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Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Dear Readers of Families International,

Lina Caruana is a graduate in Social Studies and Sociology from the University of Malta and a retired head teacher, with many years of experience in voluntary work, especially with regard to families, and has written a personal perspective of families in Malta, for Families International.

There are many island communities world-wide and perhaps this contribution about Malta will inspire some of the readers of this issue to write their personal perspective and experience with families in an island environment, in another part of the world. We would welcome your impressions. They do not have to correspond to the views of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family and the positions and opinions presented, are those of the authors alone, and are not intended to represent the views of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family. Our world is rich in cultural heritage and diversity and we would like to see this reflected in Families International. So please feel free to submit your experience, from your perspective.

This issue also encloses the text of the United Nations Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Day of Families on May 15th 2009, as well as the text of a presentation in the Dag Hammarskjold Library of the United Nations in New York to mark that day. We further include extensive information about recent and upcoming events with regard to family issues.

You will also notice that the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family has re-styled the website of the Committee, bringing it into line with a more modern design, and hopefully, more user-friendly.

Peter Crowley

Editor

(Deputy Chairperson)

Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

Table of Contents

FAMILIES IN TRANSITION	3
NEWS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS	9
NEWS FROM MEMBER ORAGNISATIONS	14
RECENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS	18
IMPRESSUM	24

Families in transition

FAMILIES IN MALTA – A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Lina Caruana
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A Brief Historical Background of Malta

Waking to the high pitched sound of birds, the rising sun between two pre-historical sites - the Neolithic Temple and the Ghar Dalam caves - the mysterious subterranean structure of Hal Saflieni close by, life begins with the thought of early family settlement. The Ghar Dalam caves hold more family mysteries besides the dwarf elephant and other curiosities. Malta covering an area of 216 square kilometers in the middle of the Mediterranean, with a population rising to 400.000 at 2009 (from an average of 10.000 people in earliest times), not managing to catch enough rainfall for the population, has survived or developed into a nation within the European Union. The scarce grazing grounds of a dry summer, the lack of running water from streams or rivers falling off mountain tops makes Malta unique in its landscape and the survival of its population.

The many deep rooted olive trees pulled out to make way for building sites are indicative of the Carthaginian oil industry. Carthage and Rome occupied Malta alternately during the one hundred years Punic Wars. Besides oil the olive trees gave Malta several exquisite pieces of furniture artistically made by hand, preserved to this day in private residencies and museums.

From what is known of Mediaeval History,

Gann Frangisk Abela lists and delineates old and notable families during the period when the Viceroys of Sicily ruled Malta. Many of them are extinct but some surnames still remain. These families were successively followed by more titled families rewarded by successive grandmasters remaining till the end of the rule of the Knights and reviewed by the British in 1886.

Charles Said Vassallo (www.maltagenealogy.com) from the original document lists 32 families who were given recognition as Malta's nobility. Most of the rest of families worked in fields to produce wheat, cotton, vegetables and fruit or grazing goats for the produce of milk and soft goats' cheeses or ricotta other than businesses of livestock, animal feed or seafaring. When Malta became a Republic all privileges were removed through the Constitution of Malta. During Napoleon's short stay slavery had been abolished. A new civil code of law was drawn up remaining to this day giving more rights to the individual. For the rest of history the Maltese still carry the symbols of past generations who gave Malta its identity. Wettinger (Melitensia, Uni. Of

Malta) lists mediaeval surnames of Arabic origins mostly remaining from the 200 year Arab rule or coming from Sicily after Arab rule there. Some have been changed in spelling and pronunciation but they still exist as today's family names. Another component of the Maltese population were Jews turned Maltese who during the time of the Knights of St. John made up a third of an even smaller population of those days. This is evident today by the many Jewish surnames accepted as long standing Maltese family names. One of these families was even rewarded by the grandmaster for having uncovered a plot against him. Sporadic events in Europe or the Middle East brought other inhabitants to this island like those who came from Palestine to Malta as Christian Jews indicative by the surname Saliba, Salib for cross. Possibly some Heugonot descendants are found from those who fled across the Mediterranean from the Pyrenees because of religious persecution. Others remained here as inhabitants who stayed on from Napoleon's army and his practice of taking with him the best soldiers when in battle. Mixed marriages gave Malta further enrichment with Greek, Polish, Italian and English families. Today's mixed marriages are of Yugoslav, Albanian, Russian, Libyan, German origins. Consequently a small number of families consist of European and Middle Eastern origins including slaves and their descendants through marriage with the rest of Maltese families, some being recorded as Ethiopians. These families lived and worked together for all the periods known to history as one Nation.

Socio-Political-Development. - In Unity there is strength

Up to 21st September 1964 when Malta became Independent from British Rule. Malta had always been colonized. Self Government emerged only after more than a hundred years of British Rule and politics was of a negotiating kind among the rulers and the several notable patriots who marked modern Maltese History. Perhaps naturally and out of necessity the strategy adopted emerged as **unity in diversity** to obtain something from the rulers who occupied the land as a geographically strategic site in the middle of the Mediterranean. This characteristic is highlighted by one of the family folk stories related to children. The story is about the elderly and ailing father who demonstrated to his three sons that tough branches cannot be broken when tied together in a bundle but the job is easily done if broken one by one out of the bundle.

Leadership arose from time to time through the efforts of patriotic individuals highly motivated by the future and well-being of families. In spite of diversity the message was clear – **in unity there is strength**. This concept has also gathered political meaning to this day. Although few studies about families in a Maltese context can be found, solidarity and support were probably the cause of the way families were economically and socially strengthened through the extended family system which is still strong, if not evident. Parents are supportive both economically and in kind as is shown by the many grandparents who look after their young grand children while their daughters are at work. Economic support to couples for setting up their first residence by their parents is another feature of this familial concern towards the setting up of new families. It is perhaps a most clear sign of the appreciation Maltese people still have for family strengths by giving new families a good start.

As a British colony Malta absorbed much of the engineering and technical facilities which made homes more comfortable, schools and health improved even further with self government, welfare legislation and the rise of trade unionism. Under the Knights, Malta acquired the enrichment of an art culture found in many beautiful adornments of churches, and majestic buildings. The bastions and pageantry or symbolic rituals of a catholic culture are a mainstay to the Tourist Industry. The coming of St. Paul in Malta recorded in the Bible had united the Maltese Nation even further into a catholic country and close unity with the Church and the Vatican. The Catholic Church is a social component in Maltese culture which the Maltese do not want to give up by the fact that minorities request the church not to exclude them even if they do not uphold traditional values. Religious practice is common as a cultural feature. The Church in Malta from very early times has catered for single mothers, unwanted or poor children, separated and violently abused wives, the elderly, by giving them care and shelter. Priests especially monks and nuns in convents were the pioneers of social work, youth work and education including the building of schools. Many NGO's were initiated through diocesan concern to strengthen families and family unity. The underlying culture included the priority and sacred duty for everyone to treat humans as a person in any situation shared by all Maltese people as social criteria. Maltese people also share universal values with other Europeans as culture from their historical past. These facts delineate many events where Maltese belief emerges in unity with other European movements and elsewhere. However the social stigma surrounding single mothers and unfortunately their innocent children by popular belief had some strength in preserving the marriage institution as a traditional family formation. The significance of the importance one gives to this reasoning is that Maltese culture centers on cultural beliefs and

abiding by it was essential unless one accepted to be marginalized as different. But cultural traditions of beliefs do not always tally with their practice. Thus the discrimination between the person and his undesirable actions may not be clear enough obscuring the authentic belief in the universal value of human dignity as a fundamental concept of belief.

