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Dear Readers of 'Families International',

The Vienna NGO Committee on the Family has focused over the last three years, amongst other issues, on various aspects of 'Families Online', by organising three different International Forums, at the United Nations, Vienna International Centre.

The first was entitled: 'Internet Use & Domestic Communication Cultures' with Dr. Corinna Peil, from the University of Salzburg, to observe the United Nations International Day of Families in 2017. The proceedings of that International Forum, are included in 'Families International' (FI) No. 102. The proceedings of a further International Forum, held a year later, in 2018, with Philip Sinner, M.A., also from the University of Salzburg, entitled: 'Socially Disadvantaged Families in a Rich Country – Digital Media Usage and Mediation Practices' are included in FI. No.108. The proceedings of the final International Forum of the trilogy, dealing with 'Families Online', entitled 'Child & Youth Media Protection From the Perspective of Parents' with Christin Kohler, M.A., based on her masters research, at the University of Salzburg, are included in this issue.

Also included, is a text from UNICEF from 2019, related to the contents of the above trilogy, and dealing with the Participation of Children Online. Further included are texts from member organisations of the Committee on the Family: The International Federation for Family Development, Make Mothers Matter, and ZONTA International, which was founded one hundred years ago this year.

Sincerely,

Peter Crowley Ph.D.

Editor

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From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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UNITED NATIONS
VIENNA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Monday November 4th 2019

INTERNATIONAL FORUM

13.00 – 15.00
[Including Discussion with Presenter & Participants]

Programme

'Child & Youth Media Protection From the Perspective of Parents'

Christin Kohler, M.A.

Christin Kohler, M.A. studied Communication Science at the University of Bamberg (B.A.) in Germany and at the University of Salzburg (M.A.) in Austria. During her studies, Christin continuously dealt with the topic of children and media, as well as media use in families. The research focus of her master thesis was on child and youth media protection, from the perspective of parents. The presentation is based on the research and the results of the master thesis.

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Child and Youth Media Protection from the Perspective of Parents

Christin Kohler M.A.

1. Introduction and Aim of the Research

Children and young people grow up in a mediatized society. They actively select media and use them for their needs. This brings both, opportunities and risks for adolescents and creates new challenges for youth media protection, in which parents play a central role. Therefore, the aim of the research was to figure out the parental perspective on youth media protection.
This text reports on research done within a master thesis at the University of Salzburg. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the research, including the theoretical framework, the methodical approach, the key results of the research and possible support offers for parents. Another purpose of this text is to give recommendations for sources of information. The following research questions were developed in order to learn about the parents' point of view, and their wishes and expectations, with regard to the protection of minors from harmful media, as well as to learn more about the parents' (media) education strategies.

What wishes and expectations do parents have of child and youth media protection?

a) What fears and problems do parents have with regard to their children's media use?
b) What issues do parents need support on?

What (media) education strategies do parents use?

a) What do parents understand by the term media education?
b) What role does one's own media competence play in media education?

2. Theoretical Framework

In order to answer the research questions, it is necessary to substantiate the research object with theoretical concepts. Firstly, media socialisation, since it has an influence on the personality development of children and adolescents. "The socialization of an adolescent is a process that takes place in different social contexts in which an individual is involved." (PausHasebrink 2017b: 107) The media are a central instance of socialization, as they can help to develop one's own identity and provide orientation. Media content can help to plan one's own life, as it shows a wide variety of scenarios (cf. Hurrelmann/ Quenzel 2016: 198). Also, Havighursts (1972) concept of developmental tasks plays an important role in the theoretical framework. "Developmental tasks describe the physical, psychological and social demands and expectations typical of the various phases of a person's life that the social environment places on individuals in different age groups and/or arise from the physical and psychological dynamics of personal development." (Hurrelmann/Quenzel 2016: 24)
Havighurst (1982; 1953) established a connection between developmental tasks and education. In every phase of life, people are assigned certain tasks. (cf. Baacke 1999: 168) The tasks mentioned by Havighurst are related to three components, namely individual performance, socio-cultural development norms and individual goals in individual areas of life (cf. Paus-Hasebrink/Hasebrink/Schmidt 2011: 21).
But Havighurst's concept is no longer up to date in relation to the current mediatised world. Because the concept was developed at a time when the media were not a permanent part of society. This can be seen from the fact that there is no life task related to media (cf. Krotz 2013: 43). Moreover, today's image of man has changed compared to the past, there are very

complex development processes that have to be included. Various factors contribute to the formation of identity (cf. Krotz 2013:44).
The "[...] concept of developmental and life tasks developed by Paus-Hasebrink (2010) connects the individual and the environment, relates cultural requirements to individual performance and emphasises the ability of individuals to act". (Pause-Hasebrink 2017a: 31) Media are selected according to one's own needs and used to cope with one's own developmental tasks. Achieving media competence can be seen as a development task in today's mediatised world (cf. Süss et al. 2018: 19). Paus-Hasebrink (2017a: 21) does not take the understanding of media as agents of socialisation sufficiently seriously, since media influence all contexts of socialisation. Media are integrated into our everyday life and cannot be imagined without them (cf. Paus-Hasebrink 2017a: 21). "Development and life tasks form the basis for the respective communicative practices of children, young people and parents who use them to achieve their goals in everyday life. (Paus-Hasebrink 2017a: 33) The selection of media and media offerings is largely determined by developmental and life tasks, since media are dealt with in this context. Children and adolescents choose media and media offerings themselves that help them to cope with these tasks (cf. ibid.).
Media education and media competence are further theoretical building blocks. Media education is a part of media pedagogics. One aim of media education is to impart media competence. Media competence is in turn a central component for the implementation of contemporary child and youth media protection.

3. Methodical Approach

To answer the research questions, two methodological steps have been carried out. The first methodological step is the use of screening questionnaires. The screening questionnaires were used to collect parental data on child and youth media protection, media equipment and media use in families. For the second methodological step, namely the conduct of qualitative guideline interviews with one parent, the interview partners were selected with the help of the data from the screening questionnaire.
The questionnaires are a standardized research instrument. The interviewees represent the number of cases in the survey. These are examined for certain characteristics defined before the survey is carried out (cf. Scheufele/Engelmann 2009: 27). The aim of the quantitative and scientific survey is to discover information on media equipment in families as well as on children's use of media. In addition, the attitudes of parents, to the protection of children and young people, with regard to media and technical measures for the protection of minors are also surveyed. Another aim of the scientific data collection is to find suitable interview partners for the parent interviews, which are carried out as a second methodological step. The second methodological step, i.e. the conduct of guided interviews with one parent, is used because the interview situation is open and the parents' perspective on the various subject areas can be more effective, than in a questionnaire survey or standardized scientific interviews. In addition, in the openly designed interview situation, the interviewees can be better addressed and the reaction to the situation can be more appropriate. More detailed information can also be collected, as it is possible to pose questions (cf. Flick 2016: 23).
Structured guideline interviews were conducted on the topic of child and youth media protection, as well as on media handling in the family, with one parent each. The problemoriented interview (Witzel: 1985) was selected for the implementation, in which biographical data, with regard to a specific problem, or problem area, is addressed with the help of a guideline (cf. Flick 2016: 210). The collection of data for this study is very well suited to the querying of snapshots, as they can be used to describe everyday routines and present subjective views (cf. Flick 2016: 183).

4. Collection and analysis of data

Data collection has proved to be particularly difficult as not many people are willing to have a personal conversation. However, for the scientific survey, seven interviewees were found, namely the mother of the families. The interview took place at the families' homes, so that they could be in their familiar surroundings and the interview situation would be easier for them. The most important data collection steps and data analysis steps are listed below.

Steps of data collection

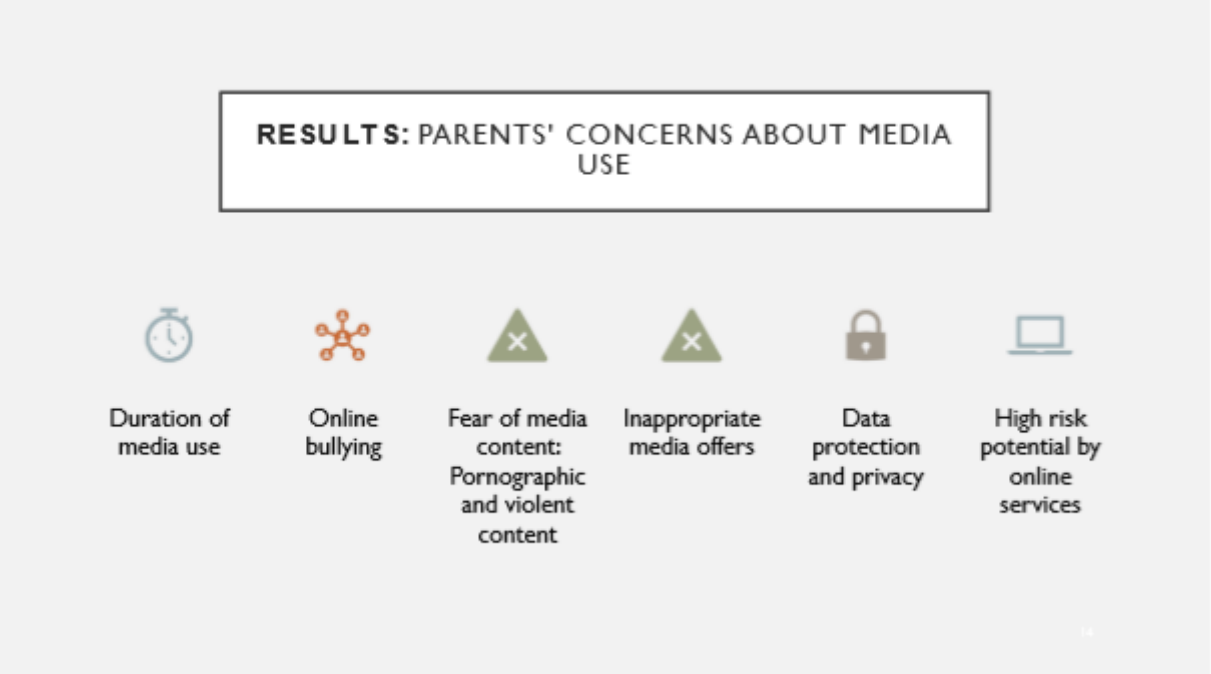
• Screening questionnaires: Distribution of questionnaires across kindergartens and after-school care centres in the area of Franconia, in southern Germany
• Profile sampling is used as the sampling strategy (Reinders 2005: 143f.; Reinders 2016: 126). In profile sampling, suitable persons are selected on the basis of data already collected (cf. Petrucci/Wirtz 2007: n.page). First a survey with scientific questionnaires was carried out and thus data were obtained that are used for profile sampling.
• Conducting guided interviews with one parent of the family to find out their attitudes, wishes and expectations regarding youth media protection and to work out their media education strategies

