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Quarterly Bulletin of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Dear Readers of 'Families International',

This 121st issue of 'Families International' principally concerns the 60th United Nations Commission for Social Development (UNCSD) (February 7th-16th, 2022), to which, as annually, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) had the opportunity to submit statements regarding this year's priority theme "Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda". A selection of these written statements is part of this issue, including a joint statement signed by three member organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family (International Council of Women, International Council of Psychologists, and Kolping International) and drafted by the Committee Coordinator for the UNCSD, Franziska Reichel.

Furthermore, you can find the Annual Report 2021 from the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family as well as texts from member organisations, for example dealing with the European Year of Youth 2022 and the handling of climate change. Finally, this issue is completed by a list of recent and upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Isabella Nening, M.A.
Executive Editor

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From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family



VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY



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Digital Networks:

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ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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

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



Vienna NGO Committee on the Family



PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES 2021

At a Full Committee Meeting, which was held as a Zoom video conference, representatives of the 41 International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), who are members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, and 22 associate member organisations, discussed various institution-building projects and activities. The Board of the Committee had worked out a schedule for their implementation, which was realised in co-operation with the support of the member organisations of the Committee and their representatives. The worldwide network of civil society organisations, research and university institutions, government agencies and individuals, continues to be, not only a beneficiary of interactive exchange, but is in many cases, directly involved in the work of the Committee. The Vienna Committee on the Family, understands itself as a non-political, non-denominational umbrella organisation, with a global focus on the well-being of families worldwide, providing a bridge between families-oriented Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), The United Nations, Governments of Member States of the United Nations and Academia, as well as between CSOs themselves, through the various digital-networks set up and maintained by the Committee.

The following projects were realised in 2021

1. Families International (FI)

Issues, Nos. 117-120 of the Quarterly Bulletin of the Committee, were published online in 2021 at www.viennafamilycommittee.org From the beginning of 2021, the Editorial Committee consisted of the new Editors, and previously Deputy-Editors, Julia Birner B.A., Christin Kohler, M.A., Karin Kuzmanov M.Sc., Isabella Nening, M.A., and the Deputy-Editor, Peter Crowley, Ph.D., who had been the Editor from 2009 to 2020.

Special features in FI in 2021 included: ‘Status of Food and Nutrition in Europe & Central Asia – Challenges & Actions’; ‘The Long Term Effects of Food & Nutrition to support Childhood Growth & Development’; Issues relating to families at the 59th United Nations Commission for Social Development 2021; Each issue of Families International also included texts submitted by member organizations of the Committee, as well as other relevant texts from United Nations agencies.

Over six hundred readers of ‘Families International’ are informed by the Secretariat of the Committee by E-mail, when the latest issue is published and available to download free of cost.

2. International Forum: ‘Status of food & Nutrition in Europe & Central Asia - Challenges and Actions’ with Mary Kenny (UNFAO)

The Committee organised and scheduled an International Forum, during a Full Committee Meeting, at the United Nations Vienna International Centre (UNVIC) for Monday May 10th 2021, to observe the United International Day of Families (UNIDF) 2021, entitled “Status of food & Nutrition in Europe & Central Asia – Challenges and Actions” with Mary Kenny, a Food Safety and Consumer Protection Officer at the Food and Agricultural Office of the United Nations (UNFAO) Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) in Budapest, who has extensive experience in working with countries to strengthen national food control programmes and related food safety capacities. Mary also manages FAO’s work in the region on agri-food trade and market integration, including work on nutrition and sustainable food systems. Mary has a Degree in Environmental Health Officer and a Masters in Food Science and Technology. Due to the rapid spreading of the Covid-19 Pandemic this International Forum was held a a Zoom Video Conference. The Proceedings were published in ‘Families International’ Issue No. 119.

3. **‘15 years Longitudinal Study of the Mediatisation of Socialisation – How do the young adults perform 4 years later?’ with Dr. Philip Sinner, Paris Lodron University Salzburg**

The Committee further organised a second International Forum, during a Full Committee Meeting, originally planned to be held in person, at the United Nations Vienna International Centre, on Monday November 8th 2021, with Dr. Philip Sinner, from the University of Salzburg, on the longitudinal study which was originated in 2005 by Prof. Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink, also from the University of Salzburg. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions, the meeting was also held as a Zoom Video Conference. The Proceedings were published in ‘Families International’ Issue No. 120.

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

The Board of the Committee keeps its various networks informed with documents of United Nations Resolutions and Reports of the United Nations Secretary-General pertaining to family issues. The above mentioned International Forum, with Mary Kenny from the United Nations Food & Agricultural Office (UNFAO) was also held to observe the United Nations International Day of Families in May 2021.

The 59th United Nations Commission for Social Development (UNCSD) 2021 had as its Priority Theme: ‘Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all.’ The Committee Coordinator for the UNCSD, Franziska Reichel, drafted a statement for the Committee on this theme, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Committee, Peter Crowley Ph.D. and it was signed by a number of member organisations of the Committee and subsequently submitted to the UNCSD by the Committee, and became an official document of the UNCSD in 2021. <https://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2021/NGO/18>

The 60th United Nations Commission for Social Development (UNCSD) scheduled for February 2022, has as its Priority Theme: ‘Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.’ The Committee Coordinator for the UNCSD, Franziska Reichel, again drafted a statement for the Committee on this theme, and it was also signed by a number of member organisations of the Committee, and subsequently submitted to the UNCSD by the Committee, and has since become an official document of the UNCSD in 2022. <https://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2022/NGO/3>

An eighty page report, of a study update entitled: **‘Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisation to the Well-Being of Families’** by Peter Crowley Ph.D. then Secretary of the Committee, in cooperation with the United Nations Focal Point on the Family, which was presented by the author, at the United Nations in New York, to observe the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations International Year of the Family, is available to download, on the United Nations website: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/international-day-of-families/2014-3.html>

The following quotation from the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the General Assembly on November 26th 2019, (A/75/61-E/2020/4) which relates to activities of the Committee going back to 2019, brings to bear the appreciation of the highest office of the United Nations for the endeavours of our Committee, the Member Organisations and their representatives, for the well-being of families worldwide. “The Vienna NGO Committee on the Family organized two international forums. One forum, held in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime, was focused on the global effort to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030, in the light of Sustainable Development Goal 3. The other, which was focused on child and youth media protection, from the perspective of parents, was the third of in a series of three forums dealing with families and digital media usage, organized in cooperation with the University of Salzburg. The Committee also published its online quarterly bulletin, “Families international”, incorporating forum proceedings, with a focus on endeavours to eliminate the practice of child marriage.” <http://undocs.org/A/75/61>

5. Website of the Committee

www.viennafamilycommittee.org

This website, which was set up in 2000 is, amongst others, the main vehicle to publish our quarterly bulletin 'Families International'. Issues Nos. 117 to 120, which were published in 2021, may be downloaded from our website without cost to the reader. A button entitled 'Families Online' is available on the homepage with a direct link to the proceedings of three International Forums organised by the Committee, between 2017 and 2021, dealing with families and digital media usage.

6. The Three Digital Networks of the Committee 1203 CSOs Networked - 92 in Sub-Saharan Africa

Katharina Muegler, kindly accepted the invitation of the Committee, in 2021, to become the Committee Digital-Networks Coordinator'.

A so-called '**Digital Divide**' exists between those connected and not connected to the Internet. Statistics from the United Nations International Telecommunications Union based in Geneva, for 2021, show that 4.9 Billion or 63% of the World's present population of over 7 Billion, was connected, to the world-wide-web, which was an increase from 4.1 Billion, or 54%, in 2019. This increase may, in part, be a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The proportion of women using the internet globally in 2020, was 57%, compared to 62% percent of men. However, 2.9 Billion globally remain offline, with 96% of those living in Developing Countries. In the continent of Africa alone, only 33% of individuals were using the Internet, leaving 67% of the population offline.

