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Quarterly Bulletin of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

June 2023, No. 126
Deadline for contributions: 15.08.2023

Vienna NGO Committee on the Family
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Dear Readers of 'Families International',

On May 15th, 2023, a Full Committee Meeting of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family took place in Vienna, the programme of which can be found in this 126th issue of 'Families International'. In the International Forum, which was part of the Meeting, two speakers presented their research on topics associated with migration and families.

Therefore, the majority of texts contained in this issue of the Quarterly Bulletin also concern this subject area: An article from UNICEF Innocenti discusses migration experiences of children and adolescents in Africa; a further text from UNICEF gives information about how to provide and ensure early childhood education in host countries of Ukraine's refugee children. A short article from the World Bank presents an experiment with the aim of reducing irregular migration.

Make Mothers Matter (MMM)'s contribution gives an account of the organisation's recent activities. At the end, as usual, you can find 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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FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

UNITED NATIONS VIENNA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

MONDAY May 15th 2023

(CONFERENCE ROOM C0237 C-Building)
Online via ZOOM: Enter Zoom-Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83443906387
Meeting-ID: 834 4390 6387

INTERNATIONAL FORUM
13.00 – 15.00
[Including Discussion with Presenters & Participants]

13:10-13:45: Dr. Claire Healy

Research Officer, Crime Research Section:

Presentation of the United Nations Organisation on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Report 2022, on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling with a Focus on Children

Dr. Healy is an experienced Research Officer at the UNODC Crime Research Section coordinating the UNODC Observatory on Smuggling & Migrants and conducting research, data collection analysis on trafficking in persons and smuggling of immigrants.

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14:10-14:45: Prof. Dr. Mathias Czaika

Dr. Czaika is Professor and Head of the Department for Migration and Globalization at Donau University Krems, Austria.

Climate Change Migration - Impact on Families; Presentation of Latest Research

Prof. Czaika is leading a team of 15 researchers and 5 research support staff. He is also the Coordinator of the Ph.D. Programme in Migration Studies, and first supervisor of currently seven Ph.D. students. His main research interests cover areas as wide as international migration, globalization, development, poverty, and inequality, relative deprivation, aspirations, and migration decision making; migration policy formation, policy impact evaluation, labour migration, asylum and refugees. Prof. Czaika holds a master's degree in Economics from the University of Konstanz, and a Ph.D. in Political Economy from the University of Freiburg, Germany.

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FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

15.30 – 17.00 AGENDA

(i) Approval of the Agenda

(ii) Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting FCM November 7th 2022

(iii) Report of the Chairperson & Discussion with Participants

(iv) Online Quarterly Bulletin 'Families International'- Isabella Nening

(v) Committee Statement United Nations Commission for Social Development - Franziska Reichel

(vi) Update Committee Website: Sebastian Oberreiter & Laura Mysliwiec - Committee Digital-Networks Coordinators

(vii) Financial Report

(viii) Reports from Member Organisations

(ix) Any other Business

(x) Date & Place of next Full Committee Meeting in November 2023

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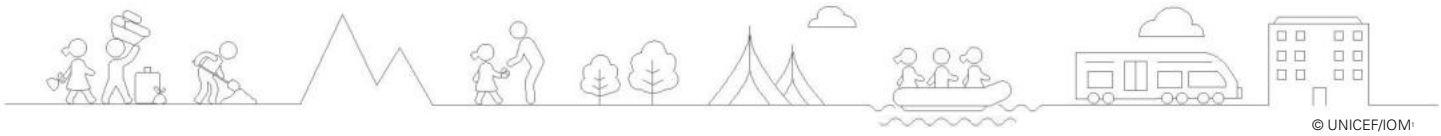
Email: contact@viennafamilycommittee.org

From UNICEF

BRIEF 3 Vulnerability, Discrimination and Xenophobia

UNICEF
Innocenti
Research
Brief 2022-03

unicef Office of Research – Innocenti



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Global Compact for Migration

Informing Child-sensitive Solutions for the Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Evidence from Children's and Young People's Experiences in the Horn and North of Africa

This series of briefs draw on the findings of multi-country research based on first-hand migration experiences of 1,634 children and young people moving between Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt[1] (available at www.unicef-irc.org/child-migration-hoa). The briefs highlight findings that can inform decision makers when designing child-sensitive solutions for children on the move (COM), in line with relevant objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes rights for every child in a country's jurisdiction without discrimination, so that all children in the country are the subjects of rights[3]. Children and families use migration as a coping strategy when their environment compels them to seek safety, protection and livelihoods elsewhere. The GCM further promotes existing international legal obligations on child rights; upholds the principle of the best interests of the child at all times and stipulates child-sensitivity as one of its cross-cutting guiding principles (GCM Para. 15(h)). In addition, the GCM includes a number of further principles and objectives for member states to ensure protection of children on the move from **vulnerability**, **discrimination** and **xenophobia**:

- **Cross-Cutting Principles Para.15 (f) Human rights:** By implementing the Global Compact, member states ensure effective respect for and protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, across all stages of the migration cycle. They also reaffirm the commitment to eliminate all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia and intolerance, against migrants and their families.
- **Objective 2: Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin** by committing to create conducive political, economic, social and environmental conditions for people to lead peaceful, productive and sustainable lives in their own country and to fulfil their personal aspirations, while ensuring that desperation and deteriorating environments do not compel them to seek a livelihood elsewhere, through irregular migration.
- **Objective 4: To facilitate access to personal documentation**, such as passports and visas, and ensure that relevant regulations and criteria for obtaining such documentation are non-discriminatory, by undertaking a gender-responsive and age-sensitive reviews in order to prevent increased risk of vulnerabilities throughout the migration cycle.

1 Primary data collection took place in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. Additional data were collected in Egypt, by reaching children through UNICEF and partners, using the same methodology for specific indicators.

2 UNICEF & IOM (2017) 'Harrowing Journeys: Children and Youth on the Move in the Mediterranean Sea, at risk of trafficking and exploitation'. https://www.unicef.org/media/49046/file/Harrowing_Journeys_Children_and_youth_on_the_move_across_the_Mediterranean-ENG.pdf

3 States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text

Kingdom of the Netherlands
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UKaid from the British people

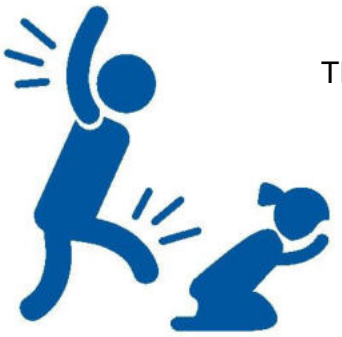
- **Objective 5: To enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration**, whereby member states commit to options and pathways for regular migration in a manner that optimizes education opportunities, upholds the right to family life, and responds to the needs of migrants in a situation of vulnerability, with a view to expanding and diversifying the availability of pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration.
- **Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration**, whereby member states commit to responding to the needs of migrants who face situations of vulnerability, which may arise from the circumstances in which they travel, or the conditions they face in countries of origin, transit and destination, by assisting them and protecting their human rights, in accordance with our obligations under international law. And whereby member states commit to upholding the best interests of the child at all times, as a primary consideration in situations where children are concerned.
- **Objective 11: Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner** ensuring that child protection authorities are promptly informed and assigned to participate in procedures for the determination of the best interests of the child once an unaccompanied or separated child crosses an international border, in accordance with international law, including by training border officials in the rights of the child and child-sensitive procedures, such as those that prevent family separation and reunite families when family separation occurs.
- **Objective 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration**, that member states commit to eliminate all forms of discrimination, condemn and counter expressions, acts and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, violence, xenophobia and related intolerance against all migrants, in conformity with international human rights law.

CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF VULNERABILITY, DISCRIMINATION AND XENOPHOBIA

Globally, migrants are often seen as outsiders and are pushed to the margins of society. While nationality and race are often key factors in their exclusion, this research finds that other reasons, such as economic status, can be a further alienating factor.

"I am constantly attacked and beaten up on the streets because of my skin colour."
– 14 year-old South Sudanese boy, Egypt

Vulnerability, discrimination and xenophobia



23% of respondents said local people treat them in a bad way

This was cited more by

26% **Children**

than

20% **Young people**

Why do they think they are treated badly?

- **38%** Nationality
- **21%** Class/economic situation
- **18%** Ethnicity
- **16%** Travelling/on the move
- **14%** Language
- **13%** Race/skin color
- **11%** Gender
  - **17%** Girls
  - **7%** Boys

One in four children and young people said they felt local people treated them in a bad way, and children were more likely than young people to feel this way. The main reason they felt treated badly was because of their nationality.

Of those who were non-nationals, 57% identified their nationality as the reason for poor treatment. Overall, 21% of respondents felt their class or economic status were used by local people to treat them badly, and of those who were nationals of the country they were interviewed in, 46% cited the same.

"I have been beaten and abused frequently by [the travel] broker when I was in Sudan... I experienced the same violence in Saudi Arabia by my employer. The elder son of my employer also tried to rape me twice. There was no one there to protect me."
– Interview with female Ethiopian returnee, aged 18, Ethiopia

Research showed little gender differences as to how many children and young people felt treated badly overall or the reasons why this happened. However, **more girls than boys indicated that gender was a reason that they were mistreated**.

In the context of perceived or real discrimination and mistreatment, it is important to understand the lived reality of children and young people. Half of interviewed children felt lonely in their current environment, while 45% believed they can find help if needed.

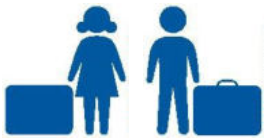
> "I always feel lonely, because here I just live a solitary life. I left my country and I left my mother behind."
>
> – 17 year-old Eritrean boy, Ethiopia

Perception of their current living environment

45%
said they can find help where they live, but

50%
feel lonely

of the 50% who are **unaccompanied children** **63%** **feel lonely**



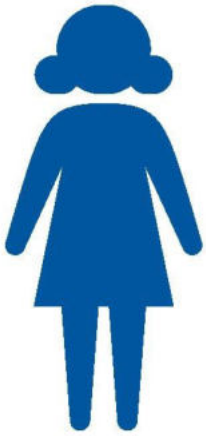
There was little difference between boys and girls, or between different age groups, on this indicator. **Many more unaccompanied children felt lonely** and overall, twice as many unaccompanied children said the area they lived in was lonely (63%) rather than somewhere they could find help (30%).

> "I feel unsafe here because I am always afraid of being attacked and beaten whenever I leave my home."
>
> – 16 year-old Sudanese girl in Egypt

AWARENESS AND SENSITIZATION OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Part of the reason why only a minority of children and young people believed they could get help is that **two-thirds said the authorities did not care about their needs**. Both unaccompanied children and young people particularly answered feeling this way. A similar proportion of both boys and girls felt this way.

Relatively few respondents believe that government officials will in fact help them - importantly, almost as many think the authorities – including the police – will do them harm.

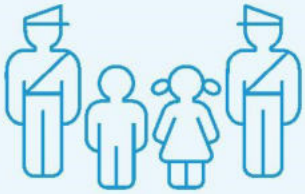


"Actually, that night I faced a lot of problems that I cannot talk about. The police were saying to each other that as long as they are here, we might as well enjoy ... Losing my virginity was the worst thing."

– 20 year-old woman, Somaliland

"Most of the community and security officials label us rude, robbers, thieves, valueless and criminals."

– 15 year-old Ethiopian boy living on the streets, Ethiopia



As one social worker said, government officials may also use violence against children and young people:

"In addition to holding them against their will, they also sometimes treat them badly. So, they come with a bad feeling from the beginning,"

– 18 year-old female returnee, Ethiopia

Implications of children's experiences for policy, resourcing and services:

Global Compact FOR Migration

- **Strengthening protective networks and addressing discrimination is crucial.** The research findings indicate the precarious nature of the support networks surrounding some migrant children and young people and the need to strengthen their protective environment including public awareness raising, fighting discrimination and xenophobia.

  GCM Objective 17

- **Stigma against migrants – both nationals and non-nationals – creates a significant barrier to protective mechanisms and needs to be addressed with multi-pronged approaches.** Therefore, there needs to be investment in overcoming these barriers. By legislating the human rights of migrants, including the rights of children and young people via an inclusive approach, and including linked sensitization and awareness-raising efforts with government officials and communities, discrimination and xenophobia are minimized.

  GCM Objective 11

- **Vulnerabilities of children should be addressed individually, by assessing their best interests and offering appropriate solutions.** While many children plan to move on, others want to or have to remain. Ensuring best interest assessments that pursue appropriate durable solutions – for all at risk and vulnerable children, is paramount. This also includes the need for cross-border coordination and protection for children voluntarily returning, reintegrating, or moving onward.

  GCM Objectives 5, 7, 11, 23

- **Addressing vulnerabilities in migration and tackling unsafe migration requires interventions in countries of origin, transit and destination.** While children and young people have the right to mobility, evidence suggests that improving security and economic opportunities in their country of origin will reduce migration push factors. Unsafe migration can be addressed by providing better opportunities for informed decision making, and by providing awareness and information about the potential risks.

  GCM Objective 2

- **While countries exercise the sovereign right to manage their borders, human rights and child sensitive approaches must always be practised.** This includes timely guardianship and referrals of vulnerable children and young people to child protection services, as well as the sensitization, training and skills development of border guards, police and immigration officers.

  GCM Objective 11

Profile and Methodology

The research findings are based on face-to-face interviews with 1,634 children and young people (aged 14-24 years) who were classed as "on the move". The research was ethically conducted by UNICEF-trained interviewers between April 2019 and January 2020 at sample points across Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan.

The respondents reflected the mixed nature of migration in this part of Africa. Two in five (40%) were nationals of the country they were interviewed in (having migrated, returned or been forcibly displaced within the country) and three in five (60%) were non-nationals ('Non-nationals' defined as those migrant children, including displaced children, interviewed without citizenship in host country).

Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents were male and 43% female. The majority were aged between 18 and 24 years (59%) and the remainder (41%) were between 14 and 17 years.

Most respondents (82%) said that they were still moving in that they were not in their home area. In addition, 17% described themselves are returnees, i.e., they had moved and returned to their habitual residence in the last 12 months, and 1% said they did not know, or did not answer the question.

Other briefs available in this series:

Brief 1: Strengthening child protection systems and ending child immigration detention

Brief 2: Access to Basic Services

for every child, answers

UNICEF OFFICE OF RESEARCH – INNOCENTI

The Office of Research – Innocenti is UNICEF's dedicated research centre. It undertakes research on emerging or current issues in order to inform the strategic direction, policies and programmes of UNICEF and its partners, shape global debates on child rights and development, and inform the global research and policy agenda for all children, and particularly for the most vulnerable.

UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti publications are contributions to a global debate on children and may not necessarily reflect UNICEF policies or approaches.

This series of research briefs are an initiative between the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, and the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.

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Middle East and North Africa

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This brief has been reviewed by an internal UNICEF panel consisting of staff with subject matter or methodological expertise.

The text has not been edited to official publications standards and UNICEF accepts no responsibility for errors.

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Building Bright Futures:

What is needed to expand early childhood education and care for Ukraine's refugee children

unicef for every child

Why invest in and expand early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in humanitarian contexts?

All children have the right to learn and develop, and thus should have access to high quality ECEC services.

Quality ECEC is a powerful means to advancing individuals and society, and to strengthening equity and inclusion for all.

Expanding ECEC services ensures all young children (0–6 years), across refugee and host communities, have a chance to succeed and overcome disadvantage.

Families' self-sufficiency and Ukrainian parents' chances of attaining relevant economic and social support are also tied to young children's opportunities to access ECEC.

How can rapid expansion of ECEC services be achieved?

Reduce legislative, policy and financial barriers that hinder refugee children's access to existing early learning services.

Accelerate national and municipal reforms and plans to expand ECEC services for all young children, especially in geographic areas with higher percentages of refugee or other vulnerable children, with a focus on provision of diverse and flexible modalities of ECEC.

Capitalize on existing resources to meet the additional demand for ECEC. This should include physical resources to provide the spaces and materials for quality early learning experiences, and human resources to meet an increased need for ECEC educators.

Engage refugee caregivers in order to support them in navigating the local ECEC system and to increase their knowledge of ways to provide early learning experiences for their children at home, which is essential in the absence of a sufficient number of ECEC services.

This brief is part of a two-brief series on early childhood education and care in the context of the Ukraine response. While the evidence base informing these briefs is mostly from upper-middle-income and high-income country contexts, the findings also have relevance to other contexts hosting refugee children and their families. Both briefs can be accessed here.

THE STATE OF YOUNG REFUGEE CHILDREN IN THE UKRAINE CRISIS

The war in Ukraine has displaced over 7.8 million individuals who have sought refuge in several countries across Europe, including Poland (1,497,849), Czechia (460,415), Italy (173,231), Slovakia (100,783) and Türkiye (145,000).[1]

As many as 9 in every 10 refugees arriving in host countries from Ukraine are women and children.[2]

Nearly 4 million of the refugees from Ukraine are children in need of humanitarian assistance,[3] one third of whom are estimated to be below the age of 6.[i]

This young refugee demographic is concerning, as the early years are highly sensitive to adverse life experiences and are a period of rapid brain growth and development.[4]

Only 1 in 3

refugee children are enrolled in ECEC in host societies.

[i] *Based on estimates from the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO).*

Refugee children are exposed to several compounded risks as they lose not only their homes but also their education,[5] which tends to be deprioritized in humanitarian response plans compared to survival initiatives.[6] Indeed, recent data show that on average, only one in three refugee children are enrolled in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in host countries.[7]

Challenges exist in rapidly expanding ECEC to meet the demand of host-community and refugee families, as access to ECEC is not universal or legally guaranteed in all host countries, especially for children under the age of 3.[8]

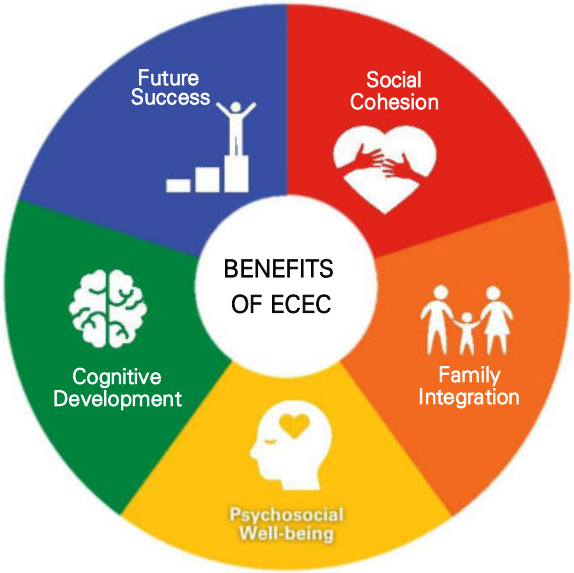
The demand for ECEC in the year before primary school is higher than the supply in many European countries,[9] and the disparity between demand and supply has further deteriorated due to the refugee crisis.

Maintaining a high quality of ECEC services while attempting to achieve rapid expansion is also a challenge, as the increase in the number of facilities must be accompanied by a commensurate increase in resources. This includes hiring and deploying a sufficient number of educators, as well as preparing the workforce to provide ECEC in a context of trauma and cultural and linguistic diversity.

1 **BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES:** WHAT IS NEEDED TO EXPAND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE FOR UKRAINE'S REFUGEE CHILDREN

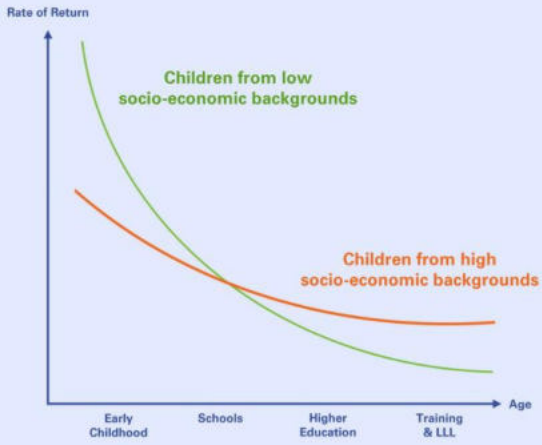
Why invest in early childhood services in humanitarian contexts?

ECEC benefits all children – from refugee and host communities – necessitating investments in its expansion. Learning and development are successive and cumulative,[10] and a strong foundation developed early in life determines a child's later success and productivity.[11] [12] [13] Inclusive ECEC also reduces inequality and fosters social cohesion and integration for children from refugee or migrant backgrounds and their families,[14] becoming a safe space for recovery for children affected by trauma.[15] Thus, ECEC is crucial for healthy social, emotional and cognitive development.



Investing in ECEC also provides economic benefits to individuals and society. Evidence suggests that investment in ECEC has one of the highest rates of return, with a significantly higher return for children from marginalized backgrounds,[16] such as refugee children (see Figure 1). It is estimated that social benefits of public ECEC in the long term will be seven times larger than the cost of its provision[17] and that every US$1 spent on ECEC yields a return of US$9 to society.[18]

Figure 1: Rate of return on investments at different stages of education, for children with different socio-economic profiles



Source: Vandenbroeck et al., 2018

Families' self-sufficiency and Ukrainian parents' chances of attaining relevant economic and social support are also tied to young children's opportunities to access ECEC, as this offers parents time to work, access shelter or find other ways to support their families while their children are being cared for.[19] Trauma-informed ECEC can also support children's resilience and recovery, as well as improve their mental health and create a sense of normalcy, which extends to their families.[20]

As such, it is essential to prioritize ECEC in the humanitarian response to the conflict in Ukraine, which should include access to quality early childhood education and care for children age 6 or below, covering a range of services such as day cares, nurseries, kindergartens and preschools, in formal and non-formal settings.[21] This requires innovative solutions in the immediate short term to ensure children can access quality education, while looking towards medium- and longer-term strategies to ensure the strengthening and expansion of systems and the continuation of learning and development.