Social change -1950 – 1980's - Polarization.

Times began to change with a new era induced by politics. As if according to the natural consequences of the craftsmanship the Maltese acquired in boat building and the rule of Carthage, Malta's geographic and strategic position, the dockyard built and maintained by the British, provided work and family living for a great number of people living in the three cities and the surrounding areas of the South Harbour. It is here that partisan politics grew vociferous. Militancy against the authority of the so far ruling elite as part of the traditional culture where everything centred on the Parish, the parish priest, the school headmaster, the notary and the village lawyer with close contact to the Church, ensued. This was the beginning of an emerging socio-political feature when Malta experienced many dock workers and their families as a militancy by contrast to the unity described. After this the Nation developed as two strongly polarized political beliefs. This progressed into violence into the 1970's and 80's when for a while the situation even got out of hand for the same politicians.

The movement against emigration because of lack of work and large families was supported by another view encouraging natural family planning, when the Cana Clinics performing as a secular NGO with redefinition of family values to the prevalent situation were initiated, thus filling the gap from the absence of family planning education. This lightened the burden for many married couples who were encouraged to have smaller families and better child education. The growth of Trade Unions of diverse ideological views brought a resistance to change along a sixty year span for reasons which were often incongruent amongst them. Further political changes by subsequent governments led Malta to a secular State where church leadership was diminished but still accepted by the majority of families. Furthermore the fact that Malta was predominantly Catholic remains endorsed in the Constitution.

A wave of liberalism acquired a political element with voting consequences. The state counseling and social work systems arose firstly to satisfy those who were involved in religious conflict. Then further secularization, democratization and rising incidence of social problems, entrenched them in social policy and welfare. Politicians encouraged the eradication of violently aggressive measures unpopular amongst the majority of the electorate.

Entry into the EU was a political issue among voters who did not agree unanimously whether to join the

EU or not to join. However participation for MEP's election is now acclaimed on all sides. The same holds true for the comparatively recent establishment of Local and School Councils. In fact local parish work has been greatly advanced by the good civil society work and maintenance of the geographical areas entrusted to local councils. Families have also learnt to exploit this opportunity particularly to issues regarding health and the environment. The growth of pressure groups for a greener environment resulted in the establishment of MEPA, an autonomous environmental planning authority.

From an anthropological or historical approach this small nation who always negotiated successfully for its survival with rulers had become polarized soon after attaining self government. By contrast it has developed immensely during the years leading to a new era of change. The profound vision of successive governments' leadership saw Malta's entry into the European Union as a successful development. Political wisdom leveled much of the previous acute and militant polarization, strengthened and improved the infrastructure, tourism, reformed the civil service and initiated the start of an information society through Information Technology. We also saw the building of a state of the art Hospital, (by tradition and custom named Mater Dei) to complement an already good health service in spite of its faults. This means that all citizens, rich or poor have the most modern available care in a modern heavily equipped hospital with the latest technology. Those who can afford still have the choice for a private hospital. All this was a unique development which still needs to be explained in terms of its benefits for family living and its running difficulties.

Impact on marriage and the Family

Growth of the Construction Industry

Referral to the above is not for its political perspective but for its relationship to the impact it had on families. It is strictly speaking a matter of local concern and requires deeper studies in the ways that the old social order started to derail and whether there are more sweeping social changes than superficially envisaged. What has been defined as the post modern family (Handel and Whitchurch) characterized by fragmentation of alternative lifestyles and overlapping families, is not unknown in Malta but the preference is still that of the family understood to be a social unit composed of a man and a woman who marry for love, have children together and stay married for life. The family is clearly delineated as a two parent biological family but with a weaker institution emerging through new lifestyles and modern development. (Fr. Paul Galea, Conference on the Family, March 2009). The media may have played a significant role. It plays a part in this transformation.

Maltese families have experienced higher standard of living with rising expectations. Ironically for such a small island State what has started as the building of residencies for families of the British Armed Forces after the War Damage development or repair of bombed building sites changed into a proper and rapid expansion of the Construction Industry with impact on families as consequential as the Industrial revolution. Malta developed from a large agricultural household of an extended family with numerous children into a house proud Nation of residence owners, with one or two children. The family would at least have a three bed roomed house, a large kitchen and living room, possibly a grand reception area. The splendour of baroque palaces and Churches spread into houses even if in imitation kind. This growing expansion of the Construction industry did not only raise property prices immensely as land became scarcer but characterized a true revolution in thought and lifestyle changing priorities. Villages changed into cities abounding with shopping centers and supermarkets. The outskirts changed into suburban palace like villas owned by the middle income wage earner. The golden rush continued whereby plots of land bought for an affordable price fetched more than quadruple the amount in a matter of a few years within a lifetime. Families found it lucrative to buy and have their own residence built with the hope of enriching their offspring on resell and a comfortable old age. Farm workers acquired rights over the land they cultivated according to old laws which gave farmers certain rights even if they did not own the land they cultivated. Social mobility followed in many areas of Maltese society through land ownership, politics or business. Widespread education for all played a great part. Property became a basic commodity for the newlyweds, including all the splendour and necessities of a golden age lasting well into the 90's. Property did not only become an investment opportunity but it expanded in business matched with the tourist industry into other places like Bulgaria and other European countries.

The aspiration of Maltese families continued to grow. Even if women participation in the labour force is encouraged, women are now working out of necessity to meet the rising costs and the price of all the commodities, now called necessities. Dining out, holidays abroad, boats and holiday resort residencies, excellent personal grooming, well clothed adults and children, are not uncommon but are enjoyed by a great number of people in spite of the fact that there are a number of people known to be below subsistence level (Angela Abela & C. Tabone O.P 2009). However the expectations of families in family lifestyle are also subject to the ripple effect from the proximity of living in a small geographic space and the media. This makes relative poverty even harder for those who cannot reach the standard. It is not unknown to find people

raising illegal buildings or caravan sites outside development zones reminiscent from past undisciplined militancy and individuals who in spite of everything want to make the grade. The relentless urge for individualistic material achievement regardless of the law and the common good has gained ground on different levels of society. Laws are in place but their enforcement had become customarily ignored. To this effect legal ways of enforcement are now put into practice to regularize the situation. This is bringing to light illegalities in the occupation of tenements.

