead of schedule. In the same vein, developing countries saw a 42% reduction in the prevalence of undernourishment between 1990-1992 and 2012-14 (FAO, 2015).

Despite this progress, poverty remains a key challenge in much of the developing world. The most recent statistics from the World Bank shows that while the proportion of people living in extreme poverty have decreased in all major world regions the absolute numbers still represent 766 million people (Figure 1). The figure also shows that sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia continue to be the world's poorest regions with 41% and 15% of their populations classified as extremely poor in 2013. Indeed it has been argued that while these two regions are home to less than half (45%) of the total population of developing countries, they account for almost 70% of the various manifestations of poverty in these countries (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012),

¹ This is a revised version of a paper presented at the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on “Family policies and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda” held on 12-13 May 2016, New York

Figure 1: Extreme poverty in major world regions, 1990 and 2013

Source: World Bank (2017). *SDG Atlas 2017*. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/sdгатlas>



This persistence of poverty and hunger in developing countries has seen the international pursuit to reduce poverty remaining on the post-2015 development agenda with the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 1) aiming to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere” by 2030. This concerted focus on poverty eradication can be attributed to the fact that poverty goes beyond income and material deprivation; it is multidimensional and has various manifestations, including:

... lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by a lack of participation in decision-making, and in civil, social and cultural life” (United Nations, 1995: paragraph 19).

Impact of poverty on families

In addition to its direct impact on individual family members (see Mokomane 2011), poverty endangers and disrupts family functioning. The latter is conceptualised as a multi-dimensional construct that is reflected in the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of family activities and interactions such as cognitive engagement and development characteristics, physical health habits, intra-familial relationships and social connectedness, *inter alia* (Pezzullo et al, 2010; Banovcinova et al, 2014). In essence conditions required for families to be successful such as stability, security, emotionally positive time together, access to basic resources, and a strong shared belief system are often lacking in the environment of poverty. To this end family relationships typically suffer when individuals live in poverty. For example, parents living in long-term poverty have been found to have a higher risk of domestic violence and to have higher likelihood of developing various addictions and criminal behaviour. Poverty is also linked to less effective parenting characterised by children receiving, among other things, insufficient parental attention; lack of warmth and support; frequent coercive, punitive and inconsistent parenting; and less vocal and emotional stimulation (Kaiser and Delaney, 1996, Ahmed, 2005; Banovcinova et al, 2014). To this end children growing up in poor households often experience social and health conditions that place them at risk for later academic, employment, and behavioural problems (Ahmed, 2005; Shanks & Danziger, 2011).

In an effort to meet the economic needs of all family members, parents in low-income families are also more likely to experience work family conflict, “a form of inter-role conflict in which the roles pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985:77). Among other things this conflict has

been shown to perpetuate poverty and the societal inequities through, for instance, reducing the number of adults who can participate in paid work; restricting the range of jobs that people are able to take up; and making it difficult to participate in leisure and social activities—which can limit social networks, opportunities and quality of life (International Labour Organisation, 2004; Cassier & Adati, 2007).

Factors underlying family poverty in developing countries

Despite the impact of poverty on family functioning poverty reduction initiatives in many countries rarely focus on the family as a unit. Rather, such initiatives often target individual family members, particularly women and children separately. Furthermore, family-oriented policies have not been the subject of much research or documentation, particularly in developing countries². It is largely against this background that in the post-2015 development agenda underscored the need to family-centred interventions to be part of an “integrated comprehensive approach to development”. But why are such interventions important, particularly in developing countries? The answer may lie in the fact that, unlike in developed countries where poverty is associated more with certain family characteristics such as single parenthood, urban residence, migration status, and parents’ educational level (Richardson & Bradshaw, 2011), in developing countries poverty is, to a large extent, explained by structural factors that can be broadly categorised into: risk and vulnerability; low capabilities; inequality and exclusion; and limited livelihoods opportunities (Handley, Higgins & Bhavna, 2009) as well as weakened extended family system, and increased demand for care.

² <http://www.viennafamilycommittee.org/new/anniversary.htm>

Risk and vulnerability.

The populations of many developing countries especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are generally at risk of, and vulnerable to poverty because of violent and/or armed conflict that can lead to displacement of families, destruction of household assets and livelihood (Handley et al, 2009). Poverty risk and vulnerability in these regions is also particularly high among families and households living in rural areas and depending on agriculture, as well as those living in tropical ecology (Handley et al, 2009). In essence because in rural areas income and food production strongly overlap, common harvest failures not only affect crop-dependent households but can also lead to market failure and food price volatility that increase the cost of the basket of basic goods and prices of staples. The resultant food insecurity tends to play a major role in keeping poor people poor and also creates “a critical barrier to agricultural and non-agricultural growth as it provides a strong disincentive to diversification into more remunerative cash crops and non-farm activities and ties up productive resources in often inefficient, low-productivity subsistence production” (Dorward et al, 2006:17). Poor health, particularly when it is sudden or prolonged is another factor that increases the risk of poverty among households and their members in developing countries. Overall, poor health often leads to a downward spiral of asset loss and impoverishment as people are forced to abandon productive activities either due to being sick themselves or having to take care of sick family members (Alam & Mahal, 2014). In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, at its peak the HIV and AIDS pandemic increased household vulnerability in several ways including through the weakening or loss of working adults, eroding household labour capacity and increasing dependency ratios (Mokomane, 2012) and “by converting ‘workers’ into ‘dependents’ and ‘producers’ into ‘consumers’ of household resources - when ‘workers’ and ‘producers’ are already scarce in

poor households where labour is one of the few assets” (Dorward, et al 2006:11).

For many women in developing countries, vulnerability to poverty is aggravated by statutory and customary laws that restrict their access to economic resources and inheritance rights and essentially make many women economically dependent on their male spouses. Thus, in the event of non-marriage and marital dissolution when there is no man to contribute to the household income, or when women’s own income is non-existent or too low to support the entire family, many of the households headed by women are left relatively poorer and vulnerable than those headed by men (Taylor, 2008). This is particularly relevant given the prevailing changes in marriage patterns – such an increasing trend in the timing of first marriages, decrease in marriage prevalence, and an increase in the proportion of unions dissolved through separation and divorce – in much of the developing world.

Another structural factor that presents poverty risks in developing countries is the weakened protective mechanisms of the traditional extended family. Through its culture of collective orientation this system ensured that family members provided socio-economic support and assistance to each other.

Low capabilities.

The core characteristics of the capability approach (Sen, 1999) are its focus on what people are effectively able to do and to be, including the capability to be free from hunger, to become educated and to lead a decent living (Maaarman, 2009; Mokomane, 2011??). From a capability perspective therefore, poverty is viewed as the deprivation of certain basic capabilities (Hick, 2012) and, as Handley et al (2009: 4) point out, people living in poverty tend to experience multiple and concurrent “capability deprivations in a range of dimensions” that include

poor or no access to education, land, health services, justice, livelihood and income generating opportunities; credit and other productive resources, and a voice in institutions, among other things (Quesada, 2001:1).

In many developing countries low capabilities can be attributed to the high level of informality. According to the ILO (2016) more than 70% of workers in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are in vulnerable employment, which includes categories of work that are highly precarious due to low-productivity, low and highly volatile earnings, and inadequate social protection. For example, between 2004 and 2010, the proportion of South Asian women in non-agricultural employment who worked in the informal sector was 83% while for men it was 82%. In sub-Saharan Africa the corresponding proportions were 74% for women and 61% of men (ILO, 2016). By the same token, in 2015, over 60% of all labour active women in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa were engaged in the time and labour intensive, and poorly remunerated agricultural sector (ILO, 2016).

It is well-established that informal sector workers have little or no access to formal risk-coping mechanisms such as insurance, pensions and social security arrangements to meet contingencies and eventualities such as ill health, accidents, death, and old age. Despite this, formal social security arrangements in developing countries were, for a long time, premised on the traditional ILO definition of social security provision, which presumed that the majority of the citizens had already attained a satisfactory living standard in a modern economy which social security was designed to protect (Tostensen, 2008). These systems, which are typically contributory in nature, were also individual-centred, concentrating on protecting the individual from insecurity that may affect him or her, and ignoring the common collective risks which normally

befall informal sector workers in developing countries such as war, crop failure and natural disasters (Olivier et al, 2008:5).

Inequality and exclusion

Inequality is positively related to poor access to amenities such as clean water, proper sanitation, and basic health care as well as to insecure property rights, low school enrolments, low life expectancy, high fertility, macroeconomic instability, corruption, among other deprivations (Neckerman & Torche 2007; Handley et al, 2009:5). Thus, like poverty, inequality is multidimensional with “inequality traps” that have two salient characteristics. Firstly, they are generated by the interplay of differences across distributions of income, social location, and access to political resources. (ESCAP, 2015:12). Across South Asia, for example, families and individuals face social exclusion and inequitable access to social services on the basis of their ascribed identities and the circumstances of their birth including their gender, ethnicity, caste, language, ability, place of residence political alliance and other factors (Dunford 2007; Kohler et al, 2009:3). Secondly inequality traps tend to reproduce themselves over time such that disadvantages becomes intergenerational as seen in education asymmetries, land ownership and patriarchal structures (ESCAP, 2015).

Limited livelihoods opportunities

The following observation in Sub-Saharan Africa by Handley et al (2009:6) succinctly summarises the situation in relation to livelihoods in most developing countries:

“People remain poor because they haven’t sufficient productive and profitable work to do. This is especially true in rural areas. A range of factors contribute to limited livelihood opportunities in rural areas including distance from markets, poor agro-ecology and sub-marginal land, low levels of public investments in service delivery and infrastructure, and conflict”

Livelihoods in developing countries are furthermore hampered by the sizes of agricultural land and informal economies. In consequence, significant numbers of people in these countries are underemployed and the working poor constitute a significant proportion of the population in these countries. The high level of informality discussed earlier aggravates the situation.

Increased demand for care

Other structural factors – women’s increased labour force participation, declining fertility rates, increased migratory flows, and in some regions the HIV and AIDS crisis (Mokomane, 2012) – have created a growing demand for care not only for children, but also for older persons. To the extent that social norms continue to ascribe the traditional role of family caregiver to women – despite their increased participation in the labour market – this demand for care has particular implications for women’s poverty. Mothers of young children, for example often pay high a “motherhood pay penalty” where they earn less than their childless counterparts partly due to employer discrimination and partly due to choosing “mother-friendly jobs”, which in developing countries, are typically in the informal sector. Jobs in this sector however provides inferior wage and social security conditions in comparison to jobs led by men and women in formal sector work (Cameron, 2014; Samman et al, 2016).

Need for family-oriented policies in developing countries

All in all therefore, it can be argued that structural factors underlying poverty and hunger in developing countries call “for a pro-poor approach that links informality, social protection and empowerment” (Lund, 2009:74). Within the context of the SDG 1 targets, this implies delinking social security benefits from labour market status and extending coverage to poor families that have previously been

excluded. This will be in line with the ILO’s reorientation of its own definition of social security from

purely individual notions of risk to include more collective and structural causes. This was done through Recommendation 202 on national social protection floors explicitly recognising that “social security is an important tool to prevent and reduce poverty, inequality, social exclusion and social insecurity” (ILO, 2012).

Taking cognisance of the high levels of informality, the absence or inadequacy of formal social security systems, and the formal employment basis of the present (formal) social security systems in many developing countries, there has also been emerging calls to give more attention to the role and potential of traditional informal social security systems in providing a protective cushion to many families in developing countries (Triegaard, 2006; Olivier et al, 2008). As Iliffe (1987:3) asserts, in many developing societies:

“There were no poor and rich; the haves helped those who were in want. No man starved because he had no food; no child cried for milk because its parents did not have milk cows; no orphan and old person starved because there was no body to look after them”

With a focus on Southern Africa, Olivier and colleagues identified other limitations of current social security and social protection schemes implemented in developing countries as the limited concepts of “family” and “work” that are not reflective of the true concepts in these countries (see box below). To this end Triegaard (2006:10) argues that more inclusive social security and social protection policies which focus “on engaging the poor with regard to informal, non-traditional and alternate forms of social security will begin to provide a more comprehensive safety net”.

- Restricted family concept: The notion of 'family', as used in formal social security schemes, is by and large based on the nuclear western family concept, i.e. a couple in a monogamous union, both in formal employment, one or two children, and so forth. This is not, however, indicative of 'family' in developing countries, where extended families and, in some areas, polygamous marriages are common, especially among the rural and urban poor.
- Limited concept of work: In their day-to-day existence, people in developing countries are joined together by what may be termed 'traditional values.' It is on account of these values (which are all about solidarity, collective responsibility, compassion, equality, unity, self-determination, human respect and human dignity) that individuals subsist as families and that families become closely interlaced communities which form a large society. These traditional values are discernable in social, political and economic activities in developing countries.

