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Quarterly Bulletin of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

October 2014, No. 91
Deadline for contributions: 30.11. 2014

Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Dear Readers of Families International,

This issue features a text by Dr. Gertraud Pichler, the current Deputy Chairperson of the Committee on, inter alia, empowering families.

Further included is the text of a recent resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on the observance of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 and beyond.

The text of a report on a seminar on violence, organised by SERFAC a member organisation of the Committee, from India, is also included, as is a paper, on family-centred policy, forwarded by the International Family Development Organisation.

We welcome you to submit texts, about your organisations and activities, for inclusion in Families International. We inform over 3000 potential readers on our mailing lists, when a new issue is available to download.

With kind regards,
Peter Crowley Ph.D.
Editor

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From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family



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FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

UNITED NATIONS
VIENNA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
MONDAY November 10th, 2014

CONFERENCE ROOM C0739

10.00 – 15.30

INTERNATIONAL FORUM

10.00-12.30

Video Message from the
Focal Point on the Family, Division for Social Policy and Development, (DSPD), Department of Economic
and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations Secretariat

Presentations:

Participation – how CSOs Influence Politics

Dr. Gudrun Kugler
Kairos Consulting

Participation as a Two-Way Process

Dr. Peter Crowley
Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Chairperson: Dr. Michael Schwarz, IFFD
Deputy-Chairperson: Dr. Gertrud Pichler, IFHE
Secretary: Dr. Peter Crowley, ICP
Deputy Secretary: Maria Helena Paes, PROSALIS
Treasurer: Mag. Wolfgang Engelmair, Kolping



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ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION

14:00 - 15.30

- i. Approval of the Agenda
- ii. Approval of the Minutes of the Full Committee May 26th 2014
- iii. Report of the Chairperson
- iv. Report of the Treasurer
- v. Reports from Member Organisations
- vi. Any other Business
- vii. Date and Place of next Full Committee Meeting

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Empowering Families, Individuals, Communities through Intercultural Competences and Understanding

Gertraud PICHLER

Keywords: Culture, diverse and multicultural society, dimension and standards of culture, intercultural competences

Abstract

Members of International Federation for Home Economics, IFHE work with families (often with different cultural backgrounds), with pupils and students from abroad and are involved in international University programmes or work as Expatriates in foreign countries with other international networks.

Home Economists also work with people of different social, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds. To cope with cultural diversity, to recognise the differences, as well as the similarity, we can support our own values as well as those of others from different countries. An understanding of cultural awareness and the ability to translate this information into effective relationships with others will better prepare those who have to work with or to live together for the diverse and multicultural world we live in.

The world is a much smaller place now that ever was. Globalization is rapidly breaking down our vision of a well-defined national, cultural and linguistic boundary. Migration and immigration has become an important issue. Today's working place had become diverse and multicultural. We have shifted into a new mode of living where cross-cultural contact has become almost a daily occurrence. Families and individuals are today confronted with these changes in a diverse society.

Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is campaigning for the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family 2014 with the Theme "Empowering Families, Individuals and Communities through Home Economics". IFHE is a worldwide organisation consisting of about 1400 members and 300 Member organisations from 64 countries around the world. English is the first language which unites the members and makes the intercultural communication possible. IFHE members work with families (often with different cultural backgrounds), with pupils and students worldwide and are involved in international

University programmes, work as Expatriates in foreign countries and with other international networks.

Home Economists work with people of different social, economical, religious and cultural backgrounds. Care centres for older people often employ carers from abroad, such as from the Philippines, Thailand, and India or from Eastern European countries. Day-care centres and Kindergarten school feeding programmes have to cope with different cultural and religious diversity. To cope with cultural diversity, to recognise the differences, as well as the similarity, we can support our own values as well as those of others from different countries. An understanding of cultural awareness and the ability to translate this information into effective relationships with others will better prepare those who have to work with or to live together for the diverse and multicultural world we live in.

The world is a much smaller place now that ever it was. Globalization is rapidly breaking down our vision of well-defined national, cultural and linguistic boundaries. Migration and immigration have become an important issue. Today's working place has become diverse and multicultural. We have shifted into a new mode of living where cross-cultural contact has become almost a daily occurrence.

Families and individuals are today confronted with these changes in a diverse society. Educators who offer multicultural education that provides students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for functioning in a pluralistic society also help to build bridges both nationally and internationally and promote global interaction cooperation, respect and acceptance. Values and cultures are not static. They change within time. They differ from place to place. They vary with ethnic origins and religious affiliations.

How can we define culture?

Considering Intercultural Competences it is necessary to define culture. The American anthropologist, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckholm (1952), compiled a list of 164 different definitions. To take one definition "Culture influences the behaviour of a group of people. It gives group members guidance on how to think and feel; how to act and how

to make sense of actions of others. It gives members a feeling of belonging and identity. It is the glue that holds the group together.” Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952; cited by Berry 2004:168). Milton Bennett (1986) describes culture as the learned and shared values, behaviours and beliefs of a group of interacting people. It is a process of generating and sharing meanings. Thomas (1996a:112) describes culture as follows “Culture is a universal orientation system very typical of a society, organization or group (...). It influences the perceiving, evaluating and acting of all its members and thus defines their affiliation to the culture. Culture as an orientation system structures a specific field of action for those who feel affiliated to this culture and thus creates the prerequisites for developing its own way of coping with its environment”.

We belong to a number of cultures, all of which impact our behaviour. Some we have chosen to belong to because of our profession, others we may have been born into for example national and ethics.

The Cultural Iceberg Concept is often used to create better understanding what we mean by cultures. The Cultural Iceberg describes three levels:

Above the surface: What can we see? What you notice about the people and organisation, the process and ways of working.

Just below the surface: official rules and codes of conduct. The stated values, expected behaviours, philosophy, the outspoken vision, mission and goals.

Deep below the surface: how the work and business really gets done, the hidden rules and unspoken beliefs, mission and goals.

To generate real intercultural communication, we need to go below the water level. The non-observable part of the iceberg is known as ‘subjective culture’. This is where unspoken assumption is found, the core values and patterns that guide our thoughts and actions. Some cultures value individualism, others prefer collective orientation. Some cultures are comfortable moving quickly and taking risks; others choose to go slowly and look at all information before they take the first step. All behaviour provides us with insight on how cultures of different values and communication style will determine our success.

IFHE as a cross-cultural organisation, we need to be more conscious of how the elements of ‘below the water line’ need to be challenged and specifically worked through. Investing time to understand the basis for example the attitudes, perceptions, memories and prejudices which condition the

approach to and reaction of those whom we are working and communicating with is therefore critical to our success. ‘Cultural intelligence’ is the ability to use insight we have about the culture we belong to, to give us insight to the culture of those people we interact with.

What are the key dimensions of culture? The key dimensions of culture are elements we have most in common and are the sum of generations of experience within the particular group.

Power: Power of the importance of social hierarchies. The driving factors are: position, wealth, religion, socio-economical situation.

Time: In time-oriented cultures is finite and should not be wasted. Time is a precious commodity, so time management is a core competence. We often say ‘Time is money’, this is relevant for example in Germany, USA, Northern European countries. In other cultures the attitude to time is more relaxed, for example in southern European countries as well as in African countries. The question is how we react to conflicts in the dimension of time. How do people conceptualize it, and what importance is given to the past, present, and the future?