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

www.10yearsIYF.org

This website continues to experience interest, as a digital network, and also as a resource archive for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 2004, with many relevant links to other sources. It resulted out of the participation of the then Chairperson of the Committee in a consultative meeting of twenty international and regional Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) set up by the United Nations Secretariat in New York, in 2002, to implement a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly to observe the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 2004. There it was agreed to prepare a study, under the chairmanship of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family on: 'Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families' since 1994. The original study, in which thirty two CSOs, from eighteen countries in five continents participated, was also published in book form with the financial support of the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities in 1994, under the title: 'Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families' and edited by P. Crowley, who presented the study at a meeting of the United Nations in New York, to observe the United Nations International Day of Families on May 15th 2004. The book was also submitted to the members of the special session of the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations on Dec. 6th 2004, to observe the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

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

www.20yearsIYF.org

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

www.civilsocietynetworks.org

An Interactive-Internet-Forum for civil society organisations world-wide, including local, national and international CSOs, as well as academic and research institutions, was set up at the request of many organisations from around the globe, and then went online in August 2004 at www.civilsocietynetworks.org. This Network had 143 member organisations from 25 countries in 2021 having incorporated the Interactive-Forums the Committee had originally set up with civil society organisations in Eastern African and in Central and Eastern European Countries, between 2000 and 2004, and then extended and opened up, as a further digital network, to worldwide membership in 2004. Civil Society Organisations worldwide can join, and participate in this Forum, free of cost, by contacting the Committee at: contact@viennafamilycommittee.org

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

The above outlined facts and figures, reflect perhaps, the ever-increasing interest generated by issues relating to families and also speak for themselves, with regard to the continued and increasing endeavours worldwide of the Committee, which observed in 2021 the 36th Anniversary of its inception in 1985.

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

Board Officers:

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

Board Members:

Julia Birner B.A., Families International,
Christin Kohler M.A., Families International,
Karin Kuzmanov M.Sc., Families International,
Oscar McConkie, Latter Day Saints Charities,
Katharina Muegler, Committee Digital-Networks Coordinator,
Isabella Nening M.A., Families International,
Franziska Reichel, Committee Coordinator,
United Nations Commission for Social Development,
Dr. Eleonora Teixeira Da Costa Rossoll,
Federation of Catholic Family Associations,
Dr. Maria Riehl, Women’s Federation for World Peace.

Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

www.viennafamilycommittee.org

Secretary : Peter Crowley, Ph.D.

January 2022

contact@viennafamilycommittee.org

Chairperson : Wolfgang Engelmaier, M.A.

Statements to the Commission for Social Development

United Nations

E/CN.5/2022/NGO/3



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5 November 2021

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Commission for Social Development

Sixtieth session

7–16 February 2022

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
Priority Theme: Inclusive and resilient recovery from
COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity
for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and
dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

**Statement submitted by International Council of Women,
International Council of Psychologists and Kolping International,
non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the
Economic and Social Council and member organizations of the
Vienna NGO Committee on the Family***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



E/CN.5/2022/NGO/3

Statement

We the undersigned international non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, recognize that several current events require both short and long-term reactions and actions to improve, in particular, the situation on poverty, malnutrition, and human rights in several communities worldwide. We are further aware, that a sustainable strategy is necessary to enable progress for social development, and in particular, to mitigate the consequences of climate change. The SDGs of the United Nations offer several possibilities to eradicate on-going inequalities and offer well-being and dignity for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic has additionally aggravated the situation of inequality. We are also aware from research of United Nations Agencies, that in particular, poorer families were especially affected from some governmental measures and economic impacts, which in turn, in some cases have led, to further and heightened social inequality. Wide-ranging international impacts of the pandemic are also visible.

The onset of the virus has accelerated the widespread digitalization of some societies, uncovering and exacerbating the so-called digital divide, in particular, in developing countries. Coupled with a so-called educational divide, this has resulted in the prevention of poorer populations and communities gaining necessary digital competencies and skills. Exacerbated inequality is further noticeable with regard to medical care, as families living in poverty, have often less options of receiving information and opportunities, particularly with regard to the Coronavirus and necessary vaccinations.

To ensure true Sustainable Social Development, a holistic and strategic approach is required, enabling developing countries to escape from poverty and build a social system enriched by equality for every single human being, regardless of their social status or gender.

We further recognize the impacts of climate change on society. Heat waves, drought, wildfires, and floods are affecting several countries worldwide, making it evident that immediate, as well as long term and sustainable action, is required, to prevent some species extinction, leading also, in some cases, to increasing numbers of famines.

We are acutely aware that ecologic, economic and societal changes are further necessary to enable stability and well-being for all. This includes the eradication of gender inequality and discrimination of women, people of colour and people of the LGBTQ+ society. True social development should lead to the growth of all individuals, and their experience of freedom. This would additionally support the acquirement of capabilities, containing knowledge, skills, and competencies, to build up sustainable societies, and enable economic and environmental changes, leading to better living standards and environments, for all individuals.

We therefore strongly support the demand to revise the 20th century social contract, which focused on the relationship between a growth economy, society, and governments, and instead, to focus, inter-alia, on current developments of inequalities affecting the well-being of humanity worldwide, calling out for systematical change in several areas. Sustainable actions are necessary to adequately protect human rights and gender equality, while mindful of historical injustices. An improved contract would also consider the importance of nature and climate protection. Additionally, a readjustment of our economic systems are also required. The inter-dependency of economic, societal and ecosystems, needs to be considered.

Sustainable ways of livelihood could also be facilitated, through the inclusion of systematical and holistic changes in our societies. A tighter inclusion of economic and climatic considerations are necessary to eradicate poverty and inequality in all aspects. Regardless of origin or social status, every individual should have universal access, to basic social services such as education, health care, safe water supply, and sanitation measures.

Current situations are often affecting, in particular, people living in poverty, especially in families. Therefore, new approaches of sustainable social development and well-being should also focus on social inequalities and their impacts on underprivileged families.

United Nations

E/CN.5/2022/NGO/14



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Commission for Social Development

Sixtieth session

7–16 February 2022

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the
twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Priority**

**Theme: Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for
sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity for all:
eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions
to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

Statement submitted by International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



E/CN.5/2022/NGO/14

Statement

This statement is presented by the International Federation for Home Economics, the only global organization representing Home Economics and related fields. Home economists maintain that homes are environments where individuals reach their full potential, live a life of dignity, and develop and express their global and local interdependence. While Home Economics supports economic development and poverty reduction through the provision of skills that lend easily to entrepreneurship, it is in emergency situations, human and natural disasters, where the support provided by a well-developed, respected, and funded Home Economics education system can really shine. Home Economists are calling for the use of policy, funding and program evaluation tools that revalue sharing and exchange outside an economized perspective. Home Economics education prepares households to provide care for their members by teaching food and financial literacy as well as sanitation and emergency preparedness.

COVID was a universal experience. Regardless of the economic or technological status of a region, be it under-developed, developing and developed, the entire human family was impacted. As the 60th Session of the UN Commission on Social Development prepares to focus on the “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda” the International Federation for Home Economics calls for a complete accounting of the ways in which the existing structures either supported or failed households seeking to feed and care for their members during an unfolding health, policy and economic crisis.

While best known for teaching the basics of household management to each generation, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that teacher educators, including Home Economists are valuable frontline workers because they are able to support individuals and families to adopt new strategies and behaviors that can build resilience. Because emergency preparedness is embedded into Home Economics as a discipline, because hygiene and home safety are foundational to the home economics as a discipline and because home economists can focus on low technology solutions any society that embeds home economics literacy into educational programs as recovery from COVID-19 is planned will be better positioned to achieve SDGs related to the reduction of poverty and hunger.

Food and Nutrition literacy equips the families for identification of novel ways to fulfil nutritional needs through a variety of available food resources. It builds resilience in food selection and preparation that can assure prevention of malnutrition and relevant morbidity. COVID-19 has witnessed the role of good nutrition in reducing the burden of infection related complications, and home economics education provides a variety of technical skills for safeguarding good nutrition. The increasing rise of for-profit opportunities for “on-demand” food, often with low nutritional value, has resulted in families that do not know how to cook and the off-siting of food production from households also reduces the opportunity for food related exchanges with neighboring households. As COVID-19 has demonstrated, this on-demand, prepared food expectation leaves people vulnerable in the case of an emergency, when off-site production of food is snarled by supply chain issues or broken by “lock-downs” of neighborhoods. A positive adaptation to COVID-19 was the sharing of food resources through formal and informal community food banks. Acting in solidarity, not for profit, community driven sharing reduced food waste and provided a solution to food chain breakdowns. Producing hope through community-based action, food sharing reduces the shame and “othering” associated with food

pantries by being openly available to all households regardless of income or class, and thereby reframes food security.