How can rapid expansion be achieved in host countries?

1. Reduce legislative, policy and financial barriers that hinder refugee children's access to existing early learning services.

Remove barriers hindering young refugee children's access to formal ECEC by including refugee children in national legislation and policy, allocating sustained funding for ECEC, waiving enrollment mandates and supporting early language development.

ECEC systems should explicitly include refugee children in their planning and budgeting, as inclusive policies and legislation provide the enabling environment for overcoming barriers to enrollment. These barriers include legal and administrative challenges, a lack of resources, missing documentation and/or residence permits, language barriers and stereotypes. Some European countries do make explicit stipulations regarding the right of refugees to access education in their legislations, enabling enrollment and easing potential barriers. For example, in Sweden, the School Act states that once a refugee or asylum-seeking child has been assigned to a municipality, they have the right to education starting from preschool.[22]

In the absence of refugee-inclusive policies and legislation, enrollment policies unfavorable to refugee children and families should be waived to support refugee children in accessing ECEC services. This is relevant in the case of European host countries, as families typically need permanent or temporary registration to enroll their children in ECEC. Finland is one of the few countries that changed their policy following the influx of refugees from Ukraine and permitted the enrollment of refugee children without registration. This positively affected children whose parents are engaged in full-time work or studies by providing them with an opportunity to work or study while their children attend preschool.[23]

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's 2018 Global Education Monitoring Report summarized other recommendations around easing barriers to enrollment, including: 1) not allowing identification documents or residence statuses to hinder enrollment; 2) making education and immigration laws consistent; and 3) establishing processes to respond to violations of students' rights.[24]

Governments must also ensure that budgeting for vulnerable and marginalized groups is included in ECEC sector planning and in national and local budgets. Most parents in Europe have to pay for ECEC services,[25] hindering enrollment for more than a third of preschool-aged children.[26] Financial constraints and an inability to pay for education create additional burdens for refugee parents who already face a multitude of challenges. To increase enrollment of marginalized groups, free or subsidized ECEC has been introduced in several European countries. For example, free ECEC is available for vulnerable groups – including asylum seekers and refugees – in Ireland, while in Norway, children from socially vulnerable families have a right to 20 hours of free ECEC per week, including children in asylum centres.[27]

It is imperative to provide refugee children who are in later stages of ECEC with additional support and resources to learn the host country's language in order to overcome language barriers and eventually transition to primary school. For example, Bulgaria's Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNICEF and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, provided additional funding for Bulgarian language classes for refugee children and rolled out training for educators to strengthen their capacity to teach Bulgarian.[28] Additionally, some countries like Slovakia provide free language classes for educators from Ukraine who want to integrate into the existing education system.[29] As such, ministries of education and municipalities must ensure that they set aside budgets that can support the diverse needs of language development or work with service delivery partners who can deliver language lessons at subsidized rates.

Develop a transitional education plan (TEP) with a focus on the early years to facilitate medium- and longer-term planning to support the education of young refugee children.

Developing a clearly articulated TEP focusing on the early years is essential when the development of a long-term education sector plan is less feasible and in cases where refugees are not already included in ECEC plans and budgets. The TEP should be a government-led participatory process, at either a national or local level.[30] When its development is delayed or not possible, it is recommended that an ECEC-specific coordination mechanism with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of involved parties is established to ensure that early learning and development opportunities for young children are part of the response. The development and implementation of TEPs and other longer-term plans should be done in parallel to short-term programmes and responses, to guarantee a more sustainable and comprehensive overall response.

2. Accelerate national and municipal plans and reforms to expand ECEC services for young children, especially in geographic areas with higher percentages of refugee and other vulnerable children, with a focus on provision of diverse and flexible modalities of ECEC.

Expand provision through different and flexible modalities of ECEC to cater to the needs of refugee families and their varying conditions and characteristics.

Establishing and encouraging the set-up of high-quality home-based ECEC services can help meet the increased demand for ECEC, especially for children age 3 or below. Home-based ECEC services are used in some European countries, such as Denmark, Finland and Germany, for children under the age of 3.[31] While variations exist in their regulation, positive associations between enrollment in high-quality home-based services and child learning and socio-emotional outcomes have been identified.[32] Encouraging caregivers to receive training and set up home-based ECEC services to meet the additional need for childcare could be one cost-effective way to expand access to ECEC. Ensuring these settings are rapidly licensed and regulated would be optimal to achieve fast expansion of services aligned with the host country's minimum ECEC standards and the formal ECEC system. In cases where formally establishing such services is not possible, non-formal home-based ECEC can be provided, with special attention being paid to the safeguarding and quality assurance of these services. Such an approach was implemented in the Little Ripples programme in Chad,[33] Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Greece. The programme provided ECEC services in home-based settings where refugee women were hired to coordinate the home-based preschools. This can ensure refugee and host-community children can access the home-based services, providing a space for them to interact, play and learn alongside one another, hence fostering social cohesion.

Double-shift schools have also been implemented in humanitarian settings to meet the increased demand for education and early learning but have several operational challenges. In double-shift schools, one group of children attends school in the morning, while the second group attends an afternoon shift at the same school.[34] This approach may also be replicated in ECEC; however, there are many challenges to operating a two-shift system. These include creating an additional burden for school staff who may end up teaching at both shifts, the exhaustion of existing infrastructure, potential segregation of host-community and refugee students, and the challenges for students and working parents associated with cutting the school day in half. Findings from Jordan indicate poor infrastructure, overcrowding, shortened lesson time and higher teacher turnover in double-shift schools affected the quality of education.[35] Lower learning achievement in double-shift schools is correlated with children spending less time at school.[36] Given these drawbacks, it is advisable to invest in the provision of overlapping shifts instead, where students in the two shifts can overlap and interact during the day,[37] and in other forms of flexible or rapid solutions. This can include setting up modular kindergartens, which are kindergartens that can be quickly constructed and then delivered to different locations to be assembled and connected to necessary utilities. Modular kindergartens have been installed in different regions of Australia to meet the growing demand for ECEC.[38]

Digital solutions have been used in several conflict settings to support children's learning and development and can act as complementary, interim solutions to support education.[39] These include learning applications for children, video content,[40] and chatbots for caregivers.[41] One such example is the online kindergarten set up by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education in Ukraine, which aims to encourage parents to conduct learning and development activities with their children ages 3–6 through videos and other online content.[42] Similarly, the partnership between UNICEF and the Akelius Foundation supported community-based ECEC classes for Syrian refugees through a digital learning application in Lebanon. This programme significantly improved children's language skills, and ECEC facilitators were key in providing technical and psychosocial support to caregivers.[43]

Digital resources should include cautionary messaging for caregivers regarding their use in moderation. For example, screen time should be limited to a maximum of 60 minutes per day for children ages 2–4.[44] Digital resources should also encourage caregivers – at home or in ECEC settings – to be actively engaged in the activities and bring them to life. This is essential as children need two-way communication modalities for more effective learning, which is possible when they are engaged with peers and adults, learn through play, apply the new knowledge, and obtain feedback.[45]

Ensure a clear link between non-formal and formal ECEC programmes to facilitate mainstreaming and enrollment of children into formal learning systems and engage with subnational entities for coordination.