Emerging Social Issues

The present day situation puts young couples in difficulty to obtain their first residence because of its high costs and lifelong mortgages. The impact this could have made on later marriages of the younger generation or co-habitation may have inspired alternative lifestyles increasing the number of children born outside marriage a concern. Whether the rising health problems of people with venereal diseases is a result of adaptation to economic pressures, declining values, or the deterioration of the family concept as an institution within the sacred bond of indissoluble marriage remains to be seen. Here partisan politics was a matter of belief about sex education, traditional values against liberal militancy. Throughout the 80's, values went through the exposition of sex education from taboo to indiscriminate spread irrespective of the inexperience and tender age of young children, peer pressure and worrying parents. This enthusiasm for secularization and modernization may have unintentionally misfired because a new concern was shared by most families. Henceforth the picture of the Maltese family started changing. Much has occurred from the not too distant far when marriages were arranged. Some elderly people can still recall the days when the first priority was the sacred bond of marriage and raising good citizens. The marriage relationship underwent sweeping changes from the old social order, firstly because of personal choice and less intermarriage between families of the same social and religious orientations. Therefore there could be much more to uncover within the apparent homogeneity of the value system. Then the changing role of women as elsewhere made it possible for women to seek separation without the social stigma on children. Separation was harder on women who cared intensely for the well being of their offspring from a social perspective. Perhaps the diminished strength of the Institution has also allowed for the emergence of cultural unevenness due to changing value systems and the weakening of the parental role. Parenting has lost its homogenous rules and peer pressure has become stronger and more threatening. Family problems of a universal nature have also assailed Maltese families. The fact that family communication and marital conversation is no

longer homogeneously accepted as one carried out 'around the family altar' * any more, created different styles and undefined value systems. Whether this contributes to Durkheim's description of anomie needs to be ascertained. Conversely it is still common to seek a priest councilor now that they are also qualified psychologists in spite of qualified expertise in the welfare system. What kind of transition are Maltese families going through?

Social issues are not without their pressures. Maltese people are a mixture of pan Mediterranean European and Middle Eastern races. They cannot be endemically racist. It is more likely that resistance to illegal immigration is the sign of a fear of losing what has been achieved in such a short time through the hard work and suffering of so many years. In contrast Maltese people are characterized by generosity and solidarity towards the needy amongst themselves and the suffering of those away from home. The world is richer by the many Maltese missionaries who work among the poor in all parts of the world staying there for a long number of years away from home stricken by illness and poverty willingly blessed by their closest and dearest.

What are Maltese fears and hopes? What is going on within the psychosocial interior of families?

Among social ills, irrespective of strengths there still remains a lacuna of undisciplined malpractice unreachable by law which adds economic pressure on families through fraud, theft or unaccountable malpractice. Families today live in apprehension of what can occur suddenly from dejavue like the collapse of banks where several families lost their life savings. Families are aware that history might repeat itself in various forms. Perhaps partisan politics play a subtle role within the system of justice where justice does not have the same meaning for all irrespective of the law and the party who governs. Many people experience the growth of an incongruent mentality. Even where earnings are supposed to be adequate the unexpected might happen. Amidst the elderly well cared for as never before, an illustration of a month's allocation of pension funds of a middle income earner may not be adequate to cover all ordinary expenses of telephone, television and internet service provider and food because of extraordinarily incurred expenses through theft and damage etc.

Although this is not typical of the whole category it is nonetheless worrying because it is a frequent allocation of funds and not uncommon in all categories. Home intrusion amongst the elderly, fraudulent practices or damage to neighboring buildings through construction works or illegal hoarding of fireworks material (for the village feast) are amongst common concerns. This means that a number of families are innocently suffering a decreased quality of life on account of the irresponsibility of those who defy the law for egoistic

motives .Not yet enough effective legislation is in place to reach these families or the wrong doers who manage to get away with it. . An individualistic trend among fortune seekers harms the growth of the economy which may at times be subjected to the scoundrels who exploit it. Although these ills are so far under control, education for families needs to reach all levels of society to stem declining values especially for the common good. Families are not only a basic cell of society but a pillar of all activity. It is by acting for the prevention of wrong doing against the common good that the economy can grow.

If addressing social issues is to be effective, these must first be identified before being treated.

Education for families

Hess and Handel indicate that research changed from family functions to all facets of family life as the immensely vast experience through which family members construct their world. In the Maltese context this can change the way in which families externalize their psycho social interior to the outside world creating a new social order and ways of perceiving social reality, into society.

Kellner and Handel's proposition to study families from a qualitative approach has much relevance to the facts which they seek.

What is there?

What kinds are there?

What is the pattern of structure of its kind?

In a Maltese context, **what kind of transition are Maltese families going through?**

Furthermore it is important as stated by Hess and Handel to firstly identify the phenomena, to measure what is worth measuring as well as what is important but cannot be measured.

Because of the complexity of the family, particularly its local socio -cultural context, qualitative research in addition, would yield a far more extensively clear picture of reality with regard to families. Apart from what is universal context, educating families needs a basis of communication to get in touch with families through reality. This may be a crucial point as frequently experienced by many educators that a point of contact or communication cannot be established with those who are being educated unless they feel that a situation is real which touches the heart as well as the mind. Acceptance to understand is more important as a start than the information imparted. This can only be done by a picture of reality as accurate as possible.

Local Ngo's work to promote healthy families by strengthening family unity. We need, to pool expertise to be shared for such a small population and carry out local research. Although times change it is not wise to throw away all tradition simply because it is old. Many old things grow more precious with time because of their history and

lustre embellished with use. In Malta's context it is worth considering cultural family traditions as a good foundation because these belong to the whole population as a culture and the universal community of Christian tradition. Whatever values one has, these form a fundamental component which strengthens the person. The psych social interior of the family will function better to make a more cohesive society by improving child rearing. For this purpose tradition needs to be defined or redefined accordingly so that families can adapt better to change in the process because of the identification of who they are and where they want to go. Family function cannot be improved by prescription but by self awareness and understanding.

In any attempt to educate families, challenges in methodology and content are always a great issue in themselves. The construction of social reality which families construct for themselves is dependent on the interpretation each member of the family gives to that reality and how he deals with .The belief system has lost much of its strength for motivating the individual. Because of the fear of trespassing into the diversity of beliefs, education has stopped short of this no go land. Much is treated about man as a sexual being with regard to families. Mankind needs to go beyond its primitive experience and seek explanations of the gift of life empowered by an inner life giving spirit. Inner connectedness of body and spirit will be reflected into balanced resourceful individuals and connected families. Separateness may occur from lack of contact with oneself, separateness from self and therefore separateness from others. Knowledge of self and others leads towards truthfulness and reality. If belief is one of our strengths, then its incorporation into an educational strategy is essential to prevent inner fragmentation within the value system. Highlighting the diversity of beliefs does not diminish one's own belief but strengthens the position of values in one's life as an authentic anchorage to live by. Living at peace with one's self and others means the acceptance of the other and not just tolerance. In Malta (as in many other countries) the standard criteria of behaviour within a strong institution were that of instilling in the young the concept of leading by example. Striving to live according to values strengthens the personality and contributes towards the common good. An anthropological approach may draw out the unarticulated wisdom from within the psycho-social life of Maltese families and their useful traditions. Imparting family sentiments to people who were not so fortunate to live this experience is not easy but transmitting through example leads to understanding. Education for families does not mean the projection of one's own family as an ideal type. This creates much misunderstanding and mistrust because there can be no prescription for family living. Preventive education is central to the way in which individuals

are educated for family living by being resourceful, knowing how to sort out priorities without being egoistic. Above all affection paves the way to support whether material, emotional, or spiritual.