Communication: Communications and the degree, to which we use verbal, non-verbal communications, differ in different cultures. When we are working across cultures, especially in virtual teams, there is no shared understanding; things are misunderstood; done differently and often not delivered. It’s easy to blame national traits. We are not investing enough time to learn about the culture, the behaviour, the habits, values, attitudes and belief of the other. How do we interpret the body language within different cultures?

Interdependence: Interdependence and the degree to which we put the individual or the group first. This dimension is about whether people see themselves as independent individuals or as an independent member of a group.

In ‘group cultures’ (collectivist), as we can see in the Asian countries, there may be more pressure to conform to group norms to retain harmony. “We” as a harmonious society, relationship within the group is very important. Identity is based on group.

In “individualistic” cultures the identity is based on one self, called as the “Me” society. The individualistic culture can be found in the western world, such as in European countries, in the USA, Canada and others.

Much research had been done to compare “Cultural Standards” within different nations (e.g. Thomas, A. 1996) as well “Cultural Dimensions”

(e.g. Hofstede G., 2001) but to describe them herein in this paper is not possible. I also have to admit that we should not take these standards or dimensions to describe the culture, behaviour, attitudes, in general or even develop stigma – but knowing them, it helps to create awareness of differences between people from different nations. For better understanding what I mean by cultural standards, I would like to mention some which had been found in certain countries:

German cultural standards are: Task orientation; straight forwardness, sincerity, directness; differentiation of personal contact and distance-separation between work and private life; time scheduling.

American cultural standards: Individualism; relaxedness; social recognition; orientation towards future; minimizing interpersonal distance – optimizing interpersonal openness; achievement orientation; equality of chances; mobility; action orientation.

Chinese cultural standards: social harmony; group orientation; cunning; tactics; face saving – not losing face; Guanxi (importance of social networks); integration of life and work; etiquette; hierarchy; bureaucracy.

Intercultural Competences

“Intercultural Competences is an important tool to understand people from other cultural background. It is the ability to communicate or interact affectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2006:247). Milton Bennett, M., an American interculturalist and founder of the Intercultural Communication Institute in Portland, Oregon, gave the definition “Intercultural Competences is leaning and understanding the values and beliefs behind behaviour - how people think - and reconciling them with our own”. Basic needs are sensitivity and self-consciousness: it means the understanding of other behaviours and ways of thinking as well as the ability to express one’s own point of view in a transparent way with the aim to be understood and respected by staying flexible where this is possible and being clear where this is necessary”. Intercultural Competences is a balance depending on the situations between

Knowledge (about other cultures, people, nations, behaviour)

Empathy (understanding, feelings and needs of other people)

Self-confidence (knowing what I want, my strengths and weakness, emotional stability) and

Cultural identify (knowledge about one’s own culture).

Intercultural understanding and competences and associated definitions appear to be the abilities to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately in multicultural context. Misunderstanding can occur due to language problems; distance can breed distrust; perceptions can be taken as facts; and cultural differences can affect the way decisions are taken, meetings are run, tasks are undertaken and completed and how deadlines are met.

Members from International Organisations, working with people with different cultural background (migrants, international business people, international students, or international professional and experts) every one of them will need to develop such skills. It is an ongoing learning process that involves interpretation, self-reflection and negotiation which gradually transforms one’s attitude, knowledge and skills towards cultural differences in which language function as the tool of interaction and communication to facilitate its development. To know and use a foreign language is very important. Language abilities are often over emphasized elements of intercultural competences and understanding.

Much more of the key elements of comprehensive cultural knowledge are dependant on action field or domain, context situations.

It needs

- an understanding of historical, political and religious contexts
- an understanding of others ‘world views’, values, norms and way of life;
- an understanding of the role and impact cultural elements exert on behavior and communication;
- skills and strategies for successful cooperation, partnership and teamwork across national and cultural boundaries;
- to develop tactics and strategies for effective use of English (either as a native or a foreign language) in international communication;
- to provide information about specific cultures and become aware of the importance of cultural differences;
- to learn about key cultural concepts, such as attitudes to time, authority and information, and how to interpret different attitudes and behavior;
- to develop practical skills and strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of communication across culture.

Nancy Adler (2002), a world expert in group dynamics and intercultural competences writes in her book: "International Dimension of Organizational Behavior" that culturally diverse teams often perform below expectations. Leaders of international organizations are most common reaction to cultural diversity is simply not to acknowledge it or believe that it doesn't have an impact on organizations. This is a parochial attitude – viewing the world solely through one's eyes and perspective. The second most common response is that leaders behave in an ethnocentric manner – they perceive, but see it as a source of problems. Nancy Adler states that performance losses in multicultural groups can be traced back to diverse thinking patterns, disagreement on expectations and what information is considered relevant. All these factors lead to higher levels of stress than found in homogeneous groups. Furthermore, members of multi-national teams demonstrate higher level due to the misinterpretation of different cultural behaviors and assumption. Additionally there is less group thinking. This occurs when group members, in striving for unanimity, override their motivations to realistically appraise alternative courses of action. The consequences of group thinking are failure to examine the risk involved in the group's choice, incomplete weighing of alternatives and a failure to work out contingency plans.

Strategies for developing culturally diverse groups or teams

To exploit the advantages of mixed cultural groups or teams and create synergy, group leaders need to take more time and effort by adopting certain measures. In examining the development of high-performing multicultural groups, Nancy Adler found the following qualities:

Recognizing differences: Intercultural communications break down or largely caused by ignorance of national differences. To overcome the natural ethnocentric perceptions, group members should first observe and objectively describe each cultural behavior without either interpreting or evaluating. At the same time, group members need to overcome acutely conscious of their own stereotypes and how they could inadvertently affect their expectations of fellow group from other countries.

Cultivate openness: Group-leaders should cultivate an open attitude toward cultural diversity. Members of a group with different cultural background should be encouraged to communicate their cultural values and explain reasons why they act the way they do. Cultural diversity shouldn't be

seen as a burden, but rather as an enriching, positive resource

Creating mutual respect: Working with people of different cultural backgrounds it needs an atmosphere of mutual respect. This especially is necessary in international organizations, between board members, group leaders and individual members, also with people of other international organizations.

Equal power: It is important that power is shared in an international context. Too much power between people of one culture could lead to counterproductive activities, in that non-dominant group members could feel intimidated. The sensitive leader (chairperson, president) should be careful not to vest too much power in his/his own ethnic group and strive to distribute tasks according to each person's ability.

Establishing a vision and overriding goal: Multi-national groups have a harder time than homogeneous groups in deciding collectively on what is good or bad suggestion or decision. To prevent a breakdown in the group work effectiveness, there needs to be continual positive feedback in every working phase. Very helpful is also external feedback. Group members learn to value contributions made by each member and trust collective decision. Right from the start to work in a group, the group leader should give the group members the opportunity to articulate their vision or goal. This will provide general direction, decrease prejudice and create mutual respect.