Adapted from Olivier et al (2008:3)

Given the growing demand for care, it is imperative for developing countries to enhance work-family balance by promoting an integrated, multi-generation approach to social protection that is sensitive to care responsibilities (Samman et al, 2016). This family-focused approach would recognise that in addition to income to cover the cost of childcare, children need developmentally-stimulating environments to thrive. Thus it is imperative to have a strong and clear linkage between social protection programmes and early childhood care and education (ECCE). The childcare programme of SOCFINAF, an export coffee producer in Kenya, is a relevant example. Permanent workers –both male and female-can enrol their children aged 3 months to 6.5 years in the company's childcare centres for free. The children are provided with a range of services including two daily meals; health checks and medical treatment in SOCFINAF dispensary and district hospitals; custodial care, early child development and pre-primary education. Evaluations have revealed that workers appreciate better health and nutrition of children; report that they work without

interference of childcare problems and thus can do more work and earn more; and the programme enables spouses of male workers to look for work (Hein & Cassier, 2010).

Another plausible policy regime that developing countries can adopt to enable parents – including those in the informal sector – to effectively combine work and care responsibilities, reduce the 'motherhood pay penalty', and foster pay parity is the adoption of care-related labour market policies. Examples include breastfeeding and crèche provisioning. India's Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is one successful and widely-cited example in this regard. According to the SEWA's 2013 Annual report, "When SEWA organized child care for members' children on their request, women were much relieved. They said that they could now go out to work with peace of mind, earning double of what they did earlier, hence bringing more and better food into the home" (SEWA, 2013: 7).

To empower and build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, there is need for poverty and hunger reduction policies in developing countries to have the encouragement of family capital and family resilience as integral components. These two components emphasise the importance of non-material resources which, while not easily measurable, have a significant effect on the family's ability to shape the future and empowerment of its members. The concept of family capital, for example, borrows from the literature on social capital: "those social relationships that allow individuals access to resources possessed by their associates, and to the amount and quality of those resources upon which people depend for social, economic and emotional support" (Belsey, 2005:17). Social capital has also been described as "resources embedded within a person's social network that influence decisions and outcomes by shaping a personal identity while delineating opportunities and obstacles within a person's social world" (Belcher et al, 2011:69). To this end family capital provides enabling resources and strengthens the capacity of individual family members to

function and attain their current and future goals and objectives.

Family resilience, on the other hand, refers to the ability of families “to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges” (Walsh, 2003:1) and is especially critical for the most vulnerable individuals and families. In terms of family functioning, the vulnerable include those families that have a higher likelihood of breaking up as a consequence of external economic, social and/or political factors; families that are unable to meet the basic needs of their members in areas such as shelter, nutrition, physical and emotional care; families in which there is physical and psychological exploitation, discrimination as well as abuse of individual members; and families characterised by injustice in the distribution of rights and responsibilities of family members (Belsey, 2005:20). According to Silliman (undated:3), families and their members demonstrate resiliency when they build caring support systems and solve problems creatively. Their resilient behaviour can be reflected in the maintenance of normal development of optimism, resourcefulness and determination despite adversity (Silliman, undated; Belsey, 2005). These strengths and resources can enable individuals to respond successfully to crises and challenges, to recover and grow from those experiences, and to generally attain social and economic empowerment (Walsh, 2003).

Social empowerment refers to the capacity of individuals and groups to foster the relationships and institutional interactions necessary for their well-being and productivity (DESA, 2012; Voipio, 2012). It is closely related to social integration and poverty eradication, and is strongly influenced by individual assets (e.g. housing, livestock, savings) as well as human e.g. (good health and education), social, (e.g. social belonging, sense of identity, leadership relations), and psychological (e.g. self-esteem, self-confidence, aspirations for a better future) capabilities (GSDRC, 2012). On the other hand, *economic empowerment* through which people have the

“ability to make choices in what productive activities to engage in and an incest it, to decide how and when to engage in markets and to influence the terms on which they do so” (Voipio, 2012:5) facilitates poverty reduction and social integration by improving participation in economic activity and promoting productive employment and decent work. Economically empowered people are able to think beyond immediate daily survival and they assert greater control over their resources and life choices (GSDRC, 2012).

Summary

In sum, to achieve the poverty-reduction goal of the post-2015 developmental agenda, family-oriented policies for poverty and hunger reduction in developing countries and their indicators of progress require recognising the structural factors that underlie poverty and hunger and must aim to adopt a “pro-poor approach that links informality, social protection and empowerment”. This essentially entails:

- delinking social security benefits from labour market status and extending coverage to poor families that have previously been excluded.
- giving more attention to the role and potential of traditional informal social security systems.
- promoting an integrated, multi-generation approach to social protection that is sensitive to care responsibilities
- adoption of care-related labour market policies to enable parents – including those in the informal sector – to effectively combine work and care
- Ensuring that poverty and hunger reduction policies in developing countries have the concepts of family capital and family resilience as integral components.

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The Role of the Civil Society Associations in the ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

COFACE Paper May 2016

Contribution to:
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Family policies and the 2030 Sustainable
Development Agenda
Session VII: Anchoring family policy in
the 2030 Agenda through relevant
family research and indicators

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“COFACE Families Europe works towards a family friendly environment, enabling families and their members to benefit from sufficient financial resources, available quality services and adequate time arrangements in order to live and enjoy their family life in dignity and harmony.”

In this Paper:

- I. COFACE: A Movement. A Vision. A Set of Values. A Network.
- II. Reflection on the role of civil society organizations in family policy and achieving the SDGs.
- III. COFACE kick-starts discussion on the SDGs and family policy in Europe: First conclusions.

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I. COFACE: A movement. A Vision. A Set of Value. A Network.

COFACE Families Europe is a European network of family organizations. The Administrative Council and Executive Buro of COFACE, supported by its Brussels secretariat, advocates for families on three main levels (levels which are representative of the multi-level governance of the European Union). Firstly, the national members of COFACE (a diverse range of family organizations spanning 23 EU countries) provide services in their respective countries and push for quality family-friendly national/regional policies. Secondly, the secretariat of COFACE in Brussels (consisting of 6 staff) represents the interests of its members in the EU political arena, and aims to build European family-friendly policies, working in partnership with the European Commission, European Parliament and other key institutions in Brussels. Thirdly, we reconcile both EU and national levels by promoting transnational exchanges and innovation across EU countries through various tools (seminars, trainings, common projects, awareness-raising campaigns, and more).

Working on 3 Levels:

- *National*
- *European*
- *Transnational*

A Movement.

COFACE represents more than 25 million families in Europe, and hundreds of thousands of people from across Europe who collectively form a movement. This movement is rooted in a set of core values that shape our vision and guide our work.

A Set of Values.

Non-discrimination. Equal opportunities. Respect of human rights. Empowerment. Solidarity. Social inclusion. Pluralism.

A Vision.

COFACE works towards a family friendly environment, enabling families and their members to benefit from sufficient financial resources, available quality services and adequate time arrangements in order to live and enjoy their family life in dignity and harmony.

A network.

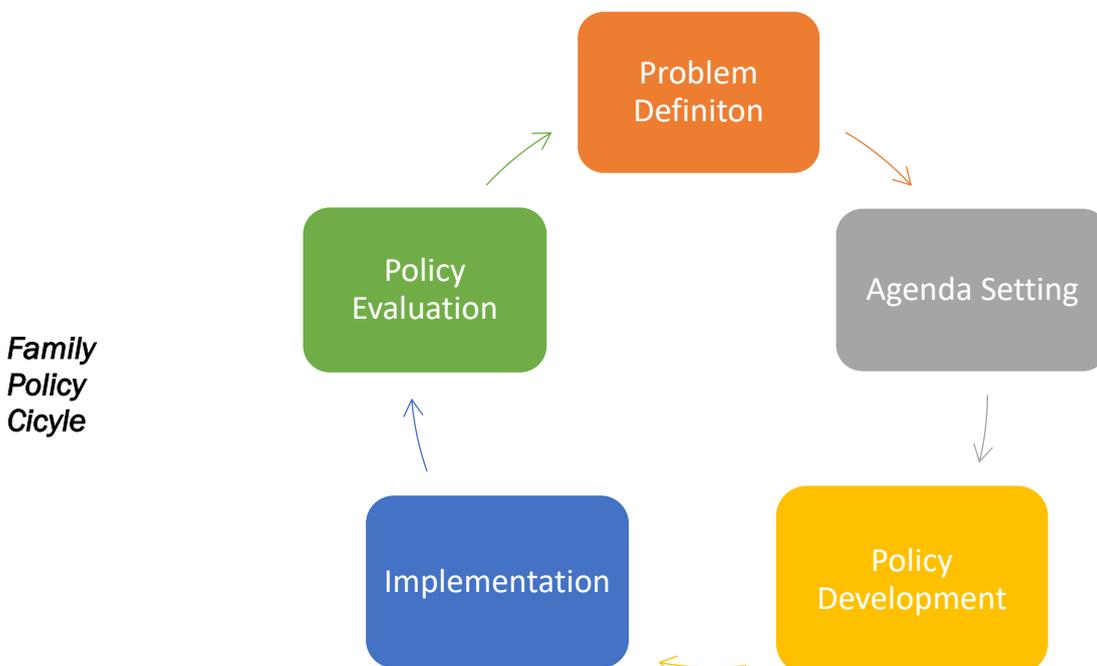
COFACE, with its combination of European and national alliances of advocacy organizations, links to EU/ national/sub-national governments, partnerships with research institutions, and online presence through various social media platforms, is well placed to build an international Community of Practice to help make the SDGs a reality by 2030.

II. Reflection on the Role of Civil Society Organizations in Family Policy and Achieving the SDGs

In our two previous written statements to the UN Economic and Social Council (in May and December 2015), we emphasized the importance and the cross-cutting impact of family policies on the economy, on poverty reduction, employment promotion, gender equality, education and health. In this section, we briefly look at:

1. The role of civil society organizations in the family policy cycle.
2. The links between the SDGs and European family organizations like COFACE.

The role of civil society organizations in the family policy cycle Karen Bogenschneider (University of Wisconsin) refers to a number of roles that family professionals can play in the policy arena, from generating research to developing and implementing policies to engaging citizens in family policy-making (see her article “How Policymaking Affects Families, and What Professionals Can Do” in “Family Policy Matters”, 2014). COFACE’s experience confirms this theory - we are currently engaged in the five general traditional stages of the family policy cycle (both at national and European level):



Problem definition:

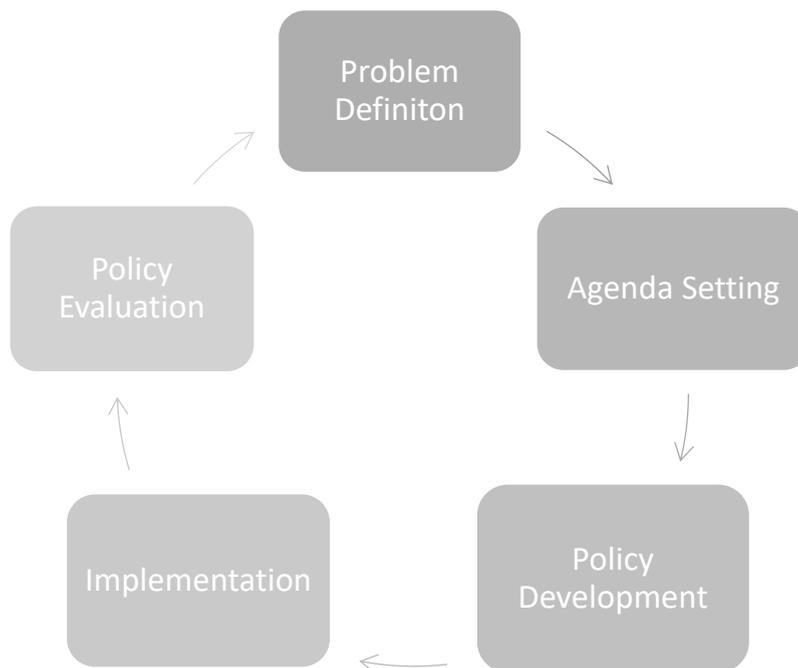
This entails assessment of the real needs of families, around which evidence-based policies can be built, and in order to create a baseline against which policy progress is measured. While researchers generally are called upon to scientifically define the policy challenge(s), civil society organizations can also fill any research gaps (either through data collected on the users of their services or through qualitative surveys linked to the families they represent or work with). COFACE and its members are regularly called upon to join various research projects in order to provide this civil society perspective.