Process of data analysis

• Evaluation of screening questionnaires with SPSS
• Transcription of the seven interviews and strict anonymization of all data
• Computer-assisted (software MAXQDA) coding of all material with a coding scheme using thematic coding
• Focused analysis across all families
• Contextual analysis of the families
• Analysis of the media education strategies

5. General results of the research

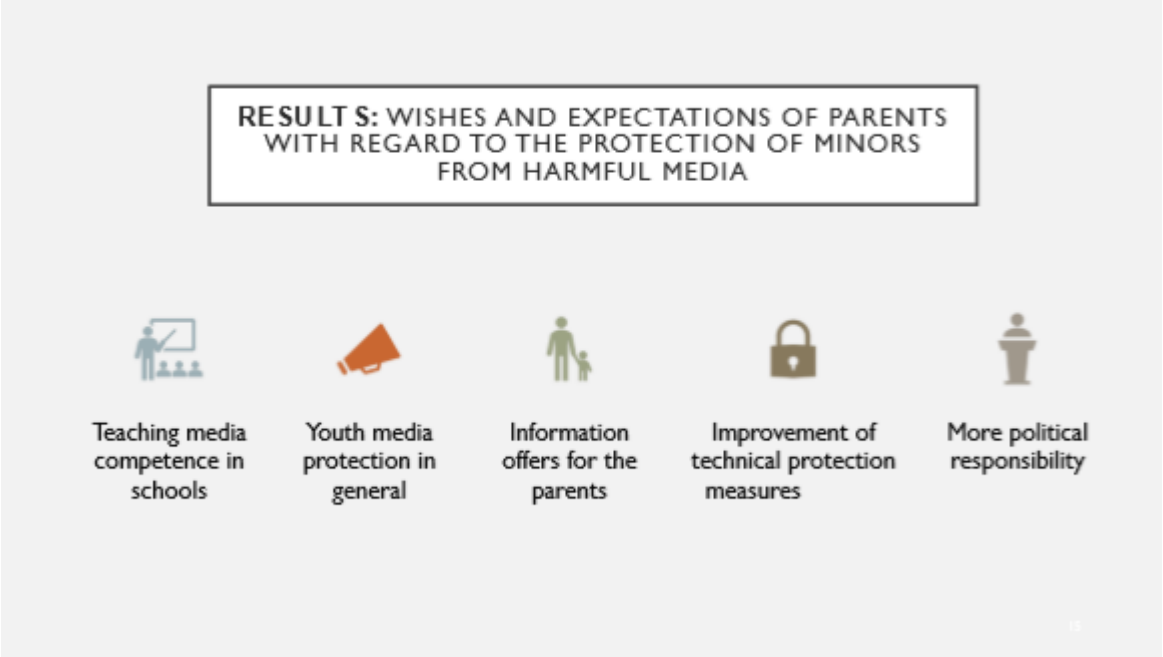
This is just a short overview of the results of the research. Media plays an important role within families, and media sharing is also very important for most families. Both parents and children attach great importance to media, with mothers agreeing that the importance of media for children is much greater than for themselves. Media use is particularly important for children of primary school age and older. All families are very well equipped with media. Books play an important role in sharing media with families, especially with younger children. But the most commonly used medium is television, because it applies to all age groups. Also, streaming offers are very popular, as content can be specifically selected, and it is easier to find a movie or show that the whole family is interested in. The mothers report that with increasing age of their children, a self-determined handling of media is demanded. In addition, it should not be forgotten that controlling media use, becomes more difficult with age and also is impossible with mobile media.
Media are also important, for the mothers surveyed, in everyday life. It can be said, that most mothers attribute competencies to themselves in relation to classical media. The mothers also have basic skills in computers and the Internet, but attribute little or no competence to themselves, when it comes to social web services, which is why they are unable to support their children optimally in this respect.



Parents also have concerns and problems with their children's use of the media.
They are most intensively concerned with the following topics:

- Duration of media use of their children.
- Online bullying (especially WhatsApp and Social Web offers).
- Fear of media content: Pornographic, violent content (also mentioned: political extremism).
- Inappropriate media offers.
- Data protection and privacy.
- High risk potential by online services in general.

The problems mentioned above are accompanied by the wishes and expectations of parents, with regard to the protection of minors from harmful media. First, the general opinion on child and youth media protection was asked, and then the wishes and expectations of the parents were discussed in detail. The knowledge level among mothers is very different when it comes to their attitudes towards child and youth media protection.
In general, it is very well accepted, even if some interview partners didn't know much about it. Age recommendations and age restrictions are best known in all families. Technical protection options are known, but there is uncertainty regarding settings and effectiveness. Also, some mothers mentioned that they think the measures for online content are inadequate. When it comes to improvements and wishes for the protection of minors from harmful media, parents have concrete expectations and make their own suggestions.

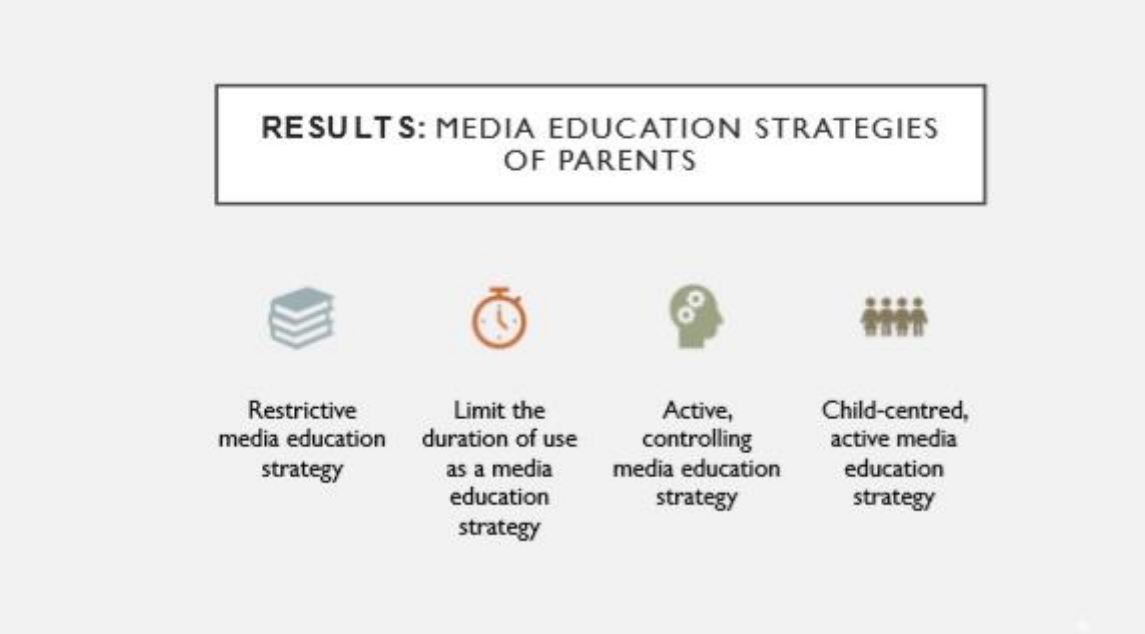


The most frequently required aspects are:
• Teaching media competence in schools.
• Significant strengthening of protection of minors especially related to online offers.
• Information offers for the parents.
• Improvement of technical protection measures.
• More political responsibility.

Without parents, the protection of minors from harmful media cannot succeed, as they ideally accompany their children with their media use in everyday life. In addition, only parents can implement some instruments for the protection of minors from harmful media. Parents give their children orientation and decide which media and media offers their children may use, at least up to a certain age of the children. It is therefore important to consider and implement their expectations and wishes with regard to the protection of minors from harmful media. In particular, the teaching of media literacy in schools seems to be a major concern for all respondents that should not be ignored. Parents do not expect them to be relieved of media education, but they would like support from educational institutions.

6. Media education strategies

The parents own media competence has an effect on media education and the teaching of media competence. If parents do not use media services themselves and do not concern themselves with them, they reach their limits in media education. Parents deal very differently with their children's use of the media and apply different strategies. These in turn are related to their own media use and media literacy. Knop et al (2015) formulated various media education strategies for the use of mobile media offerings. Valkenburg et al. (2013) also analysed various media education strategies of parents, which related them to the overall use of media. The media education strategies described in the following are based on the results of the two studies and refer to the overall media education of families. When assigning the families to different strategies, the activity level of the mothers or parents was considered, as well as whether, and to what extent, media education is oriented to the needs of the children (cf. Knop et al. 2015: 11). After evaluation of the guideline interviews, four media education strategies could be discerned, which will now be briefly explained.



Restrictive media education strategy

In one family, the use of media by children was severely restricted. The established rules are consistently implemented, for example by banning the use of individual media. The aim is to protect the children from unsuitable media offers and too long a period of use. However, the mother does not orientate herself on the needs of her children but implements the restrictions that she considers to be right. The needs of their children should be given greater prominence so that children can take advantage of opportunities, offered by the media. Furthermore, this strategy will lead to major problems as the children grow older, as they will be able to see at school, at the latest, which media other children are using.

Limit the duration of use as a media education strategy

This strategy of media education refers to the exclusive control of the period of use. This strategy is applied by two families. However, there are no clear rules on media use. Parents only intervene when they think the period of use is too long and they consider it necessary. Also, the children are not allowed to use every offer e.g. like social web offers, but the parents don't really know what their children are using. In addition, there is hardly any talk about the media and the children are relatively unaccompanied in their use of the media.