The Building Community Capacity approach to human development has identified affiliation or social relations not only as a central capability but a crucial one for it can be an area of fertile functioning. Families are the primary social relations essential for human development as they provide care that goes beyond the material economy. Families serve as an area of fertile functioning providing for the formation and exercise of other central capabilities of its members. Families that are given opportunities to develop Home Economics literacies, such as food literacy can maximize resources and create an environment that supports bodily health and integrity, imagination, reason, play, as well as social and environmental concern. Thus, the economic entitlements given to families for poverty reduction like cash transfers would have a multiplying effect that goes beyond financial or food security.

In many developing countries, the care economy of the family, though largely undervalued in development measures, is the vital social structure that enabled families to survive and recover from the negative impacts of COVID-19. Through the lockdowns that disturbed supply chains and institutional efficiency, families thrived through the sharing of food, health, and information resources. Families have turned to home gardening to augment their food supply. Home economists shared creative ways of preparing nutritious and tasty meals out of relief goods. Knowledge sharing on effective ways of dealing with stress from the work-school home arrangements were organized by various home economics organizations. There is great need to strengthen opportunities to develop home economics literacies and harness the cooperation within families especially in times of crisis. During the recovery from COVID-19, an assessment of food sharing infrastructure should be commissioned to plan and fund an increase in food literacy and inclusive, community-based access to shared food.

United Nations

E/CN.5/2022/NGO/38



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Commission for Social Development

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7–16 February 2022

Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Priority Theme: Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda

Statement submitted by Make Mothers Matter – with the support of Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation Inc., Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary International Alliance of Women, International Presentation Association, Salesian Mission Inc., Soroptimist International, UNANIMA International, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund Inc., Women’s Federation for World Peace International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



E/CN.5/2022/NGO/38

Statement

Care and Education at the heart of a transformative recovery from Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to dramatic losses in human life and devastating economic and social disruption and pain worldwide, brutally exposing and exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities.

Before the pandemic, women, mothers in particular, were already more represented in informal economies, less likely to have access to social protection, less paid than men, over-represented in poverty statistics, and economically penalized by their disproportionate share of unpaid care work. The pandemic only worsened their situation.

Mothers were hit particularly hard

Increase of unpaid family care work, especially childcare:

With the closure of schools and childcare services, home schooling and family members tele-working, as well as the reduction in care support provided by the extended family members, notably grandmothers, mothers absorbed a large part of the lockdown shock with unpaid care work.

Loss of job or livelihoods:

A number of economic sectors with a large proportion of female employees were particularly hit by the economic crisis that followed lockdowns and had to enforce lay-offs (e.g. tourism, non-food retail...). Many mothers who were in part time or precarious employment in order to remain available to their families also lost their jobs. Or they had to quit because of the increase in unpaid care work and the resulting lack of time for paid work. Others simply lost their livelihoods as informal workers because of lockdowns.

The direct consequence is poverty increase, with approximately 96 million people pushed into poverty as a result of covid-19, of whom 47 million are women and girls; pulling up to 435 million the number of women and girls living on less than \$1.90 a day globally.

Deterioration in mental health:

In addition to anxieties about new contaminations and economic uncertainties, ongoing lockdowns, increased care responsibilities, the challenges of work life balance, isolation and disconnection from usual support networks, all contributed to exhaustion and mental health deterioration in mothers – especially single mothers.

Challenges to accessing quality, essential maternal and newborn maternal health services:

Resources and health workers, including midwives, had to be diverted to Covid-19 response efforts, disrupting maternal and child health services. In addition, pregnant women and mothers with newborns experienced difficulties accessing services due to lockdown measures and restricted access to health facilities. They were also reluctant to go to health facilities due to fear of infection.

This situation could be life threatening in the event of complications during pregnancy or around childbirth, and maternal mortality and morbidity is expected to increase, especially in low-income countries.

Spotlight on key failures of our social and economic systems

As we continue to confront this crisis and its fallout, with the inevitable disruption to our society and economy, we are reminded that there are lessons also to be learned as it has put a spotlight on key failures of our social and economic systems.

In particular:

1. The crisis has shown how Care is central to our lives. It has shown that whether paid or unpaid, this essential work is not properly recognized and valued neither in our society nor in our economy. It has exposed the fact that most of the unpaid family care work falls on the shoulders of women, and how this inequitable distribution of unpaid care work and responsibilities is a challenge, in particular for mothers who have to juggle care responsibilities and paid work. It has made clear that unpaid care work is a cause of economic hardship and injustice for women.

2. The crisis has exposed gaps in social protection and the inadequacy of current systems, in particular in developing countries. It has also shown the critical role of grassroots NGOs and solidarity among people within families and communities – in filling those gaps.

The way forward: transitioning to a wellbeing economy

The covid-19 crisis provides a unique opportunity for transformative change to address these systemic failures, which particularly concern mothers. It is about changing narratives and taking action.

1. *Recognition and support of unpaid care work as essential work – and a collective responsibility*

it is high time that governments

- recognize that unpaid care work IS work, essential work
- recognize that it benefits the whole society across generations and sustains the economy – and therefore that it is public good and a collective responsibility
- address the issue of its inequitable distribution through redistributive policies and adequate public infrastructure and services
- seriously invest in supporting women, parents and other caregivers doing this valuable yet unpaid and mostly invisible work of caring and raising the next generation

Concretely, implementing the ICLS 2013 resolution on the statistics of work – which in fact recognizes unpaid care work as work - would also make it visible, on a par with Labour Statistics. Mobilising the whole government to develop a national care policy – like Uruguay did – is also one way to move forward.

2. *Universal social protection*

Social protection is key for unpaid caregivers whose time poverty often translates into poverty or lack of economic independence, especially for mothers.

Recognizing unpaid care work as work, every unpaid caregiver should have access to social protection – just like any other worker. In particular, every mother should be supported through access to social security, healthcare, pension rights and full maternity protection – whether she is engaged in paid work or not. Universal social protection is one way to answer this imperative.

E/CN.5/2022/NGO/38

Furthermore, social protection must be considered as an investment, not as an expense that should be minimized. Supporting caregivers, parents especially, through adequate public services and social protection is investing in people and families. Ultimately it is also about investing in children – and we know how critical nurturing care is during the early years of a child, and the high returns it can bring, especially for vulnerable families. Similarly, investing in maternal mental health is cost effective. And prioritizing the Covid-19 vaccine for mothers is essential for the current and future wellbeing of their children: they cannot afford to be sick – especially single mothers.

3. *Systemic transformation of our economy*

Taking a broader view, the many crises we face today (i.e. Covid-19, environmental degradation and climate change, increased inequalities, care crisis...) are deeply rooted in an economic system that fails to recognize, value, protect, and invest in what's essential to our wellbeing - it begins with Care.

As noted by UN Women's Silke Staab, "Care for people and for the natural environment, although distinct, have much in common: they largely take place outside of markets, they produce public goods whose benefits extend beyond individuals and across generations, and they are essential for the functioning, sustainability and survival of economies and humanity at large."

We have every reason to transform our economic system and drop the 'GDP growth' narrative: Gross Domestic Product only measures the monetised economy, and notably fails to account for unpaid care work and the work of nature. It also says nothing about the social or ecological relevance of this economic activity, and nothing about its 'collateral damage' (e.g women's poverty, environmental degradation...). And indeed endless 'growth' must be questioned given the physical boundaries of our planet.

It is time for a paradigm change and for governments to build a new economic system where the long-term wellbeing of people and the planet are prioritized; it is time that they transition towards a *wellbeing economy* – with care and education at the centre.

It is a political decision that can and must be made. It is about the objectives of our economic system, what it values, and the indicators that it uses to drive it.

The five governments who are part of the Wellbeing Economy Partnership (WEGo), i.e. Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales, are showing us the way. Using a participatory approach, they have defined new sets of wellbeing indicators and re-oriented policymaking and budgets to improve these indicators.