Differentiating care services from a preventive educational strategy helps in clarifying aims and objectives. Spreading illustrations of fearful family problems especially amongst young people is not effective for preventive education. This could produce undesirable effects because fear without participatory reasoning would urge more incredulity than the placing of priorities through reasoning. It has become customary that instead of presenting the joys and blessings of family life, one assumes that it is better to present first its surrealistic definitions as prevention. Believing in something good and beautiful is a strong motivation in itself. Young people may keep away from marrying and cohabit instead simply because they have been helped to believe in issues as being of a universal nature. From a holistic perspective when we give so much attention in education to all kinds of experiences **why should we not be educated in 'family literacy' as personal education?**

Early childhood education is a fundamental and fruitful foundation.

The setting up of **Family Studies** at the University of Malta will be a good start. It is good to bear in mind

however that because of the complexity of the family and its dynamic functions, family studies can never be overpowered by any discipline. It is multidisciplinary by nature. While all scientific aspects require the need of scientific expertise, putting facts together requires the sensibilities and the skills of a family educator who can be any professional within the other required disciplinary expertise. As such the need to deepen the understanding of family studies and skills related to imparting the benefit derived from such work and research also requires further studies in the formation and training of family educators. This can best be achieved through hard work but motivated by the wish for the greatest benefit for all humanity is a worthwhile task. Because the sample size and history of the Maltese experience and other small communities is of a more manageable size they may provide a good example upon which to base further work for educating families.

Note

*similar to countries with a Catholic tradition all families had a place where religious symbolism was exhibited as a place for devotion where the parents and children prayed together as a family. Lighted candles and flowers symbolized devotion and family events were the topics of conversation and prayer.

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News from the United Nations

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES
15 May 2009**

This year's International Day of Families, being commemorated under the theme, "Mothers and Families: Challenges in a Changing World," focuses on the important role of mothers for families and communities around the world.

Mothers play a critical role in the family, which is a powerful force for social cohesion and integration. The mother-child relationship is vital for the healthy development of children. And mothers are not only caregivers; they are also breadwinners for their families. Yet women continue to face major – and even life-threatening – challenges in motherhood.

Childbirth, which should be a cause for celebration, is a grave health risk for too many women in developing countries. Improving maternal health is the Millennium Development Goal on which the least progress has been made. A woman in a least-developed country is 300 times more likely to die in childbirth or from pregnancy-related complications than a woman in a developed country. We must make pregnancy and childbirth safer by enabling health systems to provide family planning, skilled attendance at birth and emergency obstetric care.

Violence against women, many of whom are mothers, remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time. It has far-reaching consequences –endangering the lives of women and girls, harming their families and communities, and damaging the very fabric of societies. Ending and preventing violence against women should be a key priority for all countries.

We must also ensure universal access to education. The benefits of educating women and girls accrue not only to individual families but to whole countries, unlocking the potential of women to contribute to broader development efforts. Statistics also show that educated mothers are much more likely to keep their children in school, meaning that the benefits of education transcend generations.

As we strive to support mothers in their care giving work, we should develop and expand family-friendly policies and services, such as child care centres, that would reduce some of the workload placed on women. Women and men alike need stronger public support to share equally in work and family responsibilities. Families built on the recognition of equality between women and men will contribute to more stable and productive societies.

We face multiple challenges in our changing world, but one factor remains constant: the timeless importance of mothers and their invaluable contribution to raising the next generation. By rewarding their efforts and enhancing their living conditions, we can secure a better future for all.

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/idf09.html>



International Day of Families

Mothers and Families: Challenges in a Changing World

Statement by:

Aminata Toure

14 May 2009

1:15 to 2:30 PM

Conference Room 3

United Nations Headquarters, New York

It is my pleasure to be here with you all today, in commemoration of International Day of Families.

- While there may be new challenges to motherhood in today's ever-changing world, an age old issue which affects the lives of mothers, to-be mothers, and their children, continue to plague us still. Decades after the international community committed itself to making motherhood safer, the relentless toll of mothers dying continues: every minute, another woman is taken from her loved ones. Every minute, a family loses its centre. A child loses a mother's love and protection. And the inequities are clear: in sub-Saharan Africa, a woman's risk of dying from treatable or preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth over the course of her lifetime is 1 in 22, while that of a woman in a developed region is 1 in 7,300. Improving maternal health, Millennium Development Goal 5, is the goal with the least progress to date.

- Furthermore, more than 10 million women a year suffer severe or long-lasting illnesses or disabilities, from obstetric fistula to infertility, depression and impoverishment caused by complications of pregnancy or childbirth. The potential struggles that motherhood poses cannot be properly addressed without the talking about this fundamental human right.

- Strategies to prevent maternal mortality are well known. They start with providing quality maternal health care services, including family planning, skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care. But they don't end there: Maternal health is linked to many other issues, including gender dynamics such as power relations between a woman, her partner and extended family members; the existence of a strong cadre of human resources including midwives – referred to as the 'bridge between the communities and facilities'; health sector reform which aims to deliver quality care including universal access to reproductive health; and political will on behalf of leaders to push for

implementation of laws, policies and frameworks such as CEDAW and Convention on the Rights of the Child for example.

- UNFPA, along with other sister agencies including UNICEF and WHO, supports safe motherhood initiatives in many countries across the globe. Programmes like the midwifery initiative, emphasize capacity development in maternal care, especially the strengthening of needed human resources. UNFPA seeks to make motherhood as safe as possible during crisis situations that compound women's vulnerability. And the Fund's work to prevent fistula is also making pregnancy safer by calling attention to health systems that are failing to meet the needs of women during the critical time of childbirth. In 2008, UNFPA along with a number of partners established a Thematic Fund for Maternal Health to increase the capacity of health systems to provide a broad range of quality maternal health services, reduce health inequities, and empower women to exercise their right to maternal health. Other key initiatives to accelerate progress in making motherhood safer include the Global Programme on Reproductive Health Commodity Security and the Campaign to End Fistula.

- Part of the solution also lies in empowering women and improving access to reproductive health care more generally, especially women and girls who come from the most marginalized groups. Poor women have the greatest need while their families and society as a whole have much to gain from improvements in reproductive health conditions. Typically the ones with least access to contraception – these women are challenged with making the decision to determine the number and spacing of her children. Family planning allows women to delay childbearing so they can complete their education, participate in the labor force while acquiring skills and experience. This can have a profound impact on a woman's empowerment, as she is able to make free and informed choices about the timing and size

of her family. Maternal and infant health improves as a mother is better able to look after her baby while the spacing of her children offers her more opportunities both social and economic.

- At the same time, mothers and children are greatly affected by gender inequality. Discrimination against women and girls - including gender-based violence and harmful practices - have far-reaching consequences. Women and girls also bear enormous hardship during and after humanitarian emergencies, especially armed conflicts.

- The girl child and adolescent girls are increasingly at risk of missed opportunities. Girls aged 15 - 20 are twice as likely to die in childbirth as those in their twenties. Girls under the age of 15 are five times as likely to die. Girls aged 15 -19 account for one in four unsafe abortions - an estimated 5 million each year. Complications of pregnancy or childbearing represent the leading cause of mortality for girls aged 15-19 in developing countries.

- In sub-Saharan Africa, women and girls account for almost 57 per cent of adults living with HIV. In most regions, women and girls make up an increasing proportion of the population living with HIV, and rates of female infection continue to rise - particularly in Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America.