Active, controlling media education strategy

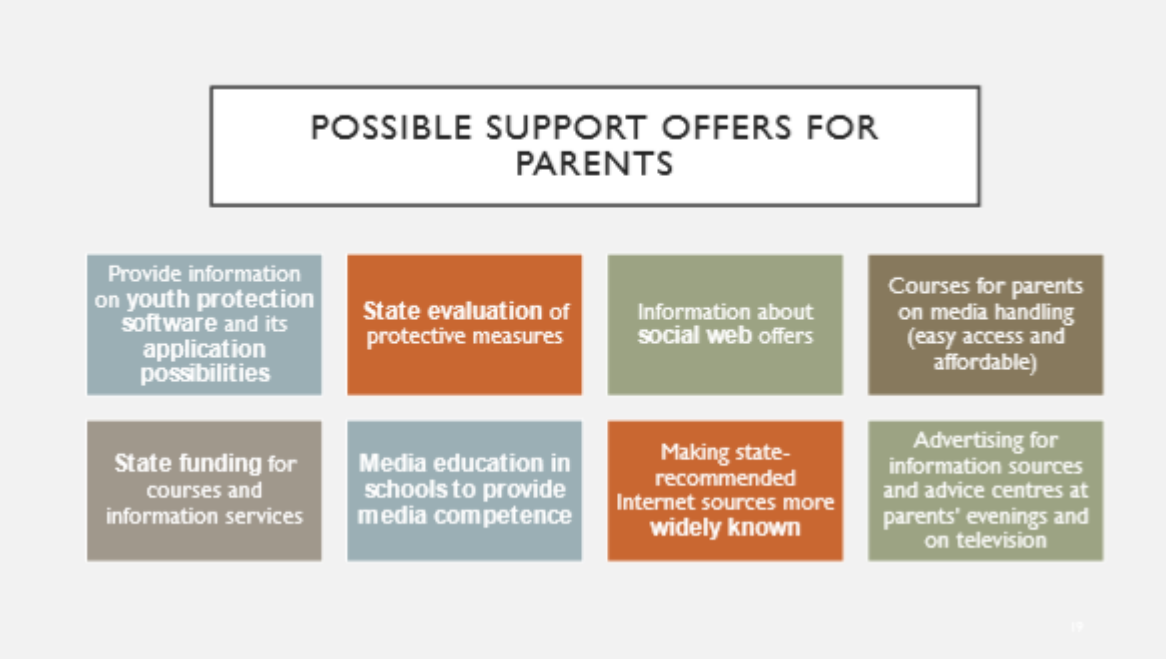
This strategy can be observed in one family. Especially the mother is worried about media education. She severely restricts media use, establishes clear rules and talks about it with her children. On the one hand, she wants her children to learn media skills and, on the other hand, she does not want them to make use of many media services, and is therefore in a dilemma. She talks a lot with her children about media content, and wants their children to use media sensibly. At the same time, however, they should not use many media offerings, so that they are not endangered by problematic content. At present the children are still very young, which is why this educational strategy can be implemented. With increasing age, however, it is almost impossible to avoid adolescents coming into contact with unsuitable content, or encountering other difficulties, when using the media. The educational strategy of the family fits into the picture shown by the results of Helsper et al. (2013: 5) in relation to Germany.

Although the children are exposed to low risks, media use is severely restricted because the parents are very worried. Parents, however, should rather teach their children competent handling and accompany their children, so that they can make use of the opportunities offered by the media (cf. Helsper et al. 2013: 6).

Child-centred, active media education strategy

Three of the families apply this strategy. In the families, media education is mainly based on communication between the parents and children. One family also has clear rules on the duration of media use. But these are also actively communicated. The other two families also have rules, but they are not so precisely defined. With these families, it becomes clear that communication plays an important role. Parents try to explain to their children why they are not yet allowed to use some media services. In addition, it is important in families, that children learn how to use the media competently. It also becomes clear, that parents are aware of how important media are for children, and how important they are, for their social relationships today. Talking about media and media content is enormously important in all three families. At the same time, children are allowed to use media, according to their age. When sharing media in these families, the focus is on the interest of the children. For example, films or shows that children like, and parents think are suitable, are selected together.

7. Possible support offers



The research showed that there are problems that arise with the media use of children and adolescents. The parents want more support in media education for their children, and have a certain expectation of the protection of children and young people in the media. In addition, the interviewees expressed some wishes and suggestions regarding the protection of minors in the media. The first point that is required, is to provide information on youth protection software and its applications possibilities. The results show that parents are aware of the fact that they

have technical possibilities to protect their children, but it is difficult to know which software is best for the required use and how to use it correctly. The parents also wish, that there would be state evaluation of protective measures, so that they can always be adapted to new media offers and technologies. Since the greatest fears of parents relate to social web offers, and parents, are at the same time, least familiar with these, there is a considerable need for information, on how to use social web offers, as well as how to deal with its dangers, and the best possible handling of it. One possibility would be to offer courses for parents on media handling. The parents should have easy access and be affordable or free of charge. So, there should be government funding for courses, and also other information services. Another aspect that is enormously important for the parents, is the mediation of media education in educational institutions. Media education in schools can provide media competence, which is why parents consider this particularly important.
It would also be significant to make state-recommended Internet sources more widely known, since the Interview partners didn't know about these sources, and were also very sceptical about trustworthy information. The sources could also be presented, for example, at parents' evenings or information events. Advertising for these pages, for example, on television, would also be useful, so that parents, who do not go to parents' evenings, can also see these offers. Some of these recommendations will be mentioned below.

8. Recommendations

The research should draw attention and raise awareness of the topic of child and youth media protection and also give some recommendations for further readings and practical tips how to deal with the use of media by children. The topic is not only addressed to academia but also to different stakeholders in politics, civil society and concerns our entire society. To obtain further information about youth media protection please see http://www.jugendschutz.net/en/ and https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu. A big part of children's media use is the use of apps. On this page you can find monitoring and evaluation of child-related apps with regard to youth, data and consumer protection risks, as well as consumer information https://www.app-geprüft.net. Also, parents can use the **Google Family Link App** to set up a Google account and smartphone for kids under the age of 13. The app shows how much time the child has spent with each app. It is also possible to determine, which apps the child is allowed to use, or download, and which are not. However, as children grow older, they are entitled to a certain degree of freedom and privacy. This should definitely be taken into account.

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From UNICEF

Is there a ladder of children's online participation?
Findings from three Global Kids Online countries

Sonia Livingstone, Daniel Kardefelt-Winther, Petar Kanchev, Patricio Cabello, Magdalena Claro, Patrick Burton, and Joanne Phyfer[i]

WHAT DOES SOCIETY HOPE CHILDREN DO ONLINE?

There is broad agreement that internet access is important for children and provides them with many opportunities. Yet crucial questions remain about what we hope children will do online and if the opportunities provided are translating into clear benefits. What do children actually need to be able to benefit from the opportunities that the internet brings?[1] Is there a gap between expectations and reality? The answers to these questions matter to:

-) Governments striving to provide connectivity for families in homes, schools and communities;
-) Parents and educators who must overcome problems of cost, risk, or lack of skill, so that children may benefit from online opportunities;
-) Child rights advocates and practitioners who call for resources to empower and protect children online[2];
-) Children themselves, many of whom want to take advantage of online opportunities for personal benefit.[3]

METHODOLOGY

-) The Global Kids Online network has developed a research toolkit to expand the evidence base in a growing number of countries on children's internet access and use, opportunities and skills, risks and safety.[4] In this research brief, we draw on findings from Bulgaria,[5] Chile[6] and South Africa.[7]

These countries have been selected on the grounds of maximizing cross-national difference, given the exploratory nature of this analysis and the fact that the likely extent of and explanation for similarities and differences are yet to be fully understood.[8] Although the countries are very different, the measures used are cross-nationally comparative, revealing cultural factors that shape children's digital participation.[9]
Based on measures of learning, creativity, community and civic participation, relationships, entertainment and personal benefits, the Global Kids Online survey asked children whether they had undertaken a series of activities online in the past month (see Appendix for question wording).

The coloured cells in the country tables that follow suggest 'steps' on the ladder of online participation. In summary, these steps show that:
-) 9-11-year-olds do just a few of the available activities;
-) 12-14-year-olds do rather more activities;
-) Older teens do the most, including some of the more advanced civic and creative activities.

Each country table shows:
i. The percentage of children in each country who do each activity at least weekly, in rank order of frequency;
ii. The frequency with which children in three age groups do these activities, recognizing that societies may have different expectations of children's online activities depending on their age;

iii. The activities practised by upwards of around half the children in each age group (in colour).

FINDINGS FROM BULGARIA

What do Bulgarian children do online?

-) Most child internet users in Bulgaria engage in a mix of mass entertainment and communicative activities.

-) Older children tend to engage to a greater extent in activities such as talking to distant family or friends, posting online content, and doing schoolwork.

-) It is only really the older adolescents who pursue a range of civic and informational interests.

-) Few, of any age, use the internet for civic purposes or to create their own content

i. The authors are members of the Global Kids Online network and thank its members for their collaboration on the project. See www.globalkidsonline.net for further information. We also thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments on an earlier version.

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Table 1 Bulgarian children's online participation

Online activities practised at least weekly	Age group (N=1000)			
	9-11	12-14	15-17	ALL
Involved in campaign or protest	2	4	6	4
Discussed politics with others	3	4	12	6
Created blog, story or website	5	8	10	2
Looked for health information	5	9	21	11
Searched for resources about their neighbourhood	7	14	19	13
Created video or music	9	15	20	14
Talked to people who are different	9	21	35	21
Looked for news online	10	27	51	28
Used website for interests or hobbies	13	31	47	29
Looked for work or study opportunities	14	32	45	29
Used the internet for schoolwork	40	56	58	50
Talked to distant family or friends	41	58	60	52
Posted photos or comments online	33	64	73	55
Learned by searching online	50	74	86	68
Played online games	78	76	65	73
Used social networking sites	49	82	94	73
Listened to music	59	83	87	75
Watched video clips	83	91	96	89

Note: Percentage of children who do each activity at least weekly, by age, ranked by frequency. The coloured cells mark the activities practised by roughly half the age group or more.

