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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,

'Parenting' has been a recurring theme in international seminars and forums organized by the Vienna NOG Committee on the Family, as well as in articles in 'Families International' especially in the last decade, to which the following titles testify:

'Male Involvement in Families', 2001; 'Ageing and Intergenerational Support for Families', 'The Changing Role of Fathers and Mothers in Society', 'The Changing Role of Fathers: Providers or Carers?', 2002; 'Parenting and Work-Life Balance' and 'Divorce and Joint Custody', 2003; 'The New Role of Fathers in Family Policy' and 'Compatibility of Family and Professional Life - Conflict or Cohesion', in 2006.

Continuing in this vein, 'Parenting education and support, keys to family well-being' is the title of a talk to the Vienna Committee of NGOs on the Family on November 23, 2009 by Eve Sullivan, who is the founder of Parents Forum (parentsforum.org), a volunteer program of parent peer support and who has a Master of Arts in Teaching in French from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Eva Sullivan is mother of three grown sons and author of 'Where the Heart Listens', a handbook for parents and their allies in a global society and also serves on the council of the National Parenting Education Network in the U.S.A. (npen.org) and the board of the International Federation for Parent Education based in Paris (fiep-ifpe.fr).

The full text of the presentation is included. The positions and opinions presented are those of the author alone, and are not intended to represent the views of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family.

The Commission for Social Development (CSD) of the United Nations meets traditionally each year in New York. At its 48th session from February 3rd to the 12th 2010 it will focus on the theme of 'Social Integration'. The Vienna NGO Committee on the Family prepared a written statement for inclusion as an official document in the upcoming Commission. The text of the Statement and the member organisation of the Committee, which signed the Statement, are included in this double issue of 'Families International'.

The Committee continues to welcome the submission of articles, reports from your organisations or personal reflections, for publication in upcoming issues of 'Families International'. We can be contacted at: fam-com.vienna@utanet.at

Peter Crowley
Executive Editor

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International Forum

VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

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FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

UNITED NATIONS
VIENNA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
MONDAY November 23th, 2009
CONFERENCE ROOM M7
10.00 – 16.00

INTERNATIONAL FORUM

PARENTING EDUCATION & SUPPORT. KEYS TO FAMILY WELL-BEING

'Parenting education and support, keys to family well-being'

A talk to the Vienna Committee of NGOs on the Family given by Eve Sullivan on November 23, 2009

Thank you, Dr. Schwarz. Thanks to all of you for coming. I am very pleased to be with you today, as a mother and a new grandmother, and to speak about parents and parenting.

As I started to put down my thoughts in preparation for this lecture, I consulted with several colleagues. I asked Rae Simpson, program director for Parenting Education and Research at MIT, to tell me what, in her view, made a successful presentation. She said that the best thing was to get a new perspective on a familiar topic.

This is what I hope to offer you this morning. The title 'Parenting education and support, keys to family well-being' gives away my bias: I believe that among the most important social services that a community can provide is parenting education and support – and these are too often neglected.

When I talk about these two activities, the first 'education' - intellectual - and the second 'support' - both

practical and emotional in nature - I will often use the phrase 'parenting services.' I want you to remember that these two words stand for all three elements: educational programming, practical support and emotional support.

Before I give you an overview of the three points I intend to make, let me mention the context in which today's discussion takes place, and it is a broad one. In the last three years the Committee has considered parenting issues in a number of ways: the situation of drug-addicted parents, families' contribution to civil society, micro-credits and families, compatibility of family and professional life, and demographic challenges for families. Each of these topics is important but I believe that today's topic can offer

some new insights and that is why I asked to speak with you.

In the hour that we have together what I want to do is focus on services provided to parents and other caregivers in their parenting roles.

- First, I'd like to tell you something about Parents Forum, the nonprofit that I founded in 1992, and describe where it fits in the larger landscape of parenting services.

- Next, I will look at that landscape and consider the vocabulary we use to describe the many activities offered to and services provided for parents.

- Finally, I want to propose to the Committee and its members an agenda for collaboration, data collection, research and advocacy to be carried out over the coming five years leading up to the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014.

To begin, let me tell you about Parents Forum and how I came to found it 18 years ago. You have probably heard the expression: 'when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.' The origin of Parents Forum lies in some very challenging experiences: one of my sons, a teenager at the time, was experiencing difficulties both in school and out of school and his behavior was problematic to say the least.

The treatment program that his father found for us required a serious commitment from parents and for a period of almost two years I took part in twice-weekly program meetings. Also, for much of that time I hosted other young men from the treatment program in my home, as did the other parents in the group. In that process I learned some incredible lessons. Simply put, I became a different kind of parent. I am happy to say that all three of my sons are doing well today.

The communications skills and emotional awareness that I acquired through such distress inspired me first to found Parents Forum, with the help of several generous friends, and then to become involved in other organizations involving parents and parenting education.

So, what is Parents Forum exactly? The core is an agenda of eight questions about family life issues.

1. What do you like about your family?
2. What concerns or troubles you about your family?
3. How do you express concern to a family member?
How do you ask for and give advice and/or help in your family and community?
4. What are your household values?
5. What are your household rules?
6. What happens when someone joins your family?
7. What happens when someone leaves your family?
8. What changes have you experienced recently?

