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Quarterly Bulletin of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Dear Readers of Families International,

This issue features a text on 'Participation – how CSOs Influence Politics' by Dr. Gudrun Kugler, Kairos Consulting. Dr. Kugler made a presentation on the same theme at the recent Full Committee Meeting of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, at the United Nations Vienna International Centre on November 10th 2014. Dr. Kugler has published widely and is a former Chairperson for Europe of the World Youth Alliance in Brussels.

The Full Committee Meeting opened with a 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 in New York. The video can be accessed on the Homepage of the Committee.

Further included in this issue are texts from Member Organisations of the Committee as well as recent and upcoming events.

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

Participation How Civil Society Organisations Influence Politics

By Dr. Gudrun Kugler, Kairos Consulting, November 10, 2014

I) At Which Institutions Should a CSO be Present?

-> **United Nations**

Headquartered in New York City and with 193 Member States, the UN is the largest and most well known international organization in the world. It is important to note that most of the UN's human rights activity takes place in Geneva, Switzerland.

-> **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe**

The OSCE is a security oriented intergovernmental organization. Despite its name, OSCE members come from around the world, not just Europe, and include the United States and Canada. The OSCE was originally created during the Cold War as an east-west forum. Today, however, the work of the OSCE is much broader and has increasingly stepped into the realm of human rights. In the 1992 Helsinki Document, the OSCE participating States called for increasing the openness of OSCE activities and expanding the role of NGOs. NGOs are therefore encouraged to attend and participate in the working sessions, as well as to organize side events on related topics. The NGOs may present recommendations directly to OSCE states.

First time registration:

<http://meetings.odihr.pl/Registration.html>

Read more below, point III.

-> **European Union**

The European Union – probably the one most familiar to people in this room – was founded in 1951 as the European Coal and Steel Community with just six members. Today it has expanded from a largely economic focus into areas of social policy and human rights. The EU also has by far the largest budget of any organization on this list, and by far the most formal power. It's estimated that anywhere from 20% to 80% of all domestic laws now originate within the EU.

- **EU TRANSPARENCY REGISTER:**

All organisations and self employed individuals, irrespective of their legal status, engaged in activities falling within the scope of the register are in principle expected to register (see below, point IV) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/info/homePage.do?locale=en>

-Register also with the FRA's Fundamental Rights Platform

-> **Council of Europe**

The fourth organization to mention is the Council of Europe – a wholly separate entity from the EU. It is based in Strasbourg, France and consists of 47 Member States. The European Convention on Human Rights was adopted in 1950 as a means of establishing a basic level of human rights throughout Europe and is enforced by the Council of Europe's most important institution - the European Court of Human Rights.

II) How Should a CSO Engage?

i. Knowledge and Awareness

Know what is happening. This may sound obvious but it is imperative that we keep a good track of what is going on – so that we can become proactive not reactive.

ii. Presence and Contributions

Many of the international bodies allow NGOs to be accredited with them and if we are not there, we leave an open invitation to all of the organizations that promote an opposite view of life and liberty to our own.

iii. Campaigns

International campaigns provide great opportunities for public debate and awareness raising. Petitions give publicity, create pressure and add to the promotion of the cause.

iv. Target a variety of bodies and documents

Engaging in legal advocacy will form the majority of any work undertaken, because for every

decision made by one of the international quasi-judicial bodies, there are many more documents adopted and decisions made by the committees, councils and commissions of the various institutions. All of these documents matter, no matter how seemingly unimportant, for one reason – the evolution of soft law into hard law.

v. Litigation

We can engage the international organizations by utilizing the complaint mechanisms. There are a number of bodies that have been established to receive complaints. We can bring cases and make third party interventions in exactly the same way we would do domestically.

III) OSCE

In the **1992 Helsinki Document**, the OSCE participating States called for increasing the openness of OSCE activities and expanding the role of NGOs. NGOs are therefore encouraged to **attend and participate in the working sessions**, as well as to **organize side events** on related topics. **The NGOs may present recommendations directly to OSCE states.**

First time registration:

<http://meetings.odihr.pl/Registration.html>

(it takes just a few minutes and there are no special requirements)

Registrations for meetings open for NGOs are listed here: <http://meetings.odihr.pl>

Participation Rules:

→ Take a **seat at the main (round) table** with a good overview and a **microphone** in front of you. Stay away from the invisible back seats!

→ When the **speaker's list** is opened, **raise your hand soon**. It might take a long time until it is your turn, if you wait too long, the list might already have closed. Please note that **at larger meetings, such as the HDIM in Warsaw, the speakers' list is opened one hour before the session starts**, normally in the hall where the meeting will take place. You have to go there and ask for the floor during the break!

→ **For the preparation of your presentation:**

In general, the statements of Delegations as well as NGOs are 2-min-pre-prepared statements which are READ out. Therefore it is advised to read the annotated agenda (the program with details on the contents of the session) carefully and respond in your speech to the questions asked there.