Relating Bulgarian children's online participation to potential benefits:

-) The Bulgarian education system lacks a structured approach to developing children's digital and media literacy, which restricts their use of the internet for school purposes (only around 50% of all children use internet for schoolwork). This might hamper their skills development, which in the long run could make it more difficult to engage in advanced online activities and limit children's opportunity to benefit.

-) There may be a lack of incentive and opportunities for Bulgarian children to engage in high-quality online content creation (55% posted photos or comments online, but only 14% created their own video/music; 7% created a blog/website), possibly impeding the development of skills needed for creative and personal expression.

-) Very few Bulgarian children engage in civic participation activities online, indicating that they do not benefit from the potential of the internet to facilitate children's civic participation.

FINDINGS FROM CHILE

What do Chilean children do online?

-) As in Bulgaria (and South Africa, see later), most Chilean child internet users, even the youngest, engage in entertainment and communication activities online but, unlike Bulgarian children they also frequently use the internet for schoolwork.
-) Older Chilean children tend to play games a bit less than younger children, but engage more in a greater variety of social activities, such as using social network sites, talking to distant family or friends and instant messaging.
-) Relatively few of the youngest Chilean children visit social networking sites regularly.
-) Looking for news online is the only civic activity done by most teens. In younger age groups less than one third of the children report doing this activity frequently.

Relating Chilean children's online participation to potential benefits:

-) Most child internet users in Chile, in all age groups, use the internet for schoolwork, likely a result of an ICT for education policy implemented for more than 20 years. While this is positive in terms of their access to education and information, 23% of children do not use the internet for schoolwork, and just under two-thirds report learning by searching online. Recently, the Ministry of Education has promoted some improvements by including digital skills in the school curriculum and designing ways to measure student learning online, hopefully reaching those children who do not benefit as much from the learning opportunities the internet affords.
-) Child internet users in Chile mostly engage in entertainment and social activities. Although creative and civic activities are slightly more common amongst older children, take up is rather low - for creative activities, it is less than half compared to 15- to 17-year-olds in Bulgaria and South Africa. However, older Chilean children are on par with Bulgarian and South African children in terms of civic activities. It may be that teens that engage in political activities have different motivations from those that engage in creating videos or music, necessitating support for diverse - and more attractive - paths to digital inclusion, personal or political expression, or civic participation.
-) Most Chilean children play online games, which can support social interaction and in theory benefit children's mental health, pointing to the potential to develop apps and games to address bullying, discrimination and participation. On the other hand, games may not always be beneficial, and it is important also to consider the associated risks of online gaming and other online activities.

Table 2: Chilean children's online participation				
Online activities practised at least weekly	**Age group (N=1000)**			
	9-11	**12-14**	**15-17**	**ALL**
Involved in campaign or protest	1	2	7	3
Created a blog, story or website	3	3	3	3
Discussed politics with others	0	5	11	5
Created video or music	9	6	8	8
Searched for resources about their neighbourhood	10	15	25	17
Looked for work or study opportunities	13	18	30	20
Talked to people who are different	12	19	28	20
Used website for interests or hobbies	7	18	37	21
Looked for health information	17	28	34	26
Looked for news online	16	27	48	31
Talked to distant family or friends	32	55	53	47
Posted photos or comments online	33	52	78	55
Learned by searching online	45	59	73	59
Played online games	77	62	54	64
Visited social networking sites	38	80	93	71
Used the internet for schoolwork	65	80	86	77
Used instant messaging	54	86	96	79
Watched video clips	81	91	92	88

Note: Percentage of children who do each activity at least weekly, by age, ranked by frequency. The coloured cells mark the activities practised by roughly half the age group or more.

FINDINGS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

What do South African children do online?

-) For the youngest South African internet users, the focus of their use is on relatively basic tasks: schoolwork, social network use and playing online games. Online gaming is an especially popular activity among this age group, with its use declining relative to other activities in older adolescence.

-) The activities of 12-14-year olds is more diverse, as they not only engage in social networking but also contribute content to social networking sites and use these sites to seek out social connections with people they know.

-) In the oldest group, children's interests expand to include seeking content that is unfamiliar to them or looking for resources to secure future work or study opportunities.

-) While watching video clips is the most common activity for children of all age groups in both Bulgaria and Chile, just over half of South African children do this weekly.

-) As was found in other countries, relatively few South African children use the internet to learn more about and contribute to their immediate offline community and few contribute original content to the internet.

Relating South African children's online participation to potential benefits:

-) South African children enjoy a greater breadth of opportunities than children in other countries by the time they reach 15 to 17 years, which means they are in a position to potentially enjoy a wider range of benefits.

-) However, the opportunities accessed by the youngest children are still quite limited, which undermines the potential benefits for this group. This may, in part, be due to the fact that parents tend to take a protective stance with young children in South Africa, restricting internet use because they don't feel confident in ensuring their children's safety online.

-) The challenges that some South African children face in accessing affordable and fast internet has implications for the degree to which they are able to explore online opportunities and develop their digital skills. For example, our data showed that fewer South African children watched video clips and listened to music weekly, compared to children in Bulgaria and Chile. Streaming videos and music can incur high data costs and as such South African children may be limited in what they can do online due to socio-economic conditions. This could lead to poor children or children in rural communities falling behind as they cannot use the internet as freely as their urban counterparts, due to existing inequalities.

Table 3: South African children's online participation

Online activities practised at least weekly	Age group (N=1000)			
	9-11	12-14	15-17	ALL
Involved in campaign or protest	4	2	6	3
Searched for resources about their neighbourhood	6	11	25	16
Discussed politics online	7	10	26	17
Created a blog, story or website	2	10	31	18
Looked for health information	10	20	43	29
Created video or music	15	29	43	33
Used website for interests or hobbies	11	22	50	33
Looked for news online	12	21	54	35
Talked to people who are different	16	36	61	44
Looked for work or study opportunities	25	32	64	45
Watched video clips	25	44	69	52
Posted photos or comments online	19	52	79	58
Played online games	64	59	63	61
Listened to music	44	61	72	63
Talked to distant family or friends	34	58	80	64
Visited social networking sites	26	56	86	64
Use the internet for schoolwork	63	63	78	70
Learned by searching online	59	73	86	76
Used instant messaging	68	82	96	86

Note: Percentage of children who do each activity at least weekly, by age, ranked by frequency. The coloured cells mark the activities practised by roughly half the age group or more.

INTERPRETING THE FREQUENCY OF CHILDREN'S ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Comparing across the three countries, the rank ordering of children's online activities is fairly similar, suggesting a 'ladder' running from commonly to rarely practised activities. While we cannot say from these crosssectional data whether children begin at the bottom and climb the ladder to a certain point, we suggest this is a plausible interpretation of the findings, and a hypothesis worth testing in future research.

This raises questions about country differences, and the significance of these differences. For example, why do only half as many children in Bulgaria, compared to those in Chile or South Africa seek health information online? This could indicate that Bulgarian children are less likely to benefit from health information online, though this also depends on other factors beyond internet access. Is there high-quality health information available online? Is it available in local languages? Is it appropriate and accessible for children? While our data show that a considerable percentage of children look for health information

online, we have a long way to go before we can judge whether this is truly beneficial to them. This is partly because more research is needed on whether and how children judge the quality of the information they find online.
The findings also reveal age differences among children: in all countries, younger children participate less in the educational and informational activities. Does that mean younger children are losing out on potential benefits? The question for policy makers and practitioners to consider here, is whether this is to be expected of younger children? There may be reasons – of evolving capacity or interest or need – why younger children engage less frequently in these activities. Since opportunities and risks often go hand in hand, it may also be safer for younger children to do less online. On the other hand, it might be judged a matter of equity or potential for improved provision that greater efforts should be focused on this group – through interventions at school or at home – to increase their uptake of online opportunities.
Analysis by EU Kids Online[10] shows that older children, those with more internet experience and those with more digital skills engage in a wider range of opportunities, which should in theory provide them with more benefits. Initial analysis of these Global Kids Online data shows a similar pattern. The 'ladder' thus reveals the possibilities for children – with activities
towards the top of the tables requiring investment if children are to attain these. It also suggests inequalities – with children with less internet experience and fewer skills not gaining the opportunities enjoyed by their better-off peers, which could result in the former missing out on possible benefits. This is another important area for future research.

Although we lack longitudinal data, it may be suggested that the steps on the ladder map out a pathway to online participation as follows:
-) The first step on the ladder reveals the entrylevel activities for children aged 9-11 in a given country. Most children take their first steps by engaging in social activities and gaming. Across three fairly different countries, these appear the attractive and accessible activities that encourage early internet use. It is worth considering what children gain from these activities, and whether these activities provide encouragement to progress and advance in online experience and expertise. One possible benefit of these entrylevel activities is that they may build the initial skills of children so that they can climb further up the ladder.
-) Online gaming is the only activity that is more common amongst the youngest children than the older across all three countries, so could be used as a gateway to constructive educational and participatory activities online, as well as to support digital skills development. This would be facilitated by creating games that provide learning opportunities while still being entertaining enough to keep children playing.
-) Learning activities are also found as a first step on the ladder in all three countries, though in Bulgaria using the internet for schoolwork comes only as children deepen their online engagement. This may be because in Bulgaria children go online at home before they use the internet in school and because they are not taught digital skills systematically at school. This might explain why fewer Bulgarian children of all age groups use the internet for schoolwork compared to children in Chile or South Africa. Chile has longstanding policy support for ICT in Education, which might explain why more Chilean children use the internet for schoolwork compared to children in Bulgaria or South Africa. This reveals how governments and policy makers can potentially enable children to benefit from the internet, by providing learning opportunities within the formal education system that can compensate for inequalities at home and, in the longer term, may lead children to use the internet increasingly for educational purposes.
-) The higher steps reveal activities that children lack the motivation, skills or support to engage in, such as civic and creative activities. It is worth considering why this is the case and whether the education system and/or specific policy or programme interventions can make a difference.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The findings show that while most children in the three countries are already enjoying some of the opportunities of internet access in sizeable proportions, most children do not reach the point where they commonly undertake many of the civic, informational and creative activities online that are heralded as the opportunities of the digital age.

