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Dear Readers of 'Families International',

The central part of this 122st issue of 'Families International' focuses on the topic of gender equality, which was also the main topic of the last International Forum that took place in May 2022. The paper of presenter Nadine Zwiener-Collins and her colleagues Zoe Lefkofridi and Anja Ratzenböck from the Chair of Politics & Gender, Diversity & Equality of the Paris Lodron University Salzburg reports the importance of gender equality and what we can do to achieve it.

Also, the programme of the Online Webinar in Observance of the 2022 International Day of Families on Friday, 13 May, is included. A text from the United Nations deals with migration trends and families.

Furthermore, three texts of member organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family are included: The International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) as well as Make Mothers Matter (MMM) both focus on unpaid carework of women, which continued to increase during the corona pandemic. Another text of the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) looks at the topic of family support and parenting in the course of the Global Day of Parents.

Finally, Families International No.122 is completed by a list of recent and upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Christin Kohler, M.A.
Executive Editor

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Gender equality: Why is it important, and what can we do to achieve it?

Nadine Zwiener-Collins, Zoe Lefkofridi, Anja Ratzenböck
Chair of Politics & Gender, Diversity & Equality - Paris Lodron University Salzburg

Gender equality – an important goal

When the 17 *Sustainable Development Goals* were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, all 193 countries committed to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (Goal N° 5) by 2030 (UN 2015). Gender equality also features prominently in the goals of the European Union: A roadmap to reduce existing inequalities in areas including health, leadership, and the economy has been published as the current Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025, while gender equality is also one of the core values of the union. Similarly, the equality of men and women is a target for many national governments and companies and organisations. But why is gender equality so important?

The short answer is that we know that gender equality leads to happier, healthier, and more democratic societies. Many studies on different outcomes—individual, societal, and economic—have documented the benefits of gender equality. For example, we know that there is a gender gap in public health that results from a lack of research on conditions that predominantly or exclusively affect women and restricted sexual and reproductive rights for women. Tackling that gap can increase health and social outcomes for women and society as a whole. In the economic sphere, gender equality can boost performance. Women's equal participation in the labour market, for example, is associated with an increase in GDP and reduction of poverty (Sinha et al. 2007). But it also benefits companies and organisations: Having a more diverse workforce and more women in decision-making positions has been found to increase profits and improve outcomes for companies (Moreno-Gómez et al. 2018). Gender equality in the political sphere is a requirement for good governance. Not only is an equal opportunity to participate in politics the core principle of democracy, but equal participation and representation of women also decrease corruption (Dollar et al. 2001), and it increases citizens' satisfaction with democracy and the legitimacy of the political system (Schwindt-Bayer/Mishler 2005). Finally, gender equality matters for individual citizens: For example, it improves family life and educational and health outcomes in children (Abu-Ghaida/Klasen 2004; Croft et al. 2014), and gender-equal societies consist of happier and healthier individuals.

This short article reflects on the importance of gender equality for different areas of society, including public education, the economy, and politics. We put a particular emphasis on the role of gender equality within families and discuss how gender equality within society influences the well-being of families around the globe. However, before exploring the consequences of gender equality in more detail, the following section explains what we mean when we talk about 'gender' and 'equality'—and how the increased focus on gender equality has also led to a backlash from different societal groups, highlighting why the continued engagement for more gender equality is as important as ever.

What is gender equality?

Although gender equality is increasingly in the focus of policymakers, the media, and the public discourse, it can have a different meaning to different people and within different contexts. It is all the more important to clarify what we mean when discussing gender equality. In contrast to 'sex', 'gender' is a relatively new concept: The core idea of gender has its origin in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), but the term itself entered the mainstream feminist debate in the 1970s (Tarrant 2006). Although gender is often used interchangeably with 'sex', the two terms describe distinct concepts. Biological *sex* refers to the biological and physiological differences between men and women (and intersex persons), referring to chromosomes, hormones and sexual organs. It is typically regarded as binary (men and women), although this notion has been challenged more recently (e.g., Fausto-Sterling 2018). *Gender* is related to sex but refers to the social norms, behaviours, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as the relationships with each other. Thus, gender is socially constructed, as the norms and roles vary from society to society and can change over time: Indeed, what it means to be a man or a woman largely depends on the spatial and temporal context. Related to these roles and norms are gender stereotypes—assumptions we make about individuals or groups of people based on their gender. Such stereotypes concern not only beliefs about what men and women typically do (descriptive) but also about what they should do (prescriptive) (Koenig, 2018). More recently, another concept has gained prominence in the public discourse about men and women, namely '*gender identity'*. While gender is defined by society rather than the individual man or woman, gender identity refers to a person's individual experience of gender (which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth).