→ **For your intervention to get distributed:**

Bring your statements on paper (with your logo and contact information) and on a memory stick. Before your intervention, have the documentation center give your speech to the translators (they will love you for it and translate better!). After your intervention, bring the text – with possible improvements – to the documentation center (distribution center) for distribution on the info tables as well as the official website.

In this way, the delegations will find it and be reminded of what you said. In such a paper statements, you can also provide more information than on the floor, esp. References and websites. You should prepare this already before you arrive at the meeting.

→ **When you take the floor:**

- Speak in one of the six official languages – though English is preferable, as most understand it directly without translation.
- Thank for being allowed to take the floor.
- Introduce yourself and your NGO very briefly.
- Do not worry if your statement does not directly relate to the on-going discussion – most don't – but if you can relate it, it is always well-perceived.
- Say something positive.
- Make one, two or three concrete recommendations suitable for OSCE / participating states / OSCE institutions.
- If possible, refer to OSCE commitments, guidelines, the annotated agenda, etc, to underline that what you are requesting makes sense (texts relevant for religious freedom and Christians you find below).
- Don't talk too long (2-3 minutes).

→ Speak "OSCE language": formulate **RECOMMENDATIONS** to OSCE or participating states or institutions of OSCE such as ODIHR or a permanent representative of the chairman in office, etc. These recommendations should make sense considering what OSCE is actually in charge of. It is useful to come with up to five recommendations

that are very **concrete** and that you present in the plenary.

→ If NGOs are asked to hand in **written recommendations** beforehand. This is very useful as those will be distributed on paper. Please do hand some in, if there is such an opportunity.

→ It might be very useful to find other NGOs with who you could agree to a **common statement**, in order to have more weight.

→ Sometimes OSCE hosts a **Civil Society Round Table** before the main meeting. It is advisable to join in such a meeting as well, as results will be passed on to the plenary.

→ If you have a whole lot to say about the issue, consider to offer a **Side Event** – which you have to register with OSCE. Your issue will then be part of the program and whoever is interested will come and listen to you. We recommend that you bring A4 papers or posters to advertize for the side event (title, organisation, time, room number). Bring tape to put the posters up wherever fitting.

→ Use the occasion for yourself to **network** and to **learn**.

IV) The EU Transparency Register

Read all and register here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/info/your-organisation/whoRegister.do?locale=en>

Key excerpt:

Networks, platforms or other forms of collective activity without a legal status or legal personality but which constitute de facto a source of organised influence, and engaged in activities falling within the scope of the register are expected to register with the EU Transparency Register. In such case its members should identify one of their number as its responsible contact person for their relations with the administration of the register.

Registering your organisation in the Transparency Register and committing it to ensure a full respect of the code of conduct by yourself, your employees, your members or representatives will be a public indication that your organisation accepts to "play by the rules" and to interact with the European institutions in full transparency. It

will also make public the fact that you are active in contributing to the EU processes, thus ensuring that your views, your interests or those which you represent are made known to the EU decision makers.

Agents and Members of the European institutions will be able to ensure, when you contact them or when you communicate with them, that they are interacting with an organisation which respects democracy and accepts to provide a minimum amount of information for all citizens to know who is participating in the EU processes.

- When registered, you'll receive an alert each time the Commission publishes a new roadmap or launches a public consultation in the field where you have an interest.
- As foreseen by article 22 of the inter institutional agreement on a Transparency Register: "The issuing and the control badges offering long-term access to the European Parliament's buildings will remain a process operated by this institution. Such badges will only be issued to individuals representing, or working for, organisations falling within the scope of the Transparency Register where those organisations or individuals have registered. However registration shall not confer an automatic entitlement to such a badge."

V) Book Recommendation:

Learn more about the key international institutions and how to engage in an easy and quick read:

„The Global Human Rights Landscape“

This short guide seeks to answer three questions: What are the international and regional human rights institutions that exist around the world, why do they matter and how can individuals and organizations get involved? ISBN: 978-3-9503055-9-3 Order for 3,99 € (PDF download) or for 5,99 € as hardcopy here.

(<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/publications/the-global-human-rights-landscape.html>)

From Member Organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

IFFD Papers No.36

Is children well-being a broken promise?

Child poverty and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

1 November 2014

25 years after the Convention on the Rights of the Child came to force, the world is still falling short in its promise and commitment to ensure the right to a safe childhood. Child poverty is affecting the lives of millions of children worldwide and conventional strategies are inadequate, as they do not recognize that children experience poverty differently from adults and that they have specific and different needs. What is it about, is there a social cost for it and what recommendations should governments consider to overcome this problem?