Non-formal approaches to expanding ECEC are important for meeting access gaps that cannot solely be covered by the government.[46]

A key consideration for establishing non-formal ECEC services is ensuring the content of the programmes offered matches or is aligned with host country ECEC standards and curricula.

This can support refugee children's integration into formal systems, either as spaces become available in formal ECEC services, or via integration into formal primary schooling. A case study from Germany suggests refugee students faced difficulty entering formal school following non-formal education, as learning materials in the non-formal setting were not closely aligned with the school curriculum.[47] While this example relates to secondary school students, it illustrates the importance of ensuring alignment between formal and non-formal services, to maintain learning continuity and minimize disruptions emerging from the need to catch up.

Engaging subnational entities, such as municipalities, is integral to achieving programme sustainability, and to either the potential absorption of non-formal programmes by the formal system or establishing clear links between both. For instance, in Poland and Slovakia, UNICEF and partners established non-formal play and learning hubs targeting children and their families as forms of alternative ECEC. Municipalities are engaged from the outset in providing the public spaces and planning professional development activities for ECEC staff. A formalization plan should be established early on in non-formal programmes to support transitioning non-formal programmes into formal ones, consequently facilitating the scaling up of formal services and catalyzing expansion efforts, which are beneficial for both refugee and host communities.

3. Capitalize on existing resources to meet the additional demand for ECEC. This should include physical resources to provide the spaces and materials for early learning experiences, and human resources to meet an increased need for ECEC educators.

Adapt and use existing community spaces to establish non-formal ECEC programmes where children can play, learn, socialize and develop.

Establishing non-formal ECEC programmes with clear links to the formal system can ensure children are not missing out on early learning and development opportunities while formal medium- to longer-term expansion solutions are achieved.

Using community spaces to provide educational experiences for young children can limit disruptions to learning and development caused by conflict and displacement, while also limiting the costs of building new ECEC infrastructure. This can include leveraging existing infrastructure, such as public libraries, playgrounds, or religious spaces that can be used for non-religious activities, to reach children in their communities who are unable to enroll in formal ECEC institutions.[48] Activities can be facilitated by community members or volunteers who are trained in implementing developmentally appropriate strategies and activities for children of different age groups, and in working with children who have faced trauma. Similar initiatives have been implemented in Jordan and Ethiopia with the We Love Reading programme, which has shown evidence of promise.[49] Private ECEC settings can also be leveraged. Governments can partner with private ECEC providers to rent out classrooms, auditoriums or playrooms for use by trained community members or volunteers who can provide refugee children with learning and play experiences. Additionally, when space is unavailable in public ECEC systems, governments can also subsidize spaces for young refugee children as a means of offsetting costs for enrollment in private ECEC settings.

Ensure young children have access to rich and stimulating early learning materials in ECEC settings and in the community.

Make use of locally available materials to create play and learning experiences for refugee children by partnering with local providers, the private sector, charity organizations or volunteers. Such materials can be made accessible in communal spaces to bring members of the community together. When feasible, this can also be supplemented with play or learning boxes, such as UNICEF's Early Childhood Development (ECD) kit for emergencies,[50] Save the Children's 'Boxes of Wonder' toolkit,[51] or locally procured play materials. These toolkits typically contain materials and templates that can create or support early learning and development activities for children in safe environments and should be facilitated by trained facilitators or volunteers.[52] [53]

ECD KIT - UNICEF

Introduced in 2009, the ECD kit has been used to strengthen UNICEF's humanitarian response for children age 6 or below in emergency settings.[54] One box can serve 50 children at a time, providing materials and guides to stimulate play and foster a sense of stability and safety. The box mostly includes hygiene products for children, as well as toys, books and other learning materials. Evaluations have found positive impacts on the caregivers who facilitate sessions with children using the toolkit, on child-level outcomes including socio-emotional development and learning outcomes, as well as on community social cohesion as it allowed host-community and refugee families to connect while creating toys.

Access to these toolkits in the humanitarian contexts in which they have been implemented has yielded positive benefits to children's behaviour, well-being, and learning.[55] Another approach that can be implemented using local resources is the mobile kindergarten model, requiring learning materials, a bus to create a kindergarten classroom on wheels, and a trained ECEC facilitator or educator for set-up. This approach has been implemented to support out-of-school children or those residing in hard-to-reach areas,[56] and can be adopted to support refugee children in host communities who are unable to access formal education.

Expand the qualified teaching workforce to meet the additional demand for ECEC by:

1) rapidly employing more educators from the host and refugee communities,

2) providing professional development opportunities for new and existing educators, and

3) ensuring positive working conditions for the ECEC workforce.

Ministries can ease accreditation and documentation restrictions and begin recognizing foreign degrees to rapidly hire qualified educators from the refugee community. This is essential as an increase in the demand for ECEC creates an increased demand for qualified educators. Accreditation and the lack of required documentation typically hinder refugee educators' ability to be hired in host countries and address the shortfall in the availability of qualified staff. Several European countries began providing ECEC-related jobs to educators from Ukraine following the war.[ii] In Luxembourg, 77 professionals from Ukraine have been hired to work in ECEC settings.[57] As an additional benefit, having educators with the same cultural background as refugee children can facilitate children's inclusion in the new community. In the medium to longer term, education systems must establish systematic teacher recruitment processes for emergency contexts to avoid deterring interested and qualified candidates.[58]

[ii] *This includes Austria, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Luxembourg and Slovakia.*

It is essential to establish various mechanisms for coaching and professional development among existing and new ECEC educators. Professional development programmes that are responsive to existing and new educators' needs are essential to facilitate their efforts in teaching and supporting refugee children in host-community preschools.[59] For example, the Brussels-based Baobab initiative trains and hires representatives of minority ethnic groups as ECEC educators.[60] The programme lasts four years; candidates work in the preschool three days per week, where they co-teach, receive mentorship and guidance on teaching and take part in trainings. Candidates are paid for their work, and training fees are refunded.[61] Additionally, in humanitarian contexts where ECEC professionals need to be rapidly trained, digital approaches such as UNICEF's LearnECD or Learning Passport – which have digestible, bite-sized professional development courses aligned with national teacher training standards – can be leveraged. The flexibility offered through digital professional development can also ensure rapid outreach to more educators.

Ensure the workforce has stable and equitable working conditions, as the quality of education is affected by educators' satisfaction with the work environment.[62] Positive work environments in challenging contexts can support teacher retention and attract qualified educators into the profession. In many contexts, the shortage of educators creates[63] situations where educators are hired rapidly, on short-term contracts, and often without the same benefits and stability as full-time educators. In Germany, educator shortages resulted in the creation of voluntary, short-term contracts for educators, with no job security and lower salaries. In addition, retired educators and those without required qualifications were hired to address teacher shortages.[64] Decision makers should also ensure other aspects of the work environment are conducive to teaching quality, including acceptable adult-to-child ratios, competitive and adequate salaries, and the provision of ECEC educators with child-free time to engage in professional development activities.[65] While these challenges are applicable to educators in any low-resource setting, they are especially pronounced in refugee contexts.[66]

4. Engage refugee caregivers in order to support them in navigating the local ECEC system and to increase their knowledge of ways to provide early learning experiences for their children at home, which is especially essential in the absence of a sufficient number of ECEC services.