- Women take on multiple roles, especially given their productive and reproductive responsibilities. Yet their contributions both at home and in the public sphere often remain unrecognized and unpaid. While there is no doubt that HIV has a profound psychological, physical and social impact on the entire family, the caregiving responsibility, whether for orphans or support to family members living with HIV, falls mostly on the shoulders of the women and girls within the family. In countries hardest hit, most of the care for people living with HIV takes place in the home, and up to 90 percent of that is provided by women and girls. Due to the demands of caring for others, many female caregivers have less time to look after their own health, earn an income, produce food, go to school, and maintain the rest of the household. This creates a vicious cycle, whereby women and their families are more likely to be malnourished and in poor health.

- Violence against women is a global crisis, a human rights violation and health concern which leaves no community untouched. Furthermore, the connections between gender based violence and family violence have been iterated time and again in studies and reports. Children, who are exposed to violence in the home, including violence inflicted on their mothers, sisters, aunts, or other women in their family, are more likely to repeat such behaviors themselves, later on in life.

- While it may be true that we have a long way to go before we achieve gender equality, there are

promising recommendations that can be offered as solutions to address these challenges.

- In the case of ending violence against women for example, leadership and political will are among the most important ingredients for halting this human rights violation. The United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's Campaign UNITE to End Violence Against Women is an illustration of the type of strong and sustained leadership that can make a difference in garnering political will at the highest levels of Government. The Secretary General is committed to the issue of ending violence against women. He states "violence against women and girls continues unabated in every continent, country and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women's lives, on their families and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence -yet the reality is that too often, it is covered up or tacitly condoned."

- United Nations agencies - each with its own vantage point based on their mandates and comparative advantages - are working to drive efforts on the Secretary General's Campaign - which has an overall objective to increase public awareness, political will and resources for preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. The United Nations is taking leadership on the issue as evidenced by the multi-agency Task Force on Violence against Women's efforts to support Country Teams in Yemen, Jordan, the Philippines, Rwanda, Kyrgyzstan, Fiji, Chile, Jamaica, Paraguay and Burkina Faso to prevent and respond to violence against women.

- Promising tools for gender mainstreaming at the policy level, such as gender responsive budgeting, have been developed to decipher and alleviate inequitable resource allocation for example. Gender responsive budgeting helps to trace the way that budgets respond to women's priorities and the way that governments use funds to reduce poverty, promote gender equality, reverse the spread of HIV and lower the rates of maternal and child mortality, particularly through effective and efficient service delivery. Tracking this resource flow allows one to see who benefits from public resources and how. It helps ensure government accountability to the commitments that were made to women and girls during the Cairo and Beijing Conferences as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

- Raising gender equitable children is a great challenge that parents and extended family members who are engaging in child rearing face. The preferential treatment to boys, sometimes even by mothers themselves, leads to persistent discrimination against girls, forcing them to miss out on opportunities including education and not to mention - time to be a child. Programmes and initiatives, either in-school or out-of school, which aim to reach boys and young men are critical as early socialization is key to reversing hegemonic

masculinities which are harmful not only to girls and women, but to boys and men themselves. Efforts which aim to better ensure that these common and often destructive perceptions of what it means to be a 'man' are no longer inherited and passed down should continue to be supported and scaled up.

- Investing in the education of girls is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty. Daughters of educated mothers are more likely to attend school, while studies show that a mother's education also translates into higher immunization rates and better nutrition for her children. Every year of mothers' education corresponds to 5 to 10 per cent lower mortality rates in children under the age of five. At the same, education improves reproductive health as educated women are more likely to seek adequate prenatal care, skilled attendance during childbirth and to use contraception. Educated girls are more likely to delay marriage and childbearing, and instead acquire skills for their future.

- Harmful practices such as child marriages, female genital mutilation/cutting, too many childbirths and violence also diminish girls' ambitions and dreams of leading fulfilling and prosperous lives. Through advocacy and community mobilization, using a culturally sensitive approach to programming, change is possible. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and abandoning harmful practices for example, depends largely on the ownership of local communities. Efforts to develop and sustain an enabling environment for the achievement of development goals, including universal access to reproductive health, necessitates that local resources are harnessed and mobilized.

- Building bridges between universal rights and local cultural and ethical values is a key strategy to provide the motivation to individuals and communities to understand and own these universal rights. Through culturally sensitive approaches an effective mix of tools for building such bridges is possible. UNFPA uses the 'culture lens' which facilitates positive negotiation environments in which universal rights can be explored and understood by local communities and their traditional and religious leaders, who are often perceived by communities as the custodians of their culture.

- UNFPA, since its inception, has been tasked with implementing these goals which reside in the most sensitive and intimate spheres of life, such as reproductive health and rights, including as they relate to adolescents and youth, gender relations and population issues. To face these challenges, the Fund has been examining its programming strategies to develop more inclusive programming approaches that encompass culture and religion and the roles played by local power structures and

institutions in mobilizing communities to become active partners in development.

- Collaboration and partnerships with faith based actors, community organizations, indigenous groups among others, have proved instrumental in neutralizing resistance and creating local ownership of the ICPD Programme of Action.

- On this occasion of International Day of Families, it is important to underscore the notion of fatherhood and the role of men and boys in gender-equitable families.

- Men's participation in domestic chores, including child care, and their participation in child and maternal health is positive for women, freeing up time for them to work outside the home, to study or to pursue activities for themselves and their households.

- Research shows that when fathers are involved in the lives of children, children's social and emotional development benefit and they often perform better in school and have healthier relationships as adults.

- Experience reflects that positive engagement as caregivers and fathers is good for men themselves. Men who are involved in meaningful ways with their children report this relationship to be one of their most important sources of well-being and happiness.

- Connecting with boys and young men offers the greatest opportunity to install gender equitable values early on. Boys who grow up around positive male role models are more likely to question gender inequities and harmful stereotypes. Ideas about manhood are deeply ingrained as boys - at an early age - may be socialized into gender roles designed to keep men in power and in control. Many grow up to believe that dominant behaviour towards girls and women is part of being a man. At the same time, these perceptions are detrimental to their own well-being. Males between the ages of 15 and 24, have the riskiest behaviours related to HIV transmission, including having multiple sexual partners and injecting drug use.

- Clearly men and boys need to be involved if gender equality is to be achieved and development programmes are to succeed. In doing so, we must recognize that gender roles and relations are dependent on social contexts in which cultural, religious, economic, political and social circumstances are intertwined. UNFPA, along with other members of the UN family, are part of the MenEngage Alliance, an alliance of NGOs and UN agencies that seek to engage boys and men to achieve gender equality.

- As we all continue to work through our diverse and varying ways, towards ensuring that every man, woman and child can exercise their human rights, the need to harmonize our efforts emerges. The bridging of various partnerships including the global women's movement with non-traditional groups and

actors such as civil society organizations including faith based organizations, human rights networks, and men's alliances will be necessary. These challenges can be worked through by engaging in effective negotiation and employing an understanding of the interests of these diverse stakeholders – for the sake of families across the globe.

- In closing, I would like to emphasize on this occasion of International Day of Families, that a mother's love and nurturing are the foundation of

Thank you.

many families in every corner of the Earth. Let us work together to ensure that every mother has the support, resources and opportunities she needs to fulfil her role as a mother, partner, and individual exercising her human right to lead a full and promising life. Safe motherhood, positive fatherhood, and gender equality are pillars for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and for existence of happy and healthy families the world over.