Sources: *Save the Children, The Child Development*

Children who fail to meet the minimum acceptable standard of living for the nation where they live are said to be poor. According to UNICEF, “children living in poverty are those who experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving the munable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society”. This and other definitions suggest child poverty is multidimensional, relative to their changing living conditions. Complex interactions of the body, mind and emotions are involved.

Child poverty is a global issue and not just one for the developing world. In a review of child wellbeing across 35 industrialized countries, UNICEF found that approximately 30million children – one child out of every eight across the OECD – are growing up poor. Despite this, child poverty has been largely absent from the post-2015 development debate.

And there is an alarming consistency to the global problem: poverty rates are usually highest among children, no matter which region or poverty measure is used.

Absolute and relative poverty

Absolute poverty refers to a set standard which is the same in all countries and which does not change over time. Certain organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, use the absolute poverty threshold of US \$1.25 a day per person to measure poverty in developing countries.

Relative poverty refers to a standard which is defined in terms of the society in which an individual lives and which therefore differs between countries and over time. Europe and many other developed countries use a relative poverty threshold, typically 50%of the countries’ median income. Relative poverty does not necessarily mean the child is lacking anything, but is more a reflection of inequality in society.

Absolute poverty and relative poverty are both valid concepts. The concept of absolute poverty is that there are minimum standards below which no one anywhere in the world should ever fall. The concept of relative poverty is that, in a rich country such as the UK, there are higher minimum standards below which no one should fall, and that these standards should rise if and as the country becomes richer. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has in recent years asked focus groups drawn from different kinds of households in UK to define a minimum acceptable standard of living – based on need not wants. Advised by experts in health and nutrition, the focus groups came up with a ‘Minimum Income Standard’ which translates into approximately 60%of today’s UK median income. It is sometimes argued that the public at large thinks of poverty in an absolute sense and that the concept of ‘relative poverty’ is properly understood only by economists and social scientists. But it is clear from these examples that the popular definition of poverty is in fact a relative one.

Children deprivation

UNICEF researchers have estimated the degree to which deprivation is experienced by children in 29

European countries, using a child-specific scale. Their paper highlights the considerable differences between countries, suggesting that specific policy measures can be effective in combating child deprivation. The researchers argue that studying deprivation – alongside the overlapping situation of children living in families poor in monetary terms – is imperative for understanding the scope and nature of poverty among children.

Deprivation analyses are especially useful when studying the situation of children because children do not have equal access to the household's income, and are more dependent on social goods and services (especially education and health).

It represents a significant new development in the International monitoring of child poverty. For the first time, the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, sampling more than 125,000 households in 29 European countries, has included a section on the lives of children aged 1 to 16. Using this data, the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre has constructed the 14-item Child Deprivation Index. Approximately 85% of the almost 85 million children aged 1 to 16 in 29 European countries have at least 13 of the 14 items in the deprivation index and are therefore 'not deprived'.

The second most obvious feature is that the highest rates of deprivation are to be found in some of the newest and poorest member countries of the European Union. Over 30% are seen to be deprived in Hungary and Latvia, over 50% in Bulgaria and over 70% in Romania.

Child Development Index

Save the Children, another British initiative, has also developed a measurement of child poverty based on measures of capability, called the Child Development Index (CDI). CDI is an index that combines performance measures specific to children – primary education, child health, and child nutrition – to produce a score on a scale of 0 to 100, with zero being the best with higher scores indicating worse performances. According to Save the Children, each of the indicators was chosen because it was easily accessible, universally understood, and clearly indicative of child wellbeing. Health measures under-five mortality rate; nutrition measures the percentage of children under five who are moderately or severely underweight (which is two standard deviations below the medi-

an weight for age of the reference population); and education measures the percentage of primary school-age children that are not enrolled in school. In terms of opportunities and capabilities, CDI is the most appropriate measurement of child poverty.

The Child Development Index follows in the footsteps of the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index (HDI). This index established the importance of measuring human well-being beyond simple national income measures. The two indices each have three components with broadly common aims.

The CDI monitors child well-being in 141 countries, aggregating data on child mortality, underweight and primary-school enrolment and. Some recent findings include overall improvement rates in child well-being almost doubled in the first decade of the 21st century; developing countries experienced faster rates of progress than developed countries in the same period; undernutrition remains one of the main factors holding back progress on children's well-being; the proportion of children suffering from wasting – or acute weight loss – actually rose in the second half of the 2000s.

The children of the recession

After the latest data provided by UNICEF last month, we can say there has been a strong and multifaceted relationship between the impact of the Great Recession on national economies and a decline in children's well-being since 2008. The recession has hit young people extremely hard, with the NEET (not in education, employment or training) rate rising dramatically in many countries. Children feel anxious and stressed when parents endure unemployment or income loss, and they suffer family downturns in subtle and painfully evident ways.