To summarize, what is necessary by working together with people of different cultural background, speaking different languages, belonging to different religions, having different attitudes and understanding of correct behavior, it is important to develop intercultural competences and understanding. The following competences will help to optimize our own intercultural thinking, and behavior towards people with an intercultural background. We need the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. Following ideas can support our intercultural skills and attitude:

- We need the ability to identify behavior guided by culture and engage in a new behavior in other cultures
- We need skills and strategies for successful cooperation, partnership and teamwork across national and cultural boundaries

- We have to behave appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations based on our knowledge, skills and motivation.
- We need to learn about key cultural concepts, such as attitudes to time, authority and information, and how to interpret different attitudes and behavior.
- We need good interpersonal skills exercised intercultural by sending and receiving messages that are accurate and appropriate.
- We need to develop practical skills and strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of communication across culture.
- We should understand other peoples world viewpoint
 - We need to develop cultural self – awareness and capacity for self-assessment
 - We should be able to adapt and adjust to new cultural environment
 - We should develop general openness toward intercultural learning
 - We need flexibility
 - We should avoid stereotyping
 - We should ask not tell, we should develop good listening skills
 - We should develop skills to analyze, interpret and relate
 - We learn to tolerate and accept ambiguity
 - We respect difference while remaining authentic
 - We should reflect our own experiences with other culture and respect other cultures
 - Deep knowledge and understanding of culture (one’s own and others – reflection)
 - We should develop cross cultural empathy.
 - We should neither over- nor underestimate the role of culture.

Belonging to an International Organization, or working with people from so many different countries, with different cultural background, languages, attitudes, behavioral concepts, I often ask myself, how much do we know about each other, how much do we know about our own culture, and how much do we understand the “others” and their culture.

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From the United Nations

United Nations

Nation Unies



Economic and Social Council

Distr.:

General

8 August 2014

E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 12 June 2014

[on the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development (E/2014/26)]

2014/8. Observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions [44/82](#) of 8 December 1989, [47/237](#) of 20 September 1993, [50/142](#) of 21 December 1995, [52/81](#) of 12 December 1997, [54/124](#) of 17 December 1999, [56/113](#) of 19 December 2001, [57/164](#) of 18 December 2002, [58/15](#) of 3 December 2003, [59/111](#) of 6 December 2004, [59/147](#) of 20 December 2004, [60/133](#) of 16 December 2005, [62/129](#) of 18 December 2007, [64/133](#) of 18 December 2009, [66/126](#) of 19 December 2011, [67/142](#) of 20 December 2012 and [68/136](#) of 18 December 2013 concerning the proclamation of, preparations for and observance of the International Year of the Family and its tenth and twentieth anniversaries,

Recognizing that the preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year provide a useful opportunity to draw further attention to the objectives of the Year for increasing cooperation at all levels on family issues and for undertaking concerted actions to strengthen family-centred policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development,

Recognizing also that the follow-up to the International Year is an integral part of the agenda and of the multi-year programme of

work of the Commission for Social Development,

Recognizing further that the family, as the natural and fundamental group unit of society, has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children and that children, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

Stressing the importance of creating a conducive environment to strengthen and support all families, recognizing that equality between women and men and respect for all of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all family members are essential to family well-being and to society at large, noting the importance of reconciliation of work and family life and recognizing the principle of shared parental responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child,

Convinced that equality between men and women, women's equal participation in employment and shared parental responsibility are essential elements of policy on the family,

Recognizing that the overall objectives of the International Year and its follow-up processes continue to guide national and international efforts to improve family well-being worldwide and address emerging issues that impact the family,

Noting the importance of designing, implementing and monitoring family-oriented policies, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work, work-family balance, social integration and intergenerational solidarity,

Recognizing that the family can contribute to eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases,

Noting that single-headed households, child-headed households, intergenerational and intragenerational households are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion,

Acknowledging that the family plays a key role in social development and as such should be strengthened, with attention to the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of its members,

Noting the active role of the United Nations in enhancing international cooperation in family-related issues, particularly in the areas of research and information, including the compilation, analysis and dissemination of data,

Emphasizing that it is necessary to increase coordination of the activities of the United Nations system on family-related issues in order to contribute fully to the effective implementation of the objectives of the International Year and its follow-up processes,

Convinced that civil society, including research and academic institutions, has a pivotal role in advocacy, promotion, research and policymaking and, as appropriate, policy evaluation, in respect of family policy development and capacity-building,

Recalling that the twentieth anniversary of the International Year will be observed during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in

2014¹ and the recommendations contained therein;

2. *Recalls its invitation* to all States to view 2014 as a target year by which concrete efforts will be taken to improve family well-being through the implementation of effective national policies, strategies and programmes;

3. *Encourages* Governments to make every possible effort to realize the objectives of the International Year and its follow-up processes and to integrate a family perspective into national policymaking;

4. *Urges* Member States to give due consideration to advancing family policy development in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

5. *Invites* Member States and the organizations of the United Nations system as well as other relevant stakeholders to take into account the role of the family as a contributor to sustainable development and the need to strengthen family policy development in their ongoing efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, the Millennium Development Goals and future United Nations development goals;

6. *Encourages* Member States to take into consideration the panel discussion held in observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year at the fifty-second session of the Commission for Social Development in order to guide its future deliberations on family issues, with the aim of establishing appropriate follow-up processes to guide national policy development;

7. *Also encourages* Member States to strengthen or, if necessary, establish relevant national agencies or governmental bodies responsible for the implementation and monitoring of family policies and to research the impact of social policies on the family and its members;

8. *Further encourages* Member States to continue their efforts to develop appropriate policies to address family poverty, social exclusion, work-family balance and intergenera-

¹ A/69/61-E/2014/4

tional solidarity and to share good practices in those areas;

9. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations and regional entities, civil society organizations, the private sector and academic institutions to promote and advance family empowerment through appropriate family-centred policies and programmes;

10. *Encourages* Member States to adopt effective means to reduce family poverty and prevent the intergenerational transfer of poverty through family-centred benefits and social protection measures, such as old-age pensions, cash transfers, housing assistance, child benefits and tax breaks;

11. *Also encourages* Member States to promote family policies in support of work-family balance and to strengthen flexible provisions for parental leave, extend flexible working arrangements for employees with family responsibilities, including flexible part-time job opportunities and arrangements, promote gender equality and empowerment of women, including by eliminating workplace discrimination against women and men with family responsibilities, and enhance paternal involvement and shouldering of responsibilities and support a wide range of quality childcare arrangements, noting the importance of reconciliation of work and family life and recognizing the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child;

12. *Further encourages* Member States to invest in intergenerational programmes for helping families in their caregiving responsibilities, including care for family members of all ages, and facilitating intergenerational exchanges and support through, inter alia, the provision of social protection schemes, including pensions, and investment in cross-generational facilities, volunteering programmes aimed at youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, mentoring and job-sharing programmes;

13. *Encourages* Member States to develop and implement policies and national strategies to prevent violence within the family as a whole, including child abuse, elder abuse and domestic violence, and thereby enhance the well-being of all of its members;

14. *Recommends* that United Nations agencies and bodies, including the regional commissions, and invites relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and research and academic institutions, to work closely with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in a coordinated manner on family-related issues;

15. *Encourages* Member States to consider establishing partnerships with civil society organizations, the private sector and academic institutions, as appropriate, in support of family-oriented policy and programme design;

16. *Encourages* Governments to support the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities to enable the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to continue research activities and provide assistance to countries, upon their request;

17. *Encourages* the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, within existing resources, to continue to cooperate with Governments, the United Nations system and civil society in strengthening national capacities through the implementation of the objectives of the International Year and its follow-up processes;

18. *Invites* Member States, United Nations agencies and bodies, civil society organizations and academic institutions to continue providing information on their activities in support of the objectives of the International Year and its follow-up processes and to share good practices and data on family policy development to be included in the relevant reports of the Secretary-General.