News from Member Organizations



Dear friends of the World Movement of Mothers,

The European delegation of the World Movement of Mothers (or Mouvement Mondial des Mères - MMM) is pleased to send you here attached this Activity Report for 2008-2009.

After 7 years Françoise de BELLEFROID is retiring as president of the European delegation of MMM. We express heart-felt gratitude for her ability, effectiveness, and enthusiasm. She will continue as a member of the team and will render precious help to Anne-Claire de LIEDEKERKE who has accepted the responsibility to preside over MMM Europe, supported by Joan STEVENS as Secretary General.

While the European Union does not have competence or a legal mandate to formulate family policy, it is clear that policies of social protection concerning employment, education, and health affect the well being of mothers.

We have monitored the proposals of the French and Czech presidencies of the European Union on these subjects. We have also followed the activities and reports of Parliament and the Commission by participating in meetings and by submitting opinions which were taken into consideration on certain proposals and reports of Parliament. In addition, we have submitted our candidature to participate in platforms to guide research on the family or to formulate a new European social agenda concerning youth.

We have observed a new willingness on the part of the European Union institutions to take into account the impact of related European policies on families. The demographic challenge in Europe has drawn attention to the necessity of sustaining families.

On the occasion of European elections, we encourage you to pay attention to the programs related to family policy as expressed by different political parties in your country. It is important for families and for mothers that these national political parties become aware of the impact that their proposals may have on families. We wish you a good read, and look forward to receiving your reaction and comments.

Best wishes from us,
Françoise de Bellefroid
Anne-Claire de Liedekerke
Joan Stevens

ACTIVITY REPORT 2008-2009

Mouvement Mondial des Mères European Delegation
8 avenue Nestor Plissartlaan, 1040 Brussels
mmmeurope@gmail.com

10-11 April 2008

The general assembly of MMM and study day was set in the framework of the collaboration between MMM England and the British army in its role of maintaining the peace. Mothers have a crucial role to play in the management of community conflict, violence, and addiction...In its peacetime commitment to community involvement, the British army has collaborated with mothers.

<http://www.mouvement-mondial-des-meres.org/fr/publications/actes.htm>

1. European Parliament

7 May 2008

The presentation of the annual report of the Institute for Family Policy (IPF) entitled "The Evolution of the Family in Europe 2008" describes the deteriorating demographic condition. The report recognizes the important role of the family and insists on the inclusion of the family dimension in social and economic policy-making of Member States. Study the report:

www.ipfe.org/Report_Evolution_of_Family_Europe_2008_eng.pdf

The Institute for Family Policies publishes its studies and statistics concerning the condition of the family in Europe, which may be found on their site:
<http://www.ipfe.org>

15 May 2008

On the International Day of the Family, MEP Marie PANAYOTOPOULOS sponsored a conference entitled "Family-friendly Initiatives and Perspectives presented by the European Alliance for Families." While the competence for family policy is reserved for member nations, the EU can create a framework favorable to families, which will have an influence on the formation of families and on the birthrate. The European Alliance for families has the purpose of sharing best practices from each country on the subject of families. At the moment it seems not to be very active.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/families/index_en.html

9 September 2008

Mme Anna ZÁBORSKÁ, chair of the Committee on Women's rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament, submitted a report "Non-discrimination based on gender and inter-generational solidarity"

which stated, among other things, that it is a question of personal choice for parents to make, whether to stay home to care for children or the elderly or to join the labor force.

If there is no freedom for people to choose, then there is a violation of human rights and discrimination exists.

The work of caring for a child or the elderly by a family member needs recognition, in social rights and pensions, to offer a true free choice.

Nor must a parent be forced to stay at home to provide care because there is no space in a public facility.

This own-initiative report was discussed, amended, and voted on in committee.

MMM Europe was invited to submit a statement on the importance to society of the educational role of parents. In preparation for the vote in Parliamentary plenary session, MMM Europe wrote to each Member of Parliament, urging them to support this resolution.

The resolution was passed in a slightly different form, but the essential ideas were included. Website for the resolution:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=e=TA&reference=P6-TA-2009-0039&language=EN&ring=A6-2008-0492>

24-25 October 2008

A colloquium was organized in preparation for the 60th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, scheduled for New York City on December 10, 2008. This colloquium was held in Bratislava and was organized by Mme Anna ZABORSKA, and supported by Hans-Gert POETTERING president of the European Parliament, Jacques BARROT, vice-president of the European Commission, and Andrej DURKOSKY, mayor of Bratislava.

Speakers used this opportunity to emphasize the importance of articles 3, 16, 25, and 26 of the Declaration, which concern the rights of the family.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

We were able to meet representatives of several international and European associations.

2. European Commission

While the European Commission is preparing a new social agenda, it continues to address the two major challenges of inter-generational solidarity and awareness of the demographic picture in Europe.

25 June 2008

The European Commission sponsored a seminar "Policies for Today's Families: Towards a Framework for Assessing Family Policies in the EU" according to a new emphasis on the family and a desire to understand how various policies impact family life and what conditions would encourage a higher birth rate. Sources of data were presented, as were policy instruments to support families. Experts then discussed how to evaluate family policies.

23 October 2008

Information day, "Social Platform for Research for Families and Family Policy." The objective is to create a social platform that will use a participative approach involving representatives from various groups having an interest in the subject of family policy.

The platform will study the current state of research on families and family policies and will define new research topics in the context of the goals of the Lisbon strategy, sustainable development and cohesion, the demographic challenge, globalization, and citizenship in Europe.

The event brought together potential participants who could work together to gather topics for research on families. MMM Europe gave a brief presentation on its own organization and objectives.

MMM Europe has applied to take part in this platform to represent our members and their needs. http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/events-12_en.html.

We will encourage you to communicate with us the needs and desires of families you represent.

24-25 November 2008

2nd European Demographic Forum, "Better Societies for Families and Older People."

The European Commissioner for employment, social affairs, and equal opportunity, Vladimir Spidla, discussed the recent evolution of policy for families and the elderly as well as the need to strengthen solidarity between generations and to work for mutual respect between the elderly and the young.

Workshops were held on reduction of child poverty and volunteer opportunities for senior citizens, among other topics.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=121&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=events>

3 February 2009

Interview with Artur Payer, of the Directorate General for Education and Culture.

MMM Europe offered to be involved in the elaboration of the New Youth Strategy 2010-2018. The general framework that they are working on has recently been set forth with major objectives and specific action lines.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/644&type=HTML&aged=0&language=FR&guiLanguage=en>

5-6 February 2009

A Colloquium was organized by the Czech presidency and the European Commission entitled "Parental Childcare and Employment Policy- Collision or complementarity" Within the framework of employment policy, the Czech Republic selected as one of its priorities to support families by giving recognition to a parent who chooses to stay home to care for his/her children, in order to give importance to the parental role and to propose this home care as "an alternative to professional life, deserving the respect and the support of the State and of society."

MMM Europe sustained this position by giving priority to the freedom for parents to choose how much time to devote to the education of the children without negative social or economic consequences. Increasing the number of childcare places is clearly necessary but it is not the only solution. The attempt is not to favor one option over another but to offer a real choice to parents.

As discussed during these sessions, the quality of family life is a major concern and needs to be taken into account when European employment policy is formulated, which was the question of this colloquium.