The poorest and most vulnerable children have suffered disproportionately. Inequality has increased in some countries where overall child poverty has decreased, suggesting that tax changes and social transfers intended to help the poorest children have been relatively ineffective. Moreover, children in particularly vulnerable situations – such as those in jobless, migrant, lone-parent and large households – are overrepresented in the most severe ranges of poverty statistics. No government was prepared for the extent or

depth of the recession and none reacted in the same way.

Many countries with higher levels of child vulnerability would have been wise to strengthen their safety nets during the pre-recession period of dynamic economic growth, which was marked by rising disparity and a growing concentration of wealth. Governments that bolstered existing public institutions and programmes helped to buffer countless children from the crisis – a strategy that others may consider adopting. The problems have not ended for children and their families, and it may well take years for many of them to return to pre-crisis levels of well-being. Failing to respond boldly could pose long-term risks – for example, there has been a break in the upwards trend in fertility rates. In no region are these risks more problematic than in Europe, where inequality is rising within and between Member States, threatening to undermine the ambitious targets of Europe's 2020 agenda.

The economic argument, in anything but the shortest term, is therefore heavily on the side of protecting children from poverty. Even more important is the argument in principle. Because children have only one opportunity to develop normally in mind and body, the commitment to protection from poverty must be upheld in good times and in bad. A society that fails to maintain that commitment, even in difficult economic times, is a society that is failing its most vulnerable citizens and storing up intractable social and economic problems for the years immediately ahead.

Commitment of governments

It is possible to examine the commitment of governments to the protection of children by looking at the overall level of resources they are prepared to devote to the task. How the money is spent can be as important as how much is spent, but the data nonetheless show a strong relationship between resources expended and results achieved.

In all of these countries the lack of priority for children in national budgets shows through in the correspondingly small reductions in relative child poverty that each achieves.

Recommendations to policymakers should include the following:

- Investment should start during the early childhood years and continue throughout childhood.
- Continuum of support without gaps in income or care replacements.
- Family benefits and in-kind services should be seen as investment for the future.
- Progressive universalism/cascaded service delivery to improve efficiency without leaving families or children behind.
- Government policy should help reduce childcare cost where necessary.
- Encourage employers to offer workers part-time employment opportunities as well as flexible working hours.
- Maximizing child support coverage helps to reduce child poverty in sole-parent families.
- At least some part of the payment by the nonresident parents should directly go the child.
- Child support systems should have simple payment formulae and procedures.

IFFD Papers No.37

A commitment to innovation

25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

1 December 2014

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (commonly abbreviated as the CRC, CROC, or UNCRC) is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children.

The Convention defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen, unless the age of majority is attained earlier under a state's own domestic legislation.

Nations that ratify this convention are bound to it by international law. Compliance is monitored by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Introduction:

As the global human rights community celebrated the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN General Assembly held a high-level meeting at UN Headquarters in New York on the promotion and protection of the rights of children. A high-level panel discussion on the '25th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: recalling its vision,' organized by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, was held at the United Nations in New York. Several missions did also hold side events.

In addition, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) held a musical celebration tomorrow morning at UN Headquarters to mark the anniversary of the Convention, as well as the 60th anniversary of the agency's Goodwill Ambassador Programme and the 35th anniversary of the Music for UNICEF concert. The occasion also served to launch the UNICEF #IMAGINE project, a musical and technological initiative to highlight the challenges children face the world over. The agency also used the opportunity of the occasion to launch its latest State of the World's Children report.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child lists different rights that children have and the different responsibilities Governments and others have to make them real.

This includes, among others:

- Making sure that children are equal, regardless of their or their parent's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status (article 2).

- Children's best interests should be taken into account when any decision is made which affects them (article 3).
- Parent's rights and right to family life and to be cared for by them (article 5), unless if they are being abused at home and are not safe living there (articles 8 and 9).
- If they are separated from one or both of their parents, to have contact with them (article 9).
- For children who have parents living in different countries, the Government must make sure that they can stay in regular contact with both parents (article 10).
- Governments must give help to parents where this is necessary to help them care for children properly (article 18).
- Governments must make sure children are registered at birth with a name and a nationality (articles 7 and 8).
- Governments must make sure that children are not taken out of their country illegally (article 11).
- Children must be given the chance to give their opinion when decisions are made that affect them (article 12), and to be able to get and share information with others, as long as this does not damage them (article 13).
- Governments must make sure that the media includes programmes and information that are relevant to children and do not harm them (article 17).
- Governments must make sure that no one interferes with children's opinions and their ability to do things that they want to do because of their religion, as long as this doesn't cause them or anyone else any

damage, or interferes with anyone else's rights, and parents are allowed to give them guidance on practicing their religion (article 14).