The country comparisons suggest that children travel somewhat different pathways to online opportunities, influenced by their life context and skills. While the reasons for country differences need further exploration, the fact of the differences suggests that there is scope to design these pathways differently, depending on national goals and values, and possibly with some countries learning from the experience of others. Can further efforts be made to increase the proportion of children which benefits from the civic and informational opportunities that the internet and mobile technologies provide? Many countries face challenges regarding how digital skills are taught, and in integrating out-of-school learning into the school curriculum. These findings show some of the popular activities that children engage in on the internet and suggests how further and deeper use could be encouraged, for example by promoting ICT in Education policies in schools and reducing data costs. While we are not committed to any definitive list of what children should or should not do online, we hope these findings help policy makers and practitioners consider what we might expect children of different ages to do online. How far should they climb the ladder of online participation, and to what end?

The present research is exploratory in nature. We suggest that the next steps for research on children's online participation include:

-) Qualitative research to explore with children in different contexts and countries which online activities they most value and why, and the skills and resources that are required for them to achieve their goals.[11]

-) Evaluative research to examine the concrete benefits, short and long term, that result from children's online participation, in order to explore the pathways through which these are obtained.

-) Multifactorial and multidimensional analysis to explore the risks associated with pursuing online participation; these risks can concern exclusion and inequality (if some children lack opportunities to participate) or harm (if more online activities lead children into problems they are unable to cope with or avoid).[12]

-) Confirmatory research to explore whether and how different online activities that children engage in may improve their digital skills, thereby providing pathways to additional opportunities.

We end on a cautionary note. Hart rightly cautions against taking the 'ladder' metaphor too literally. Many factors influence how high children may 'climb' the ladder of online participation, and there are different opinions about whether some online activities are more desirable than others. More practically speaking, the list of online activities examined here are not exhaustive and likely to change over time. They may also be regarded differently by different groups of children, or by the adults tasked with supporting their rights and online benefits. Yet while the normative dimension of this research is arguably the most difficult13, we believe it is important that children's online activities are examined from a normative perspective, as society must set expectations for children's activities in order to justify provision and then evaluate outcomes and inequalities.

APPENDIX

Table 4: Global Kids Online survey questions on children's online opportunities

1. I learned something new by searching online [learned by searching]
2. I looked for information about work or study opportunities [information about work]
3. I used the internet for schoolwork [used for school]
4. I looked for resources or events about my local neighbourhood [resources about neighbourhood]
5. I used the internet to talk to people from places or backgrounds different from mine [talked to different people]
6. I looked for news online [looked for news]
7. I discussed political or social problems with other people online [discussed politics]
8. I got involved online in a campaign or protest [campaign or protest]
9. I created my own video or music and uploaded it to share [created video or music]
10. I created a blog or story or website online [created blog or story]
11. I visited a social networking site [social networking]
12. I talked to family or friends who live further away [talked to distant family]
13. I used instant messaging (IM) ([add local examples e.g. Viber, WhatsApp) [Used instant messaging]
14. I played online games alone or with others [online gaming]
15. I listened to music online (by downloading or streaming) [listened to music]
16. I looked for health information for myself or someone I know [health information]
17. I participated in a site where people share my interests or hobbies [site for interests or hobbies]
18. I posted photos or comments online (e.g. on Facebook or a blog) [posted photos or comments]
19. I watched video clips (e.g. on YouTube, add local examples) [watched video clips]

NOTES

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FROM MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

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Family trends and challenges

United Nations Secretary General's report on family issues

1 October 2019

Every year, the General Assembly requests the Secretary General to submit a report through the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes by Member States and by agencies and bodies of the United Nations system [2]. It calls upon Member States and the United Nations system, in consultation with civil society and other relevant stakeholders, to continue providing information on their activities, including on good practices, in support of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its followup processes.

Since 2015 all "Member States were invited to invest in a variety of family-oriented policies and programmes ... to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

The recent report includes an analysis of family trends, with a focus on poverty and social protection; work family balance and unpaid work and the role of families in inclu-

sive societies. It presents information on initiatives undertaken by Member States and the United Nations system based on responses to a note verbale sent by the Secretariat and outlines relevant initiatives of civil society organizations that cooperated with Division for Inclusive Social Development of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs on family issues.

Across the SDGs, if you look at the goals and targets, families are rarely mentioned and it could be to do with moving from where we want to go to how to get there [...]. In the SDGs&Families Global Report, the view of the family is taken as a conduit to social change. [...]

The family is the fundamental unit of society, it is our smallest social unit, it is the foundation on which we build everything else, all of our social interaction. In being that, it is the place where we intervene mostly when we want to intervene for children and other dependents, when we want to support labor market access, when we want to encourage health, when we want to lower violence and so on" [1].

Extracted from the Report of the UN Secretary General on "Implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes' (A/74/61–E/2019/4).

Poverty and social protection

Families with young children are the most vulnerable to extreme poverty, with more than 20 per cent of children below the age of 5 in the developing world living in extremely poor households [3]. The intergenerational transfer of poverty continues, with children more than twice as likely to live in extreme poverty as adults, with 385 million children living on less than $1.90 a day [4].

Nevertheless, the proportion of the world's families living in extreme poverty declined overall during the past two decades, from 26.9 per cent in 2000 to 9.2 per cent in 2017[5], mainly attributed to the expansion of social protection coverage, including cash transfers and other programmes targeting families living in poverty, as of evaluations of conditional cash transfers for families with children point to multiple positive effects, including improvements in living conditions, a lower poverty incidence, increased spending on food and better access to education and health care.[6]

Work-family balance and unpaid work

Measures facilitating work-family balance and their uptake by men and women strengthen gender equality in the labour market and the workplace. The European Commission outlines several elements contributing to work-life balance, such as childcare services, parental and family leave, tax-benefit systems and work arrangements. The benefits of these policy instruments are enhanced when they are implemented together. The European Union, has required member States to provide a minimum of four months of parental leave up to three years or more per parent, has encouraged fathers to take parental leave, flexible working arrangements, including staggered hours, working time banking, part-time work, flex-time schedules and telecommuting [7].

The global recognition of unpaid work, done mostly by women, is an aspect of work-family balance gaining in visibility. In 90 countries, between 2000 and 2016, women spent approximately three times as many hours in unpaid domestic and care work as men, for example in Latin America women spend between one fifth and one third of their time each week on unpaid domestic and care work, with men spending approximately 10 per cent of their time on such work. There is therefore a growing need for policies that promote women's access to the labour market or other sources of income, to be accompanied by policies encouraging the sharing of responsibilities at home [8].

Families and inclusive societies

Families play an indispensable role in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development through their contributions to raising the next generation of healthy and productive citizens. Although families are critical to creating peace at individual and household levels, they may need help in developing skills to build peaceful relations [9].

The eradication of all forms of violence is an integral part of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, in line with
Sustainable Development Goal 16, specifically its target 16.2. Research indicates that close to 8 in 10 children between the ages of 1 and 14 in 81 primarily developing countries are subjected to some form of psychological aggression and/or physical punishment on a regular basis at home. In most of these countries, more than half of children experience violent forms of discipline [10].

Family policies and programmes

Some important objectives of the International Year of the Family are the strengthening of national-level institutional frameworks responsible for formulating, implementing and monitoring family policies and programmes; family poverty reduction; work-family balance; social inclusion; and family research promotion. There is a growing realization that family policies addressing critical areas of development contribute to the achievement of International Year of the Family objectives and Sustainable Development Goals relating to poverty, hunger, health, education and gender equality.

Targeting families with young children through cash transfers, child benefits and other measures are regarded as effective policy interventions for poverty reduction. Moreover, governments have increased their investment in work-family balance as a tool to improve gender equality. Parenting education features more prominently in government efforts towards social inclusion and intergenerational solidarity. In terms of research promotion, limited progress has been observed and more efforts are needed.

Institutional frameworks

In Hungary, policies are directed to achieve a demographic balance through stable, comprehensive, targeted and flexible family policy, adaptable to changing needs and conditions. The Italian National Fund for Family Policies finances work-life balance programmes, tries to reduce the costs of services for large families, reorganizes family centres, promotes parenting counselling and focus on child protection, the transition to adulthood and intergenerational solidarity. In Luxembourg, the 2017 fiscal reform benefited single-headed households. The Peruvian National Plan for Strengthening Families 2016–2021 provides guidance on family policy implementation. In Sudan, initiatives are targeted at older persons, children and women through anti-poverty programmes. The Russian Federation is making efforts to improve the quality of life for families and increasing their role in society.

In several countries, efforts are under way to modify family laws to safeguard the rights of women and ensure the best interest of the child and achieve full harmonization with relevant international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Poverty, hunger and social exclusion reduction

Since 2016, Argentina has implemented the National Early Childhood Plan through numerous education
programmes as of family visits and community activities to vulnerable households with children 0–4 years old. In China, efforts are under way to meet the growing care needs of older persons and children, with a 3 per cent annual growth of facilities offering services for older persons. Djibouti has launched the National Strategy of Social Protection and the National Programme of Family Solidarity helping around 16,000 families and focusing on cash transfers, access to health care and quality education, employment creation and microfinance.

Hungary has an emblematic family tax benefit. The country allocates 1.1 per cent of its gross domestic product for family allowance and offers a family home-start subsidy to families with children. Ja-

maica focuses on vulnerable family members, including pregnant and lactating women. Mexico aims at improving capacities in nutrition, health and education, for more than 6.5 million families as of the end of 2017. Netherlands helps to lift single mothers out of poverty to labour participation, reaching 32,000 women weekly through an online platform. Serbia has regulated benefits for families with children with special needs and disabilities, as well as for children without parental care and family counsellor service that supports families with children at risk of relocation due to possible neglect or abuse.