All of these terms have in common that they are not only used to describe differences between groups of people but, importantly, they are also markers of *inequality*. Equality describes a state in which all humans are treated equally and have the same chances and opportunities, irrespectively of individual characteristics, such as their biological sex, gender identity and sexual orientation; their race, ethnicity and religion, and their dis/ability. Although equality has become increasingly important for international organisations, NGOs, governments, and other organisations, progress towards it remains slow. Women (or non-male persons more generally) still face disadvantages and discrimination across various areas of life. The nature and extent of gender inequality vary geographically and from society to society: Women in Europe face a different set of issues than, for example, women in sub-Saharan Africa or South East Asia. At the same time, different groups of women experience discrimination in different ways: Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability, age, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation, among others. The third and fourth waves of feminism have, therefore, approached gender equality from a perspective of *intersectionality*. That means feminist scholars and activists aim to acknowledge the diversity within the larger categories (boys, men vs girls, women) in terms of ability, race and ethnicity and so on. Indeed, to achieve gender equality for all, it is important to consider differences between different groups of women—across and within societies. In other words, encompassing gender equality has to be intersectional.

The path towards intersectional gender equality is, however, not straightforward. Despite the progress made over the last decades, gender equality—and gender as a concept—have also become an issue of contestation. When the UN started shifting its focus from 'women' to 'gender' during the Third World Conference on Human Rights (in Vienna in 1993), the shift was not well received by all; for instance, many religious groups were opposed to the idea of

gender as a social construct opposed to the 'natural' difference of sex. Although the anti-gender discourse was initially confined to international human rights fora, other actors have taken it up in the 2010s, for example, radical right populist parties (RRPP). Recently, the backlash against gender equality has gained new popularity as evidenced not only by prominent cases, such as the anti-abortion laws in Poland—and most recently the US—or the ban of 'Gender Studies' in Hungary, but also shown in everyday interactions, such as online violence against women. Indeed, in parallel to the increased efforts to achieve gender equality, a backlash that aims to undo the hard-earned successes is also gaining momentum. In the face of this backlash, we should understand and bring into the public discourse the benefits gender equality has—for all areas of society.

The impact of gender-equal societies

Gender equality matters for healthy happy and productive societies—as a large body of studies from all different academic disciplines has documented. It matters, for example, in and for education, the workplace and economy, as well as in areas of politics and power. Here, we highlight only a few of the ways in which gender equality on the societal level affects societies, before zooming in on families in the section after.

Gender equality in education

Education is essential for the opportunities and challenges people encounter in their lives. It is thus perhaps not surprising that equal access to and opportunities in education positively affect the economic development of societies. Indeed, there is a direct link between gender equality in education and the economic growth of a country: countries tend to do better when everyone has equal eductational opportunities (Cabeza-García et al., 2018; Mishra et al., 2020). If inequality in education is, however, allowed to persist, the access to education and later to the labour market is restricted for highly talented girls, while less talented boys or men have easier access to education and, later, the labour market. Consequently, a gender gap in education also contributes to the gender gap in employment and the economy (Morais Maceira 2017). On the other hand, as long as barriers in spheres of employment and economy, such discrimination in and exclusion from in the labour market, persist, the demand for education for women remains lower because the investment into education does not benefit young girls and/or their families (Mishra et al. 2020). Finally, equality in education also matters for gender equality in other areas: The better women are educated, the more likely they are to claim access rights in the socio-economic and political sphere, while gender equality in education affects women's position in their private lives and within families, as better educated women are, for instance, better equipped to deal with family responsibilities (Mishra et al. 2020).

Gender equality in the economy

The costs of inequality in the economy are not only linked to women's educational opportunities but also shape the fundamental economic and developmental trajectories of a country. It is a well established observation that women's empowerment is related to economic development (Duflo 2012) and a reduction in poverty (Sinha et al. 2007), in other words, that more gender equal countries tend to do better. Gender inequality deprives a country of the use of female labour and, consequently, leads to a competitive disadvantage (Mishra et al. 2020). This is because the productive capacity of an economy increases, the more people are included in the labour market, which, in turn, makes an economy more competitive. Indeed, improving gender equality also helps tackle employment and productivity issues arising from the ageing

of the population, and on the whole, society profits from the full economic potential of women concerning a country's GDP.

Similarly, gender equality is increasingly considered an investment for companies. Concerning the presence of women on top of the corporate hierarchy, for example, in the boardroom and the top management, business performance increases when teams are more diverse (Moreno-Gómez et al. 2018). It is not a novel argument that diversity broadens the range of expertise and experience in management teams, and in comparison with homogenous teams or boards, more diverse teams lead to more innovation (Moreno-Gómez et al. 2018).