- Children must be able to gather together with other people and to join organisations, as long as this does not cause anyone harm, or interfere with other people's rights (article 15).
- Governments must make sure that no one is able to interfere with children's privacy or attack their honor or reputation (article 16).
- Governments must make sure children are protected from any type of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation (article 19).
- Government must make sure children are able to get health care when they need it, to get clean water, nutritious food and live in a healthy environment (article 24).
- Governments must make sure that children and their parents or carers can get financial help when needed (article 26).
- Children have the right to a standard of living that is necessary for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (article 27).
- Governments must make sure children get a good quality education (article 28) and that they can develop to their full potential and learn to respect human rights, their parents and the values, language and culture of their country and other countries (article 29), that they have rest and leisure time, and can be involved in cultural activities (article 31), and that they do not do any work that is harmful to them, or that interrupts their education (article 32).

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Stepping up the global effort to advance the rights of every child

We are pleased to share a statement issued jointly by UNICEF and civil society partners: Child Rights Connect, Child Fund Alliance, the NGO Committee on UNICEF, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages and World Vision.

When the international community adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child twenty-five years ago, we made this commitment to the world's children: that we would do everything in our power to promote and protect their rights.

The commitment was not only to some children, but to all children. It was not only to advance some of their rights, but all their rights – including their right to survive and to thrive, to grow and to learn, to have their voices heard and heeded, and to be protected from discrimination and violence in all its manifestations. It was a commitment to be honored not only in times of peace and prosperity, but also, and especially, in times of conflict, crisis, and catastrophe.

The commitment to realize the rights of all children was grounded in the conviction that it was both the right thing to do and the strategic thing to do. For by advancing the rights of children today, we help them become adults who will be able to assume responsibility for future generations – in turn, helping build a more prosperous, peaceful, and just world.

From this commitment and conviction, a global Movement was born. With the Convention as its framework and foundation, and the best interests of children as its focus, it has brought together organizations and individuals, activists and governments, the private sector and private donors, religious and cultural leaders, communities and families, individuals and children themselves.

Visionaries and pragmatists alike – including Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi, the two child rights champions who share this year's Nobel Peace Prize – they have helped change the world.

Twenty-five years since the Convention was adopted, progress is apparent in every region of the world. Infant mortality rates have declined, while school enrolment has risen. Today, the world is winning the battle against extreme poverty; and more than 2.1 billion people now have access to improved drinking water sources and sanitation facilities.

What once was a shared value – making sure children are cared for – is now a legal obligation to act always in the best interests of children, considering child rights in every context and holding ourselves accountable for advancing those rights for every child. Where once eyes took no notice or turned away when violence scarred or took the life of a child, now voices are raised around the world to

demand an end to violence against children whenever and wherever it occurs.

Celebrating this 25th anniversary today, we are inspired by the children who are growing up healthy, strong, and ready to realize the aspirations of the Convention. At the same moment, we are engaged in global discussions on a new development agenda for the post-2015 years. These discussions are driven by a recognition of how much more must be done to reduce the inequities that endanger children today and threaten their hopes for the future.

For even as we celebrate the progress, we cannot ignore the millions of children, in every country of the world, who are being left out and left behind. Trafficked, forced into early marriage, exploited, abducted, terrorized; having babies when they are still children; dying in pregnancies and childbirths; unregistered and unvaccinated; without access to health services, adequate nutrition, and learning opportunities; discriminated against because of their gender or their religion, their ethnicity or disabilities, their color or their sexuality; living in poverty; living without parental care; living on society's margins. Their capabilities diminished and their choices limited. Their rights to survival, protection, Freedom and identity violated.

We simply cannot – and will not leave these children behind. Because of what is at stake – the lives and futures of the world's children, and thus, the future of the world – we must find new ways to reach the children we have not yet reached.

There is hope to be found and nurtured, we are certain, in the human spirit that crosses and defies all divisions in its search for transformation. This is the spirit that speaks to us as we recommit our efforts to make the world a just and better place for all children.

The world has not stood still these past 25 years. There is new science to inform our interventions and our programs. New technologies that offer new opportunities for young people to know their world. Other innovations that change how we communicate and at what speed. A new accountability to children and young people and new expectations

for transparency by governments and civil society.

But there are also new challenges – from the impact of climate change, to the ravages of conflict and crises, to the effects of population growth.

It is time for the international community to recommit itself to the immutable rights enshrined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child – and to act, with urgency, to advance those rights, for every child.

Moving forward, we will challenge ourselves in country by country, city by city, village by village, to do even more for children through sustained political commitment, strategic investments, and actions that match our words. Thus our celebration on this anniversary day is a call – to those who have already done so much and those who have yet to join the cause: to speed up our efforts and expand our sphere of influence and our circle of activists. It is, most urgently, a call for innovation in what we do, how we do it, with whom and how quickly – so that, soon, all children everywhere will finally and fully enjoy their innate and inalienable rights.

PROSALIS – Health Project

We would like to inform you some of the activities which PROSALIS – Health Project in Lisbon has developed or participated.