We at MMM are calling on all governments at every level to follow their lead.

About Make Mothers Matter

Make Mothers Matter (MMM) believes in the power of mothers to make the world a better place, advocating for their recognition and support as changemakers. Created in 1947, MMM is an international NGO with no political or religious affiliations, transparently voicing the concerns of mothers at the highest level: the European Union, UNESCO and the United Nations (general consultative status). MMM also federates a network of more than 40 grassroots organisations working with and for mothers in about 30 countries around the world. More on <https://makemothersmatter.org>

From the United Nations

COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



#CSocD #SDGs #GlobalGoals WEBSITE: social.un.org/csocd

EVERYONE INCLUDED

CONCEPT NOTE Families and Migration

9 February 2022
10:00 am - 11:15 pm (EST, New York time)

Online Side Event organized by
the Division for Inclusive Social Development,
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, DISD/UNDESA

Migration is one of the mega trends impacting families worldwide. In 2022, the Focal Point on the Family, Division for Inclusive Social Development focuses on migration and urbanization trends as part of the preparations for the upcoming thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2024 (IYF+30).

The side event of the Commission for Social Development is to address current migration trends and their impact on families. In line with the priority theme of the Commission, *“Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda”*, the event will also address migration and its role in poverty reduction and its contributions to the achievement of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

We are witnessing the deepening process of globalization, characterized by increased mobility and migration. Family members migrate in search of better economic and educational opportunities ensuring better lives for the families they leave behind. Families mostly benefit economically from the new opportunities but

may become fragmented in the countries of origin and marginalized in the countries of destination.

Although mobility between locations is mostly seen as an individual decision, in fact, mobility within a country and migration abroad is entrenched in family practices and decision-making. Many migrants are motivated by a sense of family obligation to contribute to family wellbeing and improve their economic situation. Often, families designate a particular family member, with most chances to succeed, to migrate with an expectation of his or her contribution to family left behind.

It is not only economic hardship and desire to improve economic circumstances that cause migration. Civil strife and conflict cause large flows of individuals from low-income to high-income countries as well, often leading to growing hostilities between native born individuals and migrants, creating political tensions and restrictive policy responses. Policies and laws preventing migrants from having family members reside or even visit have become common in many countries, resulting in fragmented households, exacerbating inequalities and highlighting interdependency between individuals and families.

Agenda 2030 features migration under SDG10, target 10.7 “ *to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies*. Some of the other SDG targets note specific types of migration, including, *labour migration* (8.7 and 8.8), *international student mobility* (4.b), *human trafficking* (5.2, 8.7 and 16.2), *remittances* (10.c), and *migration data* (17.18).

As migration-related issues are visible throughout the SDGs, the importance of support for migrants and their families through effective policies grows and deserves further attention.

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2030 Development Agenda

Parenting and Climate Change

Capabilities to prepare children for the future

1 December 2021



Photo: Migs Reyes [Pexels]

The nascent research on parenting and climate change has primarily emphasized parental responsibilities and provided advice for parents. However, so far, the parental perspective has been minimally studied and how parents themselves experience raising children in climate change times is yet to be explored.

The complex nature of climate change information and the prevailing uncertainty around global political decision-making processes are reflected in the experiences of parents as feelings of insufficiency and disempowerment.

Based on the findings of this exploratory research, it is argued that parents need to be cared for to be able to become caring parents for their children in times of climate change. In line with this argument, a caring research agenda has been formulated with both discovery-based and interventionist dimensions and a series of research questions have been proposed.

The urgency of climate change action

Living in times of climate change is very unsettling as we are increasingly experiencing the impacts in our daily lives. Thinking ahead and trying to imagine what to expect in

This study presents a preliminary understanding of the lived experiences of parents raising children in times of climate change. Following a descriptive phenomenological methodological approach, data was collected through open and conversational interviews with the participation of 12 parents.

Findings indicated that parents experience sadness, hopelessness and anxiety about the future of their children. The larger systems that parents are embedded in create limitations to the extent to which and ways through which parents can act.

Sometimes, their actions contradict what they perceive to be the right action creating a sense of compromised integrity and feelings of guilt towards their children.

*Extracts from 'The experiences of parents raising children in times of climate change: Towards a caring research agenda'.
A. Idil Gaziulusoy. December 2020.*

Original available at
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crsust.2020.100017>

the coming decades is undeniably a burdensome cognitive endeavor, particularly given the current uncertainties associated with political processes and stagnating action. The burden of this cognitive endeavor is topped up by feelings of loss for an increasing number of us who observe and anticipate the environmental changes in near and far locations – climate change-induced grief is becoming part and parcel of our experience with the current status of the world [1].

Based on the current outlook, unfolding possible futures are bleak. In a recent special report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) discussed the impacts of a global average temperature rise of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels on natural and human systems. According to the report, human activities have already caused an approximately 1 °C temperature rise above pre-industrial levels and the increase is likely to reach 1.5 °C between 2030 and 2052 if the trend continues at the current rate.

Climate change and parenting

Given this current outlook, the children and youth of today will be exposed to significant risks during their lifetime. Three major reasons cause concern about their coping ability. [2] First, children are more vulnerable to the direct socio-economic, environmental and health impacts of climate change. Second, most young people know about climate change and are worried about its impacts on their lives. Third, they will grow up in a world going through dramatic changes (resulting from the locked-in effects of climate change), including the significant lifestyle changes associated with the required rapid transitions to low-carbon futures or, in the case of a failure in action, impacts that could render the planet largely uninhabitable in their lifetime. These concerns bring into focus societal actors with care responsibilities to children, particularly, and arguably primarily, the parents of today.

Parenting and climate change form a nascent research area. The existing limited empirical and theoretical literature focuses on, for example, the impact and implications of being a parent on climate change [3] the responsibility of parents in regards to urgently needed climate change action [4], advice on parental behavior and parenting models [5], the dilemmas faced by parents in managing health risks for children and undertaking pro-environmental behavior at home [6], quantified measures of parental-worry levels about climate change [7] and complex interrelationships between how changing parenting practices respond to the broader socio-cultural context and influence the climate change impacts of certain sectors, such as agriculture. [8]

Articulating parental responsibilities and prescribing parental advice on how parents can and should help their children are important contributions to parenting and climate change research. Similarly, quantitative research on the worry levels and risk perception

of parents provides a helpful backdrop for understanding parental psychology regarding climate change. Empirical work on macro-scale dynamics between parental practices and sectorial-level climate change impacts, deepen our understanding of the complexities associated with parenting and climate change. This body of work, therefore, also underlines the importance of adopting a systemic and multi-scale perspective in parenting and climate change research to be able to identify and intervene in multiple leverage points in policy and practice across several knowledge domains.

Understanding the experiences of parents

To make the best use of the findings from this emerging research and to expand its boundaries, understanding the experiences of parents raising children during times of climate change from the perspective of parents is also needed. This is because the capacity of parents to fulfill their parental responsibilities and to enact various advice on parenting while negotiating the dilemmas they encounter is contingent on how they experience raising children in times of climate change. The specifics of what parents actually worry about, how they live with and through these worries and the implications of these experiences on their parenting are yet to be studied.

Starting with this framing, this article contributes to the emerging research on parenting and climate change by presenting a preliminary understanding of the lived experiences of parents raising children in times of climate change. The research is explorative in its nature avoiding generalizations. The main aim is to provide some pointers for future research on understanding parental experiences related to climate change.

To be or not to be a parent

Perhaps one of the first questions that comes to mind in regard to parenting and climate change relates to the very decision people make about becoming a parent. There, in fact, exist heated debates about whether people should even have children in the first place if they care about climate change. [9] This discussion is multi-faceted and highly complex, requiring in-depth and critical analysis of the rights and responsibilities of individuals, and private and public organizations, as well as those of governments, considering the ethical, legal and practical dimensions; it is not likely to be settled soon or easily.

Although this article focuses on people who are already parents, it is important to acknowledge that deliberating whether or not to have children is now perhaps more complex than ever and arguably requires considerations above and beyond individuals' abilities to meet basic parenting responsibilities. An older study found that the decision to remain childfree was only marginally affected by environmental concerns. [10] This may

change as the impacts of climate change become more widely experienced by people in their everyday lives. Nevertheless, most people become parents, and this is unlikely to change in the near future. In addition, those people who are already parents are implicated by climate change in multiple ways. It is therefore important to emphasize understanding the multiple ways in which being a parent and parenting relate to climate change.