23rd plenary meeting
12 June 2014

From Member Organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

IFFD Papers No.35

Family-Centered Policy

Building Common Ground With Family-Focused and Research-Based Information

1 October 2014

By Karen Bogenschneider, Rothermel Bascom Professor School of Human Ecology,
University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA.

This text incorporates Professor Bogenschneider's prepared remarks, comments, and reflections for the Panel discussion on the Protection of the Family held on 15 September 2014 in the Human Rights Council (Geneva)

I am honored to be here to discuss one thing we all agree on — the valuable contributions families make for the benefit of their members and the good of society. In the Resolution on Protection of the Family, I want to heartily endorse the recommendation to undertake concerted actions to strengthen family-centered policies and programs. This has been the focus of my work for over two decades. Today I will discuss briefly what we do, the best practices that contribute to our success, and implications for supporting and empowering families.

Since 1993, my colleagues and I have convened over 190 Family Impact Seminars for state policymakers in 25 states and the District of Columbia. The seminars are a series of presentations, briefing reports, and discussion sessions that communicate family-focused, research-based information to state policymakers on timely topics ranging from child care to elder care, from parenting to poverty, from youth crime to youth work force success. These seminars are occurring in a political environment so divisive that studies show it is “mathematically impossible” for the U.S. Congress to get much more polarized (Haidt & Hetherington, 2012, p. 2).

Given this polarized environment, how much success would you expect the Family Impact Seminars to have? Not every seminar ends up influencing a policy decision, but some do. Policymakers report that the seminars influenced policy decisions that can help lift families out of poverty by informing laws that ensured access to nutritious food and to health care. The seminars have influenced policies that can support work/family balance by informing laws on the funding of child care (Bogenschneider, 2014). The seminars have supported youth becoming productive workers by influencing policies that lowered rates of school dropout. The seminars

have supported the elderly by influencing policies that help cover the costs of prescription drugs. So we have been able to influence policymakers' decisions on a number of policies that protect family well-being and human rights. What best practices have contributed to our success? I have time to mention only four.

First, we provide objective information and a range of policy options that have earned us a solid, nonpartisan reputation. We believe this is essential. If we have a liberal reputation, the conservatives won't come to the seminars. If we have a conservative reputation, the liberals won't come. Fostering consensus among different perspectives is the only way to build policies that last, even if government regimes change (see Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010).

Second, we pay careful attention to the issues we focus on. We do not focus on issues where policymakers have already made up their minds. For example, the liberal and conservative policymakers who attend our seminars could probably not agree on how to define family, so we don't focus on that. In our work for over 20 years in more than half the states in the USA, the issue of defining families is seldom raised. Instead, we focus on what we have found policymakers can agree on—how to support and empower families. Clearly, we focus on issues that are controversial, but they are issues where policymakers have not yet made up their minds and where they are open to compromise and common ground. For example, both conservative and liberal policymakers were concerned about inadequate preparation of youth for the workforce, so their minds were open to considering a range of research-based options presented at a seminar. Policymakers used this information to design a compromise law that provided alternative

ways for high-risk kids to complete secondary school.

Third, we find another way to build consensus is by focusing on family well-being. In the USA, policymakers of vastly different political persuasions agree on the importance of supporting and empowering families. So we encourage policymakers to look at their decisions through the lens of family impact. Policymakers in the USA would not think of passing a law without asking, “What is the economic impact?” We encourage policymakers to routinely ask, “What is the family impact? How does the policy affect families and would it be more effective and efficient if families were involved in the response?” (Bogenschneider et al., 2012).

We have developed five family impact questions for policymakers that we call discussion starters. For example, how does the policy affect family members’ ability to carry out their responsibilities to one another? How does it affect family stability? We joke that we would like to laser these family impact questions to policymakers’ eyeballs. Instead, we print them on business cards for policymakers to keep in their wallets or portfolios. (For the Policymakers’ Guide, Rationale, Handbook, checklists, and toolkit, go to www.familyimpactseminars.org in the family impact section.)

We use questions like these to analyze the family impact of policies, both positive and negative. In an analysis of a health care law, we found a mother and her child would be eligible for family health care coverage, but not the mother’s unmarried partner. However, if the mother married the partner, the family would no longer be eligible because their combined income would be too high to qualify. In one program to help youth get jobs after high school, our analysis showed that it worked very well for boys, but not for girls. These were consequences that policymakers probably did not intend. To identify these consequences ahead of time, family impact analysis could be conducted on each of the 2015 sustainable development goals.

Finally, we find that policymakers want research on the effectiveness of various policy options so they can invest in policies that work and cut those that do not.

In sum, in a contentious political environment, we have been able to move beyond family rhetoric to enhancing the reality of families’ lives by building

better public policies. What relevance does our experience have for policies that protect family well-being and the human rights of its members?

Among the over 60 statements introduced on September 15, there appeared to be one point of agreement— families are a fundamental building block of society. I was encouraged by the strong commitment to supporting and empowering families. Yet I was deeply troubled by the gravity of the circumstances many families are facing. The conundrum that remains is how to turn this family rhetoric into reality. I propose three considerations:

1. Will we make the most progress for families if we focus on those issues where the most consensus exists? The lively discussion around families reminded me that we are all part of the UN family. Like a family, we can discuss. We can engage in vigorous debate over vastly different views. But as happens in families, we can listen to each other, compromise, and find common ground.

2. Which approaches to the 2015 sustainable development goals will best support and empower families? The UN discussion yielded three alternatives. First, family well-being could be an explicit 2015 sustainable development goal stated broadly (e.g., supporting and empowering families) or stated narrowly (e.g., eradicating family poverty, strengthening parenting education, ending family violence). Second, family well-being could be implicit by requiring that each 2015 sustainable development goal be viewed through the lens of family impact. Conducting family impact analysis can detail how each goal affects families and specific ways it could be implemented more effectively and efficiently if families were involved in the response. Third, both explicit family goals and implicit family impact analysis could be considered for inclusion in the 2015 sustainable development goals.

3. What resources are available to support and empower families? We have a growing body of research evidence on the valuable role families play in promoting economic productivity, school success, social competence, and so forth (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010).

We know how to conduct family impact analysis to critically examine the advertent and inadvertent effects of a policy, program, agency, or organization on family stability, family relationships, and family members’ ability to carry out their responsi-

bilities. I am hopeful that we can put our differences behind us and reach consensus on specific ways we can work together to support and empower families. If we focus on issues with the most consensus, would this bring more countries to the table? With more countries, would there be more potential for strengthening family entered policies and programs?