Work-family balance and the empowerment of women and girls

The 2015 law on fair employment and work-family balance in Ecuador protects the right to social protection of individuals engaged in unpaid work at home. The "Growing up with our children" programme offers weekly visits to help vulnerable families with early childhood education based on a rights approach, with a focus on intergenerational inclusion and gender equality. Latvia implemented a pilot project on the provision of flexible working hours for employees who work non-standard hours, to support flexible childcare for children of parents with such work hours [11]

In Poland, more stable, longer-duration contracts and a higher minimum wage were introduced to promote stable employment and better working conditions, which are considered to contribute not only to better workfamily balance, but also to demographic stability. The coverage of childcare facilities for 0–3 years olds in Portugal increased by 84 per cent between 2006 and 2017, and a cooperation protocol was signed with private nonprofit organizations for the provision of childcare subsidized by relevant ministries. The Equality is Quality award recognizes companies and other employers with good policies in gender equality and work-life balance.

Parenting education

Belarus has organized research workshops on the international programme Generations and Gender, focusing on family formation, the stability of family relations and childbearing in changing socioeconomic conditions. Burkina Faso, has developed a national parenting education programme for early childhood education for the period to ensure that the needs of the child are met. Jamaica has launched the second phase of a parenting programme, focusing on nutrition, budgeting and discipline for parents of children between 2 and 6 years of age. An early stimulation programme focuses on the needs of children with disabilities and is intended to promote strong intergenerational interaction. It offers parenting workshops and family counselling. Through its community-based interventions, it encourages support through parentteacher and citizen associations, church groups and other collaborative community settings.

A National Strategic Policy for Positive Parenting for the period 2016–2024 is being implemented in Malta. Positive parenting refers to the parents prioritizing children's best interests to help them to grow in an environment that is free from violence and conducive to their healthy development, while providing guidance and support. The policy is aimed at building and sustaining a positive culture and infrastructure for parents and their children, in which parents are supported to fulfil their role to the best of their abilities.

Conclusions

Member States, United Nations agencies and civil society continued their efforts towards the implementation of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes through national strategies and advocacy, as well as prioritizing family-oriented policies and programmes. Practical interventions focusing on family and children's well-being have been seen as conducive to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals and their targets.

Family-oriented policies for poverty, hunger and social exclusion reduction are an important part of overall social development strategies pursued at the national level. The provision of social protection for vulnerable families tops those efforts.

Social protection mechanisms in the form of universal and targeted cash transfers and child allowances

contribute to poverty reduction, increased consumption and better access to education and health care, although the specific impact varies. The provision of universal cash benefits also serves as an incentive to register or document children, increases family investment and helps to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion.

Evidence and evaluations have shown that familyoriented policies and programmes, such as family cash benefits, are mostly effective at reducing family and child income poverty, deprivation and food insecurity. Family services and counselling are important for child protection and intimate partner violence prevention. Both cash and services tend to improve school enrolment and participation, health and nutrition, labour market participation and gender equity.

Family policy design requires that targeting criteria, and levels of cash transfers or level of services delivered, be determined on the basis of the full understanding of the competing family needs, levels of vulnerability and inequality, public budget issues and social and community factors that can moderate the effects of such interventions.
It is imperative to expand child and family-oriented social protection systems, in line with target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals on expanding coverage. An important area of focus should be child and family grants, given that there is a clear evidence of impact, but relatively low coverage in most parts of the world. Social protection systems work best for children and families in which systems are strong and integrated.

Importantly, poverty, in combination with other stresses inherent in family life, can increase the risk of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. That is why, beyond poverty alleviation, it is imperative that family-oriented policies and programmes address other social, health and psychological factors that are bound to undermine child well-being.

Moreover, it is important to design programmes, such as cash transfers, that do not reinforce gender stereotypes. Employment policies favouring women's access to labour markets should be accompanied by measures equalizing the unequal share of time spent by men on unpaid work. In particular, such policies and programmes are a useful tool to help to redefine the traditional roles of men and women to lower the burden of women's unpaid work by promoting men's role as caregivers and their participation in household duties.

Work-family balance policies focusing on improving working conditions for families with children, reconciling professional and family demands and facilitating the sharing of household responsibilities between men and women continue to be a priority for many governments and form part of their efforts towards greater gender equality. Work-family balance for carers of older persons or adults with disabilities, however, is a relatively new issue on the policy agenda, as is unpaid work, and both require more attention.

In the area of social inclusion, however, more action is needed to ensure legal identity for all, including birth registration, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 targets. Parenting education focusing on positive forms of discipline also requires more attention and investment at the household and community levels.
There are many barriers preventing the social inclusion of migrant families, ranging from political feasibility and racial, religious and gender bias to stringent language tests and high costs. It is therefore imperative to make family reunification policies and regulations more flexible. Socially inclusive policies for migrant families should focus on the elimination of social, economic and housing barriers and on facilitating participation in host country social and cultural institutions.

The issues examined make it clear that many Sustainable Development Goals, especially those relating to poverty, health, education, gender equality and the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, cannot be achieved through stand-alone approaches focusing on individuals without the recognition of families, communities and the societies in which they function.

Importantly, family-oriented policies and programmes designed to address specific Sustainable Development Goal targets often have positive spill over effects on the achievement of other Goals and

their targets. For example, poverty reduction strategies focusing on families contribute to reaching health and education targets, given that families have more resources to invest in children's health and education. In fact, the cross-cutting nature of family policies helps to achieve many development goals simultaneously.

International and national entities can cooperate in research activities to build a database to support the use of evidence-based family policy, innovation in crosssectorial integration and implementation strategies. There is a need for more research, including in relation to the evaluation of family-oriented policies and programmes, to respond to the demand for evidencebased responses to the Sustainable Development Goals. Disaggregated data by family types, child age and other relevant factors is crucial. Moreover, evidence of scalability and the transfer of effective family policies is key, keeping in mind that specific family policies will work differently in various contexts.

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MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

MMM at the UNESCO General Conference: Mothers are key agents of change

On the occasion of the 40th General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, MMM strongly reaffirmed the role of parents for education.

Excerpts:

Women, especially mothers, are the first victims of violence. But everywhere, they are rising up to face it. A mother never gives up, because even if she is abandoned by the side of the road, she always takes the path that will lead her children to a better future. While mothers are vulnerable, they are also key agents of change.

Mothers are, with fathers, the first educators of their children. In their diversity, families are part of the solution. Working FOR and WITH mothers is good for them, for their children, for families, for the community and for society as a whole. This is essential for all of us – in the future and for more peace in the world.

For 70 years, our NGO MMM has believed that mothers have the capacity to make the world a better place. We wish to continue an effective partnership with UNESCO based on respect for its values, so that our work contributes to the implementation of its programmes and the achievement of our common mission of education and peace.

Read the full MMM speech here (in French): https://makemothersmatter.org/mothers-key-agents-ofchange/

MMM at the Geneva Peace Week: Supporting mothers and families essential for early childhood development and peace

MMM had the privilege to represent the **Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC**) at an event organised on 4 November by Arigatou International on "Rethinking peace theory and practice: enhancing peacebuilding initiatives with the integration of early childhood development". The panel event, which took place in the context of the Geneva Peace Week 2019, brought together diverse experts on Early Childhood Development (ECD):

In her intervention, MMM Vice-President Valerie Bichelmeier presented the background of the ECPC, its mission and its different areas of work, and how MMM became involved in its work.

The Mother and Child Program (MOCEP) devised by ACEV, one of the ECPC's founding partners, provided a concrete example of how empowering mothers with child development knowledge and parenting skills could change relationships within families and help reduce violence. Beyond Turkey, MOCEP was implemented and evaluated in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, a very fragile context where violence is rampant.

The MMM presentation also highlighted the importance of working with and supporting mothers and families to empower parents and children as agents of peace.

It is within the family unit that the values and beliefs that shape an individual are transmitted; that a child first experiences safety or distress, nurturing or violent relationships, as well as the joys and challenges of living with others; and it is also within the family that a child learns tolerance – or intolerance, as well as the peaceful – or violent – resolution of conflicts.

The science is clear that enabling children to grow up in healthy, violence-free and nurturing families is essential for them to reach their full potential and to find their role in society – which ultimately is the foundation for lasting peace.

Most parents want the best for their children, but the reality is that parents, especially mothers, face many challenges:

-) Violence: both direct violence like domestic violence or violence in areas affected by war or conflict, and indirect violence like poverty, displacement, homelessness, etc. Violence clearly affects a mother's ability to properly care for her children and leads to a pattern of intergenerational transmission of violence.
-) Time: mothers are increasingly present in the workforce and face the challenge of balancing paid work with their domestic and caring responsibilities – with the knowledge that globally, women still carry the bulk of unpaid family care work, including domestic tasks and the work of caring for children and other dependent family members.
-) Mental health problems: according to WHO mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, affect 10 to 20% of mothers during pregnancy and the year after childbirth. This obviously impacts their ability to provide adequate nurturing and responsive care.
-) Isolation: families/mothers are increasingly isolated, often living far away from grandparents and the extended family that traditionally helped with raising children.
-) Single motherhood is a reality for an increasing number of mothers – and in the majority of cases, it is not a choice.

All these issues also need to be addressed as part of any policy that aims at supporting ECD – and building peace. And they show that ECD also touches many sectors, including health, education, social affairs, labour, family affairs, women's rights and gender equality, which means that the answer should also be multi-sectorial.

Mothers are key players and they must be recognised as such. They should be informed and educated on early childhood development, on positive parenting and nurturing relationships, and on the importance of providing responsive and loving care. And they should be supported in this challenging but essential job.

At the same time, we must be careful not to put too much pressure on mothers as they already face many challenges- and we must recognise that women also have other roles to play in society: as citizens, professionals, politicians and community leaders.

It is also absolutely essential that fathers be involved – a quadruple win: for the mother, for the child, for the father himself, and ultimately, for society as a whole and for peace.