What changes do you expect in the future?

These questions, along with exercises presented in our interactive workshops, form a curriculum that

fosters honest, respectful and caring communications in families. In our small-group workshops, facilitators model and teach effective communication skills. Our goals are to be more responsible in our families and more involved in our communities, as we learn to work through the conflicts and strong feelings that arise in family and community life.

That's a tall order, obviously! However, there are many like-minded individuals and numerous agencies with similar purposes and, without a doubt, there is plenty of work for all of us.

In my own community I have been part of the Cambridge, Massachusetts, Family Literacy Collaborative for over ten years. Shortly after founding Parents Forum in 1992, I heard about the U.N. International Year of the Family, went to Montreal for the closing meeting of that celebration, and ventured further afield to become involved in the International Federation for Parent Education, based in Paris: FIEP (in the French acronym) is part of this Committee. More recently I became part of the National Parenting Education Network, NPEN, in the U.S. and now somewhat reluctantly, I consider myself a parenting educator, although I prefer to be seen as a parent advocate.

Our organization collaborates with local groups, also, and I will mention only three: the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, like Parents Forum, was founded in difficult circumstances, and, also like us, is a positive and preventive grass-roots program worthy of replication. The Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood founded in the year 2000 is dedicated to 'reclaiming childhood from corporate marketers.' A new kid on the block is the recently organized Good Men Project, offering 'real stories from the front lines of modern manhood.' Each of these initiatives, in a different way, supports parents.

This brings me to the second part of my remarks, the larger landscape of parenting services. What do parents need to succeed? And what do the people who help parents do? Various phrases describe these activities and services.

family support
strengthening families
parent advocacy
parent development
parent education
parent engagement
parent involvement
parent leadership
parent peer support

(this is allied to the mutual help domain and clearly where Parents Forum fits)

parent support
parenting coordination
parenting resources
parenting orders

The meaning and tone of each of these phrases is slightly different. Would you rather have education? Or support? Would you prefer to be offered services? Or resources? Would you rather be asked to become involved? Or engaged? If your child gets in trouble with the law would you rather be subject to parenting orders? Or be required to have supervision from a parenting coordinator?

Some of the phrases above are linked to health care, some are more aligned with educational systems, in particular, the effort in public education circles in the U.S. at any rate, to get parents to take a greater and more effective role in educating children. Some of the phrases relate to a child's special circumstance, for example, parent advocacy often centers on a child's disability or learning impairment and the need for compensatory services.

The challenge, in the experience of many parenting services providers – at least in the U.S. and I would guess in other countries too – is how to convey a positive message of parenting education and support as a social service that should be available to all, affordable by all, and used by all.

Issues of social class and culture play a role both in the provision of services as well as in how they are perceived and received. I thought, on first entering the program that helped my son and our family, that because I had been to college I would be able to 'get it' quickly, to be in and out of treatment in a few months. As I mentioned earlier, it took nearly two years for us to learn the lessons we needed to learn.

Parenting educators are well advised to monitor their own attitudes as well as those of the parents they wish to serve. Providing a service to individuals who are either unwitting - do not know they need help - or unwilling - know they need it but resent having to get it and are resistant - is indeed a challenge.

Let me ask you a few more questions: Would you choose to attend an activity for parents according to your gender – a fathers group, for example, or a group for nursing mothers – or according the age of your child – parents of toddlers or parents of teens – or an activity related to special circumstances or life stage that you find yourself and your children in – parents of children with a certain disease or developmental issue, parents who are married or those who are divorced, grandparents raising grandchildren, parents themselves suffering a certain disease, or parents who have lost a family member?

An easy, but inapt, characterization of the phrase 'parenting education and support' that I heard at one point is that parenting education is for the well-to-do and the smart, those who can afford to spend money and time to prepare to be parents, and that parent support is for everybody else, presumably the less well off, the not so smart and the poor whom we have always with us.

I argue that high educational attainment and/or material success is no guarantee of strong parenting skills and that low educational attainment and/or lack of material success is no predictor of weak parenting skills. I believe that all parents, rich, poor, better educated, less well educated, need and can benefit from both education and support.

We have to acknowledge that most parents have their children's best interests at heart –and in mind– most of the time. And most parents do a great job, often despite severe challenges. Day-to-day demands of life, however, can distract or deter even the best intentioned parent from behaving in positive ways toward their children. Then there are special circumstances affecting parents as individuals: physical or mental illness, addiction, the necessity to travel long distances for work or absences due to military service. These also hinder parents' effectiveness.

So, back to the title of this talk:

I'd like to tell you why I picked the phrase I did from the list of terms above as the title of this talk: parenting education and support.

→ Parent education (without '-ing') is directed at the person, putting the person down and giving the impression that he or she is less capable that he or she ought to be.

→ Parenting education (with '-ing') focuses on the process of raising children and, ideally, this phrase helps those who work with parents remember that their job is a collegial one. While mothers and fathers certainly need special insights and skills to do the job of raising their children and some of these insights and skills will be new, the people who receive parenting education are adults and should be treated as independent, capable and caring people.