We emphasize in this report those activities related with the family issues.

1. Civil Society Forum - The Role of Civil Society: Empowerment for Inclusive and Transformative Development

Each year the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD), the NGO Committee for Social Development and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung conducts a Civil Society Forum, based on the theme to be addressed by the United Nations Commission for Social Development at its annual meeting.

On Monday, 10th February, PROSALIS has participated in the Civil Society Forum, Commission for Social Development under the title “The Role of Civil Society: Empowerment for Inclusive and Transformative Development”.

The Forum prepared civil society participants to participate during the 52nd Session of the Commission for Social Development (Feb 11-21, 2014 at UNHQ in New York) as well as in ongoing discussions related to evaluation of the post-2015 development framework.

2. Fifty-Second Session of the Commission for Social Development

On Monday, 11th February, PROSALIS has participated in the 52nd Session of the Commission for Social Development at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Commission is a functional body of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The 52nd session of the UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD 52) adopted resolutions on its priority theme, “Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all,” as well as programmes of action on social groups, including aging, disabled and youth populations and families.

The Report on the 52nd Session (E/2014/26–E/CN.5/2014/10) is available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/253/51/P/DF/N1425351.pdf?OpenElement>

3. XXIV Workshop on “Family Policies: Recognition of the family as the first inter-generational nucleus” – 18th March, 2014

The XXIV Workshop, integrated in the celebrations of the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2014), proclaimed by the United Nations, was provided a useful opportunity to draw further attention to the objectives of the International 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 approach to development.

The following topics were discussed:

- The Family as the first intergenerational nucleus;
- Family, Education and Society between Generations;
The importance of the economic and social role of the Family;
- The role of the family in times of crisis: employment, housing, health and social policies.

Renata Kaczmarek, Focal Point on the Family, DSPD/DESA, addressed a statement for the XXIV Workshop that we have the pleasure to transcribe the important topics:



Statement to the XXIV Workshop on Family Policies
"Recognition of the family as the first intergenerational nucleus"
Lisbon, 18 March 2014
Organized by PROSALIS, Health Project in Lisbon

By Renata Kaczmarek
Focal Point on the Family, DSPD/DESA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address you today on the very important topic of family as an intergenerational nexus.

As you may now *Advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity* is one of the three main themes chosen to guide the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014. Let me briefly elaborate on the significance of this topic and the importance of family-oriented policies in this area.

Intergenerational relations are changing. They have been impacted by a variety of trends such as population ageing, increased mobility and migration, rapid urbanization and break-up of traditional extended family structures. Such trends pose numerous challenges to intergenerational solidarity. They also present new demands on family members and test the grandparent-parent-youth-child relationships. Moreover, they impact on traditional multi-generational living arrangements and result in a growing number of older persons living alone, in skipped generation household, or in institutionalized settings. On the other hand partly due to the recent economic and social crises,

young people who are hard pressed to find jobs tend to depend on their parents or even grandparents longer for material support and housing.

In line with changing trends, public policies should be framed with intergenerational approach in mind. Policy development must consider the diverse needs in sectors dealing with social security and welfare, pension, health care, social support and employment and labour as well as lifelong learning. Family-friendly policies need to recognize the changing nature and diversity of family structures and forms and obstacles to full engagement such as larger geographical distances preventing families from providing care and support to their dependent members.

Such policies can be fostered at family, community and national levels and may range from specific programmes promoting multigenerational living arrangements, shared intergenerational sites, mentoring programmes at work and volunteering of younger and older people in the community.

Social protection schemes are especially important not only from an economic point of view. They do play an important role in restoring dignity and conferring recognition to older people as well. They also tend to support intergenerational solidarity and mutual assistance within families. Tax benefits and policies supporting intergenerational care, such as allowances for grandparents who care for their grandchildren contribute to strengthening family ties as well.

Some good practices promoting intergenerational solidarity focus on intergenerational housing arrangements, such as encouraging extended family proximity in living through tax credits or home loan incentives while "cash and counselling" programmes allow using cash benefits by family members caring for their relatives.

Educational institutions may also promote intergenerational programmes by encouraging volunteering of older persons in schools and offering community service requirements for high-school students. School-based intergenerational programmes often involve community service, requiring young people to help older persons with their daily activities.

Shared sites intergenerational programmes are uniquely positioned to help generations interact as they provide ongoing services to both children and older persons who attend the programmes in a single facility. Typically, these are care programmes for the very young and older adults, where both generations can interact.

Another care setting involves older persons as employees or volunteers at children's care programmes. Research indicates that senior employees provide a family-like quality to the programmes and help teachers offer more one-on-one care. Older care workers help children develop social skills and ease the transition from home to school. The analysis of many intergenerational programmes indicates that they improve participants' self-confidence, self-esteem and perceived health while facilitating greater community integration and involvement. Mentoring programmes have been found to help younger people build very concrete and often highly specialized skills, find work and expand career opportunities.