Agenda-setting:

This phase is important in terms of defining the policy priorities to address. National family policies across Europe tend to prioritize areas such as financial support in the form of benefits and allowances, appropriate leave policies, and appropriate services to support family members (childcare, elder-care, disability care, etc). From a European perspective COFACE can confirm that there are three main areas which must absolutely drive family policy agendas:

R for Resources (adequate income and allowances), S for Services (quality and affordable care services), and T for Time (flexible working time arrangements to allow families to care for children and vulnerable family members, to reconcile work and family life).

Family Policy Circle



Policy development:

The policy development process and the policy objectives will depend on the welfare structures in place in different countries, on the presence of a political vision or not for families, on the needs of families, on the exact target group of the policy (children, parents, youth, grandparents, carers, etc). The policy objectives will depend on the approach taken to reach out to families (family or individual units, parent/child well-being, relationships to siblings, etc), and the approach will determine the soft or hard outcome indicators used to measure policy progress. In some cases, civil society organizations are considered genuine partners in policy development since they serve as watchdogs of emerging trends, they represent families or represent services working closely with families - and therefore have a valuable contribution to make in the policy development process.

Policy implementation:

Family organizations might wish to function outside of the policy arena, or they might wish to function within a clear policy framework. In some contexts, they are seen as part of family policy (as service providers to families, such as parental support, babysitting and more), or as a way to complement existing family policies by helping to build family

support networks, provide psychological support and training, provide respite to family carers, provide a voice for different groups of family members (e.g. grandparents associations, families of people with disabilities and more). Civil society organizations with a firm foot in local communities will be perceived as a resource to harness in order to contribute to successful policy implementation.

Policy evaluation:

Indicators are theoretically defined from the outset of a policy (see policy development) and therefore serve as the basic evaluation framework of a given family policy, as well as scientific evaluations (e.g. through randomized control trials) and cost-effectiveness evaluations (does the policy reduce costs to society?). But there are also other ways of complementing such indicators, namely through family impact assessments, qualitative surveys and focus group sessions with families which civil society organizations can contribute to or indeed lead on. Key evaluation questions to be considered are: does the policy support the social and economic integration of families? Does the policy successfully manage family support needs? Civil society organizations can intervene ex-ante, mid-term or indeed at the end of a policy cycle in order to help define new problems to be addressed in a next policy phase.

The Links between the SDGs and European Family Organisations like COFACE

All SDGs are relevant for families and family policies, but 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are especially relevant in our eyes. Let us take a closer look at how COFACE is already contributing to the achievement of some of these SDGs in Europe.

SDG 1: NO POVERTY

Families in Europe are increasingly vulnerable to poverty in these difficult economic times (triggered back in 2009). Combinations of unemployment, financial stress and cutbacks in social welfare benefits are placing pressure on families. In 2015, COFACE focused on families in vulnerable situations, and hosted three key events.

- Through the conference on financial inclusion held in Madrid in May 2015, COFACE explored various ways to support vulnerable families financially either by securing access to quality/affordable financial services or by providing direct services to families such as independent financial guidance, solidarity loans or social mortgages.
- In September 2015, COFACE stimulated European debate on the idea of developing more two-generation Early-Childhood Education and Care programmes which target families in need of support, providing coordinated integrated services to both children and parents. These are perceived as important programmes for poverty prevention.
- COFACE organized a «Families Beyond Borders» event in Sofia, Bulgaria on 5-6 November 2015. The event, focused on transnational families, aimed at exploring challenges and consequences of what it means to move to a different country for better economic prospects, but leaving ageing

parents and sometimes young children in their countries of origin.

SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER

Even if economic growth and employment are slowly picking up again, evidence in some countries shows that European households are increasingly using food banks for basic food assistance. COFACE will take part in the launch (on 2 June 2016) of a European stakeholder platform under the new Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived adopted in 2014 by the European Union, bringing its vision of how to use emergency food distribution to address the needs of poor families in a sustainable and long-lasting way.

SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

COFACE continues to closely monitor EU health and food policies, both of which have an impact on families. Helping a person with care needs demands considerable energy, and can be both physically and psychologically draining. The family carer is confronted with a fourfold emotional, psychological, physical and financial strain. COFACE Disability adopted the European Charter for Family Carers designed as a reference tool that can be used by many organizations representing persons with disabilities and /or complex support needs and their families (more here). The family is a key learning environment, and early childhood is when habits are learned that are apt to become entrenched. It is essential to provide children with culinary education within the family. We also develop practical tools for awareness-raising of families, such as the Nutri-Medias tool which highlights the links between advertising and children's food choices and family relationships - a tool developed in the context of the European Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (European Commission – DG SANTE).

SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

COFACE member organizations provide a range of services aimed at complementing childhood education, focusing on issues such as cyberbullying, inclusive education, parental support, creating a safer internet, preventing early school leavers. A

concrete example is the #DeleteCyberbullying application which we developed with the financial support of the European Commission. This app aims to take users through a quiz which will either redirect them to appropriate resources to address cyberbullying, or test their knowledge about cyberbullying.

SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

Families in Europe are striving to reconcile work and family life. COFACE believes that gender equality is key to achieving reconciliation between work

and family life, with an equal sharing of family care responsibilities between men and women, whereby men embrace more their caring roles as fathers and women embrace more their role and potential as active workers. For this reason, we decided to kick-start a European discussion on the role of family policies to address SDG 5 (see below).

III. COFACE Kick-Starts Discussion on the SDGs and Family Policy in Europe: First Conclusions

As COFACE, we decided to take a closer look at the potential of Europe to achieve the SDG targets, and more specifically SDG5 : Gender equality. We have so much data now stating that when girls and women can make choices for themselves personally and professionally, it is good for their health, their families' health, and their countries' economy. Empowering girls and women is essential to building strong economies, to establish more stable and just societies, and to improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities. Thanks to the efforts worldwide and in the EU to reduce the gender pay gap and the gender pension gap, we have made progress but we still have a long way to go. As European Commissioner Frans Timmermans declared: « It is unacceptable that my daughters still have less opportunities than my sons to build a career, to reach the top ». We decided to host a conference in Amsterdam on 19-20 April 2016, to gather experts from across Europe to discuss the role of family policies in reaching SDG5 (Gender equality), with a focus on the gender care gap. Approximately 100 participants attended. We had a variety of perspectives on the programme. During our 1,5 day event we looked at:

1. The origins of the SDGs in a critical perspective;
2. The way SDGs are intrinsically linked to family policies;
3. Some recent research findings;

4. Policy pointers - time to rethink policies and adopt a more holistic approach;
5. Inspiring practices from civil society organizations;
6. The role of the European Union in achieving SDG

THE ORIGINS OF THE SDGS IN A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Jan Vandemoortele, independent researcher and formerly with the UNDP and UNICEF, made the link between the former 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In his opinion, the targets under the MDGs and SDGs are as much about the “striving as the achieving”, hence highlighting that whereas none of the MDG targets had been met statistically, they had still contributed to making significant progress in some areas. He believes huge progress was made in reducing poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and reducing some illnesses (HIV, Malaria, TB). Some progress was made in relation to basic education and gender equality – for instance, virtually as many girls as boys now attend primary school in the world. Less progress was made however in addressing the environmental targets, which explains why the follow-up to the MDGs starts with the word “Sustainable”. Whereas the MDGs were a concise list of priorities, the SDGs are from the outset



a conceptual framework to set a global agenda for development. This attempt to be holistic and comprehensive is to be commended, but still has inherent flaws according to him. From his critical perspective, he asked himself just how sustainable are these SDGs. He drew attention to the following challenges:

- The fact that just like the MDGs, the SDGs do not take enough into account the problem of inequality across the globe, and are likely to help the better off section of the population while leaving the poorer 20-30% behind. Many books have been published on the problematic impact of such inequalities on our societies (see for instance Piketty, Stiglitz and other authors).
- The fact that the targets under each of the SDGs are not sufficient or ambitious enough. A scientific review of the targets conducted in the US showed that only 29% of the SDG targets were adequate, while 54% of the targets need reworking.
- The fact that the SDGs are intended to be universal, while in reality different geographical areas of the globe need to focus on priorities linked to their region. For instance, under SDG 2 No hunger, malnutrition is not equally a priority across continents (especially not in North America and Western Europe).
- The fact that some key challenges are not addressed in the SDGs, such as obesity and diabetes. The current development agenda ignores these major issues of public health, while a WHO report

published this year confirms the prevalence of diabetes has doubled, and the number of people living with diabetes has quadrupled.

- The fact that there are no big champions across the world actually demonstrating how to achieve the SDG targets. The European Union (EU) is not placing any pressure on its Member States to show what indicators they intend to use; for instance, in accordance with the implementation of SDG 1 (No poverty) the EU is not collecting national definitions of poverty to be used as a benchmark for measuring progress in 2030.

THE WAY SDGS ARE INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO FAMILY POLICIES

Renata Kaczmarek, Social Affairs Officer in the UN Focal Point on the Family, analyzed the SDG from a family policy perspective. Family policies generally-speaking have an essential role in achieving long-term solutions to a wide range of challenges. Family policy outcomes should include: building more resilient families, healthy children, access to decent work, work/family balance, gender equality, and stronger intergenerational bonds. These elements are all part of the current sustainable development agenda. She highlighted the contribution of family policies in relation to the following SDGs:

- SDG 1: No Poverty. This is not just about income poverty (although clearly family and child allowances help prevent reduce vulnerability to poverty). Poverty is considered multi-dimensional, and hence these different dimensions need to be addressed not least through adequate social protection systems. She made parallels between such

systems and family structures, which can be considered as “natural” social protection systems.

- SDG 2: No Hunger. The aim here is to empower parents to meet the nutritional needs of children, for instance through promoting access to decent work and income. This is very linked to SDG 3.
- SDG 3: Health and well-being. Health education is influenced by family behavior. Research shows that family leave policies lead to better nutrition and better survival of children. Policies which contribute to better work-life balance are also considered fundamental to achieving this goal.
- SDG 4: Quality education. In this regard, there are several areas of family policy which can help, not least programs promoting positive parenting, boosting school success and life-long learning.
- SDG 5: Gender equality. Reference was made here to the important contribution of policies which

address and prevent violence in families, as well as policies which push for recognition of unpaid care and domestic work.

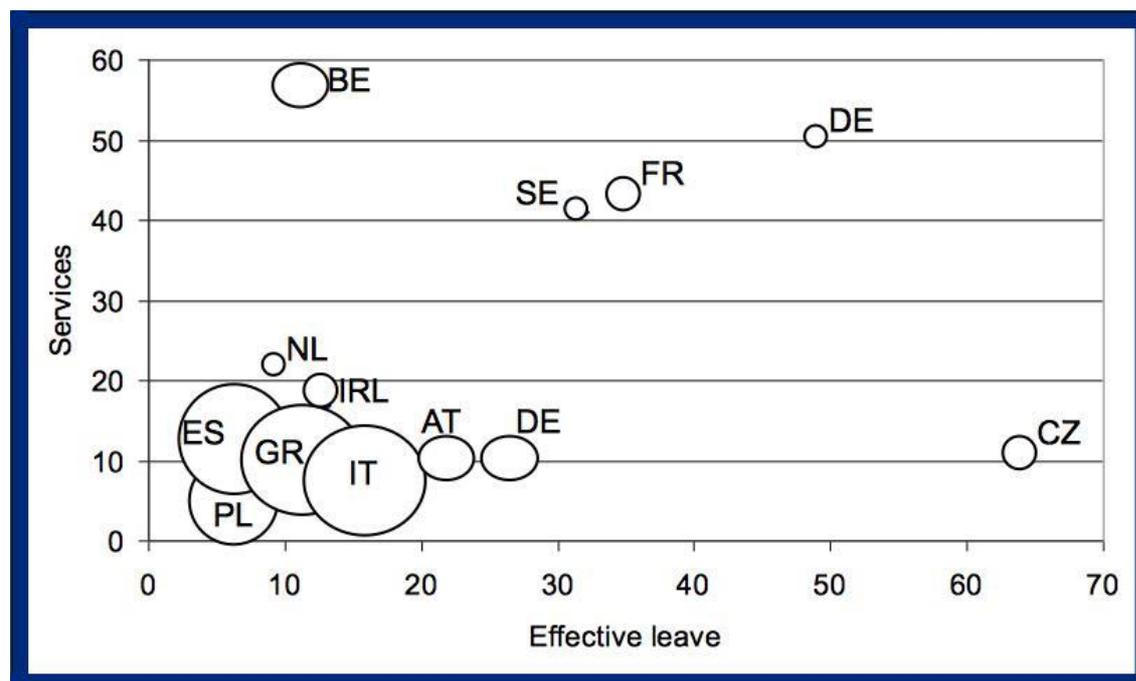
- SDG 10: Reducing inequalities. This is linked to intergenerational transfer of poverty, and linked to family structures which are not conducive to good child development (e.g. unstable family relations).
- SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions. There is a real need to promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies. For instance, there are some countries where women are not able to pass on their nationality to their children. National family law should comply with international standards and ensure justice for all family members – also upholding the right of children and women. In conclusion: the design, development, implementation and monitoring of family-oriented policies are considered essential to achieve several of the 2030 SDG targets.