Targeting refugee caregivers in response efforts and complementing child-targeted programmes with caregiving support are essential to ensure children have positive home learning and development environments, which is important in the absence of sufficient ECEC services.[67] Caregivers impact their child's development, socio-emotional well-being, learning and home environment.[68,69] Caregivers may be reached through services they frequent, such as health providers, where parenting resources providing guidance on how to create nurturing home environments can be distributed for use at home. Home visiting programmes can also be effective in providing refugee caregivers with the necessary knowledge and support to provide positive learning experiences for their children.[70] Caregivers can also be engaged directly through ECEC centres. For example, PrimoHUB – a play, learning and parenting centre implemented in Romania with the support of UNICEF, Romania's Ministry of Education and the Step by Step Center for Education and Professional Development – has engaged caregivers of children age 6 or below to increase their parenting skills.[71] Knowledge gained through such centres can be used with other young children in the family, who may be unable to enroll in ECEC.

Parenting programmes can also be delivered through digital solutions to support refugee parents during their displacement. For example, the International Rescue Committee's Vroom initiative aims to empower caregivers to use everyday interactions with their children as brain building moments by sending content through various media modalities, including social media (specifically, Facebook and WhatsApp) and television.[72] Adapting existing materials and resources to suit the needs of refugee caregivers can also prove to be a quick, cost-effective option, as with UNICEF's Bebbo application. Bebbo was initially designed to provide comprehensive and concrete tips and strategies for parents to support early childhood development and parental care of children age 6 and below in a parent-friendly format, and was adapted to the Ukrainian language once the conflict began.[73]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

ECEC is often underprioritized in humanitarian responses. However, ECEC has long-term benefits for a child's cognitive and socio-emotional development, and missing out on early experiences has negative consequences for years to come.

As such, the expansion of ECEC services in host countries is integral to ensuring refugee children can succeed both in the short and long term and better integrate into their new communities. Expansion of ECEC must be linked with opportunities for existing/ongoing reforms in ECEC at the national and municipal levels, with a focus on equity, thereby ensuring ECEC services are readily available in areas with higher densities of refugee populations. Expansion can be achieved through both formal and non-formal channels, including through rapidly expanding the ECEC workforce and providing them with necessary professional development, removing barriers that hinder access to ECEC, and capitalizing on partnerships and existing resources to provide ECEC services (such as mobile kindergartens or using community spaces to provide children with learning and development activities). It is essential to also target caregivers in response efforts to help them create positive home learning and development environments for their children in cases where formal and non-formal access is not possible. Finally, ensuring linkages between formal and non-formal services can support learning continuity, transition and long-term sustainability of ECEC services with the goal of eventually strengthening ECEC systems for all young children.

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Three Interventions to Reduce Irregular Migration and Promote Alternatives: An Experiment in The Gambia

Tijan Bah, Catia Batista, Flore Gubert and David McKenzie

Irregular migration from Africa to Europe attracts substantial policy attention. Although international migration can enable people from developing countries to dramatically increase their incomes, the absence of legal channels and the chance of higher incomes can induce people to take part in risky journeys that can involve a low chance of success, and the potential for human rights abuses and loss of life.

The most common policy responses have been efforts to deter this form of migration through increased enforcement, and through information campaigns that emphasize the dangers associated with irregular migration. However, evidence on the effectiveness of such campaigns is limited, and such policies may not be enough if they do not offer alternative possibilities for improving livelihoods. We designed an experiment in The Gambia to test different approaches.

Experimental Setting

The Gambia had the highest per capita incidence of irregular migration to Europe among all African countries in 2017. This migration typically takes place along what is termed "the backway", which involves an overland journey through West Africa, across the Sahara Desert, and into Libya or Morocco, from which youth attempt to catch boats across the Mediterranean Sea to Italy and other European destinations.

In March/April 2019, we selected 391 settlements (villages) in high-migration rural areas of the Eastern part of the country and did a door-to-door listing to obtain a sample of 3,641 young males aged 18-30.

Interventions

We randomly assigned settlements into four different groups, as follows:

- **Information and Deterrence Treatment:** individuals in these settlements were shown a video documentary about the risks involved in migrating irregularly to Europe. This was produced with an NGO called Youth Against Irregular Migration, formed by Gambian youth who had attempted the migration journey. Interviews describing their experiences were accompanied by animations of the statistics of the risks involved.
- **Information and Senegal Treatment:** this treatment group was shown the same information video, but then also given information and assistance about a safer visa-free regional migration alternative: going to work in neighboring Senegal. This included a video with interviews with Gambians working there, information on logistics, and a labeled cash transfer of 20 euros to pay for the cost of a bus to Dakar.
- **Information and Vocational Training:** this treatment group were shown the same information video as the first treatment, but then also given the opportunity to enroll in a free vocational training program that could help provide the skills needed for non-rural jobs elsewhere in The Gambia, providing a viable local option to irregular migration.
- **Control Group**: youth in these settlements were shown a health video as a placebo.

Results

We conducted a follow-up survey between September and November 2020, approximately 18 months after the

Do you have a project you want evaluated? DECRG-FP researchers are always looking for opportunities to work with colleagues in the Bank and IFC. If you would like to ask our experts for advice or to collaborate on an evaluation, contact us care of the Impact editor, David McKenzie (dmckenzie@worldbank.org)

information intervention, and 6 months after the COVID-19 pandemic had closed borders. Through a combination of face-to-face (76%), phone (13%), and proxy interviews (11%) we were able to locate all but 1 person.

- *Knowledge* about backway migration and Senegal improved right after showing the videos, with lasting impacts 18 months later.
- *Intentions to migrate to Europe remain high, and offering alternatives changed these intentions 18 months later.* 28% of the control group said they will surely move in the next five years and 52% said they are sure or likely to migrate. The vocational training treatment lowered intention to migrate to Europe by 5-7 percentage points. The Senegal treatment increased intentions to migrate to Senegal by 3 to 8 percentage points.
- *Offering alternatives increased longer-term migration to Senegal, offset by a reduction in internal migration.* The Senegal and vocational training interventions increased the likelihood of residing somewhere in Senegal at the time of the follow-up survey by, respectively, 2.2 and 2.6 percentage points, which more than doubled the rate in the control group. Temporary internal migration to the capital city of Banjul was reduced in these groups.
- *Irregular migration to Europe plummeted during our intervention period, leaving no scope for any treatment impact on this outcome.* Only 1.1% of control individuals made a backway migration attempt, and only 0.6% made it to Europe during the 18-month period. This low migration rate is a combination of a change in government in The Gambia and in European asylum policy, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic making it harder to migrate.

Policy Implications

1. Providing information about the risks of irregular migration is unlikely to be enough by itself. The informational video improved knowledge, but had no significant impact on intentions to migrate to Europe, nor on regional or internal migration. This is consistent with the somewhat limited effectiveness of information campaigns in combatting irregular migration in other settings, and suggests the need to consider additional interventions.
2. Offering alternative pathways to improving livelihoods had larger impacts on migration intentions and behavior. This was despite our Senegal and vocational training treatments having limited take-up, suggesting they also increased the salience of other options.
3. Targeting migration-related policies is crucial for effectiveness. While we targeted young males in high migration areas, our findings illustrate how geographic and demographic targeting alone are unlikely to be enough, and further targeting at the individual level is needed to focus programs on those closest to the margin of taking a risky migration journey.
4. The desire to attempt this risky journey is still very strong, despite the limited migration rates during our study period. Moreover, the journey may be becoming even riskier as youth now take lengthier sea journeys – so the need to test policies to offer better alternatives remains an ongoing policy imperative.