Of course parents do not always behave as such! So, on to the next term I chose: 'parenting support.' I admit that 'support' implies that something or, in this case, somebody is either falling down or at risk of falling down. Here is where we as parents need to realize that we –and our children– can benefit if we get support of various kinds at various stages of our children's development - to keep us and our children from falling down. Let me read to you the definition of parenting education from the website of the National Parenting Education Network, NPEN, on whose board I serve:

"Parenting Education is a process that involves the expansion of insights, understanding and attitudes and the acquisition of knowledge and skills about the development of both parents and of their children and the relationship between them.

Parents are those who are so defined legally and those who have made a long-term commitment to a child to assume responsibility for that child's well being and development. This responsibility includes providing for the child's physiological and emotional

needs, forming a loving emotional relationship, guiding the child's understanding of the world and culture, and designing an appropriate environment."

Let's step back and ask who provides parenting education and support at the present time? There are over 50,000 parents programs in the U.S. alone. What does this vast parenting education and support landscape look like? There are nonprofits, or NGOs, that offer parenting education classes; there are for-profit parent training companies, some of which are very aggressive in preying on parents' insecurities; and there are government programs, some in the public health arena, some in early care and education and some in formal education. A major challenge in finding words to describe what parents need – and what parenting educators and parenting support programs provide – is that the field crosses different disciplines.

So, before I close the vocabulary lesson and go on to talk about some ideas I want to propose to you, let me add one more note about the way we talk about what we do. In the U.S. at least, there a common practice of saying 'families' instead of 'parents' in talking about services for parents. I want to share my understanding of why this practice arisen and tell you why I think it should end.

Part of the reason for saying 'families' instead of 'parents' is that parents do 'fall down' on the job and when they neglect or harm their children, protective services for the children are absolutely necessary. So, someone other than the child's biological parents has to step in. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, older siblings, adoptive parents, tribal elders, may be called upon to take on the parenting role. The sad result is that child welfare advocates, perhaps despite their best intensions, have created an adversarial situation where services for parents come with an implication if not a clear connotation of negligence or violence on the parents' part.

Besides the fact that many people besides biological parents take on the work of parenting, the perception is that raising children is basically a private undertaking and that government involvement would be an invasion of privacy or at the very least would represent interference. There is no clear line between what parents do with and for children and what public, private or civil society sector agencies do. The increase in home schooling, at least in the United States, I believe, is an indicator of parents' desires to take a larger role in, or perhaps simply take back responsibility for, their children's education and upbringing. The charter school movement in the U.S. is another indicator of a return to greater parental responsibility and community involvement in children's education.

Under the U.S. Government Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), one of the eleven HHS 'Family of Agencies' is the Administration for Children

and Families. The description of its mandate does not even use the word parents! It reads:

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is a federal agency funding state, territory, local, and tribal organizations to provide family assistance (welfare), child support, child care, Head Start, child welfare, and other programs relating to children and families. Actual services are provided by state, county, city and tribal governments, and public and private local agencies. ACF assists these organizations through funding, policy direction and information services.

You can see, in the above paragraph that the focus is almost exclusively on children. Of course we are parents because we have children, but if we do not explicitly say parents we miss the concerns and needs of the adults in the family. If the language we use is unclear, if the focus is almost exclusively on the child and not on the parent, how can we as parents not feel marginalized? I would like to see programs that are already serving parents and those seeking to increase or improve their services to parents to say the word 'parents'! Could the U.S. Administration for Children and Families be renamed: Administration for Children, Youth and Parents?

So, let me recap the first two parts of my presentation on parenting education and support as keys to family well-being (and, yes, I am willing to say the word family).

When we talk about 'parenting education,' we recognize that it is intellectual: parents must have –or acquire– both an understanding of child development and an appreciation for best practices in parenting at different stages of that development. This knowledge, the thinking and understanding part, needs to be accompanied by acquisition of skills - the doing part - and here is where 'parenting support' comes in. Parents need practical support to develop the skills to do what will best help their children learn and grow. But parents also need emotional support to help manage the sometimes perilous rollercoaster of fears, doubts and insecurities that they or their children may be on at any particular point in time.

Understanding the complexity of parents' needs should not discourage us from addressing them. Rather I hope it will spur us to take a broad view and a long view and find better ways to meet these needs both at the local service level and at the national and international policy level. I will mention some research on parenting services and their effectiveness and then make a few proposals for the Committee and Committee's member agencies' consideration.

Mary Crowley, a fellow board member of the International Federation for Parent Education, and former head of Parenting UK, urged me to mention the work of Prof. Charles Desforges. Desforges stresses that simply getting parents in touch with schools and

involved in helping their children with schoolwork is fine but is *not* the key. The most powerful positive influence on children is "at home good parenting" and what he means is parents listening and talking to their children.

[*The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: a Literature Review Dfes 433 by Prof Charles Desforges and Alberto Abouchaar 2003*]

Desforges writes:

"At-home good parenting has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors affecting attainment have been taken out of the equation. In the primary age range the impact caused by different levels of parental involvement is much bigger than differences associated with variations in the quality of schools. The scale of the impact is evident across all social classes and all ethnic groups."