SOME RECENT RESEARCH FINDINGS

Some recent data presented at the conference demonstrates various new trends in family structures, sharing of care responsibilities, the way policies and legislation can actually shape the behavior and choices of families in sharing childcare responsibilities (e.g. the introduction of the daddy quota in the Scandinavian countries, with a «use it or lose it» policy and significant income replacement). Pearl Dijkstra from the Erasmus University of Rotterdam presented some outcomes of her “Lifecourse” research (the life-course perspective is increasingly used in policy-making namely in the health sphere, where it is acknowledged that what happens early in life influences how people’s health develops over time). Emerging family interdependence and intergenerational solidarity

across European countries is consistent with demographic realities where we find increasing numbers of three- and four-generation families (whereby children have more grand-parents and even great-grandparents, which creates opportunities for interdependence). The life-course perspective acknowledges these trends, and also allows for a holistic approach to family needs which concern not only parents with young children, but also adults with ageing parents. There is evidence of similarities in needs. Data was also presented by Irena Kotowska (Centre for Demography, Warsaw School of Economics, Poland) on the impact of the economic and employment context on the so-called ‘sandwich generation’ (people who care for both their ageing parents while supporting their own children). The sandwich generation is expected to work longer as a result of pension reform.

GRAPH: Predicted probability of caring for a grandchild of a working daughter by level of effective leave and services



All the while, the demand for care is increasing with the ageing population, and in many countries the family is expected to step in as an important source of support. Adult children respond to parents' needs for support according to different factors (their employment status, normative expectations, and the country-specific care regime). These and other trends were flagged as areas requiring policy discussions to prepare for the future.

Greet Vermeylen from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) in Dublin, Ireland presented some recent findings from the European Working Conditions Survey and qualitative research outcomes on themes such as company practices for workers

with care responsibilities and different leaves (maternity, paternity, parental). The life-course approach used in their analytical framework for measuring sustainability of work for women and men provides data on trends from the beginning to the end of working careers. Some of the European data shows that men and women have different working time patterns: men tend to work more than women, but when unpaid care is taken into account women work longer hours men. They engage differently in unpaid work (domestic work and care work) over the life-course: there is limited engagement in unpaid work at the beginning of the life-course, and this increases with age; and when parenting starts, women tend to reduce their working hours but they increase their unpaid work. The same goes for men, but to a lesser ex.

POLICY POINTERS – TIME TO RETHINK POLICIES AND ADOPT A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH

Special attention was dedicated to the issue of unpaid care and shared responsibilities within the household, in line with SDG target 5.4: “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.” Speakers highlighted examples of policy needs in countries like The Netherlands, namely through the recommendations of Antia Wiersma and Eelco Wierda from the Atria Institute on Gender Equality and Women’s History e.g. highlighting that the gender pay gap is an issue in the country, but not in the case of women aged between 25 and 30 who actually earn more than men of the same age group. How then to avoid to the so-called “motherhood penalty”? Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Jet Bussemaker, confirmed that investing in women means investing in families – she provided inspiring examples linked to the “Kracht on Tour” campaign she organized (Dutch Empowerment Tour).

The Scandinavian countries were highlighted by Gerda Neyer from Stockholm University (Sweden) as models of sustainable gender-equal societies with high female labor force occupation, and with policies which aim inter alia for gender transformation, namely striving to change the traditional gender roles by encouraging men to take up caring roles and women to take up their worker roles.

The contradiction between policies and societal attitudes/structural realities was examined through the example of family policy-making in Estonia (by Hanna Vsevirov from the Ministry of Social Affairs), where already innovative leave policies exist (e.g. allowing other family members to take parental leave). Yet the introduction of further new elements, such as greater rights for fathers to take leave for their family life, can be faced with attitudinal and technical barriers. The generally low income levels in Estonia (compared to other EU countries) mean that even if part-time work is widely accepted as a way to reconcile work and family life, it

is simply not a popular and realistic option for working parents.

While maintaining high-quality family policies, it was clear from the discussions with the conference participants that there is a need to develop more holistic policies which provide a mix of measures from paid leaves (parental, maternity, paternity, family, carer), to affordable childcare with highly qualified staff, rethinking school systems, and supporting women into employment. Taking family time into account in the organization of working time increasingly seems to be the prerequisite for successful implementation of the gender equality principle. For that to happen, however, the concept of reconciling work and family life needs to be rethought in universal terms i.e., in terms that embrace both men’s and women’s wants and needs, not just those of women, as has too often been the case so far. These universal terms can only come about from balancing men’s and women’s needs and wants in terms of time for family life.

The European Reconciliation Package (referred to in the conference opening speech of COFACE President, Annemie Drieskens, and highlighted by COFACE senior policy officer Paola Panzeri) is a unique policy document, as it covers the entire European Union and applies a systemic approach to the complex issue of work-life balance, to both its related challenges and possible solutions. It is the main policy outcome of the 2014 Year of Reconciling Work and Family Life in Europe. Over the past years COFACE observed an increased preoccupation of European families with the challenges of balancing their family life and work responsibilities. Increased childcare costs, limited places, long commutes, hectic schedules coupled with job-insecurities mean that working parents and carers are finding it increasingly difficult to find long-term solutions that serve the interest of all family members. COFACE spent the past years cataloguing the problems faced by families, and analyzing and collecting inspiring practices and legal instruments at regional, national and EU level, as well as workplace solutions that work for all – not only working parents with small Children.

The European Reconciliation Package analyses four main areas:

1. Reconciling for Carers
2. Women at Work
3. Reconciling at the Workplace
4. Childcare, Education and Parenting.

COFACE calls on the European Commission to mainstream the recommendations of this European package through a mix of benchmarks, policy guidance and indicators for implementation of the reconciliation approach.

INSPIRING PRACTICES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Various services and programs to families were presented, as a sample of some of the innovations which exist in Europe:

- Online platforms to help men express their emotions better («Men's school of love» presented by Anna Rotkirch of the organization Västöliitto in Finland),
- Services to support teenage mothers and fight discrimination through preventive campaigns in schools (through the eyes of Silvija Stanic from the organization Step by Step in Croatia),
- Services to empower women to turn their life round (introduced by James-Stuart Duffin from Women for Women in The Czech Republic),
- Services to help fathers embrace their family roles (by Marion Macleod from Children of Scotland in The UK),
- Training for companies on how to develop reconciliation policies in the workplace (presented by Asunción Iglesias of UNAF in Spain),
- Parenting and life skills programs via companies (by Joyce Knappe of ProParents in The Netherlands).

These are all services/programs provided by civil society organizations to complement traditional family policies in Europe (which usually consist of a mix of financial allowances and various forms of leave - maternity, paternity, parental, carer). Services which are dynamic and close to citizens, to families. Services which test innovative ways of responding to emerging family needs.

THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN ACHIEVING SDG 5

The European Union has a strong influence on the well-being of families living in Europe: the European Institutions must therefore give proper consideration to the SDGs, making sure they underpin all EU policy and law-making in a holistic way. Manuela Geleng, representative of the European Commission, highlighted the following EU policies to consider as an important contribution to achieving SDG5:

European Semester

An annual process monitoring the economies of the different EU countries, by issuing guidelines and country-specific recommendations. Including employment guidelines for actions to promote equal pay, reconciliation between work and family life, access to affordable quality early childhood education, and more. Countries report yearly on their intentions to implement these guidelines.

EU funds

European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund - Under the European Social Fund, approximately 1.5 billion euros are being allocated under the investment priority 'equality between women and men' for programs supporting work-life balance, combating wage disparities between women and men, and promoting female entrepreneurship. Under the European Regional Development Fund, funding is available to develop childcare infrastructure.

New start initiative for WorkLife balance

This initiative will replace the proposal for a European Maternity Leave directive. The objective of this initiative

(to be launched in 2017) is to address the obstacles to women's labor market participation through:

1. Better reconciliation of work and family responsibilities
2. A more equitable use of work-life balance arrangements between women and men.

The initiative will take a broad approach, considering a complementary mix of different policies needed for greater work-life balance and female labor market participation.

EU Pillar of Social Rights

In March 2016, the European Commission put forward a first, preliminary outline of what should become the European Pillar of Social Rights. Once established, the Pillar should become the reference framework to screen the employment and social performance of participating Member States, to drive reforms at national level and, more specifically, to serve as a compass for the renewed process of convergence within the Euro area. The preliminary outline proposed by the European Commission includes “Principle 5 on gender equality and worklife balance”.

Paola Panzeri, senior policy officer of COFACE, responsible for following employment and gender equality policies at EU level, also noted the existence of the European Commission Strategic engagement (not a strategy) for Gender Equality 2016-2019, which includes a first area of work on employment and work-life balance. She emphasized the important role of the EU in supporting transnational exchanges between civil society family organisations as a way to drive innovation in a number of fields related to the SDGs, namely through support to European civil society organisations like COFACE under the EASI programme

2014-2020. But also as a way to progressively build consensus between different stakeholders and a common European language between 28 different cultures/perspectives in order to enact effective and sustainable change in the EU.

Sacha Gabizon, Executive Director of Women in Europe for a Common Future, took part in the writing of the SDGs. She insisted on the important next steps for 2016 and beyond being the development of indicators and methodologies, and the need for the EU to take the lead on monitoring and implementation of the SDG targets e.g. by testing indicators on unpaid domestic and care work. Most of the indicators have not been defined yet, so that now is a good time to step up, trigger discussions and fund concrete projects. SDG Watch Europe brings together a broad coalition of stakeholders which is pushing the EU to include the SDGs in its Development Agenda 2030 - it includes organisations like COFACE and Women in Europe for a Common Future. However, progress is slow within this coalition. She believes greater leadership must come from the EU institutions to ensure Europe can genuinely contribute to the achievement of the SDG.

CONTACT US

Join us. If you would like to join or support our European movement, now is the time. Brussels welcomes you with open arms!



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Innocenti Research Brief

2017-16

Growing Inequality and Unequal Opportunities in Rich Countries

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INTRODUCTION

Inequality can have wide-ranging effects on communities, families and children. Income inequality (measured through the Gini index) was found to have an association with higher levels of peer violence in 35 countries (Elgar et al. 2009) and to influence the use of alcohol and drunkenness among 11- and 13-year olds (Elgar et al. 2005). On a macro level, countries with greater income inequality among children have lower levels of child well-being and higher levels of child poverty (Toczydlowska et al. 2016). More worrying still is that growing inequality reinforces the impact of socio-economic status (SES) on children's outcomes, limiting social mobility.

Concern about growing inequality features prominently on the current international development agenda. Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls specifically to reduce inequality within and among countries, while the concept of 'leaving no one behind' reflects the spirit of greater fairness in society. But with a myriad of measures and definitions of inequality used in literature, the focus on children is often diluted. This brief contributes to this debate by presenting child-relevant distributional measures that reflect inequality of outcomes as well as opportunity for children in society, over time.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Three indicators are selected to examine the

child-centred income inequality and the impact of family background on child outcomes:

The first indicator, the Palma ratio – a standard indicator of income inequality – was adapted to reflect a focus on children. It measures the income share of the richest 10 per cent and the bottom 40 per cent of the population in an income distribution. To make it child-specific, the shares are based on the equivalized disposable household income of children.

The second indicator measures the bottom-end relative income gap among children. The measure represents a gap between household income of a child at the median and that of a child at the 10th percentile – reported as a percentage of the median. It represents an overview of how well the world's developed nations are living up to the ideal of 'no child being left behind'. The data for these two indicators comes from various waves of European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) for European Union countries and Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, and various household surveys for the remaining countries¹.

The third indicator represents the impact of family background or SES on students' achievement in maths, reading and science literacy.

¹ See Appendix 1 for data sources for non EU-SILC countries

It is measured through the composite index of economic, cultural and social status (ESCS) developed by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). It includes a number of PISA-constructed indices such as family wealth or parents' educational and occupational status². The ESCS index is built on a continuous scale which is standardized across the OECD countries to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one (OECD, 2014). The results presented in this brief across 39 countries are based on the average score-point difference across students' achievement in all three subjects, associated with a one-unit increase in the ESCS index. A higher value indicates a higher level of impact of socio-economic background on students' performance.