It is important to note that the implementation of socially integrative policies is not a sole responsibility of Governments but should be shared by all sectors of society including the private sector and civil society at large. Partnerships between the public and private sectors, civil society in the broadest sense including grassroots movements, trade unions and academic institutions are necessary for social integration efforts to succeed.

The success of social integration and inclusion efforts depends on the effectiveness of public policies and the support from local communities, civil society and families and their active participation in the society as citizens with rights and responsibilities. To move closer to 'a society for all' a broad-based participation and engagement of people in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes should be encouraged at all levels.

It is my hope that your workshop will reflect on some of the issues I highlighted in this message.

My best wishes for successful deliberations of your workshop.

Thank you for your attention.

4. Open-ended Working Group on Ageing Fifth working session

PROSALIS as a member of the NGO Committee on Ageing has participated in the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (5th working session).

The Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing was established by the General Assembly by

resolution 65/182 on 21 December 2010. The working group will consider the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and identify possible gaps and how best to address them, including by considering, as appropriate, the feasibility of further instruments and measures.

This is the only forum in the United Nations dedicated to promoting intergovernmental discussion on the rights of older persons and it is increasingly important and observed by Member States.

The group will continue through an open and interactive discussion with the participation of Civil Society.

5. 2nd Meeting about "Family Policies: Policymakers, Public and Private Institutions versus Family Support"

PROSALIS in 2013 supported the creation of Embrace the Family - Association for the Recognition of Family, having been in the organization of its 2nd Meeting held on 21st October, 2014.

The year 2014 marks the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and the 2nd Meeting on Family Policies aimed to emphasize the importance of family to the social development and its contributes to the promotion and the creation of policies that strengthen the well-being of family, recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Treaty on Civil and Political Rights as the natural and fundamental unit group of society.

The following topics were discussed:

- Intergenerational initiatives, development priorities against inequality and exclusion;
- Active Citizenship and Community Projects;
- Society of affections in building a healthier world;
- Structural changes and support for Families (employment, health, social work).



MMM NEWS – SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

MMM and the Beijing+20 UN ECC review

As co-chair of the Committee on the Status of Women in Geneva, MMM was part of the organizing committee of the Geneva NGO forum Beijing+20 UN ECE regional review on 3-5 November 2014. The objective was to prepare recommendations that will serve as a basis for the discussions by the Member States on 6 and 7 November. MMM President Anne Claire de Liedekerke participated as a speaker in the “Women and the Economy” roundtable.

MMM presented the below recommendations on how to improve gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Concrete actions to reconcile work and family life are crucial to support women employment, alleviate women poverty and foster women’s economic independence – a key step towards gender equality.

MMM would like to make the following 10 recommendations that derive from the main results of an online survey conducted by MMM in 2011 in 16 EU countries: “What Matters to Mothers in Europe”. In this survey, mothers gave as their primary concerns their lack of time, the lack of recognition of their role as mothers, and the absence of choices when it comes to balance their work and family lives. They also expressed their desire to be present on the labour market AND spend time educating their children, giving priority to one

or another depending on the age and number of their children.

Recommendations for governments:

1. Provide accessible, affordable and high-quality public services and infrastructures, in particular in the most disadvantaged and remote areas, with a focus on addressing the issue of women’s “time poverty”. Water, electricity, energy, ICTs, transportation, proximity childcare and healthcare are all necessary to significantly reduce the time spent on unpaid family care work, mostly supported by women, and thus liberate time for remunerated activities.

2. Make unpaid family care work visible to policy makers and society at large by conducting time use surveys which reflect real time spent in order to assess its monetary value as a percentage of GDP (estimated between 10 to 50% of GDP according to the October 2013 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona). Include unpaid family care work in alternate economic and social indicators currently under consideration to measure wellbeing (e.g. Beyond GDP, Genuine Progress Indicator).

3. Building on the resolution adopted at the ILO Conference of Labour Statisticians,

to **legally recognize unpaid family care work as being a particular category of labour that produces rights** (e.g. access to social security, education and training, a voice in the democratic system, etc.).

4. In particular, **recognize the periods dedicated to unpaid family care work in the calculation of pension rights** (“care credits”), as these periods are essential to societies’ wellbeing. This must not be seen as a cost but as an investment in childhood and human capital with a positive impact in other areas: recognition of the social and educational role of parents, prevention of women poverty, prevention of social and health problems linked to burn out and stress, prevention of violence and school drop-out, higher fertility rates, etc.

Recommendations for governments, the private sector and other stakeholders, as appropriate:

5. **Facilitate discontinuous career paths** rather than linear ones, allowing men and women to leave the labour market partially or completely to educate and care for their children or dependent relatives, and then re-enter it without being heavily penalized.