In addition to speaking with Mary Crowley, I asked Anne Robertson, head of the U.S. National Parenting Education Network for her views on the present state of the field. She has studied demographic shifts in the U.S. in the last 30 to 40 years where schools have been consolidated and our population has become increasingly mobile. These shifts have undermined what was a traditional, middle class expectation of parents being involved in their children's schools. In response to this, for example, in Head Start, there has been a call for increasing (or restoring) parent involvement in early childhood programs and in schools. This dynamic may not hold in Europe and the developing world, Robertson says, where there may be less mobility and a clearer understanding of the complementary roles of parents and teachers. Teachers and parents in the U.S. probably *both* feel overwhelmed and see the other as needing to do more.

I will share with you three recent and distressing news stories regarding children's well-being that relate directly to parenting issues:

- First, Reuters reported, on February 14th of this year, ironically Valentine's Day, that a panel set up by the U.S. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine found 'the cost of mental illness, substance abuse and behavioral problems among children and young adults in the United States is \$247 billion a year in treatment and lost productivity alone.' This is a staggering sum, in addition to the accompanying untallied emotional distress.

- Next, the journal *Pediatrics*, in July 2009, reported that educational programs for new parents on the risks of shaking a baby fail to include fathers, yet fathers are 70% of the perpetrators. Father should be included, obviously.

- Finally, The Economist, on September 5th of this year, described the findings in a report 'Doing Better for Children' published by the Organization for Eco-

conomic Co-operation and Development OECD. The most troubling, to me, is that the U.S. has one of the highest levels of spending per child but among the worst outcomes in terms of child well-being. While some countries may need to spend more on services to children and their parents, all of us need to figure out how to support services that do the most good. In effect we need to spend or invest more strategically.

The cost of doing little or nothing to support parents is clear. Mary Crowley, again, sent the following ballpark estimates from a study by Dr. Stephen Scott, at the London School of Economics in 2002: The cost 'to the public purse' of a child with no specific disorder? 7,000 pounds. The cost of a child with conduct problems? Nearly four times that: 25,000 pounds. The cost of a child with a diagnosed conduct disorder? Ten times that: 70,000 pounds. Note that the costs mentioned are for public expenditures and do not include the investments by parents in food, clothing, travel, entertainment or other not so incidental expenses.

The assumption that parents can take care of themselves simply because it is the parents' job to take care of children is a dangerous one. We are at a time in our history where we can and must look at family life issues in a different way and respond in a different, more positive way to the situations families find themselves in. Parenting education and support is the key.

How do we move forward with a common understanding and language in order to set a sensible agenda for our work? I believe that we need to survey parents about what they need and want. At the same time we need to survey parenting educators about what they see as successful in different settings and with different populations.

The Vienna Committee has a long history of thoughtful and thorough action in this domain. I brought with me the 1994 Guiding Principles on the Family along with the 2003 report 'Major Trends Affecting Families' by Amr Ghaleb, former head of the U.N. Programme on the Family.

I want to propose to the Committee and its member agencies an agenda for collaboration, data collection, research and advocacy. We might call it 'Putting Parenting First.' It could build on the considerable good work being done all over the world in three general areas:

Some work, 'on the ground' as the expression goes, is in programs that involve parents where they live and work and, sad but necessary to say, where they are incarcerated. Parents Forum for several years gave workshops in a Massachusetts correctional facility for men. This work was by turns heart-breaking and incredibly uplifting. We need to know who is doing what with and for parents and how parents rate the programs.

Other work is being done in the academic world to evaluate program curricula and evaluate program presenters. The results of this research deserve wider circulation. Again a note from Mary Crowley on evaluation: A good facilitator or presenter is more effective, even with a not so good curriculum, than a poor facilitator, even with an excellent curriculum. The experience and empathy of the presenter is key to any program's success with parents.

Finally, there is policy work, both in government and business circles. I will mention one effort with which I am familiar in the United States. The Partnership for America's Economic Success has a task group 'Invest In Kids' which seeks to educate business leaders on the importance of investing resources in early childhood programming. They are, thankfully, open to considering advocacy for parenting programs also.

We know intuitively -- and I hope I have given you some convincing arguments to support the assertion -- that if we want kids to do better we need to help parents do better. We need statistics to support this, but data can be dull! I'd like to share with you a word about Gapminder. Gapminder has taken data from over 212 countries and 200 years and brought them to life! This is only one of many on their website, which I urge you to visit:

<http://www.gapminder.org/videos/200-years-that-changed-the-world/> (4 min.)

Gapminder is a non-profit venture promoting sustainable global development and achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by increased use and understanding of statistics and other information about social, economic and environmental development at local, national and global levels.

Can the Committee collaborate with Gapminder, assuming that we have or can get good data from a significant number of parenting programs in enough countries to be statistically significant, to show the value of putting parents programs at the top of the social service agenda, where I believe they belong?

Bionote:

Eve Sullivan is the founder of Parents Forum (parentsforum.org), a volunteer program of parent peer support and she works as an editorial assistant a physics journal at MIT. She has a Master of Arts in Teaching in French from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and has taught English as a Second Language in Cambridge, Mass. as well as in Tunisia and Portugal.