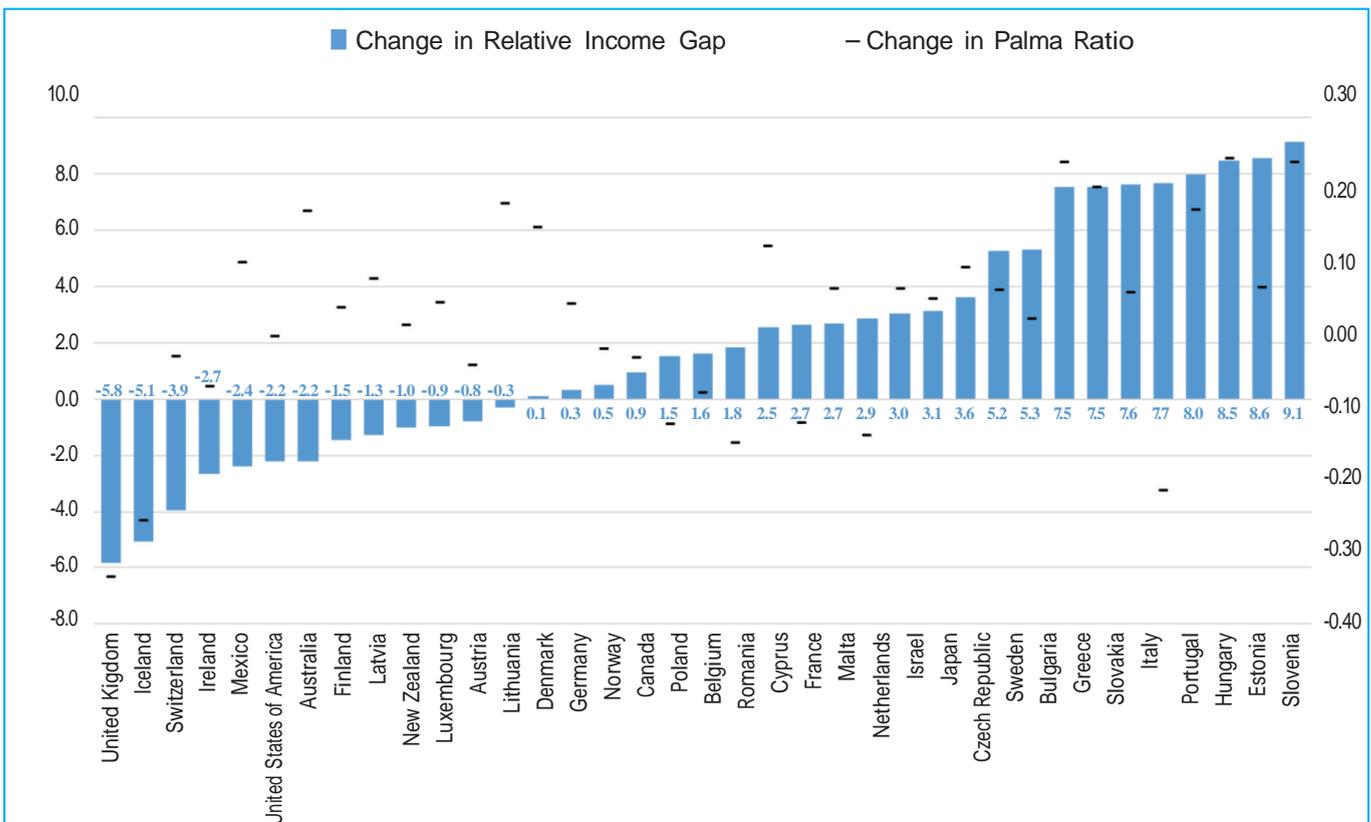
RESULTS

Children in the rich countries live in a world of growing inequality. The trend on both income inequality indicators (relative income gap and Palma ratio), shows a widening economic divide between children across the whole income distribution. Since 2008, the most disadvantaged children in the bottom 10 per cent of income distribution have fallen further behind the median, in 23 countries³. The starkest increase in relative income gap between the poorest and the 'average' child (at the median) was registered in Estonia, Slovenia and Spain, as well as in Hungary and Portugal. Moreover, the share of income held by the richest 10 per cent increased in two thirds of rich world. (see Figure 1).

² For more information see OECD, 2015

³ The increase of more than 0.2 percentage points took place in 23 countries with available data. In Denmark the increase is equal to 0.1 percentage points, which is not seen as statistically significant.

Figure 1 - Change in relative income gap and Palma ratio among children between 2008 and 2014



Note: The changes illustrate percentage point difference between 2008 and 2014 in relative income gap and Palma ratio among children between 2008 and 2014. Missing countries: Chile, Croatia, Korea and Turkey.

Source: EU-SILC various waves, and various household surveys.

The poorest children fall further behind if the richest accumulate more income

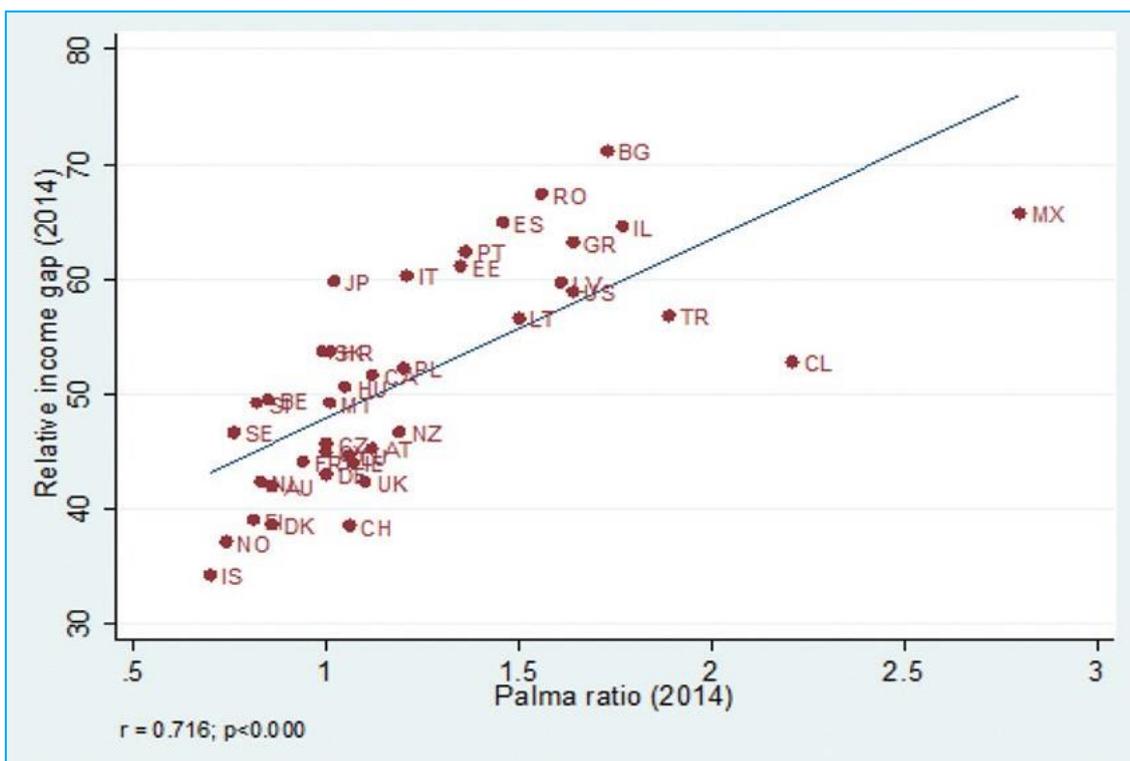
The countries where the richest top 10 per cent accumulate more income than bottom 40 per cent are also those that allow the poorest children to fall further behind the 'average' child (see Figure 2).

We find that the countries with high relative income gap such as Bulgaria, Israel and Mexico are also the ones with a high Palma ratio i.e. share of income distributed unequally within society.

In Bulgaria, the poorest children at the 10th percentile have around 30 per cent of the income of the 'average' child, while the richest

group holds a bigger share than that of nearly half of all children combined. In Chile and Mexico, the share of income accumulated at the 'top' is more than twice the size of the share of the poorest 40 per cent of children. In Nordic countries, income distribution is more equitable with income differences being much smaller among children.

Figure 2 - Palma ratio and relative income gap among children in 2014



Note: The Palma ratio is the ratio of the income share of the top 10 per cent and the bottom 40 per cent of the population in an income distribution. A value of 1.0 indicates that the income of the top 10 per cent is the same as that of the bottom 40 per cent. Values above 1.0 show that the share of the top 10 per cent is bigger, and values below 1.0 indicate that it is smaller. Values below 1.0 therefore suggest lower levels of inequality.

Source: EU-SILC 2014 and various household surveys.

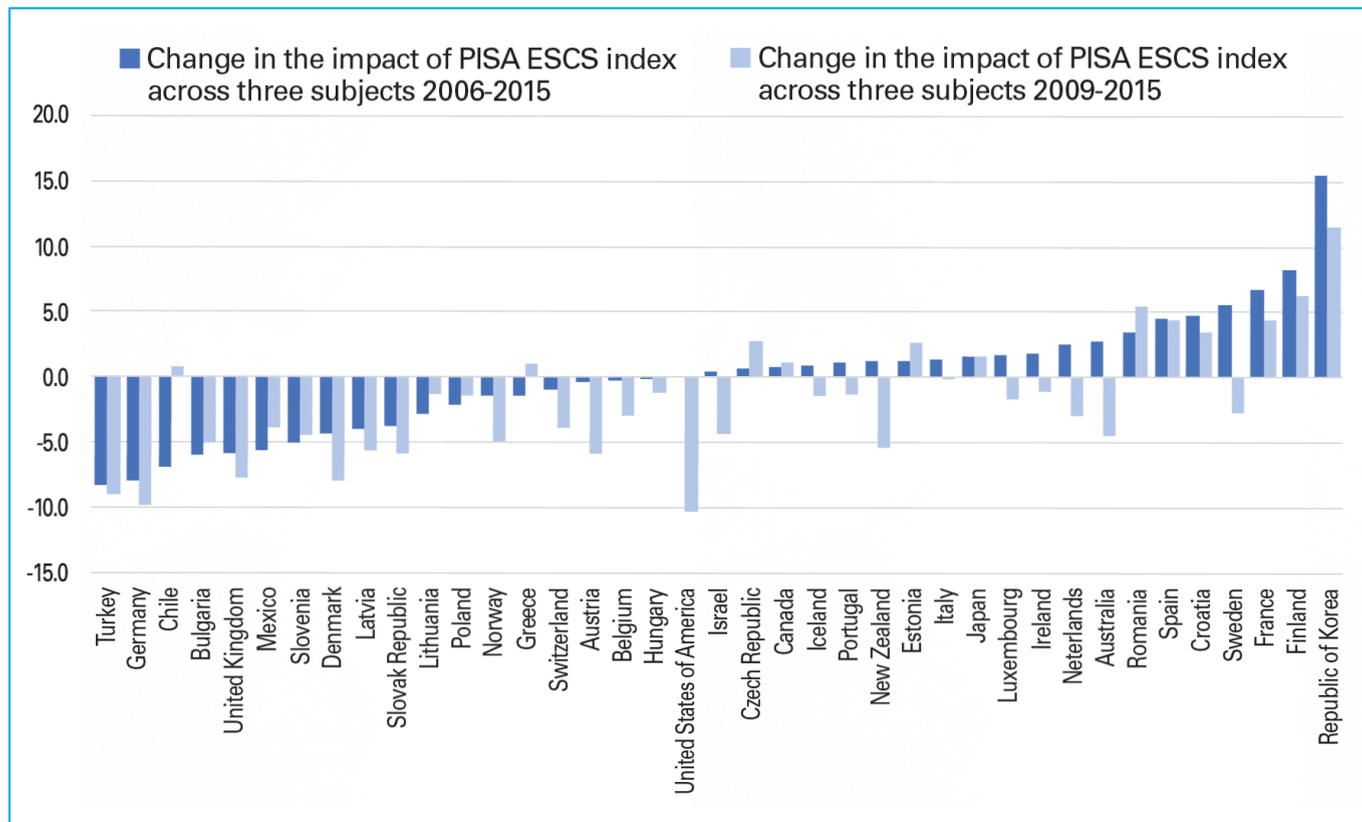
The school system can mitigate the impact of socio-economic background, but can equally exacerbate it

Unequal accumulation and distribution of income can translate into a greater degree of inequality of opportunities. This can happen either through the education system or through differentiated ability of parents to invest in their children's skills, knowledge, health and social support network. The family's socio-economic background is a significant predictor of 15-year-old students' achievement across three subjects (reading, mathematics, and science) in all 39 industrialized countries studied (Richardson et al. 2017).