Transcript of conference:

<http://www.mpsv.cz/en/6391>

3. European Economic and Social Committee

29 October 2008

The Conference, "European Solidarity—our challenge for tomorrow" explored the need to reconstitute harmony between individuals, families and institutions. There is need to recognize the contribution of the elderly, need for better reconciliation of family life and work and to ensure that youth and children are considered and feel a part.

http://eesc.europa.eu/index_en.asp

Contacts with other Associations

3 June 2008

The Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Union (COFACE) celebrated its 50th anniversary with a conference. Numerous EU officials and experts congratulated COFACE and discussed the development of family policy, with emphasis on the continuing need for better reconciliation of professional and family life, for quality care of children especially in after school hours, and quality care for the elderly.

<http://www.coface-eu.org>

16 October 2008

The European Federation of Women working at Home (FEFAF) organized a conference on "Demographic and Aging Change" at the European Parliament. The traditional home care of dependents was given by women, but now, unless they themselves want to become dependent in their old age, these women need to enter the formal work force in order to earn a pension. Active aging, family solidarity, and forms of elder care were among subjects discussed.

<http://www.fefaf.be>

13 November 2008

"Generations for Dialogue and Peace" was the subject of a conference sponsored by the European Forum of Muslim Women and by the European Parliament.

Many times Islam is viewed negatively, but negative perceptions must be changed through respectful dialogue in which there is mutual influence between Europeans and Muslims. People see the headscarf first before they see the face. Muslim women must change this by taking part in the community, in business, and political life. <http://www.efomw.eu>

Other groups are valuable partners with whom we exchange information, and with whom we unite for action to lobby European policy-makers. These groups include New Women for Europe (NWFE) <http://www.newwomenforeurope.org>

Association for New Femininity in Europe (ANFE), and European Forum for Women.

The European Forum for Women is a very dynamic European observatory on women, the family, and work. We collaborate with them in exchanging information and contacts.

<http://forumeufemmes.typepad.com/forumeufemmes/>

Recent and Forthcoming events

16 JUNE 2009

Training and family interventions: scientific day

Quebec, Canada

Sherbrooke University

This Scientific day precedes the 56th **International Conference of the International Commission on couple and family relations (ICCFR)** to be held at Sherbrooke University from 17th to 19th June 2009 on the theme:

"Training education and support to professionals and all those who work and with families"

The annual international Conference of ICCFR is held in high repute and as each year, should attract participants coming from many countries and thus, also gather our lecturers from Quebec.

This day is organised in co-operation with:

ICCFR
CIRCF

International Commission On Couple
and Family Relations

SHERBROOKE UNIVERSITY
University of Sherbrooke

NAFO
North American Family Organization



ICCFR

International Commission on Couple and Family Relations

<http://www.iccfr.org/en/index.php>

The Commission was created in 1953 by the International Union of Family Organisations (forerunner of the World Family organisation). Its annual international conferences are devoted to the implementation of a innovative and modern contribution to the issues and challenges to which couples and families are confronted worldwide. Members coming from all the continents represent organizations and individuals working in the frame of couple and family consultations and therapy, education to relation, social services, mediation, psychology or psychiatry, research and social and family policies, family courts and justice as well as family institutions. This evolution of the Commission led to the creation of a forum devoted to an innovative multidisciplinary dialogue on couple and family relations and assistance services provided by professionals.

NAFO

The North American Family Organisation

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

The mission of the North American Family Organisation is to share, distribute and develop a corpus of knowledge related to the family, through the setting up of many international networks, composed themselves of various bodies.

There is particular concern of the recognition of the family as fundamental in society and place for the transmission of values. NAFO is a regional Family corporation covering the territories of Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Members of the Scientific Committee:

Benoît Clotteau, Director of the Institute for the development of community assistance to children and families, Psycho-education, couple and family therapist and psycho-dramatist.

Francine Cyr, Ph.D in Psychology and Lecturer at the University of Montreal.

Serge J. Larivée, Ph.D in Education and Lecturer at the University of Montreal.

Justin Lévesque, Professional social worker (TSP) and family mediator.

Robert Pauzé, Ph.D in Psychology, Department of Psycho-education, Sherbrooke University.

Special Adviser : **Michel Lemay**, Psychiatrist at Sainte Justine Hospital.

FURTHER INFORMATION: http://www.iccfr.org/documents/Quebec_Scientific_Day_English.pdf

12 - 17 JULY 2009

Linking Global Foster Care

Dublin/ Ireland

An excellent training programme will be provided and after a hard days work attending plenary sessions and workshops the social activities will kick in. Any one who has previously attended an International conference hosted by IFCA can vouch for a successful and most enjoyable conference in 2009.

CONTACT: lisa@conferencepartners.ie
or therese@conferencepartners.ie
<http://www.ifco2009.ie>

4 AUGUST 2009

Law Students' Society Lecture: *Family Violence*

Melbourne

Presenter: Ms Catherine Lamble, Magistrate

Ms Catherine Lamble is the Supervising Magistrate for the family violence and family law jurisdiction in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria. Catherine has many years of involvement in the family violence jurisdiction. In 2008, she led the Court's implementation of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008. Between 2005 and 2007, she was the lead Magistrate at one of Victoria's first specialist 'family violence courts' at Heidelberg Magistrates' Court. Catherine has been a Magistrate for 13 years. Previously she has worked for the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Victoria Legal Aid and a variety of tribunals.

10 - 14 AUGUST 2009

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, pre-sessional working group

New York, USA

23 - 26 AUGUST 2009

5th World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights: Children Caught in Conflict

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

World Trade and Convention Centre

Streams:

- Children's Rights and Family Conflict
- Child Protection
- Responding to Difference
- Children of War

PROVISIONAL PROGRAM:

http://www.lawrights.asn.au/images/stories/World_Congress_Provisional_Program.pdf

24 - 26 AUGUST 2009

Survival Skills for Healthy Families

Melbourne, Australia

Imagine families being able to take a course together to learn the principles and skills of healthy family living. In fact, this is not a new concept; family wellness courses have been developed in America over the last 30 years, and are now used in many countries outside the USA. Since 1980 more than half a million families worldwide have benefitted from these programs.

Survival Skills for Healthy Families is a twelve-hour program, delivered over six sessions. The whole family will learn relationship skills, whilst putting parents firmly in charge of the family.

- Survival Skills for Health Families involves all members of the family, from eight year olds to 80!
- The program also caters for single parent and step families.
- The program has been honed over three decades with families from the San Francisco Bay area; it was also used in church and community settings across a broad range of social levels.

The family wellness programs transfer very easily into the Australian culture.

The Survival Skills for Healthy Families Program will teach people:

- Practical, lifelong skills, to strengthen, support and empower families.
- Tools to help manage the family in a healthy way.
- Steps to resolve conflict.
- Skills to solve problems.
- Ways to encourage and support one another.
- Steps for effective discipline.
- How to bring out the best in each other.
- How to build on the strengths of your family.
- Alternatives to physical punishment.
- Skills to build self esteem and self confidence, in both parents and children.
- Effective communication skills.