For further reading see: Bah, Tijan, Catia Batista, Flore Gubert and David McKenzie. “Can Information and Alternatives to Irregular Migration Reduce “Backway” Migration from The Gambia?” World Bank Policy Research Working Paper no. 10146, August 2022.

Recent impact notes are available on our website: https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/finance-and-private-sector-impact-evaluation-policy-notes

NGO FAMILIES INTERNATIONAL

From Member Organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

May 2023

Make Mothers Matter

MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

"Leave no single mother behind": side event to the 61st UN Commission on Social Development

Organised as a webinar, the side event brought together expert speakers from varied backgrounds to discuss the situation of single mothers in diverse contexts across the world. Their vulnerability to poverty and exclusion, the multiple challenges they face, and the solutions that are implemented to support them, notably in accessing decent work, were the key drivers of the discussion.

Statistics shared by Antra Bhatt from UN Women show that globally, lone parents with children head 8% of all households, with lone mothers constituting the overwhelming majority (84.3%). However, these statistics do not reveal the whole story: many lone mothers live in extended households, in particular those who need to balance unpaid care and paid care work. They are therefore not counted as such and remain invisible to policy makers.

The event highlighted the different socio-economic and cultural contexts and the many possible reasons behind single motherhood: from abandonment or rape to divorce or separation, to fleeing a violent or abusive relationship, single motherhood is rarely a choice, and often puts these mothers and their children in extremely vulnerable situations.

It also looked at the many solutions implemented by grassroots NGOs in response to these varied contexts:

- In Bangladesh, Awaj Foundation provides support services like childcare, healthcare, or counselling, and does advocacy for mothers and children's rights in the garment industry.
- In the Czech Republic, Aperio runs "Single but strong", a programme to empower single parents.
- In Morocco, Ahddane supports single mothers who are outcast by their families and communities, through emotional and legal counselling, childcare services, as well as mother and child shelter.
- In Kenya, the Passion to Share Foundation empowers mothers in the slums of Kibera through professional training and childcare services.
- In Uruguay, CEPRODIH offers training programmes for the socio-economic inclusion of mothers in vulnerable situations.
- In Spain, Fundación Isadora Duncan does advocacy and supports single parents in vulnerable situations through financial literacy programmes, as well as legal and administrative support.
- In DRC, HAD/En Avant les Enfants trains and empowers young single mothers, often rape victims, in the agricultural sector, helping them to regain their place in their community.

Most of these solutions combine practical aspects like sheltering, providing childcare services, and legal and emotional support, with training and counselling. They all aim at rebuilding these mothers' self-esteem, equip them with both education on practical aspects of their life, like financial literacy, and professional skills so they can regain their autonomy and take their place in the community.

Policies are another important lever for change and the focus of MMM's advocacy work. The European Child Guarantee, which was adopted by EU Member States in 2021, aims at reducing child poverty in Europe and is therefore a first important step to support single mothers, as many of those children living in poverty belong to single parents' households. Still, this is not enough, and MMM also provides policy recommendations to specifically support single mothers.

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More information on the event, including background information, the programme and event recording, is available on the MMM website: Solutions from across the world for single mothers – CSocD61 event recap

Harnessing digital technologies to empower mothers – and their children MMM CSW67 written statement

Digital technologies, which were the focus of the 67th UN Commission on the Status of Women, offer huge potential to empower women, in particular mothers.

In our statement, we identify promising applications and give multiple examples of existing services and tools supporting:

- access to education and training
- access to information supporting parenting and nurturing care, as well as maternal and child health
- job and entrepreneurship opportunities
- tools to engage fathers
- mothers' solidarity networks and community development

Digital technologies can thus greatly contribute to improving health and well-being, advancing gender equality, fostering sustainable social and economic development, and be truly transformative – if only governments recognise this potential, address the multiple gender gaps as well as negative social norms that prevent access, invest in digital infrastructure and digital literacy programmes for women, and prioritise policies that aim at educating, informing and supporting mothers in their different roles.

Read the MMM full statement on Harnessing digital technologies to empower mothers – and their children

See also our CSW67 recap article on Global support for recognition of "Care as a Right" gains momentum – MMM teams look back at CSW 2023

Re-inventing our economy and recognising Care as a Right – MMM calls for systemic change to address unpaid care work

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of the inequitable distribution of unpaid family care work, a cause of much discrimination and economic injustice for women, in particular when they are mothers, has finally been receiving the attention it deserves.

Until now, policymaking to address this issue has been guided by the so-called "3Rs framework", i.e. Recognize – Reduce – Redistribute, a framework which is reflected in Target 5.4 of Goal 5 of the UN 2030 development agenda.

This framework is undoubtedly useful as it provides concrete avenues on which policymakers can act. And more efforts should be made to implement Target 5.4 and recognise, value and redistribute unpaid domestic and care work. Redistribution is about sharing this work more equitably first between men and women, but also across society, adopting a principle of co-responsibility, so that women can engage in paid work, be independent and make life choices on an equal footing with men.

But basically, we have only been trying to fix our current economic and social systems, which are still based on now obsolete assumptions (in particular the male breadwinner model). Women have tried hard to adapt, often

to the detriment of their health, juggling to reconcile care work and responsibilities with their other lives.

It is time to reverse this logic: our systems must be adapted to the realities of care needs and women's lives.

It is time to take a step back and look at the bigger picture. And this leads us to consider and call for 2 additional "Rs": re-invent the economy and recognise care as a right.

- Our current economic system not only completely ignores unpaid care work, but considers this work to be an unlimited and free resource. **Our first call is to re-invent our economic system**, reconsider what it values, values and prioritises, and transform it into a well-being economy centred on care, so that it serves the well-being of people and the planet – not the other way around.

- **Our second call is to recognise care as a human right**: the right to care, the right to be cared for, and the right to self-care. The right to be cared for is already implicitly enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is the responsibility of States to support parents in their caring and educational responsibilities, and to provide childcare as part of public services. A right to care would unequivocally put obligations on States to provide adequate support to every unpaid caregiver – thereby also protecting the rights of any person in need to receive care, i.e. not only children, but also persons with disabilities, older and other dependent people.

See our Statements to the 51st session of Human Rights Council:

- MMM calls for the recognition of care as a human right
- Like nature's vital resources, unpaid care work must not be taken for granted

See also the op-ed we wrote for the OECD Forum: 268 years to close the economic gender gap? It is time to consider CARE as a human right

A new Irish legislation for mandatory inquests into maternal deaths "Remaking the fabric of care"

In Ireland, a new Act, the Coroners (Amendment) 2019 Act, was passed in full and enacted at the beginning of 2020. This law makes **reporting and inquests into all maternal deaths mandatory**.

This achievement was possible thanks to the commitment of the "Elephant Collective" movement – a group of midwives, families, birth activists, such as our member association Irish Maternity Network, lawyers, etc. The collective has been advocating since 2015 for strengthening the care in maternity services to reduce the numbers of maternal deaths.

The inquests until now have given detailed insights into **how the services are failing women and their families with tragic consequences**. They have put into evidence that the burden of **injury and death** has been borne disproportionately by **women of colour.** A pattern which holds true across Europe and in the UK: **pregnant women of colour are especially vulnerable**.