On average across OECD countries, the difference in academic performance explained by students' socio-economic background is around 38 score points, which is equivalent to about one-year's schooling.

Progress over time has been mixed (see Figure 3). In nine education systems, the average change in the effect of socio-economic background measured using the PISA ESCS index weakened by more than two score points between 2006 and 2015. The educational system of the United States of America has made significant improvements in mitigating the impact of SES across the three subjects between 2009 and 2015. Conversely, in twelve education systems, the effect of SES on school achievement across core subjects increased between 2006 and 2016. The highest increases in average differences in performance between students with different socio-economic statuses (above 5 score points) were observed in Finland, France, the Republic of Korea and Sweden – the countries with traditionally strong academic performance, as reported through PISA.

Figure 3 - The score-point difference in reading, mathematics and science associated with a one-unit increase in the ESCS index



Note: All values are statistically significant. US 2006 data are not available, as there are no data on reading. Data for Mexico are excluded due to low rates of enrolment. At the time of the PISA 2015 survey more than one in four Mexican students between the ages of 15-17 were out of school (26.7 per cent); children from the lowest income quintile make up almost half (45 per cent) of non-attendees in this age group, see UNICEF (2016). 'Niños y niñas fuera de la Escuela en

CONCLUSION

The results show a consistent picture: Income inequality among children is growing in rich countries. The more the income share is accumulated at the top, the more likely the poorest children are to fall behind, compared to 'average' child. The education systems of OECD member countries show mixed results in mitigating the impact of family socio-economic background on

students' achievement. Tackling socio-economic inequalities may require a long-term political vision and coherent policy effort across distribution policies or education sector modalities. But it is high time that rich countries make it their policy priority. The SDG agenda on reducing inequality provides countries with an aspiration but at the same time makes them accountable for achieving a common vision of a more equal society.

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APPENDIX 1

Data Sources for non-EU-SILC countries:

- Australia:** Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (HILDA).
- Canada:** Canadian Income Survey (CIS).
- Chile:** La Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN).
- Israel:** Household Expenditure Survey (from Luxembourg Income Study).
- Japan:** Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions.
- Mexico:** El Módulo de Condiciones Socioeconómicas de la Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (MCS-ENIGH).
- New Zealand:** Household Economic Survey for New Zealand (estimates taken from Perry, B (2016). 'Household Incomes in New Zealand: Trends in indicators of inequality and hardship, 1982 to 2015'. Ministry of Social Development, Wellington).
- Turkey:** Income and Living Conditions Survey.
- USA:** Current Population Survey 2013, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (from Luxembourg Income Study). Reported 2014 data for Australia, Chile and Republic of Korea refer to 2015; for USA and New Zealand refer to 2013; and for Israel and Japan refers to 2012. Reported 2008 data for Canada, Israel and USA refer to 2007. Income estimates for Chile are based on equivalized total household income and are not directly comparable.

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Innocenti Research Brief

2017-22

Exploring Women's Empowerment through Asset Ownership and Experience of Intimate Partner Violence

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INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is widespread globally, with an estimated one-third of women aged 15 years and over experiencing physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner during their lifetimes.⁽¹⁾ Economic empowerment, or the financial standing of women, is often thought to protect against IPV, signalling sufficient economic autonomy to leave abusive situations or to prevent abuse.⁽²⁾ Asset ownership is one measure of economic empowerment, and can convey substantial agency as a wealth store, especially for large productive assets, such as agricultural land⁽³⁾ or home ownership.⁽⁴⁾

However, women's increased economic empowerment may increase the risk of IPV, if men use violence to obtain resources from women, or in settings in which women's financial autonomy may be seen to challenge customary norms, whereby men may use IPV to assert dominance.⁽⁵⁾

Despite the important implications of IPV reduction for policy and programming, evidence of this relationship is scarce. In a recent global multi-level analysis, structural factors such as laws and practices that promote women's property ownership at the country level, protected against IPV.⁽⁶⁾ Yet the association between women's asset ownership and IPV at the micro-level (i.e. at the individual woman/couple level) remains unclear, as findings to date come from geographically limited, cross-sectional studies with small sample sizes, which makes it hard to draw conclusions or to generalize findings to other settings.

What do we know from studies linking women's asset ownership to IPV at the micro-level

Panda and Agarwal (2005) were the first to show how women's house and land ownership protect women

from physical and psychological IPV in Kerala, India.⁽⁷⁾ More recent studies have found similar protective associations for at least some IPV measures and different types of assets: Northern India (house; physical IPV), Nicaragua and Tanzania (land; physical and psychological IPV), Ecuador (financial and physical assets; physical IPV) and Ghana (financial and physical assets; emotional IPV).⁽⁸⁻¹⁰⁾

To learn more about this relationship, in a recent study, we used nationally representative data from 28 countries to explore women's house and/or land ownership and reported experience of IPV in the past 12 months. To our knowledge, this is the first study that provides comparative results on this relationship across several countries. One of the study's strengths is its use of population-based data, which allows for greater generalization of the findings. In addition, we used quasi-experimental methods, which go beyond estimating simple correlations and instead attempt to account for inherent bias in the estimated relationship in an effort to strengthen conclusions regarding causality of the observed relationships.

STUDY DESIGN

Data for this analysis came from nationally representative Demographic and Health Surveys (DHSs), collected between 2010 and 2014. All selected surveys included information on women's experiences of IPV and asset ownership, taken from a new module implemented as of 2010. The sample included 164,986 women aged 15 to 49 years from 28 countries – two countries from East Asia and the Pacific, one country from Europe and Central Asia, two countries from the Middle East and North Africa, three countries from Latin American and the Caribbean, two countries from South and Southeast Asia, and 18 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

We used 12-month measures for experience of IPV, in the forms of 1) physical and/or sexual violence, and 2) emotional violence, perpetrated by the current or last husband or partner. We used indicators of individual land and house ownership (combined and disaggregated) reported by each woman and tested associations with IPV for sole ownership, joint ownership (in conjunction with another household member) and combined measures. We ran multivariate probit regression models for each country, and controlled for demographic characteristics, including age, schooling, marital status, household size, urban residence, and region. Because women's asset ownership is likely to be correlated with household wealth, we used a matching method (coarsened exact matching) to create weights to account for the confounding relationship with household wealth in the estimated relationship between asset ownership and IPV risk.⁽¹¹⁾

RESULTS

Prevalence of IPV and asset ownership

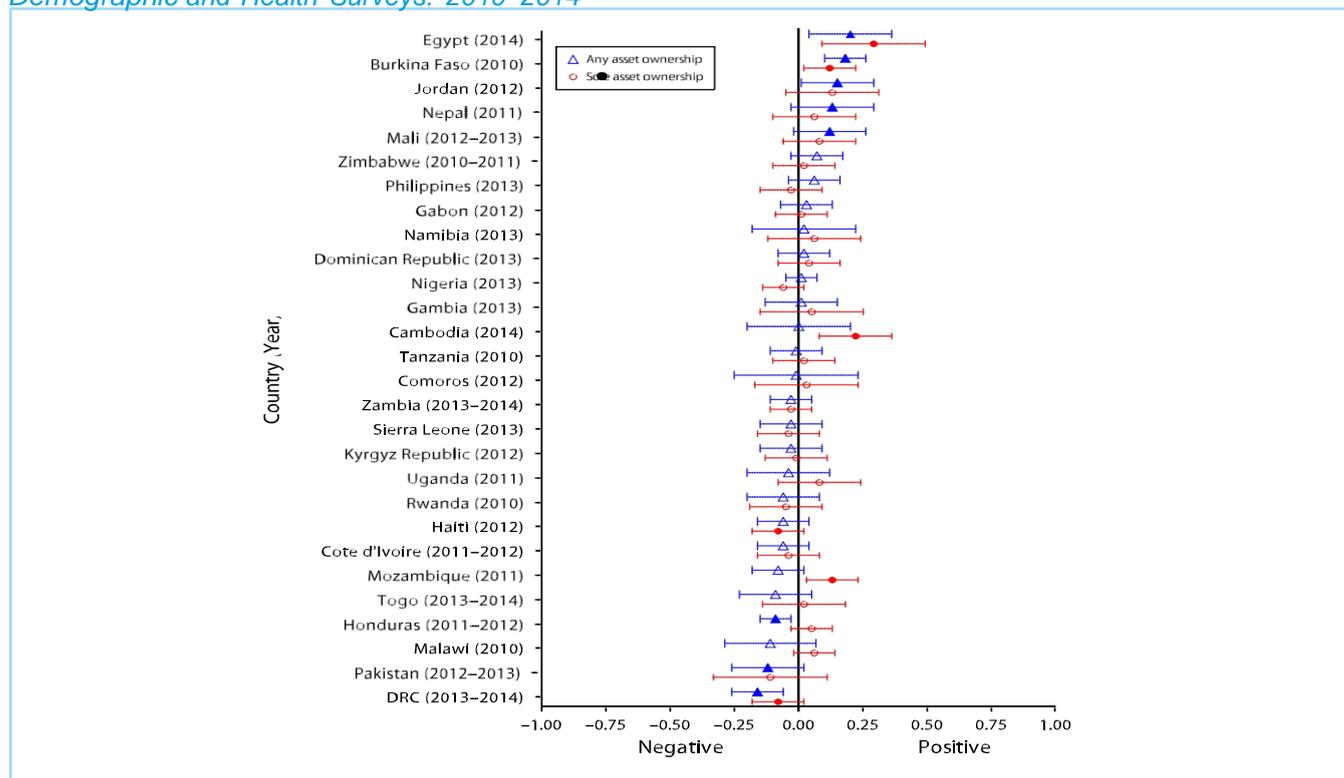
Approximately 20% of women reported experiencing physical and/or sexual IPV in the past 12 months (ranging from 5% in Comoros to 44% in Rwanda). On average, 50% of women owned assets either solely or jointly (ranging from 6% in

Egypt to 86% in Rwanda), and 21% owned assets solely only (ranging from 3% in Egypt to 67% in Comoros). On average across countries, more women reported owning houses than land.

Associations between IPV and any asset ownership

Figure 1 shows the overall results from associations between physical and/or sexual IPV in the prior 12 months and women's asset ownership from the weighted probit regression models. The blue triangles denote marginal effects (and standard errors in bars) for any asset ownership (house and/or land combined); red circles denote marginal effects (and standard errors) for sole asset ownership; and a solid fill denotes statistical significance at the $p < 0.10$ or higher. Overall and by region, we did not find specific patterns of women's asset ownership and experience of IPV. At the country level, however, women who owned assets (whether solely or jointly) in three countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Honduras and Pakistan) were less likely to report 12-month IPV compared to women who did not own assets in these countries. In contrast, those who

Figure 1: Percentage Point Changes in Physical or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence (or Both) in the Previous 12 Months Associated with Women's Asset Ownership from Weighted Probit Regressions from 28 Demographic and Health Surveys: 2010–2014



Note. DRC = Democratic Republic of the Congo. Value of marginal effect denoted by circle or triangle (with SE bounds). Solid point estimates represent statistical significance (at the $P < .10$ level). Unfilled point estimates represent insignificant relationships. Data from ever-partnered women aged 15–49 years from nationally representative Demographic and Health Surveys. All models adjusted for background characteristics (see Peterman et al. 2017, for further details).

owned assets in five countries (Burkina Faso, Egypt, Jordan, Mali and Nepal) were more likely to report experience of 12-month IPV.

Sensitivity analysis

We conducted a number of sensitivity analyses to attempt to unpack these initial, disparate results. However, when we disaggregated by asset type, examining land and house ownership separately, the findings showed similar inconclusive patterns: for example, women who owned land were less likely to report experience of IPV in five countries (Cambodia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia), but more likely to report IPV in four countries (Cote d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Egypt and the Kyrgyz Republic). In addition, we examined rural-only samples (as productive assets including land are likely to be more relevant in agricultural households), samples of younger women (aged 15 to 24), who may have brought assets into marriage, and thus face different initial dynamics in partnerships, and samples of women who lived in communities with higher than 50% incidence of women's asset ownership (who are less likely to directly challenge gendered-norms around women's property ownership, compared to communities where fewer than 50% of women report any asset ownership). In no case did we find more conclusive patterns across countries.