First and foremost, having children is associated with the significant 'carbon legacies' of individuals, ranging across several generations. [11] However, this is only from the perspective of population increase – the impact of becoming a parent; once a child is born, that child becomes an emitter. There is also another side of the coin that relates to how being a parent influences individuals' emissions. On this, a recent study in the Swedish context has found that parents emit significantly more greenhouse gas emissions than those adults who are not parents. [12] The increased emissions were mainly tied to increased transportation and changed food consumption. Also, regardless of gender, becoming a parent increases individuals' worry about impacts on the climate. [13] However, some implied that such increased worry does not automatically translate into becoming a greener person; on the contrary, the evidence suggests that becoming a parent increases individuals' emissions. Therefore, the conclusion from this paragraph is that by becoming a parent, an individual becomes a source of increased emissions, both in the short term and in the long term.

This brings into focus the topic of the responsibilities of parents in regard to climate change. Whether parents can be held directly responsible for increased emissions that relate to child raising and intergenerational carbon legacies, and if so, to what extent, is a politically and ethically delicate discussion. Although this discussion cannot be held at length here without losing the focus of the article, a note is necessary to highlight that the emissions generated by individuals are a systemic result. Shifting the responsibility for reducing or eliminating the emissions that can be directly attributed to becoming a parent solely onto individuals disregards the fact that in their choices, those individuals are, to a large extent, bound by the actions and decisions of politicians and businesses; they do not necessarily have the power to choose between alternatives as to the alternatives either do not exist (e.g. an energy system that is fully based on renewable energy) or are not accessible to all (e.g. about three billion people rely on traditional fuels for cooking).

Do parents then have a responsibility to influence political and societal decision-making and institutional changes? Indeed, Cripps (2017) argued that, from a philosophical point of view, the parents of today have a special shared duty to their children and their indirect descendants by having caused their children to exist in a state of vulnerability to certain harms in the first place and, by bringing children into the world, they have caused the prospect of a whole line of

descendants who will also be vulnerable. She highlighted that the parents of today have more direct and primary responsibility for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the case of climate change, as they may be the only generation who can act upon timely mitigation.

Besides this 'action responsibility', parents are also responsible to influence the behavior of their children in a pro-environmental direction, at least to alleviate some of the indirect emissions attributable to their carbon legacy. In support of this, there is early empirical evidence that suggests that family-based discussions on climate change, regardless of parents' disposition and concern levels, predict more climate change-mitigating behavior among children. [14] Similarly, parental perceptions of climate change risk and individual agency to influence mitigation are correlated with adolescents' risk and efficacy perception, as well as with information-seeking behavior about climate change. [15] Another study argued that parents should adopt an authoritative (eco-) parenting model in order to affect their children's ability to protect the environment, and mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts [16]. Other researchers focused on parental advice and guidance like a series of tips for parents to help their children in developing strategies to cope with climate change. [17]

While current parents have significant responsibility for influencing political action to address climate change and educating their children as pro-environmental individuals, these responsibilities cannot be fulfilled in isolation from all systemic influencers of parental experience and behavior. In addition, there is currently very little understanding of how such complexities influence the experiences and behavior of parents. In fact, there are quite complex decisions parents have to navigate in household management that relate to emissions that they can control to a certain extent. For example, health policies about infant care during extremely hot weather and policies on energy saving are at odds in the Australian context, and there is a need for integrated, cross-sectorial policymaking in order to provide consistent advice and guidelines for parents on more adaptive practices at home [18].

At the same time, there are similar mismatches between different policy instruments in the USA, New Zealand and Germany that leave parents confused and disoriented in balancing the provision of optimal care for young children during extreme weather events, reducing energy consumption and managing energy-related household expenses [19]. They also argued that there is a need for systemic policy measures and behavioral advice that support parents across multiple vulnerabilities, such as energy poverty, the added stress of care responsibilities and isolation. The matter requires going beyond investing in cooling measures and putting effort into building social infrastructures for support and tapping into public facilities which can operate as 'cool hubs' for multiple households at the same time.

In addition to such micro-level complexities that

parents face, there are also macro-level complexities that influence the relationship between parenting and climate change. Parenting practices are not temporally or spatially static; they dynamically change in response to changes that take place in the broader societal context. The question of how changes in the broader social context influence the challenges and responsibilities of parents regarding climate change is significantly understudied but arguably central to discussions on the extent to which parents are directly responsible and can act upon their relevant responsibilities.

Based on this overview, it can be inferred that the questions about parenting and climate change cannot be easily reduced to quantified accounts of the emissions caused by becoming a parent and raising children. Additionally, the responsibilities parents have about climate change are varied, and meeting these responsibilities involves significant complexities. Although there is some emerging and important work on these complexities, research so far seems to have focused on observable, measurable and external factors. This article contributes to the emerging literature on this with its focus on how parents experience raising children during times of climate change.

Conclusions

The mitigation of future climate change and adaptation to locked-in climate change requires urgent action across all levels of society, by all actors in society. The climate has already warmed by 1 °C compared to pre-industrial levels. Currently, we are on track for higher degrees of warming; according to current estimates, the temperature rise will reach 1.5 °C between 2030 and 2052. At the moment, it is uncertain whether human society will be able to limit the temperature rise to this level; however, achieving this target will require significant lifestyle changes. If human society fails to meet this target, then the scale of required adaptation will multiply and the risks of systemic collapse increase. More so than us, the children

and youth of today will be exposed to these challenges (along with the currently unborn near-future generations).

The nascent research area of parenting and climate change has so far discussed the responsibilities of parents to care for and educate their children, generating some solid advice. It has been argued that the parents of today have a shared special responsibility towards not only their children but also to their descendants due to the possibility of being the only generation who can take action towards the timely mitigation of climate change. Starting from the position that, for parents to be able to fulfill their responsibilities and act upon advice, it is important to understand how parents experience parenting under the special circumstances of a changing climate, this article presented the findings of an explorative phenomenological study of twelve parents.

The findings indicated that parents who are concerned about the implications of climate change on their children experience sadness, hopelessness and anxiety about their children's future. They feel guilt and that their integrity is compromised because they believe that they cannot model the right behavior. The parents feel insufficient and disempowered because they do not think that they have the necessary resources and capabilities to prepare their children for the future.

Based on the findings of this exploratory research, it is clear that parents need informational and psychological support to be able to implement the parental advice provided in earlier research concerning their special responsibilities to their children, their indirect descendants and the current and future society regarding acting on climate change and preparing their children for the impacts and implications of a changing climate. Given that research on parenting and climate change is a nascent research area, there are multiple directions that both discovery-based and interventionist research can take to understand the experiences of parents and to develop solutions to support parents.

[1] Cunsolo and Ellis, 2018; Doherty and Clayton, 2011.
[2] Sanson et al., 2018.
[3] Murtaugh and Schlax, 2009.
[4] Cripps, 2017.
[5] Sanson et al., 2018; Nche et al., 2019.
[6] O'Sullivan and Chisholm, 2020.
[7] Ekholm and Olofsson, 2017.
[8] Burton and Farstad, 2020.
[9] Hendrixson and Gies, 2015.
[10] Langdridge et al., 2005.

[11] Murtaugh and Schlax, 2009
[12] Nordström et al., 2020.
[13] Ekholm, 2020.
[14] Lawson et al., 2019.
[15] Mead et al., 2012.
[16] Nche et al., 2019.
[17] Sanson et al., 2018.
[18] Nicholls and Strengers, 2018.
[19] O'Sullivan and Chisholm, 2020.

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Empowering the youth to thrive

Post-Covid: Mental health challenges and new opportunities

1 February 2022



Children and adolescents tend to have a milder disease compared to adults if they catch the coronavirus that causes Covid-19, but they are still struggling to cope with the pandemic. Curfews, closures, and lockdowns are taking their toll on their emotional wellbeing.

Against a decade-long pattern of deteriorating mental health among European youths, experts warn the Covid-19 pandemic made everything worse. Numerous studies observed sharp increases in rates of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and suicide attempts.