She is mother of three grown sons and author of Where the Heart Listens, a handbook for parents and their allies in a global society. The third edition of this handbook is to be published in December.

She serves on the council of the National Parenting Education Network in the U.S. (npen.org) and the board of the International Federation for Parent Education based in Paris (ifpe-fr).

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[Eva Sullivan can be contacted at: annals@MIT.EDU]

Another partnership we might explore is with the Alliance for philanthropy and social investment worldwide in the U.K. Alliance Magazine this month (November 2009) completed an essay contest on the topic "As a philanthropist, how would you spend \$10 million to combat global warming?" I would like to see an international essay contest on the question: "How would you, as a philanthropist, invest \$10 million to better prepare, educate and support parents for their most important job: raising children?"

If I were entering that contest today I would call for three things:

- a social marketing campaign over five or ten years to create a positive perception of parenting services as essential for everyone raising children,
- development of behavioral economics strategies through health care, insurance and tax policy that would, first, encourage parents to access the services they need, when and where they need them, and would, second, give the many excellent parents program providers appropriate pay for their expertise and time,
- and, in coordination with the above two initiatives, a sequence of meetings, at local, national, regional and international levels, to consider principles, practices and policies that will improve the lives of parents and in so doing enhance the health, well-being and success of our children.

Those are a few of the thoughts that came to mind as I wrote this talk for you. I am sure that together, the Committee, along with member agencies, including FIEP, and other national organizations such as NPEN (National Parenting Education Network), can over the next five years leading up to the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014, develop and address a substantial agenda of activities that will serve our common mission. There is certainly plenty of work for all of us!

I look forward hearing your comments and very much appreciate your kind attention.

United Nations Commission for Social Development

The following Statement was prepared by the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, signed and submitted to the United Nations Commission for Social Development by the organizations listed below:

Commission for Social Development
48th session - 3 to 12 February 2010
Priority theme: "Social Integration"

STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY:

Associated Country Women of the World
International Council of Women
International Council on Alcohol and Addictions
International Kolping Society
International Confederation of Christian Family Movements
International Inner Wheel
World Movement of Mothers
Soroptimist International
International Federation for Home Economics
International Federation for Family Development

"The aim of social integration is to create "a society for all", in which every individual, with its rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play" (**World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen 6-12 March 1995. Programme of Action, chapter 4 "Social Integration", Basis for action and objectives, para. 66 page 95**)

Three core issues of the World Summit for Social Development were; (i) the alleviation and reduction of poverty, (ii) the expansion of productive employment and (iii) the enhancement of social integration, all of which are also crucial objectives in endeavors to achieve sustainable development.

The concerns of a considerable number of family-oriented Civil Society Organization's are well known and there is no need to underscore the importance of supporting families in a society with multiple vulnerabilities.

The welfare of families is synonymous with the welfare of society, as has been affirmed many times before, so often perhaps, that this concept has lost some of its impact.

Supporting and socially integrating vulnerable groups of persons is a top priority. But why do we not sufficiently support families who, in turn, support their own members, such as the ageing, the disabled, those ill or unemployed?

In the midst of the present world economic crisis, families are being challenged in ways that may have negative effects on their lives. This crisis is having a devastating impact on those families world-wide, such as; families with only one earner or no earner at all, young people who cannot afford the cost of an increasing mortgage rate, and as a consequence, are living permanently in their

parents household; families coping with poverty, disabilities, drug and alcohol addiction; as well as with unintentional migration and the human tragedy that, not seldom, accompanies it.

As agents of socialization, families can strengthen social integration by promoting respect for pluralism and diversity. They can also promote active citizenship and the integration of disadvantaged family members by focusing on the awareness of their special needs and by pressing for services to meet those needs.

The objectives should hence be:

- To strengthen the role of the family in enhancing social integration
- To recognize and support families on behalf of disadvantaged family members
- To support the formation of family organizations dedicated to the social integration of disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable groups
- To recognize the vital importance of the protection and the integration of migrating individuals in host countries

If we neglect the needs of families, or ignore the potential impact, both positive and negative, families have in social integration we are undermining our own future and the future of generations to come.

Recent and Forthcoming events

4 DECEMBER 2009

University of Melbourne, Parkville



**University of Melbourne's Vice-Chancellor's Interdisciplinary Steering
Committee on Children's Rights, Participation and Citizenship
Moving the Children's Rights Agenda Forward: An Interdisciplinary Australian Perspective**

Celebrating the Twenty Year Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (UN-CRoC)

10.00am	Opening and Welcome	Professor Glyn Davis
10.10am	Children's rights, past, present and future.	Margaret Coady
10.20am	Children's participation and Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities - the status quo and opportunities that lie ahead.	Matthew Carroll
10.30am	Obtaining children's views in legal proceedings The Hon Alastair	Nicholson AO RFD QC
11.00am	Children's best interests AND children's voices: Celebrating UN CROC in policy and practice	Dr Judy Cashmore
11.30am	Peak oil and children's rights: a monster problem or child's play?	Dr Paul Tranter
12.00pm	Inspiring children's rights in early childhood curriculum	Professor Glenda MacNaughton
12.30pm	Summation	Dr Kylie Smith

1.00pm Light Luncheon and Drinks

11 DECEMBER 2009

UCL, Institute of Child Health, London

'New Challenges in Protecting Women and Children'

A day conference confronting Domestic Abuse & Violence, FGM, Forced or Arranged Marriage & Honour Based Violence.