CONCLUSION

Our results suggest that the relationship between asset ownership and experience of IPV varies by asset type and setting. One conclusion is that programmes and policies may need to be tailored to specific contexts. Another conclusion is that better data and methodologies are needed to account for confounding factors in the observed relationship between women's asset ownership and IPV risk. We recommend that future research focus on identifying causality in the relationship between women's assets and IPV through longitudinal study designs, rather than continuing to rely on cross-sectional estimates. Rigorous evaluations of asset transfer programmes and panel data to track changes in ownership of diverse assets, asset values and gendered asset gaps, are needed to understand if women's assets protect against IPV. Women's empowerment has potential to play a key role in progress towards reducing IPV and meeting the Sustainable Development Goal 5.2. We hope this research will advance our global understanding of this potential.

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The intergenerational effect

Reducing global poverty through universal education

1 November 2017



Youth are more than four times as likely to be out of school as children and more than twice as likely to be out of school as adolescents. The high out-of-school rates for older cohorts can be explained by poverty and a variety of other reasons: many youth never had a chance to enter school when they were younger, upper secondary education is often not compulsory, and youth have a right to employment in most countries [1]. The decline in out-of-school rates and numbers between 2000 and 2015 was accompanied by a reduction in gender disparity at the global level. The male and female out-of-school rates for the lower secondary- and upper secondary-age populations are now nearly identical, while the gender gap among primary-age children dropped from more than five percentage points to less than two.

A new adjusted gender parity index (GPIA) out-of-school drop from 1.31 in 2000 to a low of 1.11 in 2011 meaning that girls of primary age are still more likely to be out of school than boys. For the lower secondary and upper secondary out-of-school a change from 0.97 and 1.03 was recorded, meaning a shared probability of being out of school. Nevertheless, while global averages show progress, they also mask disparities at the regional and country levels where girls of all ages face considerable barriers to education.

The number of children, adolescents and youth who are excluded from education fell steadily in the decade following 2000, but UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data show that this progress essentially stopped in recent years.

The total number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth has remained nearly the same at around 264 million for the past three years (See figure 1).

Some 61 million, or 23% of the total, are children of primary school age (about 6 to 11 years), 62 million, or 23% of the total, are adolescents of lower secondary school age (about 12 to 14 years), and 141 million, or 53% of the total, are youth of upper secondary school age (about 15 to 17 years) (herein children, adolescents and youth, respectively).

*Extracted from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Policy Paper 32 / Fact Sheet 44.
Available at: <http://bit.ly/2rCOZao>.*

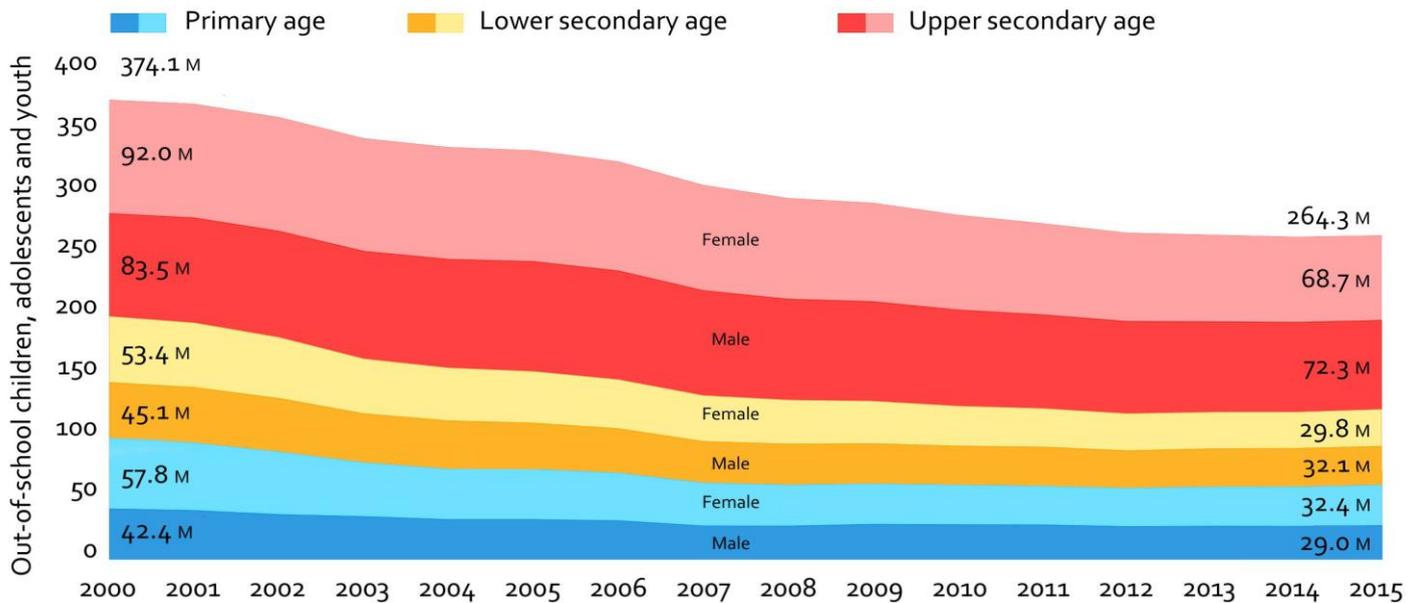


Figure 1. Out-of-school children, adolescents and youth: global status and trends
[Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database]

Regional and national out-of-school figures

The global out-of-school figures hide large regional differences. As in previous years, sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest out-of-school rates for all age groups. Of the 61 million out-of-school children, 33 million, or more than half, live in sub-Saharan Africa and 11 million live in Central and Southern Asia. Three regions are home to nine out of ten out-of-school adolescents: sub-Saharan Africa (26 million), Central and Southern Asia (20 million) and Eastern and South-eastern Asia (8.5 million). Sub-Saharan Africa is also the region with the highest rate of out-of-school adolescents (36%), followed by Central and Southern Asia (18%), and Western and Northern Africa (15%). In all regions, out-of-school rates and numbers are far higher among youth of upper secondary age than among younger cohorts. In total, 141 million youth were not in school in 2015. The largest proportion lives in Central and Southern Asia (69 million), followed by sub-Saharan Africa (34 million), and Eastern and South-eastern Asia (18 million). More than half of all youth are out of school in sub-Saharan Africa (57%), and nearly half of all youth in Central Asia and Southern Asia (49%).

Turning to national data, more than one out of five children of primary age are out of school in several countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Western and Southern Asia. The countries with the highest out-of-school rates include South Sudan (69%), Liberia (62%), Eritrea (61%), Sudan (45%), Equatorial Guinea (43%), and Djibouti (43%). The United States is one of the rare countries in Northern America and Europe with a relatively high rate of out-of-school children (5.5%), but the

majority of these children are being home-schooled (Redford et al., 2017).

There are six countries with very large out-of-school population: Nigeria (8.7 million), Pakistan (5.6 million), India (2.9 million), Sudan (2.7 million), Indonesia (2.6 million) and Ethiopia (2.2 million). But, it is important to keep in mind that not all out-of-school children are permanently excluded from education. Globally, 28%, or 17 million, of all out-of-school children have never attended school and will probably never start. About 38% of all out-of-school children attended school in the past but did not continue their education, and 34% are likely to enter school late and will be over-age for their grade (UIS). One out of three out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia and Northern Africa and one out of four in Central and Southern Asia will probably never receive any formal education. In Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean, most out-of-school children will start school late. In Central and Southern Asia more than one in every two out-of-school children started primary school but did not make it to the last grade.

Implementing a family perspective in legislation is important due to the classification of out-of-school children by past and possible future school attendance. To be effective, policies must be tailored to address the different situations facing out-of-school children and their families. If the majority of out-of-school children in a country attended but left school, interventions should focus on reducing the dropout rate by developing preventive measures with parents and care-givers at home. For children who are likely to attend in the future, the goal is to ensure earlier entry into the education system that is mainly ensured by their families. The most challenging group of out-of-school children are those who are unlikely ever to attend school, often because of a perpetuating cycle of lack of education and poverty that their families share.

Poverty and education

Various studies have shown a strong link at the country and individual level between poverty and education regarding both school attendance and learning outcomes. The World Bank assigns countries to four groups according to their gross national income (GNI) per capita [2]. In low-income countries, out-of-school rates are systematically higher than in lower-middle-income, upper-middle-income and high-income countries (see Figure 2). As a group, low-income countries combined have higher out-of-school rates than all individual SDG regions, except for sub-Saharan Africa, which has a marginally higher primary out-of-school rate.

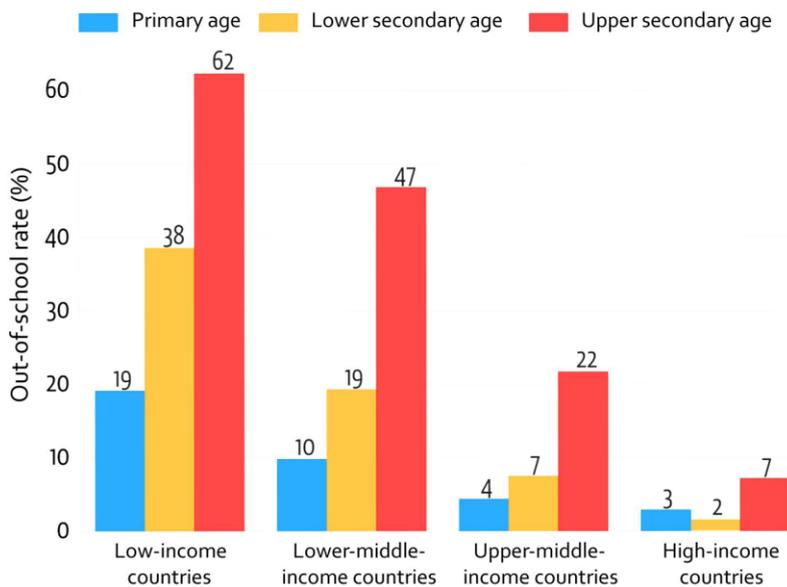


Figure 2. Out-of-school rate by income level and age group, 2015
[Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database]

Low-income and upper-middle countries are home to a disproportionately large share of the global out-of-school population such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan along with Brazil and China. Low-income countries (including Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania) account for a disproportionately large share of the global number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth. They are home to 13% of the world's school-age population but 24% of the global population out of school. By contrast, high-income countries account for 11% of the global school-age population and only 2% of the global number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth. The correlation between national income and out-of-school rates can also be observed at the level of individual countries.

Education policy and poverty reduction

Education is key to the development of individuals, families, communities and societies. However, there are about 264 million children, adolescents and youth out-of-school in the world, with those in low-income countries far less likely to enroll than those in middle- and high-income ones. Completion rates are even lower than enrolment rates. For example, in low-income countries, while 62% of adolescents were enrolled in 2015, only 27% of them finished lower secondary education in the period 2008–2014 [3].

Several studies have demonstrated that low levels of education and poor skill acquisition hamper economic growth, which in turn slows down poverty reduction. Poverty is defined in two ways. First, it is increasingly recognized as a multi-dimensional concept, and the lack of education is itself a dimension of poverty. Second, it is defined traditionally with reference to the monetary dimension, i.e. income or consumption.

New evidence, based on the average effects of education on growth and poverty reduction over the period 1965–2010 in developing countries, suggests that increasing the years of schooling among adults (15 years old and over) by two years would help to lift nearly 60 million people out of poverty. Achieving universal primary and secondary attainment in the adult population would help to lift more than 420 million out of poverty (See Figure 12). The effects would be particularly large in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, where almost two-thirds of the reduction are expected.

Three distinct channels link growth, inequality and poverty. First, economic growth is a major determinant of poverty reduction, although the same rate of growth can have different poverty impacts [4]. Households increase their likelihood of escaping poverty when growth increases their income through employment, transfers and the returns on their assets. Of those, employment creation has proven to be the most effective in pro-poor growth [5]. Second, in the short term, a more equal distribution of income means that the same growth rate will have a stronger impact on poverty reduction. The income of the poor will grow faster if there are complementary policies that redistribute income to reduce inequality [6].

Third, in the long term, there is the mutual interaction between growth and inequality. Historically, there was a perception that growth increases inequality at the early stages of development but then reduces inequality later on. What has been gaining more ground is the belief that a more equal distribution of income will lead to faster economic growth [7]. This includes the establishment of fair and robust institutions, which protect the rights of the poor. Education contributes to these growth, equality and

poverty reduction interactions in two main ways: education provides people with knowledge and skills and, if it expands along an equitable path, reduces income inequalities.