I am not naïve about how hard this is going to be. However, just because it is hard does not mean that it is not worth doing. The well-being of families around the world is worth it. Families, particularly those least able to speak on their own behalf, need a strong and unified voice in policymaking.

Note. Sincere appreciation is expressed to Ignacio Socias, Noor Al Malki Al Jehani, Renata Kaczmarek, and Lori Diprete Brown for their comments on an earlier draft of these remarks.

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Report of The National Seminar on “Impact of Violence on Social Institutions: Family, Education and Community in India”.

Dates: 26th & 27th Sept 2014 Venue: SERFAC, Chennai, India.

Introduction:

Human and Social Rights are most often not met in most societies. This often starts from conception and is transmitted from generation to generation. In the process, both are intensified, diversified and supported by social aberrations and deviations based on class, caste, religion and transmitted through culture, traditions, taboos, life style, beliefs etc which in turn are often reflected in forms of violence some of which are child abuse, early or forced marriage, dowry, domestic violence, sexual harassment, pornography etc.

The “Impact of Violence on Social Institutions in India,” affects individuals, families, women and children in particular and spreads to the whole community consequently affecting social harmony; peace and integrity of the social environments, quality of life of the family and achieving gender equality suffer a setback. Present and future generations are vulnerable. It is in this background the three day National Seminar on “Impact of Violence on Social Institutions: Family, Education and Community in India” was organised by SERFAC in Chennai on 26th & 27th September 2014.

Preamble:

Planning and preparations for this seminar was taken well in advance with prompt communication for the successful execution of the seminar. Seminar invitations sent to 244 educational institutions including universities and colleges covering four regions of India (Northern, Western, Eastern and Southern States). Invitations sent to the Heads of the Institutions and Departments viz Sociology, Women’s Studies, Social Work, Psychology, Anthropology etc, psychologists, consultants, Research Scholars and NGOs to send their synopsis of the paper in advance. The responses were received and 12 papers shortlisted to be presented in the seminar. Invitations were also sent to the same group for participation in the seminar to contribute their expertise in the workshop group. Students were also invited to participate in the seminar to motive and sensitise them in the issue of violence and its impact. Four Chairpersons from reputed universities and colleges were invited to chair each Plenary Sessions and a chief guest to inaugurate the seminar.

Report:

The two day National Seminar on “Impact of Violence on Social Institutions: Family, Education and Community in India” was organised by SERFAC in Chennai on 26th & 27th September 2014. Forty two participants from six states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Pondicherry, New Delhi and Maharashtra) of India participated in the Seminar. The participants and presenters include Academic Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Research Scholars, Students, NGO representatives etc.

1. Inauguration:

The inauguration was marked with a procession by students with a lighted lamps, followed by the lighting of the traditional Indian lamp by the chief guest Dr. Susheela Kaushik, President of Centre for Development Studies and Action, New Delhi, Dr. V.D. Swaminathan, Professor of Psychology and Head-in-charge of Department of Social Work, University of Madras, Dr. Catherine Bernard, Founder and Director of SERFAC, Mr. Manikandan, Manager of SERFAC and Ms. S. Jilly Philippa, Secretary for Research, SERFAC.

Dr. Catherine Bernard, Founder and Director of SERFAC welcomed the chief guest and delegates of the Seminar and presented the objectives and dynamics of the seminar. She highlighted the importance of the workshops and it was meant to dialogue instead of discussion, in view of finding directions and consolidated efforts towards solutions.

Dr. Susheela Kaushik, the chief guest of the seminar thanked the organiser for the title chosen as it is the need of the hour. She highlighted different forms and types of violence against women and children especially girl children and the social crimes like foeticide, female infanticide, maternal mortality, neglect of women’s health, dowry killing, honour killing, murders by in laws, the crimes in the field of sex and sexual harassment, molestation and rape of adolescent girls and even infants and older women, abetment to women’s suicide etc which have increased by leaps and bounds. She also highlighted the cost of these various types of violence against women and girls which has been enormous by way of the loss in human resources, economic productivity and utilisation of the developmental benefits leading to much loss to the state and social advancement. She gave a call for the

academicians and civil societies to organise gender sensitisation workshops and seminars among the male youth and men, educate them on women's rights, equality and justice. She also emphasised on the need for networking and to strengthen support groups to work towards equality and justice to women.

Dr. V.D. Swaminathan extended a vote of thanks.

2. Plenary Sessions:

This National Seminar which consisted of 12 selected research papers related to the topic of "Impact of Violence on Social Institutions: Family, Education and Community in India" were presented by the academic professionals, professors, associate professors, assistant professors, research scholars and professional psychologists.

The following are the four plenary sessions with its overarching titles:

Plenary Session I: *The Cycle of Violence*. The two presenters Ms. Anitha, Faculty of Social Work, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kerala presented her paper on "Effects of Exposure to Domestic Violence on Adolescents" followed by Dr. Sara Neena, T.T., Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Vimala College, Kerala presented her paper on "Domestic Violence and its effects on the Emotional and Physical Development of Adolescent: A Study in Kerala."

Plenary Session II: *"Exposure to Violence during the Life Span"*. The paper presenters were Dr. A. Shahin Sultana, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Social Work, School of Social Science and International Studies, Pondicherry University on "The impact of violence on young children (0-6 yrs)", Dr. G. Sheefna, Research Associate, Women's Studies Centre, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore on "Gender Based Violence and Legal Provisions", Dr. V.D. Swaminathan, Professor of Psychology and Head in Charge of Social Work, University of Madras on "Prevention of Violence across life span – Psychological Perspectives".

Plenary Session III: *"The Co-relation between Technology and Behaviour"*. There were four presenters during this session. Dr. Saket Bihari, Assistant Professor, IIPA, New Delhi who presented on "The impact of Technological Violence on society: Narratives from the select schools in Delhi Metropolis, Dr. B. Geetha, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai who presented on "Cyberspace and Vulnerability of Women – A Case study on victims of virtual world", Dr. C.Hilda Devi who presented on "Media Violence

and Youth Violence" and finally by Ms. Sunita Menon, Independent Professional Therapist, Chennai presented on "Fighting Effects of Violence in Media".

Plenary Session IV: *"Protection/ Prevention and being proactive"*. The paper presenters includes Dr. Suganda Ramamoorthi, Associate Professor of Economics, Convenor, Centre for Women's Studies, Lady Doak College, Madurai who presented on "Commercial Sex work from Stigma to Rehabilitation and Mainstreaming", Mr. Arockiam, Doctoral Research Scholar, Madras School of Social Work, Chennai presented on "A Study on Drop-outs among Bricklin Workers Children of Thiruvallur District, Multi Centered Approach" and finally by Dr. B. Madhana Rekha, Director, Centre for Women's Studies, J.B.A.S. College for Women, Chennai on "Proactively Ensuring Safe Environments for Family, Social Institutions and Community".

Each session had time for interaction on the papers presented. This approach created space for participants to seek clarifications, to explore, exchange information, and discuss on the issues. It was requested to continue to discuss in the workshop sessions and come up with appropriate recommendations.

3. Workshops:

Three workshop sessions were held to discuss/dialogue on the following three main levels:

- Highlighting the reality of violence: Major issues, interconnections and consequences on the fabric of society
- Identifying and naming the nexuses between various social institutions and systems that stimulate violence and suggesting action to break the nexus and fill the lacunae
- Scaling up existing system and drawing a road map for the next 3- 5 years.