Read the article on the MMM website: https://makemothersmatter.org/supporting-mothers-andfamilies-essential-for-early-childhood-development-and-peace/
See also the Early Childhood Peace Consortium website: https://ecdpeace.org

100 Years of Maternity Protection at the ILO: Mothers need more than just leave policies

MMM took part in an event organised on 8 November by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Maternity Protection: "A Century of maternity protection: Transforming leave and care policies for a better future of work for all".

The Maternity Protection Convention (No. 3) was among the first conventions that the ILO adopted at its initial International Labour Conference in 1919, recognising the right to paid leave in relation to childbirth with employment protection. Since then, the scope of maternity protection and benefits has expanded as reflected in a new Maternity Protection Convention adopted in 2000 (No. 183).

Most countries have now adopted maternity protection legislation. And over the last 20 years, there have been improvements in terms of leave duration, and the introduction of funding systems of paid maternity leave based on social security instead of employer liability.

However, only 41% of women with newborns receive maternity cash benefits that provide them with income security around childbirth. In particular, for women working in the informal sector, which is the case for the majority of women in most developing countries, maternity protection remains elusive.

This is a serious gap that must be addressed: maternity protection is absolutely crucial for women's health and economic and social rights around childbirth.

In addition, the return to work after maternity leave is not the end – on the contrary – it is the beginning of motherhood.

From maternity protection to parenthood protection and support?

What about "motherhood protection"? Or rather "parenthood protection and support", i.e., a package of measures that support women and men in their different roles, and that foster more equity in both the private and public spheres.

Paternity and parental leaves are absolutely essential and must be an integral part of such a package. But, no matter how transformative they may be labelled, they are simply not enough. They must also be part of a much broader policy/package of measures – one that encompasses multiple sectors beyond the labour and health sectors.

A "parenthood protection and support" package should, in particular, include measures to:
-) facilitate women's re-entry into the workforce after maternity or parental leave – through training, but also, by recognising the skills that one acquires through the work of caring (like organisational or interpersonal skills, or even management skills);
-) support parents' challenge of balancing their caring and educative responsibilities with a career – with, for example, non-discriminatory flexible working arrangements and quality part-time work;
-) protect from all kinds of discriminations linked to motherhood – e.g., at hiring, in promotion, in pay (we know that the gender pay gap is larger for mothers than for women without children);
-) promote a more equitable distribution of unpaid family care work and responsibilities – first between men and women, but also between families and society;
-) "care for the carers", through health and social services that above all target vulnerable families, like single-parent families, and that recognise and address maternal mental health issues and parental burnout;
-) empower parents for the challenging but essential job of raising the next generation – the future workforce – e.g., through parental education on child development and on the importance of nurturing and responsive caregiving and positive parenting, especially during the early years.

The European Work-Life Balance Directive, which was adopted earlier this year, and which we at MMM campaigned hard for, is a first step in this direction. It could go much further and we intend to continue our advocacy work at the EU to build on this Directive.

In fact, we need systemic transformations and a paradigm shift where
-) care, education and the wellbeing of people and the planet are at the centre of government priorities and policies, and
-) governments move away from short-termism, take a long-term perspective and invest in the future, in children and families, in people and in their capabilities.

We at MMM firmly believe that it is time for the world of work to adapt to people and families and that the economy serves the wellbeing of people and the planet – not the other way around.

Read the full statement on the MMM website: https://makemothersmatter.org/beyond-maternityprotection-mothers-need-more-than-just-leave-policies/

Beijing+25: #FeministsWantSystemChange – Mothers too

MMM was actively involved in the preparations for the CSO Forum that took place on 28 October, just before the UNECE intergovernmental meeting to review the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and evaluate progress on women's rights and gender equality in the region.

2020 will mark the 25th anniversary of the landmark Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), which was adopted by governments in 1995 at the 4th UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. As part of the "Beijing+25" review process, which

will culminate in the next session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women at UN Headquarters in March 2020, UN regions have launched regional review meetings, beginning with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Under the motto #FeministsWantSystemChange, the Women's Major Group mobilised women's rights defenders across the UNECE region and led the organisation of the Civil Society Forum. Its main objective was to bring the voices of civil society and provide input into the UNECE intergovernmental process of reviewing progress on women's rights and gender equality since Beijing.

MMM co-chaired with WIDE+ the working group that elaborated the factsheet on "Addressing economic structural barriers for economic justice".

This factsheet is the result of a process that started in July and which involved various organisations across the UNECE region. The aim was to
-) identify the structural barriers to gender equality and women's rights that remain in the economic sphere;
-) highlight gaps in government efforts to address gender economic inequality as outlined in the BPfA;
-) make recommendations to governments.

The factsheet was finalised with additional input during the CSO Forum, and a statement reflecting a consensus of the group on the priority issues was delivered during the intergovernmental meeting on 29 October. The factsheet will also be part of the regional report that will be discussed

The factsheet brings the perspective of mothers, identifying
-) the inequitable distribution of unpaid family care work as a major structural barrier to women's economic empowerment;
-) pregnancy, maternity, and motherhood as grounds for discrimination in the economic sphere;
-) single mothers as being among the most vulnerable to poverty.

MMM also put forward its recommendations to address these specific issues.

Read the factsheet on "Addressing economic structural barriers for economic justice": https://makemothersmatter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2.3.-Structural-Economic-Barriers.pdf

MMM highlights motherhood wage gap in intergovernmental discussions on gender pay gap

MMM seized the opportunity to speak at the session on the gender pay gap of the intergovernmental meeting to draw attention to the linkages between motherhood and the gender pay gap.

As part of the session on "Closing the gender gaps: Effective economic and social policies in the UNECE region", a panel focused more specifically on the gender pay gap, the reasons that explain its persistence and the different policy approaches to close it.

The average hourly gender pay gap remains high at 18% in the region, with large variations across countries – e.g. up to 62.4% in Kyrgyzstan. High gender pay gaps also translate into even higher pension gaps in most countries – for example, 53% in Germany in 2017.

Most of the discussions focused on the necessary legislative framework, and policies like the mandatory reporting that several countries have started to implement, including France, Switzerland and the UK. The law recently adopted in Iceland that makes external certification mandatory for employers was also hailed as a major step forward. But no one even mentioned the motherhood pay gap.

Therefore, MMM took the floor following the delivery of the statement of the Women's Major Group.

A 2016 ILO report clearly shows that wage gaps exist not only between men and women, but also between mothers and women who do not have children.

This motherhood wage gap is significant to the gender pay-gap issue because studies found that employed mothers are the women that account for most of the gender wage gap. Research shows that hourly wages of mothers can be significantly lower than the wages of women without children.

It has been suggested that mothers earn less than women without children because they are less productive. In fact, they are penalised for going on maternity leave, for possibly not putting in as much "face time" at work as their childless peers, for having to turn down jobs that require overtime, and for daring to ask for part-time work. They are simply victims of the perception/stereotype that women with children are not as much "into their jobs" as others, because they are distracted by the caring and nurturing requirements of their households.

To conclude its statement, MMM called on governments
-) to recognise that women suffer specific discriminations linked to motherhood (the "motherhood penalty");
-) to collect data on the motherhood wage gap;
-) to take it into account when addressing the gender pay gap.

See related articles on MMM website:
- https://makemothersmatter.org/beijing25-feministswantsystemchange-mothers-too/
- https://makemothersmatter.org/beijing25-mmm-highlights-motherhood-wage-gap-in-discussions-ongender-pay-gap/

MMM at the Social Forum at the UN in Geneva: Supporting parents and families essential to the realisation of children's rights

In 2019, the Social Forum, which took place on 1–2 October in the context of the 30th Anniversary of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, focused on "The promotion and protection of the rights of children and youth through education". MMM made an intervention as part of the general discussion that took place after the opening keynote panel on The transformative power of education for young people.

Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant-Director General for Education, set the tone:

"We face no less than an education emergency. According to our most recent projections, 12 million primary school children will never see the inside of a classroom, of whom 9 million are girls. And 220 million children and youth will still be out of school in 2030. Four in ten will not complete secondary education.

Every day, conflict, crisis and natural disasters are disrupting education for the world's most vulnerable young populations. This is an intolerable violation of the right to education, of human dignity. It is entrenching inequalities and poverty within and between countries, and seriously jeopardizing progress across the entire development spectrum.

This crisis ignores the irrefutable evidence on the transformative power of education – for people, prosperity and the planet. Simply put, the starting point for building more inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies is to invest in education from the youngest age and throughout life."

MMM intervention reminded that the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of SDG 4 explicitly calls for the support of families as the primary caregivers of children, particularly during early childhood.

Family structures have been greatly affected as our societies have undergone rapid change. The models of extended and nuclear families have gradually given way to more diverse units. Social issues like unemployment, income inequality, imbalances between work and family life, and lifestyle changes related to urbanisation also carry health consequences with new risks of illness, increase in drug addiction and psychological difficulties related to daily stress. In addition, technology has impacted human relationships and behaviour, especially within families.

As traditional structures disappear, new parenting difficulties are emerging. Concerted efforts are therefore needed to help parents play their role.

A 2015 UNESCO report on early childhood education and care indicates that more than half of young children risk being deprived of quality parental support in areas deemed as essential.

There is an urgent need to analyse and examine the reasons why some parents do not invest in or are unable to fulfil their parental educational responsibilities. Social and family policies play a determining role in parenting practices and the functioning of families. But more needs to be done by providing parents with access to education and support programs.

In conclusion, MMM stressed that parental education and support not only benefit families and children, contributing in particular to the realisation of their rights, but also communities and the entire country. They are therefore essential to face our global challenges and realise the SDGs.

See related article on MMM website: https://makemothersmatter.org/beijing25-mmm-highlightsmotherhood-wage-gap-in-discussions-on-gender-pay-gap/

CIRC4Life project: Consumer surveys show consumers lack time to adopt sustainable behaviours

In the framework of the EU CIRC4Life research project to develop new products and services based in the circular economy, MMM conducted between July and October 2019 three consumer's surveys on:

-) Attitudes to reuse and recycling concerning electronic and food products
-) The eco-points system the project is promoting (a rewarding scheme for consumers adopting sustainable behaviours)
-) Sustainable lighting products

The aim was to understand the barriers, drivers, incentives and purchasing preferences end-users face in order to encourage a transition to a circular economy.