Effect on growth, inequality and poverty

Different policy levers targeting access and inclusion as dimensions of education quality have distinct effects on the effectiveness of the channels linking education with growth, inequality and poverty. The extent to which education policies reach and integrate poor people is key for leveraging poverty reduction through economic growth.

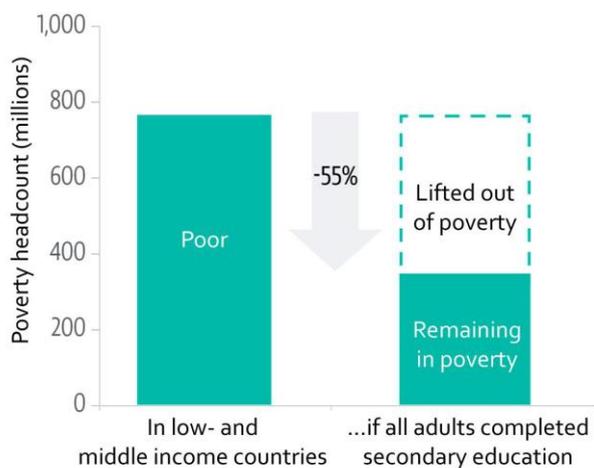


Figure 3. Estimated effect of universal secondary education completion on poverty headcount
[Source: Global Education Monitoring Report team estimates (2017)]

It is mainly the poor who miss out on schooling. Estimates from the World Inequality Database on Education suggest that, in lower-middle-income countries, children from the poorest 20% are eight times as likely to be out of school as children from the richest 20% [8]. The direct costs of education to families are crucial in this respect and need to be eliminated. In South Africa, fees were abolished in the poorest 40% of schools. An evaluation found that this increased enrolment in grades 8 to 10 by more than three percentage points in the poorest 20% of schools, despite the fact that the fees amounted to only about 1.5% of household income [9]. Examples such as, Andhra Pradesh (India) with the Midday Meals Scheme contribute to reduce the effects of severe drought on height and weight loss while increasing

learning achievement in mathematics and reading by 9% and 18%, respectively [10].

Reducing the indirect cost of education to families is also critical, including through cash transfers to families, scholarships and incentives to students. A meta-analysis of 42 impact evaluation studies for 19 conditional cash transfer programmes in 15 countries showed that attendance increased by 2.5% in primary schools and by 8% in secondary schools. These programmes have a stronger impact when they are combined with grants, infrastructure or other resources for schools, as in the 'Oportunidades' programme in Mexico or 'Bono de Desarrollo Humano' programme in Ecuador [11].

Some complementary health interventions are also necessary to ensure children do not lose school time due to illness. The national school-based deworming programme in Kenya, which began in 2008, not only increased school attendance at the time of its implementation but, 10 years after the treatment, women are still 25% more likely to have attended secondary school, halving the gender gap [12].

Conclusion

Far too many children, adolescents and youth are still out of school for multiple reasons relating to their living conditions, financial constraints, family situation and social adversities. Education can play a transformative role to help them escape poverty, but education policies need to do far more to improve access and inclusion.

While it is very challenging to bring out-of-school youth back into education, there is also a disquieting slowdown in the pace at which the world's children and adolescents are being integrated into national education systems. The global primary out-of-school rate has remained stubbornly at 9% for eight years in a row. As education and poverty are dynamic phenomena with strong inter-generational effects, failure to act now jeopardizes the future of several generations. Global poverty could be more than halved almost within a generation if all adults completed secondary school.

It may be the time to focus on a better environment for children, adolescents and youth educational process. There is a need to address these challenges from a family perspective while developing policies. A family perspective not only fosters scholarization but also promotes a completion of studies. Focusing on families and especially in the parents and their education, the children, adolescents and youth are raised in a supportive environment to increase their capacity and confidence [13].

[1] UIS and Global Monitoring Report (GEM), 2016. [2] World Bank, 2017. [3] UNESCO, 2016. [4] Ravallion, 2001. [5] Besley and Cord, 2007.
[6] Klasen, 2009. [7] Piketty, 2006, Naschold, 2002. [8] UNESCO, 2017. [9] Borkum, 2012. [10] Chakraborty and Jayaraman, 2016.
[11] Saavedra and Garcia, 2013. [12] Baird et al., 2016. [13] Carter, 1996.

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Mouvement Mondial des Mères

Make
Mothers
Matter

MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' RIGHTS

MMM submits two oral statements at 36th Session of UN Human Rights Council

Every child has the right to thrive, and every mother has the right to see her child thrive

In September, the MMM delegation at the UN in Geneva drew attention on the particular importance of **supporting pregnant women and mothers of very young children in the contexts of the refugee crisis and migration**. Refugees experience severe stress usually or most often linked to poverty, violence, discrimination, insecurity, anxiety and cultural shock. The challenges are even bigger for pregnant women who must face giving birth in a refugee camp, and for mothers with infants or very young children.

It is well established that such stress can have particularly **detrimental effects during pregnancy and early childhood** when the developing brain of a child is very sensitive to environmental influences.

MMM called on States and policy makers to pay **special attention to migrant and refugee mothers**, mainly

- to ensure safe and community spaces for them and their children, with access to adequate healthcare, and
- to support them in their parenting role through targeted interventions, and facilitate the healthy physical, emotional and cognitive development of their children.

Read the [MMM Oral Statement Right to Thrive: HRC36](#).

In another **oral statement** complementing the report of the Special Rapporteur on toxic waste, Make Mothers Matter **underscored the intergenerational dimension of exposure to toxic substances**, which severely jeopardize a child's development to their full potential, their education and their ability to contribute to society later in life. In addition to

health costs, this translates into future social and economic costs, not only for them but also for families and society as a whole.

MMM emphasized the need to consider the role of mothers and other caregivers as key actors in prevention and mitigation strategies, and **called on Member States**

- to adopt a human rights-based approach in the enactment and enforcement of laws and policies to regulate toxic substances, prioritizing the protection of mothers and children, and
- to inform and educate mothers and other caregivers on how a polluted environment can affect their children, even in the womb already, and how to mitigate the effects of exposure to toxic substances.

Joint Statement on the International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women

On 25th November, La Goccia Magica, CiaoLapo, the Italian Obstetric Violence Observatory, and Make Mothers Matter made a joint statement spotlighting the need to promote respectful maternity care in full compliance with the WHO statement. **MMM urged Governments to eliminate all forms of obstetric violence, institutional and against women**, according to article 12 of the CEDAW Convention.

Many women across the globe still experience disrespectful, abusive or neglectful treatment during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum care. Women in vulnerable situations are particularly likely to experience disrespectful and abusive treatments. Although, in some countries (Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Brazil) laws are in place to eliminate obstetric violence, in the rest of the world the phe-

nomenon is not even acknowledged. It is almost impossible for women to report it, as it is considered “normal”, both in medical as well as in legal contexts.

The first Italian survey conducted by the Doxa Institute in September 2017 and commissioned by national civil society associations of mothers, found that one in three Italian women felt excluded from fundamental choices related to her childbirth.

Finally, MMM launched a 16-day campaign until International Human Rights Day on 10th December 2017 to end obstetric violence around the world using hashtags: **#obstetricviolence** and **#orangetheworld**.

Because every woman has the right to the highest attainable standard of health, including the right to dignified, respectful health care throughout pregnancy and childbirth, as well as the right to be free from violence and discrimination.

Access the full statement here: [Joint Statement against Obstetric Violence 25 November 2017](#).

MMM Statement on Universal Children’s Day: Over 30,000 stateless children in Daesh deserve a future

On 20th November, MMM and the mothers it represents all over the world **urged the governments of 25 countries where mothers cannot pass their nationality to their children to change their legislation. It is time to end child statelessness by registering all births to ensure equal rights to all children.**

31,000 women who were pregnant under Daesh are now mothers to children who find themselves without valid documents and on the brink of statelessness. **UNHCR reports that already 130,000 persons are stateless in Iraq**, specifying that the most vulnerable are the children of Iraqi mothers and non-national fathers.

Therefore, in accordance with Article 7 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on birth registration, **MMM urged the Iraqi government to register the births of this new generation of stateless children in order to eliminate the institutional violence and discrimination.**

Access the full statement: [MMM Stateless Declaration 20 November 2017.pdf](#).

MMM delegation at UN High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace in New York

On 7 September 2017, the MMM delegation at the UN in New York attended the **High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace** at the UN General Assembly, which emphasized the importance of education and early childhood development in building a culture of peace, and of investing in inclusion and cohesion, so that diversity is seen as a benefit and not as a threat.

Various statements reflect the key role mothers already play as the principal providers of early childhood care and education, being at the forefront of transmitting the essential values and skills of a culture of peace to the next generation.

From the perspective of Make Mothers Matter, informal peace education mothers deliver in the household needs further formal recognition and support.

Mothers: Pillars of Social Entrepreneurship and Peace-Builders

On 22nd November, Pauline Ambrogi representative of MMM to UNESCO, was invited as a speaker at an international conference organized by ASO-DAMAS from Colombia (Association of First Ladies), a new member of MMM. The meeting was dedicated to social management, entrepreneurship and peace and brought together decision makers, civil society and companies to discuss how female entrepreneurship was key to building sustainable peace in Colombia.

In its presentation “Mothers: Pillars of Social Entrepreneurship and Peace-builders”, MMM highlighted the ways in which mothers already act as social entrepreneurs playing an essential role as economic pillars of their families and societies, as well as agents of change promoting peace, security and reconciliation.

Several examples of successful local initiatives across the world illustrated how both social entrepreneurship and peace-building activities were helping mothers gain economic autonomy as well as self-confidence, credibility and recognition as leaders within their communities and benefit families, communities and societies.

The presentation also underlined how increased engagement and support of fathers in the family was essential to share unpaid family care work by freeing up more time to engage in income-generating activities, among others, but also reduced violence in the family, and supported a more balanced emotional family life and upbringing of the children overall.

MMM concluded its presentation with a number of **recommendations** that would promote mothers' empowerment as agents of sustainable economic development and peace-building in society:

1. **Accessible and affordable infrastructures and public services**
2. The right of mothers to **social security, education and pension based on providing unpaid family care work**
3. **Recognition and evaluation of unpaid family care work** as a percentage of countries' GDP
4. The **recognition and validation of competencies acquired** by mothers to facilitate their return to the workplace
5. Measures encouraging a **balanced distribution of unpaid family care work between men and women**

MMM invited as speaker at #ECOG17 Annual Congress to discuss child obesity

On 15th November, the European Childhood Obesity Group (ECOG) opened its 27th annual congress. More than 200 experts from over 30 countries and the most renowned research centres in the world gathered for three days in Rome to discuss how to prevent and treat overweight and obese children. Olalla Michelena, Secretary General of the EU Delegation of Make Mothers Matter, was invited as a speaker.

At the congress, ECOG and MMM presented the **project to conduct a European survey** aiming at an-

alysing and understanding attitudes and behaviours of European mothers and families that face the issues of obesity and overweight on a daily basis.

Mr Fabio Lavarone from the ECOG also presented their successful mothers' peer-to-peer program in a low socio-economic status school setting in Southern Italy. It consists on training mothers at the school of their children who then mentor other mothers in tackling overweight and child obesity. In the Southern Regions, there is prevalence of 40% of child obesity.

Obesity is a phenomenon that has reached epidemic proportions. According to WHO, globally 18% of children and adolescents (aged between 5 and 19) are overweight or obese. It is a complex phenomenon that requires a multidisciplinary approach for the definition of prevention and treatment programs that are adequate and efficient.

About Make Mother Matter – MMM

Make Mothers Matter (MMM) is an international NGO created in 1947 to raise the awareness of policy makers and public opinion on the contribution of mothers to social, cultural and economic development. MMM has no political or religious affiliations, and thus transparently voices the concerns of mothers at international level with permanent MMM representatives at the United Nations (General Consultative Status), UNESCO and the European Union. MMM federates a network of about 40 grass-root organisations working across the world to advance the rights of women and children.

Compiled by Irina Pálffy-Daun-Seiler, MMM Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, with input from Marie-Liesse Mandula, MMM Secretary General, and Olalla Michelena, Secretary General of the European Delegation of MMM.

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Recent and Forthcoming events

2018

January

- 14-20: Big Sandy Family Week (Big Sandy, TX, USA)
<https://familyconferences.org>

February/March

- 28-02: 19th Biennial Helping Families Change Conference (Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, CA, USA)
<https://helpingfamilieschange.org/>

June

- 13-16: FCEI 2018 (Bad Ischl, Austria)
<http://www.fcei.at>
- 22-24: AHCF Family Meeting (Iselin, New Jersey, USA)
<http://ahckids.org>

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