This important event will examine a range of contemporary issues in relation to Abuse and Violence against Women and Children. Presentations from leading experts will seek to inform the development of effective interventions and explore practice issues from political, legal and ideological perspectives.

Keynote speakers include:

- Nazir Afzal OBE (CPS Policy Development)
- Asha-Kin Duale & Leethen Bartholomew (Community Partnership Advisers)
- Fiona Dwyer (Women's Aid)
- Dr Marie Macey & Nuzhat Ali (Bradford University)
- Dr Comfort Momoh MBE (Public Health Specialist)

FURTHER INFORMATION: www.baspcan.org.uk/events.php

	<p><u>NEW CHALLENGES IN PROTECTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN</u></p> <p><u>A DAY CONFERENCE CONFRONTING DOMESTIC ABUSE & VIOLENCE, FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION, FORCED OR ARRANGED MARRIAGE & HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE</u></p> <p><u>11 DECEMBER 2009- LONDON</u></p>
<u>9.30AM</u>	<u>REGISTRATION AND COFFEE</u>
<u>10.00AM</u>	<u>CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION – PROFESSOR NICKY STANLEY</u>
<u>10.15AM</u>	<u>DR COMFORT MOMOH MBE</u> <u>FGM, HEALTH MODEL AND CHILD PROTECTION</u>
<u>11.00AM</u>	<u>COFFEE</u>
<u>11.25AM</u>	<u>ASHA-KIN DUALE AND LEETHEN BARTHOLOMEW</u> <u>FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION- COMMUNITIES' PERSPECTIVE OF ITS ROOT CAUSES AND IMPACT</u>
<u>12.10PM</u>	<u>DR MARIE MACEY AND NUZHAT ALI</u> <u>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: FORCED MARRIAGE</u>
<u>1.00</u>	<u>LONDON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD</u> <u>SHORT PRESENTATION TO INTRODUCE THE TOOLKIT FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH FGM</u>
<u>1.10PM</u>	<u>LUNCH</u>
<u>2.00PM</u>	<u>FIONA DWYER</u> <u>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE</u>
<u>2.45PM</u>	<u>COFFEE</u>
<u>3.05PM</u>	<u>NAZIR AFZAL OBE</u> <u>HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE</u>
<u>4.10PM</u>	<u>QUESTIONS AND PLENARY</u>
<u>4.30PM</u>	<u>CLOSE</u>

10 MAY 2010

'Speaking Up For Children: The Media and LSCBs- On the Same Side?'

BVSC, Birmingham

Key Note Speakers include:

- Liz Davies -Senior Lecturer, London Met University,
- Mike Jempson - Director, The MediaWise Trust
- Prof Nigel Parton - NSPCC Professor , Univeristy of Huddersfield
- Sue Woolmore - LSCB Advisor, NSPCC
- David Spicer - Barrister & Vice Chair BASPCAN
- Mark Williams-Thomas - Managing Director, WT Associates



FURTHER INFORMATION: www.baspcan.org.uk/events.php

24 – 29 JANUARY 2010

The 24th Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment

San Diego, California

The San Diego Conference focuses on multi-disciplinary best-practice efforts to prevent, if possible, or otherwise to investigate, treat, and prosecute child and family maltreatment.

The objective of the San Diego Conference is to develop and enhance professional skills and knowledge in the prevention, recognition, assessment and treatment of all forms of maltreatment including those related to family violence as well as to enhance investigative and legal skills. Issues concerning support for families, prevention, and leadership, policy making and translating the latest research into action are also addressed.

FURTHER INFORMATION: www.chadwickcenter.org/conference.htm

10 FEBRUARY 2010

Families Today: Where are we now?

Edinburgh,

A one day conference looking at issues facing today's families. What do we mean by 'family' today? What issues face families in Scotland in the 21st century? What responses can we make to these issues? The conference will bring together practitioners, policy-makers and academics to consider these key questions. It will provide opportunities to consider research and practice and to discuss key issues.

Themes:

- Kinship care
- Alcohol and drugs
- Prisoners
- Families in the recession

Speakers include:

Lynn Jamieson, Professor of Families and Relationships, University of Edinburgh, Co-Director, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

Susan Deacon, Professor of Social Change, Queen Margaret University

Panel session: your chance to find out what ideas are shaping the political manifestos of the future and influence these. **Who should attend** Anyone with an interest in families from social work, health, education, academia or the churches.