The participants were divided into four groups which were, based on the four plenary sessions..

Highlights of the Interactive/ Workshop sessions:

- 1. Highlighting the reality of violence: Major issues, interconnections and consequences on the fabric of society**

Group 1 discussed on the reality from the papers presented in Plenary Session I on Domestic Violence. They also discussed on the possible causes, major issues and interconnections, the consequences on children, their development and family as a whole.

Group 2 discussed on the reality from the papers presented in plenary session II on

early childhood exposure to violence and gender based violence in family, community and workplace, its consequences on the development of the family as whole, workplace and community.

Group 3 discussed on the reality of the papers presented in plenary session III on the impact of various forms of IT/Media/Press violence on Children, Youth, Adult, Family, and Community.

Group 4 discussed on the reality of papers presented in plenary session IV on the prevention of violence, needs and efforts to minimise violence in families and society.

The following are the issues/realities identified by groups are summarised as follows:

Children:

- unfair treatment
- they live in closed homes with poor ventilation
- verbal and non verbal abuse from/among parents
- poor socialisation due to alcoholism and drug addiction
- frequent exposure to destructive language, thoughts and scenes
- denial of child's interest and forced educational achievements for lucrative careers.
- Frustration of children and consequent disinterest in studies
- Violent behaviour at later age/stage of life.

Family:

- alcoholism is justification for violence
- violence is considered normal
- lack of interpersonal relationship
- development of tolerance for violence
- job insecurity leading insecurity and stress
- negative influence of media
- domestic violence – verbal abuse, physical abuse
- adolescents engage in the violence and experience violence
- lack of neighbourhood culture- self centred
- lack of proper socialisation
- no parental role model

Community:

- Alarming issues of gender based violence/life cycle issue
- lack of responsibility in using media and technology
- divorce and separation, break down of families
- gender bias
- lack of proper machinery to implement legislations
- more and more legislation, more and more violence
- dependency among women and children
- lack of value based system in family
- insecurity/ lack of secured environments
- stereotypic roles of male and female
- indecent representation in media

Education:

- lack of commitment / passion for teaching
- lack of dedication in work
- judgemental attitude towards students
- lack of innovativeness in teaching
- not updating teaching skills
- focus on materialism and money
- privatisation of education
- lack of discipline among students
- media influence
- rebellious attitude among students
- peer pressure
- lack of hard work, disinterest in studies

2. Identifying and naming the nexuses between various social institutions and systems that stimulate violence and suggesting action to break the nexus and fill the lacunae

All the four groups discussed on the gaps/ lacunae in family, education and community. The following are the gaps identified by the groups.

- Minimal collective efforts on child rearing
- limited interaction with family members (between husband and wife, between parents and children, between grandparents and grand children)
- limited siblings at home/ nuclear family system
- addiction and dependency to modern communication devices (mobiles, tabs, notebook, laptops, computer etc)
- lack of joint decision making by parents
- minimal sharing of roles and responsibilities
- self centred attitude, individualistic rather than collective
- poor concern for others

- parents are seldom at home or spend more time on work and therefore less time at home so children often lack parental love, care and affection, lack of spending quality time with children
- abuse by care takers
- lack of face to face interaction due to increased mobile usage
- lack of proper guidance and counselling
- lack of assertiveness ie to say no to any sexual advances
- psychological/emotional blocks
- lack of sex education
- lack of awareness about the prevention of violence
- culture of silence
- cultural,religious and traditional differences, social taboos

3. Scaling up existing system and drawing a road map for the next 3-5 years.

All the four groups discussed the drawing a road map for the next 3- 5 years. The following are recommendations and possible solutions highlighted by the groups.

- Having one meal a day together, family prayer together, going out together as a family at least once in a month, doing household activities together, sharing of roles and responsibilities
- Encourage and exemplify face to face interaction, Appreciating one another in family, visiting family members and relatives during important occasions
- Preparing the youth for marital life, educating them on positive parenting
- Educate students for freedom of choice with responsibility
- Master technology and not become slave to technology
- Parents and teachers to help develop healthy hobbies
- Develop an anchor in spirituality
- Provide media literacy to parents and children
- Dedicated and committed to their own profession as teachers
- Improving their skills in teaching
- Love one another and become good citizens
- Introduce innovative life skills and value education for students
 - Creating conducive environment for learning
 - Start counselling centres in all institutions

- Concentration is needed on “HI- Happiness Index” instead of HDI
- Balanced life style
- Allot time for outdoor activities to avoid “Techno addictions”
- Educate both female and male on gender equality by promoting equal treatment at home, in schools, religious institutions etc.
- Introduce gender sensitisation programme, value education programme in schools and colleges
- Gender sensitisation should be given to officials
- Provide self defence mechanism to protect and safeguard women and girls from violence

Conclusion:

Dr. Catherine Bernard, Founder and Director of SERFAC thanked all the speakers and participants for their cooperation and contributions that has made the seminar a success.. Certificates were distributed to the presenters and participants and the programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks.

FURTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

CoNGO COMMUNICATION No.10 - September 2014 Post-2015 development agenda



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Presidential Introduction

The service provided by the CoNGO COMMUNICATION on the Post-2015 Agenda, now at its 10th Number, has been welcomed by many parts of the CoNGO constituency and beyond. This current issue once again illustrates the diversity and complexities of the Post-2015 Agenda, and provides insights and connections that are particularly useful for the very many NGOs/CSOs that are not able to follow the New York-centred deliberations and negotiations.

The next weeks and months will see major new steps forward in the preparations for the Agenda and specifically for advancing towards an agreed set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many of these are also referenced in the current issue.

But it is already time to think seriously about IMPLEMENTATION. Once finally adopted, the SDGs will need robust monitoring and review mechanisms for all their goals and targets. Monitoring and review will be essential to ensure that the SDG commitments translate to results that are meaningful for the world's peoples. These mechanisms must identify who should be accountable, and

how. I draw particular attention to the excellent first statement by the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who took office on September 4. He stated clearly that the SDGs "will only make a difference to people if progress can be effectively monitored - and if decision-makers can be held accountable for shortcomings. An important effort needs to be made to construct an accountability framework for the SDGs, with indicators that can measure the actions and omissions of private business and public authorities, and flag where implementation is faltering. Clearly, this accountability framework should aim at maximum involvement by civil society and the general public."

Bravo, High Commissioner! It is up to all of us to help ensure that governments heed your stirring and sensible words!

CoNGO COMMUNICATION No.10 has been prepared by Julien Bédard, CoNGO intern from the University of Sherbrooke. This collaboration, notably through the University's Ecole de Politique Appliquée, is very fruitful and I express once more our warmest thanks to the University and to Julien.
Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

1. 65th United Nations DPI/NGO Conference

From 27 to 29 August 2014, the annual United Nations DPI/NGO conference was held at the UN Headquarters in New York City. The theme of the conference was "2015 and beyond: Our action Plan". Thus, the outcome document of this event is now the action plan that was agreed to pursue in the next year to try and shape the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. According to Maher Nasser, acting head of the Department of Public Information, there were more than 4000 participants in this three day conference. One hundred NGOs from all around the world and 120 national delegates participated in the conference as attendees or speakers. The organizers also had the social media active with #UNNGO2014 that has been trending with 3.6 million media impressions in the course of the conference. It helped people who couldn't be at the conference participate in the discussions.