MMM produced a report showing the results where close to 1200 respondents participated from all over Europe. Close to 40% of respondents had children living in their household.

In the reuse and recycling attitudes survey, it was mentioned that a barrier for consumers to reduce their food waste and recycle their electronics was the lack of time. This was also found by a survey previously conducted by MMM on what mothers in Europe want in 2011 and other more recent surveys where parents say families demand more time to care for their children. An interesting parallel can be drawn between the lack of time to care for the family and the lack of time to care for the environment.

Find more information on the project here: www.circ4life.eu

Response to the EU consultation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning – evaluation

The European Commission launched a public consultation in August 2019 asking stakeholders and citizens about how Member States are validating non-formal and informal learning and in particular about how the 2012 EU Council Recommendation on this topic is put in practice. The Council Recommendation defining **eight key competences** that are **crucial to better prepare people for today's societies** is an important step. The Council of the European Union on Education held on 8 Nov 2019 highlighted the key role of lifelong learning policies in empowering societies to address the technological and green transition in support of inclusive and sustainable growth.

More support for women

It would be necessary that these policies take into account women, especially mothers, who in many cases have devoted time to caring duties and whose skills are considered "out of the labour market". Still for many women their skills are undervalued: either because the society ignores them or because they are not considered as economically important. Caring for children/elderly and taking time off from work endangers the career development of the parent making that decision. Investing in the future generation does not get any particular recognition and

is not considered to procure any material value to society.

Maternity develops a new set of skills in women, especially the so-called soft skills. These skills need to be recognised also in the labour market. This new set of skills basically comes through non-formal and informal learning.

Early education and care centres is not the only solution

There is more and more discussion on increasing the number of "high-quality early education and care centres" where children can go after the parental leave is over (in some countries this can already be when the child is three months old). This also means investing in qualified early childhood educators and carers. We consider that a real conciliation between work and family life should give parents (in the majority of cases the mother) the real possibility of choosing when and how to work, especially during these first years of life of their children. Governments should support those decisions, but not by giving more weight to one or the other choice. Governments cannot on the one hand give financial support to families to pay for day care centres and, on the other, offer zero financial support and no recognition when it is a parent who does that job.

Helping women, and families to better reconcile their work and family life does not mean that all children have to be sent to early child education and care centres. The schemes should be flexible enough for parents to ask for part time, teleworking and/or longer parental leaves, without risking to be left with uninteresting work, or lose the possibility to be promoted, or lose pension and social rights, or for women to have greater gender pay and pension gaps.

Competences

The Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning defines competences as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. And key competences are those needed for personal development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship.

Among the eight key competences we know that in the domains of STEM, digital literacy and entrepreneurial attitudes women are lagging behind men. We need education systems and lifelong learning opportunities where women can be integrated and fully taken into account also in those fields.

There should be truly flexible pathways, up-skilling and re-skilling, and especially the recognition of those "other" less tangible skills that are as important and valuable as the others.

Lifelong Learning should be recognised as important for the whole population. A strong economic framework should also accompany it, as well as the understanding that learning does not happen only in a classroom.

The green target

Within the green targets that Europe has foreseen for the next decades we need to recognise the important role women play. It is estimated that women make over 80% of consumer purchasing decisions in families in developed countries. In addition, OECD studies of household behaviour show that women tend to be more sustainable consumers; they are more likely to recycle, buy organic food and eco-labelled products and place a higher value on energy-efficient transport. Women, and particularly mothers, play a key role in promoting sustainable practices among their children, family and the communities they live in. Mothers play a pivotal role in transitioning to a circular economy.

Common and coordinated strategy

It is necessary that Europe develop a common strategy of best practices and models, which allow all citizens, and women in particular, to be able to use within the labour market and in society all those skills acquired throughout their lives.

Visit the MMM website for further information on this topic. See also https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-on-keycompetences-for-lifelong-learning_en.

About Make Mothers Matter – MMM

Make Mothers Matter believes in the power of mothers to make the world a better place, advocating for their recognition and support as changemakers.

Created in 1947, MMM is an international NGO with no political or religious affiliations, transparently voicing the concerns of mothers at the highest level: the European Union, UNESCO and the United Nations (general consultative status).

Compiled by Irina Pálffy-Daun-Seiler, MMM Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, with input from Valérie Bichelmeier, MMM Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, and Olalla Michelena, Secretary General of the European Delegation of MMM.

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100 Years ZONTA International

"Eid bi Eid" – Empowering women and building resilience in a humanitarian crisis

Zonta International is the only private donor of the "Eid bi Eid" project run by UN Women in Jordan. The aim is to improve Syrian refugee and Jordanian women's access to sustainable and decent employment – but the project offers much more to the at least 25.760 direct beneficiaries: It is about building resilience in a humanitarian crisis and empowering women.

Since about eight years ago, the civil war in Syria has resulted in today's largest refugee crisis. About 700,000 of the refugees are registered in Jordan, out of them 49% women. Jordan is estimated to be the country that hosts the second highest number of refugees relative to its own population. This huge effort needs to be acknowledged. That international help is necessary to ease this burden, goes without saying. UN women, Zonta International's partner and one of the more than 40 aid agencies active in Jordan, was the one to introduce a gender perspective into the humanitarian work. In 2016 they started an initiative in Za'atari, the biggest camp. It's called Oasis and has become a rightfully praised model. Building resilience in this very difficult context is what the project is mainly about. The immediate goal is to create work opportunities, both inside and outside of the camps.
Generally, the Syrians in the camps can be considered the most vulnerable of the refugees. 30% of the women in Za'atari, that provides shelter for 80,000 people, live as single mothers. Many are traumatized. Very often, they have been victims of gender based violence. So the Oasis center are meant to host those women in a calm and friendly environment. Like everywhere else in the camp, there are containers that have replaced the tents that were set up early when the crisis started, but everything looks a lot more orderly and well kept. There is a playground, even a small garden, and container walls with colorful paintings evoke green landscapes.

This is a space where refugee women experience that their needs are respected. They can bring their children that can not only enjoy some happy moments on the playground, but also lessons in a kindergarten setting. Most women who come there, are signed up for three months courses that they have to apply for. Apart from them, there are also Syrian women, e.g. teachers, who work there more permanently alongside with UN Women staff.

Getting to the Oasis is almost never a walk around the corner. Therefore UN Women provides transportation. Five days a week, the women come to the center, bring their small kids, learn to sew, weave or manufacture and, at one training course, produce baby kits – a supply of clothes for the first year of a child's life – that are given to the parents of a newborn baby in the camp. About 400 babies are born in the camps every month. The women receive cash for work. The money they make can be spent for food and

supplies that they are not automatically offered as part of the regular help that is provided.

The Oasis centers don't only empower women by providing meaningful work and money. Through dialogues and confidence building sessions they are also encouraged to take on leadership roles in the community. There are councils through which the refugees partly organize their lives, and UN Women helps the beneficiaries of our project to raise their voice and take on responsibility.
The Oasis model has been copied and, starting this year, eight centers outside the camps, in areas with a particularly vulnerable population became operational. They are run by the Ministry for Social Development. UN Women supports the set-up and the operation with social workers. These centers work pretty much in the same way as an Oasis center in the camps. But what is special is that Syrian and Jordanian women are together in a three months rotation. Transportation is always a critical element. The women and their families don't have cars, and public transport is not available. Without providing this service, the women could not come to the center. It is as simple as that.

Although there are also maintenance classes where the women are trained in plumbing or in fixing electrical appliances, training in tailoring seems to be a focus. "Wouldn't this perpetuate old gender roles?" was a question that arose. Maybe not, because of the structure of the Jordanian labor market. Even women with a college degree can often not find a job in their field of expertise. "Despite achieving high grades at university, I was unable to find work. But now I believe I can start my own business through the technical skills I gained at the Oasis Center.", states Rema, a 28-year-old home-maintenance trainee. All women who have been trained in the centers (in 2018, the number was 4,200) could theoretically at least find work in a factory. "Theoretically", because not every family, not every husband, would allow her to work outside of the house. Two of the young Jordanian women, both cousins, think of opening their own workshop and use a small spare room for this.

In each of the Oasis centers, the courses provide a protected environment to talk and share experiences, bad ones and good ones. The centers also offer support for victims of genderbased violence. At the center in Zarqa near Amman that is operated by the Jordan Women's Union, they receive basic medical care, psychological as well as legal support in addition to training. Often the women choose certain topics for the lectures and classes. So those women really get, what they ask for. And even more: for example Fatimah. The Syrian refugee women, single mother of four, first helped in the kitchen – also with the intention to bring food back to her family since she could not afford to have a stove on her own. Today, she comes to the center every day and helps in various ways. The center has changed her life. She was depressed when she first came and now has the confidence and the energy to build a new life for her family. And she's sharing that experience with other women in the center.
Zonta International has committed US$ 1,000,000 to UN Women for the project within 2018 – 2020.

Text: Dr. Susanne von Bassewitz
ZONTA International President 2018-2020

Fotos © Christine Gerberding

Recent and Upcoming Events

2020

January

- 18. – 24.: Austrian Society For Family Medicine 19th Winter Meeting 2020 (OGAM 2020) (Lech am Arlberg, Austria); https://theconferencewebsite.com/conference-info/austrian-society-for-family-medicine-19th-winter-meeting-2020

- 30. – 31.: ICFP 2020: 14. International Conference on Family Planning (Sydney, Australia); https://waset.org/family-planning-conference-in-january-2020-in-sydney

April

- 26. – 02.: Big Sandy April Family Conference (Big Sandy, TX, USA); https://familyconferences.org/events/family-conference/bigsandy20/

May

- 27. – 30.: FCEI 2020: Deaf Children, Families and Services: Embracing Diversity for Brighter Futures (Bad Ischl, Austria); http://www.fcei.at/unit/fcei/congress

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- Government of Spain, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands
- International Non-Governmental Organisations
- Lower Austrian State Government
- Lower Austrian Insurance AG
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- Schoeller-Bleckmann Oilfield Equipment AG
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