Cost: *Large organisation £50 (includes lunch)
**Small organisation £20 (includes lunch)

**Large organisation: Commercial organisations, central government departments, agencies and other national public bodies, local authorities, NHS, Police, Trade Unions, professional associations and charitable organisations with income over £1,000,000*

***Small organisation: Voluntary organisations with income of less than £1,000,000*

FURTHER INFORMATION: <http://www.cfr.ac.uk/events/familiestoday.html>

22 – 23 FEBRUARY, 2010

Twenty-Fourth Annual Conference on the prevention of child abuse

presented by prevent child abuse Texas

Dallas, Texas

Featuring: Bruce D. Perry, MD, PhD

Dr. Perry is the Senior Fellow of the Child Trauma Academy, a not-for-profit organization which promotes innovations in service, research and education in child maltreatment and childhood trauma. Dr. Perry has been an active teacher, clinician and researcher in children's mental health and the neurosciences holding a variety of academic positions. A focus of his work has been the development of innovative clinical and systemic programs and practices based upon emerging concepts regarding child development and neurodevelopment. These programs are in partnership with multiple sectors of the community and in context of public-private partnerships which help catalyze systemic change within the primary institutions that work with high-risk children such as child protective services, mental health, public education and juvenile justice.

FURTHER INFORMATION: www.preventchildabusetexas.org/nextconference.html?id=5ESS69TH

12TH – 14TH MARCH 2010

The International Commission on Couple and Family Relations

57th International Conference

Malta

In collaboration with Cana Movement Malta

Empowering families as sustainable partners in social policy

There is no substitute for the family – it is an irreplaceable gift to society. Worldwide concern about the problems families are facing promotes the vital need to empower the family and help it rediscover its innate abilities and potentialities.

The family is not an agent which receives only but which has a lot to give and this makes it a potential stakeholder in policy making. Rather than implement policies which penalize the family, states are duty bound to implement family friendly policies. The conference will therefore focus on ways to sustain and empower the family. It will provide a forum for sharing ideas and new initiatives.

Keynote presentations from different parts of the world, backed up by workshops allowing participants to share and learn experience and skills, will form the major part of this conference.

Conference participation:

Individuals and organisations involved in couple and family counselling and therapy, family organisations, research, social policy, family-related legislation and legal processes, relationship educators and the provision of welfare services are invited to participate.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Keynote presentations by internationally recognised experts

Among the sub-topics to be addressed:

- *Sustaining families with social and economic problems*
- *Intergeneration issues*
- *Health issues*
- *Empowering caring agencies*
- *Sustaining families in the educational field*
- *Sustaining families with disability realities*
- *Sustaining families going through crisis*

Workshops offering the chance to explore topics in more depth

Study group sessions developing international, multidisciplinary perspectives on conference topics and participants' interests

Poster presentations

A mixture of cultural events and informal entertainment will make up the social programme

The 57th international conference is jointly organised with The Cana Movement Malta.

About Cana:

For over 50 years, Cana Movement's main priority has been to render its services to the Maltese family. Our services are addressed to help young people in their preparation for marriage, and to accompany families throughout their married life. However this does not stop us from assisting couples who find stumbling blocks in their relationship.

Cana engages in:

- Training facilitators for Marriage Preparation Courses, Natural Family Planning teachers and Counsellors
- Providing on-going training/formation through seminars and conferences for its teachers, facilitators, counsellors and members
- Carrying out research and work on manuals/textbooks on educating in couple relationships
- Organising marriage preparation courses, enrichment meetings for married couples and national and international conferences
- Sending via email, the 'Family Update' to Church, Government and other local organisations, with the aim of keeping them abreast with current family issues
- Providing counselling service by trained counsellors and professional psychologists
- Offering the services of a number of support groups

Conference Venue:

New Dolmen Hotel, Qawra - Malta

Merging almost seamlessly with neighbouring Bugibba, Qawra extends southwards from St Paul's Bay, linking it with Salina Bay around the next peninsular. The New Dolmen Hotel, named after the Neolithic remains found nearby, is the most luxurious hotel in the St Paul's Bay area.

Interestingly, the archaeological remains now form part of the well-landscaped hotel grounds and make an unusual addition to the place.

Empowering families as sustainable partners in social policy

DETAILS OF THIS CONFERENCE AND HOW TO REGISTER will be available on the ICCFR website: www.iccfr.org in June 2009.

If you are interested in offering a workshop in the topic area, or if you want further information or have questions, please contact one of those identified below as soon as possible (deadline for workshop proposals is September 2009).

Dr Anna Vella

President Cana Movement
avella@synapse.net.mt

Marthese Borg

Vice President Cana Movement
marijaterenza@gmail.com

Terry Prendergast

Chair ICCFR
terry@marriagecare.org.uk

Claire Missen

Vice Chair ICCFR
cmissen@eircom.net

FOR CONFERENCE BOOKINGS KINDLY CONTACT:

Ray Baldacchino

Conference organiser
maltaconf@onvol.net

17. - MARCH 2010



Home

XVIII World International Family
Therapy Association (IFTA) Congress
17-20 March 2010 Panamericano Hotel
Buenos Aires, Argentina

WEDNESDAY, 17 MARCH

15:00-17:30 REGISTRATION HOURS

OPENING CEREMONY AND GENERAL SESSION

President William Nichols

Dra. Elena I. Highton de Nolasco

Vicepresidenta de la Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nacion

World Family Therapy Congress Achievement Award Presentation

Award recipient: Carlos Sluzki

16:00-17:30

17:45-19:30 WELCOME RECEPTION

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

ALL DAY REGISTRATION HOURS

08:30-10:00 BRIEF SESSIONS

10:00-10:50 COFFEE BREAK

PLENARY SESSION I: Global Sharing: People, Problems, and Effective Family Therapy