“Before the pandemic we had about 10-20% of children suffering from mental illness problems, not all of whom progressed to an impairment,” said Dr Nina Heinrichs, professor at the Department of Psychology at the University of Bremen. “Now, from the last 2 years, it looks like it’ll go up to 20-25%.”

Nevertheless, mental illness is notoriously difficult to assess in young people. According to Prof. Heinrichs, who is on the executive board of the RISE research project, which focusses on the prevention of child mental health problems, it is the externalised behaviours – of an aggressive, oppositional type – that are easiest to observe

The coronavirus pandemic has up-ended the lives of people around the world, with our youth among the hardest hit as their education, work opportunities and social lives are put on hold.

As the president of the European Commission said in her State of the Union address last September, “the pandemic has robbed young people of many opportunities to meet and make new friends, to experience and explore new cultures. While we cannot give them that time back, the EU is designating 2022 the European Year of Youth”.

Extracts from 'Empowering Europe's youth to thrive in a post-pandemic world' and 'The Covid generation: the effects of the pandemic on youth mental health' (HORIZON, the EU research and innovative magazine).

Compiled by the International Organizations Department of the International Federation for Family Development.

and get the most attention. Yet most youngsters do not misbehave, and instead hide their feelings. Internalised feelings, such as those that worsened during the pandemic, can be difficult to observe and are easily overlooked.

This means the reported rates of mental health problems among European young people are probably an underestimated. This can cause problems down the line. Prof. Heinrichs explained that 'feeling blue' can sometimes develop into full-blown disorders.

A daily measure of adolescents' mood

Studying the development of prosocial behaviour in adolescence since 2016, a group of researchers in the Netherlands could not ignore the impact of the pandemic. Under the PROSOCIAL project, they sent daily questionnaires to more than 600 adolescents in Rotterdam asking them about their mood and daily experiences. The results showed that as the pandemic wore on, rates of tension increased while vigour decreased. These trends did not ease even during respites from lockdowns and other restrictions, for example over summer.

"We see in periods of disaster that the socio-economic inequalities that already exist in society enlarge," said Eveline Crone, professor of Developmental Neuroscience in Society at Erasmus University Rotterdam. As the coordinator of PROSOCIAL, she explained why. "Children who are already advantaged in terms of being in good schools or having parental support, they don't suffer that much during homeschooling. Children who are dependent on the schools for their personal growth get hit the hardest."

The pattern is clear across Europe and beyond: families and communities that were already economically disadvantaged suffered the effects of Covid worse.

Growing up in lockdown

"COVID lockdowns have forced families to live together, often in small homes, for long periods," said Lucie Cluver, professor at Oxford University, UK, and coordinator of the HEY BABY project, which aims to assess resilience-promoting pathways for families. Prof. Cluver said this has created enormous stresses for families, "on top of Covid's economic effects including reduced income and job losses."

HEY BABY also revealed a related global increase in family violence, including partner violence and violence towards children. All this compounds the

child mental illness problems directly, and via increases in cyber-bullying.

Schools, apart from their educational benefits, provide students with a refuge from family dramas, routine, activities, and sense of community. The closure of schools disrupted or ended these supports for students and parents.

Instead, students faced homeschooling, and many families have struggled with that too. Homeschooling at a minimum requires a quiet room and computer access, resources that some households cannot easily provide, especially if they are crowded. Homeschooling is more effective when parents supervise and are available for questions, yet unfortunately this is not always possible.

A silver lining

Many might expect stressed, unsupported youths to express their frustrations destructively. "We definitely did observe that young people developed more negative feelings during the pandemic," said Prof. Crone. "But on the other hand, we observed a need to give support to friends. This increased as the pandemic went on. We refer to these as pro-social experiences, because they are social acts directed towards the benefit of others."

PROSOCIAL also examined how young people directed help towards friends and family. Youths aged 18-25 reported more prosocial experiences towards their families, while experiences towards friends peaked in the 15-17 age group. These findings were unrelated to socio-economic factors. PROSOCIAL researchers also observed that helping others was associated with an increase in vigour, showing that giving help is a basic need for adolescents.

"One of the biggest misunderstandings of adolescence is that it's only a time of trouble," continued Prof. Crone. "Of course, there are some tensions in every family ... but the idea that all adolescents develop into inconsiderate risk-takers is a misunderstanding." Although most young people show a reward sensitivity, only about 10-15% get into trouble with excessively risky behaviours. Troubled youngsters often get most of the attention, yet PROSOCIAL's results indicate that most adolescents develop into socially considerate and committed young people who feel an innate need to contribute.

The PROSOCIAL team discovered that the same region of the brain corresponding to personal rewards (the ventral striatum) is also activated by helping others. This led to a new understanding of the adolescent brain as being ripe for social

learning opportunities, and that providing opportunities for youths to help others is vital for their development.

“Prosocial opportunities help adolescents to see the perspectives of others and give them good feelings as well,” said Prof. Crone. “We all have a fundamental need to be part of the group and to matter to others around us, but this is particularly enlarged during adolescence. Helping others feels good.”

Tips for families

People need support to cope with stressful times. The right support for young people and their families can make a huge difference.

HEY BABY and RISE worked together, co-leading a Covid parenting emergency response in conjunction with Parenting for Lifelong Health, an initiative with the World Health Organization and UNICEF, and the European Commission.

Dr Jamie Lachman, senior researcher and teaching fellow at Oxford University, co-led the collaboration with Prof. Cluver. “Funding from the European Research Council and other partners was essential in allowing us to rapidly respond to the situation, and build an interagency collaboration that endorsed and supported the dissemination of parenting resources on a global level,” said Lachman. The results formed the basis of the tips for families.

The tips have been delivered to 210 million people in 198 countries and territories worldwide and have been used by 33 national governments including many in Europe. The advice has even been adapted into a song by a team of Broadway composers and producers.

The tips cover spending quality time with children, praising them for behaving well, parents saying what behaviour they want, creating routines, sensitively handling misbehaviour and supporting families experiencing illness and bereavement from Covid-19. The tips also help parents take care of themselves.

Prof. Cluver summarised one of the simplest and most useful parenting tactics. “When you want to scream or throw something, try to take a moment and count to 10, breathing in and out slowly. If you can get into a different room, great; if not, look away for a moment. Just give yourself a chance to calm down before you say or do anything. It can really help.”

Young people need advice too. Esteban de Manuel Keenoy is Director of the Institute for Health Services Research in Spain, and coordinator of the UPRIGHT project. He spearheaded a collective team response to Horizon’s questions. The group said that resilience

can be taught, but also that it is vitally important youngsters are taught this before they encounter serious problems. This would allow children and adolescents to thrive better in most situations and to avoid the development of mental illness as a response to stressful events.

UPRIGHT examined the teaching of resilience, including the roles of families and schools. Not surprisingly, the study concluded that families or primary caregivers play the main role in emotional education. Families that provide a safe and nurturing environment are best for developing confidence, inner strength, and self-esteem. Yet schools play a vital role too, especially since the ages of schooling are the ideal developmental period to acquire such important life skills.

The UPRIGHT team designed an intervention programme where the entire communities of 17 schools from five countries were trained in both personal and community resilience skills. Also, 22 school communities served as a control to compare the effectiveness of the intervention. Together, these taught 18 mental-health skills across four broad categories (coping, efficacy, mindfulness, and social-emotional learning) as a subject separate from the normal school curriculum.

The group that participated in the programme reversed the trend of deteriorating youth mental health observed during the pandemic, improving almost to pre-pandemic levels.

A downward trend in youth mental health is not hopeless. Although young people generally have little control over their situation, many have nevertheless stepped up to the challenge, coping with Covid themselves by helping others cope. This, combined with making resilience training a normal part of school life, and providing opportunities to contribute, can bring significant developmental changes that protect against mental illness. Supporting young people helps everyone.

Celebrating Youth

The EYY 2022 does not come straight out of the blue, as it builds on the achievements of past programme to involve young people as decision-makers. They include the EU Youth Dialogue, a mixture of young people – particularly the disadvantaged – along with youth organisations, plus policymakers, and other experts to create the 11 youth goals that form the EU Youth Strategy under the slogan ‘Engage, Connect, Empower.’