6. **Promote the regulation of quality part-time work and job sharing schemes** allowing men and women to adjust their workload to their family responsibilities, and eliminate any type of discrimination against part-time workers (i.e. mainly mothers) regarding career advancement, pay level, social security, pension rights, etc.

7. Address the “motherhood penalty” and

the growing inequality and discrimination between parents and non-parents by **recognizing and validating the competences and skills** acquired and developed while performing unpaid family care work to facilitate the re-entry into the labour market after a career break.

8. **Facilitate access to lifelong education** in order to ensure that women of all ages can acquire and develop the knowledge, capacities, aptitudes and skills needed to fully participate in the paid labour market.

9. **Promote and support equal sharing of care responsibilities between men and women** (e.g. through paternity leaves, parental leaves, awareness raising and education, etc.). This will allow men to take care of their children since the beginning, which then will more likely continue during the whole childhood.

10. **Change current legislation and practices** to enable women's right to **full and equal access to economic resources**, including the right to inheritance, ownership of land and other property, access to credit, etc.

Grassroots mobilization in France

For several years, Make Mothers Matter has been mobilizing policy makers and the general public to defend parents’ free choice regarding the type of childcare in general and to support the current 3-year parental leave in particular. When the revision of the law on gender equality was announced, thousands of parents mobilized spontaneously on Facebook, and MMM France started working with them to join them and convey their voices to decision makers.

On 29 September, the French Government announced that as of 1st January 2015, parental leave would be reformed drastically. It still has to be confirmed by the Senate how but the reform aims at imposing that benefits of parental leave will only be given to each parent for a maximum of 18 months instead of 36 months shared freely between both parents. For a significant number of families where both parents aren't able to share the parental leave of 3 years, this means that they would lose by 50% the possibility to use this childcare solution. It is possible that the current reform would also have an impact on childcare in general, as it would be necessary to take care of the children whose parents aren't able to both take parental leave in this form.

Opposition to this reform is increasing, and it's visible on social media. In only 3 days the Facebook page "Congé parental et projet de loi" showed an increase from 3,000 to 9,000 parents following, and mobilization continues. Make Mothers Matter actively supports this initiative and is very vocal in communicating this grassroots mobilization through the media and to decision makers.

Visit the parents' website where parents are mobilizing:

<https://www.facebook.com/CongesParentalEtProjetDeLoi?fref=ts>

For more information on the latest press releases from MMM France on this subject, see:

http://www.mmmfrance.org/ficdoc/Communique_de_presse_conge_parental_senat.pdf

http://www.mmmfrance.org/ficdoc/cong%C3%A9_parental_communique%C3%A9_de_presse_27_sept_2014.pdf (in French)

About MMM

Make Mothers Matter is an international NGO founded in 1947 to raise awareness of political decision-makers and public opinion on the essential role of mothers in promoting peace and ensuring social, economic and cultural development. MMM maintains its independence by having no political or religious affiliations in order to truly represent transparently the concerns of mothers worldwide to international authorities through the MMM permanent representatives. MMM has benefitted from UN Consultative Status since 1949 and from General Consultative Status since 2004.

MMMI affiliates associations in more than 30 countries and represents more than 6 million women.

Make Mothers Matter Newsletter

Visit our website to download the latest newsletter at:

<http://www.makemothersmatter.org/en/>.

Presented by Irina Pálffy-Daun-Seiler, MMM Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, on behalf of MMM

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Recent and Forthcoming events

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>
- XIX International Family Congress - October 2015, Mexico

January 2015

- 26 - 30 World Congress on Juvenile Justice
<http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=32111&flag=event> (Geneva, Switzerland)

March 2015

- 9-11 PSPC 2015 - 8th Annual Poverty and Social Protection Conference
<http://www.pspconference.org> (Bangkok, Thailand)
- 11-14 XXIII World Family Therapy Congress <http://www.ifta-congress.org/> (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
- 14-18 UN Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, Japan)
- 15-19 International Conference on Childhood Education (Oxford, UK)

April 2015

- 12-17 7th World Water Forum <http://worldwaterforum7.org/en> (Daegu, Gyeongbuk, Korea)
- 27-29 Children's Welfare League of American Conference
<http://www.cwla.org/2015NationalConference> (Arlington, USA)

May 2015

- 4-7: International Conference on Sociology <http://www.atiner.gr/sociology.htm> (Athens, Greece)
- 18- 19 Child Aware Conference <http://www.childawareconference.org.au> (Melbourne, Vic)

July 2015

- 4-7 ERPA International Congresses on Education 2015 <http://www.erpacongress.com> (Athens, Greece)
- 13-16 Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
- High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Third Session (Geneva, Switzerland)
- 22-24 ICCFR 62th annual international Conference <http://www.iccfr.org/conferences> (Berlin, Germany)

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