Visit the MMM website for further details and recommendations: A new Irish legislation for mandatory inquests into maternal deaths: "Remaking the Fabric of Care"

May 2023

MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

Care on the move – the forgotten angle

Make Mothers Matter, together with partners, organised a conference at the European Parliament to tackle the issue of the gender care gap in relation to intra-EU mobility. Featuring Dr. Nina Miller from the University of Glasgow School of Law, the event was hosted by two MEPs, Maria Noichl (S&D) and Christine Schneider (EPP), and supported by the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and Coface Families Europe. The conference reiterated the critical need to recognise and value women's and mothers' unpaid care work within the European Union.

Mothers, and, more generally, women with caring responsibilities, encounter difficulties in accessing and securing EU free movement rights and protections, such as residence and equal treatment rights, when moving to an EU host Member State. Care work is therefore even more challenging in the framework of intra-EU mobility, since EU citizenship and free movement rules neglect this reality. This leads to adverse consequences, notably in terms of legal and physical insecurity and precariousness, both for those with caring responsibilities and those being cared for, like children.

EU free movement rules, one of the most essential pillars of the EU citizenship regime, deny the reality of care by precluding mothers and women from actually accessing free movement rights and protections, like residence and equal treatment rights. **Free movement rights within the EU aren't enjoyed equally by men and women.**

Today, half of those mobile EU citizen women who are not economically active in the host state are not working because of their childcare responsibilities. In such circumstances, it is even more crucial for mothers and women with caring responsibilities to formally secure their situation, notably in terms of residence and social protection.

The Citizens' Rights Directive 2004/38/EC provides a series of free movement rights and protections for Union citizens and their family members. In that regard, article 7 (1) of the Directive is an important provision, since it reserves the right of residence for more than three months on an EU host Member State territory to Union citizens holding specific statuses, all of which revolve around the notion of "work". However, that notion is not gender-neutral in EU law. Indeed, the Court of Justice of the European Union considers unpaid care work to be a non-economic activity that doesn't qualify as "work" for the purposes of EU law, resulting in serious consequences for all mobile mothers and women with caring responsibilities.

How does this affect mothers and women with full-time caring responsibilities?
Mothers and women with full-time caring responsibilities are unable to secure any autonomous and individual residence rights. Additionally, they cannot secure other associated rights, such as the equal treatment right, entitling them, for instance, to social welfare benefits similar to host state nationals. Both, those with caring responsibilities and those being cared for, like children, are therefore at an increased risk of legal and physical insecurity and precariousness.

Moreover, although the Citizens' Rights Directive guarantees free movement rights and protections to EU citizens' family members, it shouldn't be considered as a permanent and stable solution for mothers and women with full-time caring responsibilities. Indeed, it implies that their residency on the EU host Member State territory and all other associated rights are conditional on their relationship with a Union citizen, generally being their husband or partner. That dynamic of dependence is deeply problematic in case of separation, or even dangerous when the mother or woman is a victim of domestic violence, as the conditionality of rights can deter her from escaping such an unsafe environment.

May 2023

Make Mothers Matter

MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

What impact does this have on mothers and women combining an economic activity and unpaid care?
When there is no legal safety net for mothers and women with full-time caring responsibilities, those who are combining an economic activity and unpaid care work may also encounter gaps in the rules. In that regard, mothers on maternity leave can retain their worker status for up to twelve months, which enables them to maintain free movement rights and protections.

However, mothers still out of the labour market beyond that time frame, for example during the period their children are of pre-school age, find themselves in a legal limbo. More generally, under article 7 (3) of the Citizens' Rights Directive, workers can retain their status in case of illness or vocational training, but not when providing unpaid care work for a child, even in case of illness of the child, which implies further discrimination.

The following **recommendations aiming** to close the gender care gap in the context of intra-EU mobility were formulated during the event:

- Concrete and effective solutions for mobile mothers and women with caring responsibilities may only be implemented via extensive, in-depth collaboration between the academic world, policy actors and civil society organisations.
- At the EU level, the issue has to be introduced and discussed across different sectors. For example, at the EU Parliament (in the FEMM, EMPL and LIBE committees) and in different DGs of the EU Commission (EMPL, JUST), and encouraged among national authorities.
- For this problematic situation to be widely recognised and tackled, more men must be involved in every field, notably among policymakers.
- For the issue to be widely recognised and tackled, buy-in and support are required, in particular from men across all fields, especially in the political arena.
- Civil society groups should continue to play an integral role in raising awareness among the general public of the possible risks women may encounter when moving between Member States.
- There is a real need for more data collection and research as to how the EU free movement impacts mothers and women with caring responsibilities living in an EU host Member State.

Visit the MMM website for the online version: Care on the move

Help prepare your child for a happy, successful life
emotional intelligence videos for mothers and their families

MMM started a collaboration with La Granja Ability Training Center to provide families with **online emotional well-being resources.** Emotional intelligence is a vital skill that helps people build healthy and fulfilling relationships, maintain their mental health, make good decisions, and develop leadership skills. Unfortunately, emotional intelligence is often neglected in education systems and teaching methods, because this kind of intelligence isn't always available to parents.

Family relationships can be as complex as they are wonderful. Through this collaboration, MMM and La Granja aim to provide parents and families with the resources and tools they need to ensure an emotionally intelligent education as their children grow up. This video series will **help family members heighten their self-esteem, balance their emotions, communicate with each other, and strengthen family bonds by building trust and questioning perfectionist expectations.**

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La Granja and MMM are combining their expertise in family dynamics and health to develop this series. La Granja is a centre for school camps that has been working to improve the personal and social abilities of school-age children for almost two decades. La Granja has developed a unique, certified method for developing emotional competencies in young people. MMM is therefore delighted to partner with them in sharing valuable insights with families around the world.

The following **topics** are covered in the videos:

- The Perfect Family Syndrome
- Demand vs. excellence
- Emotions – allies or enemies?
- Overprotecting is underprotecting: 8 tips to burst the bubble
- Preoccupation versus occupation: what do you choose?
- Impatience and zero tolerance to frustration
- Weakness or vulnerability – for a human education
- When anxiety and stress rule, how does it affect our children?
- Joy or happiness: the danger of confusing the two
- The pressure of success

The first "**The Perfect Family Syndrome**" and second "**Demand vs. excellence"** episodes are available in three languages (ES, EN, FR) and were launched in the past two months.

Access the resources on our YouTube channel via this link:
https://www.youtube.com/@makemothersmatter9064/feature

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

Recent & Upcoming Events

May

- May 09: Workshop on Child hearing and participation
(digital)
https://go.coe.int/vQoWH

- May 15: 2023 International Day Of Families On 'Families and Demographic Change'
(United Nations Headquarters, New York)
https://social.desa.un.org/issues/family/events/2023-international-day-of-families-on-families-and-demographic-change

June

- Jun. 13-15: 16th session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)
(United Nations Headquarters, New York)
https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/cosp/16th-session-of-the-conference-of-states-parties-to-the-crpd

- Jun. 14-16: Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development Summit 2023
(Nairobi, Kenya)
https://gfrid.org/summits/gfrid2023/

- Jun. 23: 2023 Family Life Education Virtual Summit
(digital)
https://www.ncfr.org/fle-2023

July

- Jul. 03-04: International Conference on Comparative Family Studies
(Prague, Czechia, digital)
https://waset.org/comparative-family-studies-conference-in-july-2023-in-prague

September

- Sept. 18-20: 11th Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD), theme: "The Midpoint of the SDGs: Global and Local Progress & Challenges"
(New York City, USA, and digital)
https://ic-sd.org/

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