Featuring conferences, events, and promotional campaigns around Europe, the EYY will focus on green, digital, social inclusion, support for good mental

health, and other issues close to the hearts of Europe's younger generation.

Besides budgets of €1 billion for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, Europe's parliamentarians also provided an extra €8 million top-up for the two programmes to support EYY 2022 activities, with the proviso that young people must be involved in deciding how the money should be spent.

Even before Covid-19, youth across Europe enjoyed the benefits of numerous other EU programmes geared to helping them find work, educational opportunities or traineeships, like the EU's Youth Guarantee, and the Youth Employment Initiative. Others include the EURES targeted mobility programme, while a new initiative called ALMA will be launched in 2022 to support cross-border professional mobility for disadvantaged youth.

Among the multiple offerings focused on youth are several rural development programmes for young farmers, plus research and innovation programmes, and actions on climate change – including EU programmes with international outreach or of a cross-national nature.

Boosting opportunities for Europe's youngsters also includes exciting initiatives such as the European Education Area, the updated European Digital Action Plan, the European Skills Agenda, and the Youth Employment Support.

The EYY also goes hand in hand with the successful implementation of NextGenerationEU – the whopping €800 billion investment programme for the whole of the EU's post-pandemic recovery, which provides funds, loans and grants across a wide swathe of sectors.

European Year of Youth

That's what the EU's Youth Portal asked youngsters in a poll, whose results were published in December 2021. Most said they would like to actively contribute to the EYY 2022, and interact with young people from other European countries, while they are primarily interested in the topics of education and training, climate, health and mental wellbeing, as well as in matters of inclusion.

They see the year as an opportunity for more interactions with youth across Europe, a chance for young people to take part in the decision-making process

and to make their voices heard at European level. Most of those surveyed expect to be given more opportunities to interact with others through cross-border activities, trainings, cultural exchanges, Pan-European festivals, and other large events. Some stressed the need for recovery programmes after the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on their daily lives.

The EYY is also a chance "to put aside our differences and to build a shared Europe that goes beyond our national identities," according to one interviewee. Meanwhile, others view it as an opportunity to bridge the generation gap.

Last but not least, the 2022 Conference on the Future of Europe will highlight the EU's commitment to encouraging its youth to participate in setting the agenda, by presenting the views and opinions of young people on the future of the EU. What's more one-third of participants in the European Citizens' Panels and of Panel representatives to the Conference Plenaries are also young people, while the President of the European Youth Forum also takes part as champion for the young.

With this in mind, we look forward to seeing Europe's younger citizens at one of the many activities organised by EU institutions, Member States, and civil society organisations to celebrate the wonderful Year of Youth and our young people.

Horizon's series about today's youth

In this context, Horizon will focus on youth and the issues they face today. This month, we speak to researchers across Europe who are studying what it's like to be young in Europe today. For instance, we speak to scientists studying the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on children and young people in Europe. We also meet researchers investigating the inequalities experienced by young people in urban contexts. We find out why young people have become the demographic age group most at risk of experiencing poverty in Europe.

In addition, we explore the socialisation process that is central to understanding the degree of young people's participation in politics and society.

Our Monthly Focus on youth will also include an investigation into the rejuvenation of rural life. We meet scientists analysing trends and making an inventory of rural futures of today's youth.



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MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

MMM statement for CSW66: Empowering mothers to mitigate and adapt to climate change

In its written statement submitted last October for the 66th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66, 14 to 25 March 2022), Make Mothers Matter focused on the specific impacts of climate change on women as mothers, and the key role mothers can potentially play in mitigation and adaptation.

Climate change has become a global emergency, already impacting the lives of many and threatening the lives of even more people. Like most crises, it has a multiplier effect on existing crises like those related to health, poverty or hunger and exacerbates existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. Around the world, women are among the most affected by climate change, especially when gender intersects with other factors like ethnicity, age, disability, a migrant background or low socio-economic status.

1. Mothers are on the front line and experience particular challenges in facing climate change

- Climate-change related extreme weather events, such as droughts, flooding or the salinisation of soil and water, destroy the natural resources many mothers rely on for their family's livelihoods. As a result, they need to walk longer distances to secure clean water and fire fuel for cooking, thereby further reducing the time they have for income-generating activities. In fact, climate change exacerbates the lack of basic public infrastructure and services (including access to water and sanitation, energy, health and social services).
- Climate change has an important impact on agriculture, directly affecting rural women around the world, who represent 70% of the agricultural workers and are also often engaged in subsistence farming. It threatens their livelihood and their ability to feed themselves and their families.
- Climate change effects on agriculture also result in food shortages pushing food prices up and making it increasingly difficult for the poorest families to feed themselves – in which case a mother often prioritises other family members over herself.
- Climate change impacts maternal, neonatal, and child health through maternal malnutrition, environmental risks, and emerging infectious – often waterborne – diseases¹. New climate patterns like heat waves particularly affect children and infants, who are more vulnerable to dehydration and heat stress, as well as to respiratory diseases, allergies and fever. An increase in children's health issues results in more unpaid care work for mothers.
- Stress linked to climate change effects, related disaster risks and the need to adapt also take their toll on maternal mental health – and as a result, also on a mother's ability to take care of her children.
- Climate change forces people to migrate in search of paid work and a better future. And because of social norms that deem it more acceptable for a man to migrate, it is first the men who migrate, often leaving women behind, together with children and older people.

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30246-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30246-1/fulltext)



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2. Mothers are also often the most concerned about climate change – as it threatens their children's future – and this triggers action

According to research conducted in the US, 83% of mothers across the political spectrum are concerned about climate change, compared to less than 60% of the general population².

This shows that well-informed/educated mothers are also likely to be the most motivated to implement changes in their personal and family lives, aiming at:

- mitigation: e.g. taking steps to reduce GHG emissions through low-carbon practices, and more generally, to reduce their environmental footprint through the daily choices they make for themselves and their families;
- adaptation: e.g. taking action to adapt to new or expected circumstances, like adapting their crops and livestock to a new climate and environment, or using solar-powered cooking stoves.

Mothers also have the capacity to mobilise other mothers, and organise and find new creative ways to take action at community level such as solidarity actions. They are able to motivate other mothers to demand action from their governments. This is what an organisation like Mothers Out Front³ is doing.

And it is no coincidence that the few countries leading systemic change towards well-being economies⁴, i.e. economic systems that serve the well-being of people and the planet, are mostly led by women.

3. Empowering mothers to mitigate and adapt to climate change

Human action has been changing the Earth's climate in unprecedented and destructive ways. Only human action at every level can possibly limit climate change and its impacts.

While mothers are among the most affected by climate change, they are also well-positioned to take action to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. They are a force to be reckoned with.

We are therefore calling on member states to:

- take action now, mobilise every stakeholder at every level, and cooperate with one another – time is running out;
- recognise the differentiated impacts that climate change has on women, in particular on maternal and child health, and on women's unpaid care work and their ability to earn an income, feed their family and send their children to school;
- include maternal help in disaster response and pregnancy care as part of resilience programmes;
- inform and educate everyone, including women and girls, about climate change and possible mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- support and empower mothers to take action at the family and community levels;
- recognise the specific skills and knowledge that women can bring in climate action;
- take a participatory approach when elaborating adaptation policies; include women and grassroots women's rights organisations in all decision-making to ensure that it is effective, meets the specific needs of women and children, and will not exacerbate inequalities and other vulnerabilities.

Climate change, human rights and gender equality are indissociable.

Download the MMM CSW66 statement [here](#).

² <https://grist.org/beacon/moms-vs-climate-change/>

³ <https://www.mothersoutfront.org/>

⁴ <https://weall.org/>



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Shouldn't every mother have the right to social security?

On the occasion of an intersessional panel discussion on “The right to social security in the changing world of work” at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Make Mothers Matter reaffirmed the critical importance, relevance and legitimacy of the right to social security for unpaid caregivers, especially mothers. MMM emphasised the need to change narratives around unpaid care work and social protection.