The conclusion of this conference is, without a doubt that NGOs and other members of civil society must advocate to their governments. The post-2015 agenda will then reflect accurately the top priorities of every one. As the Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson said at the closing session, this declaration "should enable you and communities across the globe to speak with a common voice and advocate for ambitious goals, and for a commitment to leave no one behind". To outline the importance of Youth in this agenda, two youth representatives were asked to read the declaration before the adoption, a very meaningful gesture in the post-2015 agenda process.

To read the final declaration:

<http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/files/2014/08/DPINGOOutcomeDoc-DeclarationFinal.pdf>

Complementary Resources document:

<http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/files/2014/08/RESOURCES-DOCUMENT29.08.pdf>

More information about the conference:

<http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/conference-2014/>

2. Youth in Post-2015 development agenda

On 17 December 1999, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution 54/120 that recommended creating the International Youth Day. This inquiry was made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth held in Lisbon from 8 to 12 August 1999. From then on, 12 August has been recognized as the International Youth Day. This year's theme was "Youth and Mental Health".

However, Youth is taking an important space in the post 2015 sustainable development agenda process. This is why so many articles concerning the post-2015 agenda are devoted to youth.

For more information on the International Youth Day, please visit:

<http://www.un.org/en/events/youthday/>

2.1 One hundred young Tunisians will discuss the post-2015 development agenda

To celebrate the International Youth Day, the development and international cooperation ministry in collaboration with the United Nations system in Tunisia organized a consultation on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. They invited Youths aged 15 to 29 years old from around the country, and even outside of it, to discuss their recommendation according to six themes pre-selected by them: Education, Employment, Health, protection against crimes and violence, Mobility and Participation. The one hundred young Tunisians were supported by fifteen UN professionals to help them in one of their first advocacy experiences.

Unfortunately, the outcome of this meeting is not yet available. The article is in French:

<http://www.babnet.net/cadredetail-89765.asp>

2.2 Youth is more than the Theme of the Day; it's the Theme of the Decade

As Mr. Maher Nasser said in his closing speech in the UN DPI/NGO Conference concerning the post 2015 development agenda, "This is a major opportunity". An opportunity that Youth must take to make sure we live in a better world in 2030.

This is what Kate Redman says when she writes that Youth is the theme of the decade. She offers us a good summary of the situation of Youth in the world regarding employment and the schooling systems. There is a major gap between the demand of young people that need schooling and the limited supply of spaces in the schools, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This leads to more young people joining the job market without the basic skills. They are then "ill-equipped to find secure, well-paid work."

She notes that, in the UN-Led My World Survey, the top priority of the 16-30 age group is a good education, a good job opportunity comes 4th. Taking action on climate change comes last.

That being said, in the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda we find goals and targets that are as well as in the Education For All (EFA)-led Muscat Agreement, which is a great step toward a better education for all. Also, in a few

countries like Pakistan, India and Nigeria, policies to perfect their schooling systems have been set up.

In the article

(http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/kate-redman/youth-is-more-than-theth_b_5670705.html), Kate Redman refers to those two reports: Education for All: Global Monitoring report: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/theme/s/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/>

Putting education to work:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002180/218003e.pdf>

And, here is the UN-Led My World Survey:

<http://data.myworld2015.org/>

2.3 Pre-conference event: Developing a post-2015 youth advocacy strategy

On 26 August 2014, the day before the opening of the 65th UN DPI/NGO Conference, the Youth Subcommittee held an event open to everyone. There was no need to be involved with an NGO to be able to participate. This event was a training program on advocacy. It got together over 75 persons, mostly youth from around the world.

The people present at this event had the chance to hear Mr. Felix Dodds, Senior Fellow at the Global Research Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, talking about advocacy, how it works, and how you can advocate without the other person knowing. His advice was much appreciated by the attendees.

After, Freya Seath, from CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, explained the importance of writing a letter to the editor of your local or national journal about issues that are important to our eyes. She explained what to do and how to do it.

Finally, the Networking specialist and Career strategist Rod Colon came and gave a lesson on the importance of networking, and how to do it the right way. He discussed about LinkedIn, the networking site, and how to break the ice with someone before creating the relationship.

The Training program was a great initiative from the Youth Subcommittee and seemed to be much appreciated by the people present.

A Post-Conference Webinar on Engaging and Mobilizing Youth in Post-2015 will be held in a few days from now. The speakers, the date and time are to be confirmed.

To participate to this webinar, please follow the committee on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/dpingoyouthcommittee>

3. CoNGO Presidential Briefing, 4 September 2014

During his briefing, Mr. Ritchie reiterated the importance of advocacy for the NGOs. We all have to be present to give inputs to our governments to make sure to influence the policy-makers.

To fulfil this important role, we have to prepare on a long-term scale. It is not necessary to try to influence next week's meeting, but the ones next year, we have to prepare them. The 70th anniversary of the United Nations, for example, can be a forum where we can encourage the implementation of a change of philosophy at the UN. Also, the Conference HABITAT III that will take place in 2016 is going to be a key moment for NGOs and the application of the post-2015 agenda. The mission of HABITAT is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all. This UN program is working towards a better urban future.

For more information about the Conference and to be kept informed, visit: <http://unhabitat.org/>

4. Important events in September

4.1 Third international Conference on Small Island Developing States

A theme of the year 2014, chosen by the UN, is Small Islands Developing States. From 1-4 September 2014, the Third Conference on SIDS was held in Apia, Samoa. The focus was put on a group of countries that remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and peculiar vulnerabilities. The theme overarching the whole conference was "The sustainable development of small islands developing States through genuine and durable partnerships".

"The Conference had the following objectives:

- Assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation;
- Seek a renewed political commitment by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for further implementation;
- Identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable devel-

opment of SIDS and means of addressing them; and

- Identify priorities for the sustainable development of SIDS to be considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 UN development agenda."

A statement that illustrates the weight SIDS can have on the post-2015 agenda was made early in the Conference by John Ashe, President of the UNGA. SIDS can be the leaders of the transition to 'green' energy. In fact, the importation of fossil fuel is a great part of the budgets. The green transition could help them economically, as well as it could help the environment. They have an unlimited resource of wind, wave and solar energy that they can exploit.

For information about the conference's outcome:

<http://www.sids2014.org/>

4.2 UN Secretary General's Climate Summit

On 23 September, the UNSG's Climate Summit will be held at the UN headquarters in New York City. The aim of this meeting is to "mobilize political will for a universal and a legally-binding comprehensive agreement in 2015." One of the ways used to reach this goal was to invite civil society to the table of discussion. At the request of the UN Secretary-General's Climate Change Support Team, UN-NGLS issued an open call for nominations of civil society speakers and attendees for the 2014 UN Climate Summit. 38 civil society representatives have been selected to participate to the summit. Four of them will be speaking and the 34 others will be attending the summit.