Home, Hope, Homelessness and the Search For Home in Challenging Times

Kenneth V. Hardy (USA)

Family Therapy in the Context of Evidence Based Practice

Cecile Rausch Herscovici (Argentina)

10:50-12:20

12:20-14:00 LUNCH BREAK / POSTER SESSION

14:00-15:30 SUB-PLENARY SESSIONS

15:30-16:20 COFFEE BREAK

16:20-17:20 1 HOUR WORKSHOPS

17:20-18:20 1 HOUR WORKSHOPS

FRIDAY, MARCH 19

08:30-10:00 BRIEF SESSIONS

10:00-10:45 COFFEE BREAK

10:45-12:15 SUB-PLENARY SESSIONS

12:15-13:45 LUNCH BREAK / POSTER SESSION

PLENARY II: Global Sharing: Contextual Issues in Therapy: Family Loyalties and Politics, Ethical Dilemmas

Connecting the Past to the Present: Loyalties and Politics in Therapy With Families

Marie-Luise Conen (Germany)

Ethical Dilemmas In Psychosocial Interventions From A Contextual Relational Perspective

Sergio Bernales (Chile)

13:45-15:15

15:15-15:45 COFFEE BREAK

15:45-17:45 2 HOURS WORKSHOPS

SATURDAY, MARCH 20

08:30-09:30 1 HOUR WORKSHOPS

09:30-10:00 COFFEE BREAK

10:00-12:00 2 HOURS WORKSHOPS

12:00-13:30 LUNCH BREAK

13:30-15:00 1.5 HOURS WORKSHOPS

15:00-15:30 COFFEE BREAK

PLENARY III: Global Sharing: Understanding and Treating Family Violence and Psychosis

Treating Couples Experiencing Aggression: Lessons Learned From Working With Violent Couples

Sandra M. Stith (USA)

Psychosis Is Response to Life: Dialogue Is The Best Cure For It

Jaakko Seikkula (Finland)

15:30-17:00

17:00-17:20 CLOSING CEREMONY

11 – 29 JANUARY 2010

Committee on the Rights of the Child, fifty-third session

Genf

18 JANUARY TO 5 FEBRUARY 2010

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, forty-fifth session

Genf

Women's anti-discrimination committee concludes forty-fourth session; adopts provisional agenda for next session in Geneva

Wrapping up the forty-fourth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women this afternoon, Committee Chairperson Naela Gabr, expert from Egypt, noted that the Committee had adopted decisions on three cases under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and it had continued discussions on the draft general recommendation on article 2 of the Convention related to policy measures.

The Committee today also adopted the draft report of its three-week session, introduced by Committee Rapporteur Violeta Neubauer, expert from Slovenia, as well as concluding observations and recommendations on the 11 States parties whose periodic reports were considered during the meetings: Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Denmark, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Spain, Switzerland, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu. Further, it adopted the draft report of the Working Group of the Whole on the Committee's action on implementing article 21 of the Convention and on ways and means of expediting its work, and it adopted the provisional agenda for its forty-fifth session scheduled for 18 January to 5 February 2010 in Geneva.

Ms. Gabr said the session was marked by a heavy work load, and presentations by four States parties that had submitted their initial reports after very long delays. The Committee had also adopted new work methods on the procedure for following up its concluding observations and it met with non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities to discuss background papers on general recommendations on older women and on the economic consequences of marriage and its dissolution. It also reflected on ways to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention and the tenth anniversary of the Optional Protocol next year, and continued its work on papers concerning the Committee's relationship with parliaments and non-governmental organizations.

Jessica Neuwirth, Director of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights New York Office, also spoke, thanking the Committee for its work during the session.

The Committee, which monitors State parties' compliance with the Convention, comprises 23 experts acting in their personal capacities.

1 – 12 MARCH 2010

Commission on the Status of Women, fifty-fourth session

New York, United States

15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000)

In March 2010, the Commission on the Status of Women will undertake a fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Emphasis will be placed on the sharing of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals. Member States, representatives of non-governmental organizations and of UN entities will participate in the session. A series of parallel events will provide additional opportunities for information exchange and networking.

Ongoing national and regional review processes are feeding into the global review process.

The General Assembly is expected to mark the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in a commemorative meeting during CSW.

- **National level review of implementation**
 - Questionnaire
 - Member States responses
- **Regional 15-year review processes**
 - Regional reports
 - Regional meetings
- **Global 15-year review process in the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women**
 - Overview
 - Documentation
 - Interactive events
 - Outcome
 - Participation
 - NGO participation
 - Media accreditation
 - Parallel events
- **Commemoration of the 15th anniversary by the General Assembly**
- **Related intergovernmental processes**
- **Other commemorative initiatives in the UN**

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- ❖ Government of Liechtenstein
- ❖ Government of Luxembourg
- ❖ Government of Spain, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands
- ❖ INGOs
- ❖ Niederösterreichische Landesregierung
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