In her intervention, Shahra Razavi, Director of the Social Protection Department of the International Labour Organization (ILO), recalled that the right to social security is enshrined in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), as well as the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), which most member states have ratified. She also stressed that investing in social protection is necessary for development and that it pays off: it reduces poverty and inequality, and it expands people's life choices. The impediments which are often put forward include financing and informal work, but these are policy choices and laws to change. Social protection could and should cover all types of workers.

We at MMM go even further and argue that **the right to social security should also apply to unpaid caregivers, in particular mothers.**

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed how the inequitable distribution of care responsibilities is a source of economic injustice for women, and the challenges that most mothers and other unpaid caregivers face in trying to juggle care with paid work.

Investing in care and supporting women, parents and other caregivers doing the essential yet unpaid and mostly invisible work must be at the heart of a new social contract. As part of such a contract, unpaid care work must be recognised as work, essential work, which sustains the economy and benefits society as a whole. It must therefore be recognised as being our collective responsibility.

This means that every unpaid caregiver should have access to social security just like any other worker. In particular, every mother should have access to income security, health care, pension rights and full maternity protection.

Social protection must also be considered as an investment, not as an expense to be minimised. Supporting caregivers, especially parents, through adequate public services AND social protection is investing in people and families. Ultimately, it is also about investing in children, which brings high returns, especially for vulnerable families.

To summarise, the pandemic provides a unique opportunity for systemic changes and a new social contract, and this begins by changing narratives:

1. Unpaid family care work IS work, essential work.
2. Supporting this unpaid care work through social protection is both our collective responsibility and an investment.
3. The right to social security must therefore be part of a new social contract where care and education are key.

Find more information [here](#).



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MMM France presents results of first 1000 Days Survey

To advocate for the needs and expectations of mothers in relation to the French government's forthcoming reform on the #1000premiersjours (#First1000Days), MMM France was determined to hear and consult mothers first, and launched its survey "Donnons la parole aux mères" (Let's Give Mothers a Voice) in November 2020. The results were presented to local and regional policymakers at a dinner at the Versailles town hall in autumn 2021.

This early childhood period of the first 1000 days between approximately the 4th month of pregnancy and age 2 lays the foundation for the health and well-being of the individual throughout life. It is also a time when the role and well-being of mothers is critical. As neuropsychiatrist Boris Cyrulnik, President of the 1000 Days Commission, points out, "To provide security for the child, we must provide security for the mother".

To date, more than 22,000 mothers have been able to express their experiences and needs regarding pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, post-partum, maternity and parental leave, the place of the father, and the reconciliation of work and family life. Thanks to the fruitful collaboration between MMM France and [IDM Families](#), the survey presents concrete figures for the first time on the needs and experiences of mothers, figures that are certified and representative as regards data processing and sampling. The first results from 20,000 responses were presented on 3 June 2021 during a live webinar. The recording can be viewed [here](#).

Here some results of the survey with key figures

76% of women said their approach to childbirth changed after their first birth; they would like a less clinical setting for childbirth:

93% are in favour of the creation of new birthing centres.

86% are in favour of integrating home births into the healthcare system.

The majority of women want better support:

31% of them did not feel respected by the medical team.

29% of respondents have experienced obstetric violence, 13% think it is likely.

1/3 of mothers experience post-partum depression.

For better risk prevention, they suggest longer paternity leave, better support and systematic home support during the first two months after childbirth.

Post-partum depression is more common among women who have experienced obstetric violence (46% versus 29%).

44% of mothers said they had experienced parental burnout:

Over 80% of them want to be able to choose:

– the type of parental leave best suited to their needs: a short, well-paid parental leave versus a long, low-paid parental leave;

– how to allocate this leave as they see fit within their couple.

Last but not least, 96% of the 22,000 mothers surveyed by MMM France said they recognised themselves in this statement:

"Society expects me to work as if I didn't have children and to have children as if I didn't work."



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The survey that will underpin MMM France's upcoming advocacy and action for mothers is still online.

Find more information [here](#).

Migrant women's mental health & well-being

Make Mothers Matter was asked to contribute to the report on *Migrant women's mental health and well-being*, initiated by the European Network of Migrant Women. The aim of this report is to signal the profound impact that migration can have on the mental well-being of women and girls.

The research underlines the lack of availability and accessibility of quality women-centred and culturally appropriate support services.

MMM reported on the existence of barriers experienced by migrant mothers in accessing maternal health care in Europe. We highlighted issues such as high out-of-pocket payments, language barriers and the absence of clear policies and information, a fear of being deported, the distances to medical facilities, and biases among health care professionals.

We also called for raising awareness among policymakers, the general public but also among health care professionals and migrant women and other vulnerable groups of mothers. Mothers need to know their rights and receive the necessary information on how to access proper maternal care.

Access the full contribution [here](#).

Maternal health care in the EU

Last autumn, the [European Institute for Gender Equality](#) (EIGE) released its [Gender Equality Index 2021](#) report. The 2021 Index focuses on the links between health and gender equality.

Make Mothers Matter participated in the preparatory experts' meetings organised by EIGE in early 2021 and contributed with its position paper on [Maternal Health Care in the EU](#) and subsequently, summarised it in a policy brief.

Gender inequalities in earnings and income are closely related to care duties for children – or other family members – which fall disproportionately on mothers. This has severe negative effects on women's income, affecting their health (e.g no access to health insurance in certain countries, lack of proper nutrition and a healthy diet).

Despite many international and European legal instruments addressing the right to maternal health care, obstacles remain. Countless studies and investigations on Universal Health Coverage in the EU identify certain institutional and organisational barriers in accessing maternal health care, including high out-of-pocket payments, language barriers and the absence of clear policies and information, a fear of being deported, geographic distances to medical facilities, and discriminatory attitudes by health care professionals. In addition, in some EU countries, accurate data is scarce.

EIGE's Index is mostly based on 2019 data and therefore does not encapsulate the full impact of COVID-19 on gender equality. However, the report already indicates some of the consequences of the pandemic, such as acute mental distress for health workers, limited access to reproductive health services, a drop in birth rates and an increase in unpaid care work for women. The Report states: "The crisis is exposing, as never before, the crucial links between paid and unpaid work, and between the economic and health spheres."



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These issues are at the core of MMM's EU advocacy work. We are therefore hopeful that the EU will use the COVID-19 crisis as a unique opportunity to develop a transformative Care Strategy for both the formal and informal sectors. A well-balanced and sound Care Strategy would give a boost to gender equality in the EU by empowering women to choose and be able to access the care services most appropriate to their situation.

Access the full policy paper and the policy brief [here](#).

About Make Mothers Matter – MMM

Make Mothers Matter believes in the power of mothers to make the world a better place, advocating for their recognition and support as changemakers.

Created in 1947, MMM is an international NGO with no political or religious affiliations, transparently voicing the concerns of mothers at the highest level: the European Union, UNESCO and the United Nations (general consultative status).

Compiled by Irina Pálffy-Daun-Seiler, MMM Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, with input from Valérie Bichelmeier, Head of MMM UN Delegation, and Johanna Schima, Head of MMM European Delegation.

Recent & Upcoming Events

March

- Mar. 10: Are We Caring for Everyone? A Child Protection Symposium (Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), digital)
<https://www.aasw.asn.au/professional-development/are-we-caring-for-everyone-a-child-protection-symposium>
- Mar. 11-12: International Conference on Family Business (London, United Kingdom, digital)
<https://waset.org/family-business-conference-in-march-2022-in-london>
- Mar. 11-12: International Conference on Education and Poverty (Miami, United States, digital)
<https://waset.org/education-and-poverty-conference-in-march-2022-in-miami>

April

- Apr. 07-08: International Conference on Family and Society (Cancun, Mexico, digital)
<https://waset.org/family-and-society-conference-in-april-2022-in-cancun>
- Apr. 14-15: International Conference on Family Studies and Society (Cape Town, South Africa)
<https://waset.org/family-studies-and-society-conference-in-april-2022-in-cape-town>
- Apr. 25-26: International Conference on School and Environmental Psychology (Tokyo, Japan, digital)
<https://waset.org/school-and-environmental-psychology-conference-in-april-2022-in-tokyo>

May

- May 23-24: International Conference on Contemporary Family and Gender (Vancouver, Canada, digital)
<https://waset.org/contemporary-family-and-gender-conference-in-may-2022-in-vancouver>

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