Read more: <http://climate-l.iisd.org/events/2014-climate-summit/>

For the Civil society representatives and the method of selection, visit: <http://www.un-npls.org/spip.php?article4492>

4.3 United Nations General Assembly

The theme of the 69th session of the UNGA "Delivering on and implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda" was announced in elected President Sam Kutesa's speech of acceptance on 11 June 2014. Kutesa is Uganda's Minister for foreign affairs. The UN member states will be invited to comment on the theme during the 69th General debate from 24 September to 1 October.

Read more: <http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/kutesa-confirms-theme-for-69th-unga/>

Furthermore, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) will present a special report during the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples that will occur in New York City 22-23 September in the framework of the 69th UNGA. This report will contain an update on the indigenous population and their processes of migration, as well as the detailed situation of women and children, along with other indicators. The challenges will be to face the observance of standards for the indigenous peoples and articulate them with the post-2015 development agenda.

The report will be available as of 23 September on ECLAC's website: <http://www.cepal.org/?idioma=IN>

5. Other interesting Information

5.1 Action/2015: A large-scale mass-mobilization Campaign

Action/2015 is movement that was created to make sure that civil society has important weight in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. What is required is for your organization to put their logo on your communiqués to make sure that they are seen. Their goal is to create a movement around their logo so it is recognized around the world and it unites civil society around the goal of building a people-oriented post-2015 agenda.

Please, consult <http://action2015.org> for more information and to join the movement.

5.2 United Nations Cuban Association (UNCA) work on Post-2015 agenda

In February 2014, there was a meeting concerning the building of the Post-2015 agenda that got together a Panel composed of representatives of

the Cuban Ministry for Foreign Affairs, intellectuals, researchers and parliamentarians.

More than 100 persons from 60 organizations of the Cuban civil society attended this meeting. The debate was around issues such as the role of the youth and the position of national culture in the post-2015 process. Also, climate change and public participation in their society were discussed, with the issue of gender equality crosscutting the discussions. The role of international cooperation in support to developing countries was an important aspect of the debate. Those issues are considered by the UNCA as basics to fulfil the challenges of the forthcoming agenda.

Contribution of the Asociación Cubana de las Naciones Unidas: <http://www.acnu.org/cu/es>

5.3 Around the world in 50 days for the Millennium Development Goals

The blog and Facebook page "Humans of New York" were created in 2010 by Brandon, after he lost his finance job. He started this because he wanted to create a catalog of 10 000 New Yorkers and plot their photos on a map. In addition, he began to interview his subjects and he wrote their story or a quote alongside of the picture. When he saw the buzz that his blog created, he decided to publish a book of his best captions.

Today, he is on a 50 day trip in 10 countries around the world in partnership with the UN, supported by the Secretary-General's MDG Advocacy Group. Henceforth, Brandon will be telling the stories of individuals with the desire to create a global perspective on the 8 MDGs that were supposed to be accomplished by the year 2015. Let's hope it will give a wakeup call to the world for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Facebook page is here:

<https://www.facebook.com/humansofnewyork?ref=ts>

Blog right here:

<http://www.humansofnewyork.com/>

6. Calendar

NOTICE

1. The CoNGO Calendar is a service to the NGO constituency to enable each individual organization to determine, in good time, its possible or desired involvement in the events mentioned, in accordance with the organization's own statutory or programmatic focus.
2. The conferences and meetings listed in the CoNGO Calendar are not under the convening or invitational or access responsibility of CoNGO. They are listed for the information of readers, and any queries about any event should be addressed solely to the organizer of the event, not to CoNGO.

Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

September 2014

- 22: UNGA Special Session on ICPD Beyond 2014 (New York, United States)
<http://icpdbeyond2014.org/key-events/view/15-icpd-beyond-2014-review-timeline>
- 22-23: UN General Assembly High Level Plenary Meeting serving as a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (New York)
<http://wcip2014.org/world-conference-on-indigenous-peoples-september-2014>
- 23: 2014 Climate Summit, organized by the UN Secretary-General (New York, United States)
<http://climate-1.iisd.org/2014-climate-summit/>

October – November 2014

- October 20 –November 7: International Telecommunications Union, Plenipotentiary Conference (Busan, Korea)
<http://www.itu.int/en/plenipotentiary/2014/Pages/default.aspx>

November 2014

- 10-12: World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, organized by UNESCO (Aichi-Nagoya, Japan) <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/events/calendar-of-events/education-global-conferences/>
- 21-24: CIVICUS International Civil Society Week <http://civicus.org/index.php/en/get-involved-128/2014-04-25-05-16-07/civil-society-week>
- November 12-19 INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE (World Conservation Union), 6th World Parks Conference (Sydney, Australia)
- November 20-21: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors (Vienna International Centre) Organizer: IAEA
- November 25-27: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Industrial Development Board 42nd Session (Vienna International Centre) Organizer: UNIDO

December 2014

- 1-12 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 20th Conference of Parties (Lima, Peru)

2015

- Seventieth Anniversary of the United Nations Organization
- World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995: Beijing +20 Campaign
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women>
- World Summit on Social Development-Copenhagen+20
<http://undesadspd.org/CalendarofEvents.aspx>

March 2015

- 14-18 UN Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, Japan)

April 2015

- 12-17: 7th World Water Forum (Daegu, Gyeongbuk, Korea)
<http://worldwaterforum7.org/en>

July 2015

- 13-16 Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
- High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Third Session (Geneva, Switzerland)

May 2016

- 23-27 Second United Nations Environment Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya)

Recent and Forthcoming events

16TH TO 17TH OCTOBER 2014

Lodz, Poland

III International Conference "Reading culture of the young generation"

III International Conference „Reading culture of the young generation” is a forum for exchanging ideas and presenting recent research on the status of certain aspects of the reading culture of children and young people.

WEBSITE: www.konfkbin.uni.lodz.pl/index.php/en/

CONTACT: Agata Walczak-Niewiadomska

24TH TO 25TH OCTOBER 2014

Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

6th International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Dialogue

The Conference will utilize an Interreligious and Intercultural Model for Dialogue and Peaceful coexistence in Nigeria, and a strategy to overcome misunderstandings and stereotypes that affect relations between groups and within societies.

Organized by: New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 15th August 2014

WEBSITE: www.interfaithdialogueconference.org

CONTACT: Dr. Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba

29TH NOVEMBER TO 4TH DECEMBER 2014

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

International Youth Leadership Conference

The IYLC- UAE is a week-long experience aimed at achieving mutual understanding between participants from The United Arab Emirates, the GCC region and all corners of the globe.**Time: 8:00 am - 8:00 pm**Price:\$1155 -1650

Organized by: Youth Leadership Europe

WEBSITE: <http://atnd.it/10618-0>

CONTACT PERSON: William Webster

Impressum

Projects of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family are supported by:

- ❖ Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bäuerinnen in Niederösterreich
- ❖ Austrian Federal Government
- ❖ Bank Austria
- ❖ Berndorf Gruppe
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- ❖ Siemens
- ❖ United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities

'Families International' is published by:

Vienna NGO Committee on the Family:

Office of the Chairperson:

DR. MICHAEL SCHWARZ
JOSEFSTRASSE 13
A-3100 ST. POELTEN
AUSTRIA

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