Family Wellness Instructor Training

FURTHER INFORMATION: www.anglicare.org.au/our-services/relationship-education/family-wellness

07 - 10 SEPTEMBER 2009

Children and the Law: International approaches to children and their vulnerabilities

Prato, Tuscany

The rights and best interests of children in the 21st Century are challenged by new and emerging social concerns. These include: the plight of child refugees, children escaping war and trauma, new forms of child victimization such as children as soldiers, children entering the criminal justice system, the pervasiveness of child sexual abuse, and children harmed by maltreatment and family breakdown. These children require more effective responses from governments and national systems responsible for their care and protection.

This international conference will bring together practitioners, policy contributors, advocates and researchers from welfare, criminology, law, policing, health and mental health. It will examine the vulnerabilities of children and young people and how the systems responding to those at risk of harm must be reshaped to better protect their rights and best interests.

CONTACT: social.work@med.monash.edu.au
<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/socialwork/conference09/>

14 SEPTEMBER - 2 OCTOBER 2009

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

Geneva

21 - 26 SEPTEMBER 2009

14th International Conference on Violence, Abuse and Trauma

San Diego/ California

This year's theme:

Promoting Peace in the Home, Your Community, and the World:

Linking Practice, Research, and Policy Across the Lifespan

Conference Tracks:

Children Exposed to Violence, Child Maltreatment Victims, Adult Survivors of Child Mal-treatment, Intimate Partner Violence Victims, Intimate Partner Violence Offenders, Trauma and Its Effect on Military Personnel and Their Families, Other Trauma, Sexual Assault Victims, Sexual Assault Offenders, Elder Abuse and Vulnerable Populations, Legal Issues and Criminal Justice, Healthcare, At Risk Youth Note special themes of Cultural Diversity as well as Substance Abuse

CONTACT: ivatconf@alliant.edu

<http://www.ivatcenters.org/Conferences/CallforSubmissions11-7-08.pdf>

1-3 OCTOBER 2009

Family Violence

Brisbane, Australia

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration is pleased to present a conference on
Family and Domestic Violence

The conference seeks to address a broad range of issues confronting those who are involved in responding to domestic and family violence, including:

- Recent developments and best practice in the area family violence at both state and federal level, and internationally, including the National Council's Report: Time for Action: 2009-2021
- Opportunities and challenges of establishing a more collaborative and integrated responses to family violence across jurisdictions, including police, community services, parental rights groups and others.
- Recent experience with the Victorian domestic violence legislation from the perspective of practitioners, medical professionals, community services and others.
- Best practice and recent experience where family violence is alleged in parenting disputes, including in the Family Court and Family Relationship Centres.
- The use and limitations of alternative dispute resolution in relation to family violence.
- Judicial ethics in domestic violence, including the implications of a more collaborative or participatory judicial role for judicial officers.
- Education in relation to family violence, including for the judiciary, perpetrators and community.
- Responding to family violence in indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- The impact of domestic violence on children, including family homicide.
- Sharing information between courts and tribunals
- Best practice in violence intervention programs for offenders and effective support for victims.

The conference organisers welcome the submission of abstracts of papers for consideration for presentation at the conference.

Submission of abstracts of up to 250 words and panel proposals should be accompanied by a proposed title of the presentation and the names, contact details and position of the presenter(s). Early expressions of interest and queries in relation to possible topics and the submission of abstracts and panel proposals are welcome.

Abstracts should be submitted by email to: ajja@law.monash.edu.au

Closing date for abstracts: Friday 17 July 2009

Those submitting abstracts or panel proposals will be advised whether their paper/panel has been accepted as soon as possible. Those presenting papers will be required to register for the conference.

Details as to registration will follow.

12 - 16 OCTOBER 2009

Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, eleventh session

Geneva

23 - 24 OCTOBER 2009

YPN and "Junges Forum" Colloquium 2009: Consumer - Household - Family"

IFHE Office - Bonn, Germany

FURTHER INFORMATION: www.ifhe.org

CALL FOR PAPERS

Young Professional Network (YPN) of the International Federation for Home Economics
and

JUNGES FORUM an advisory board of the German Association for Home Economics organise in collaboration a

Colloquium

Is to be held October 23rd and 24th 2009 in Bonn/Germany

The Young Professionals Network (YPN) is a council committee of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) consisting of young members of the Federation. The JUNGES FORUM (JF) is an advisory board of the German Association for Home Economics (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hauswirtschaft (dgh) e.V.) organising annual colloquia for several years. On the occasion of the 30th birthday of the German section of IFHE the 17th colloquium 2009 is organised in collaboration. Together YPN and JF represent young academics and practitioners from all fields related to home economics or household related sciences including young experts and students in home economics education, food science, consumer economics, consumer affairs, social economics, institutional and hospitality management amongst others. With this »Call for Papers« we would like to invite you to submit a paper to the 17th Colloquium. The meeting will be held in Bonn/Germany at the General Secretariat of the IFHE (Kaiser-Friedrich-Strasse 13) on October 23rd and 24th 2009.

The topic of this year's conference is: **Consumer - Household - Family**

The empowerment and wellbeing of individual consumers and families are crucial factors in home economics. Wellbeing, as an outcome of everyday practices, is created in the living environment of individuals. The implications of capacities and competences of individuals and families impact far reaching levels in local or global (glocal) communities. Therefore, sustainable lifestyles in homes and households are basics to a sustainable development on a global level. Social, economic and environmental sustainability in everyday household processes are profound.

Some distinct factors influence the wellbeing of consumers so that home economics includes numerous disciplines. Because phenomena and challenges of everyday life are not typically onedimensional, a coalescing of inter and transdisciplinary knowledge is essential. Home economics emphasizes four dimensions or areas of practice: an academic area, a curriculum area, a dimension to influence and develop policy and the area of everyday life. Consequently home economics might include: food, nutrition and health; textiles and clothing; shelter and housing; consumerism and consumer science; household management; design and technology; food science and hospitality; human development and family studies; education and community services. This disciplinary diversity combined with the aim of achieving a sustainable lifestyle means that home economics can influence all sectors of society by intervening and transforming political, social, cultural, ecological, economic and technological systems, at glocal levels.

Call for Papers«

Practitioners, students, young researchers and those who are interested are asked to contribute to this conference.

Research projects, practical ideas or concepts that are related to the topic of this conference can be submitted.

Abstracts can be related to currently running or completed projects.

Papers should be sent via **Email**, to:

jungesforum@dghev.de until **May 31st 2009**.

We expect a maximum of one page abstract (max. 400 words) with indication of the title and the author. Selected papers are presented at the colloquium followed by discussion and will be published in the „Jahrbuch Junge Haushaltswissenschaft 2009 [Yearbook Young Home Economics 2009]. Please have in mind that you describe your project in particular, illustrate your methods and discuss your results. Your abstract should keep this order as well.

Format requirements: file format .doc, .txt, or .odt; paper size DIN A4; font size 12pt; line spacing 1.5; margins 2,5 cm. We will inform presenters of their acceptance until July 15th 2009.

The presentations are to be held at the 17th Colloquium of JUNGES FORUM on October 23rd and 24th 2009 at the General Secretariat of the International Federation for Home Economics, Kaiser-Friedrich-Strasse 13, Bonn/Germany.

The written essay of around 10 pages for the yearbook is due 30th November 2009. For more information and questions please do not hesitate and contact Stefan Wahlen (jungesforum@dghev.de).

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HOME ECONOMICS:

is an International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO) in consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe

**IFHE YOUNG
PROFESSIONALS
NETWORK
YPN**

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