Despite these positive effects of gender equality in the labour market, social obstacles, such as the traditional views of women's roles in society, stereotypes about their competencies, the persisting double burden of managing childcare and work, missing gender quotas and a lack of female role models remain in the way to gender equality in the labour market and the economy. Organisational obstacles are rooted in the reluctance of companies to hire women but also stem from a persisting reluctance to promote women and adapt, for example, work-life balance practices to fit women's needs. As a consequence, women might withdraw from the labour market or opt for more "family-friendly" career paths (Pološki Vokić et al. 2019).

Gender equality in education and employment can contribute to economic growth by increasing the talent pool available to an economy. However, the positive impact of gender equality on the economy depends on the opportunities available to women: If gender-related barriers in the labour market persist, educational efforts, development, and economic growth fail to translate into gender equality (Kabeer/Natali 2013).

Gender equality in politics and power

In order to tackle both gender inequality in education and the economy, gender equality in the political sphere is necessary. In the twenty-first century, more women were elected into political office than ever before: In May 2022, the percentage of women in parliament ranged from 0% in countries such as Yemen, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea, to 53% in Cuba and 63% in Rwanda, with a global average of 26.4% (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2022). However, in particular, in political decision-making positions, women continue to be underrepresented, while in areas with less power, their representation is better (Pološki Vokić et al. 2019). At the same time, female politicians are essential for representing women's interests. If women are excluded from the political decision-making, their interests also tend to be insufficiently represented (Pološki Vokić et al. 2019). That is because the context, process and institutions in which policies are made are deeply embedded in a culture of masculinity. Political institutions are gendered and male-dominated, which consider the male norm as "neutral" and reproduce it. Consequently, they reinforce disadvantages for women and advantages for men (Lombardo et al. 2017; Lowndes 2020).

A prominent example of gendered policy implications is the area of welfare policies. Welfare policies often differentiate between the employed and unemployed, penalising career interruptions and absences from the labour market. This means that they—implicitly or explicitly—reinforce the traditional 'male breadwinner/female caregiver' family model and increase the dependency of women on their male partners (Lombardo et al. 2017). One reason for 'gendered' policy outcomes is that policies are designed according to how specific problems are interpreted. When there are hegemonic assumptions, the interests of marginalised groups, such as women, often fail to be targeted by policies (Lombardo et al. 2017). At the same time, we know that women in power make different policy choices than men. Especially in countries in which women's needs are neglected, their priorities *differ* from those of men: Women pursue

policy preferences that reflect their own needs, including issues such as child health and improved access to the labour market, but also women tend to be focused on issues such as infrastructure (Duflo 2012). Putting women in charge therefore helps to address imbalances between men and women in other areas of life (Coleman 2004).

In addition to the negative consequences of inequality in policy-making for policy outcomes, inequality also affects the political system itself: For example, higher levels of female participation in government are associated with lower levels of corruption, as they are more likely than men to prefer the common good over individual material gain (Dollar et al. 2001). Similarly, studies have found that the presence of women increases transparency in municipalities (Araujo/Tejedo-Romero 2018).

Gender equality and the family

Families in gender-equal societies

Gender equality is fundamental not only to the functioning of society as a whole, but it also matters families. Families are situated within the context of the society which means they function within a complex context of policies and cultural norms that shape the well-being of families and individuals within it. It is perhaps not surprising that women not only prefer more gender-egalitarian societies but are also, on average, happier in them. In most countries, women have lower levels of well-being than men, often attributed to the disadvantages and discrimination they experience. Indeed, gender (in)equality seems to explain quite well, why women are happy in some countries and not-so-happy in others (Mencarini and Sironi 2012). Both cultural values of gender equality and the unequal distribution of resources, such as money, free time, and education, play a role in women's comparively lower levels of well-being (Tesch-Römer et al. 2008).

Many of the inequalities linked to women's lower levels of well-being are rooted in the so-calles 'gendered division of labour', which describes the observation that in hetero-sexual relationships, women remain disproportionally responsible for unpaid work within the home—care work and housework—while men do more paid work in the labour market. In countries where such a 'male breadwinner/female caregiver' family model dominates, it is, for example, primarily women who struggle to reconcile work and family demands. In more egalitarian societies the challenges to balance work and family are more evenly distributed between men and women (Kurowska 2020). As a consequence, in these countries, having children leads to happier men *and* women, while in less progressive cultures, where childrearing is the responsibility of women, only fathers, but not mothers, are happier than their childless counterparts (Aassve et al. 2015).

One way politics can encourage or discourage different family models is through policies aimed at the reconciliation of paid work and family responsibilities, so-called work-family policies. These policies influence, for example, women's labour force participation and their labour market attachment (Hegewisch/Gornick 2014), but they are also important for the well-being of mothers and families. Sufficiently long and well-paid maternity leave, for example, is vital in supporting mothers' physical and mental health post-partum (Dagher et al. 2014). Countries where work-family policy regimes promote a dual-worker/dual-carer family model also tend to have higher levels of child well-being, lower levels of child mortality and child poverty, and higher levels of children's educational attainment, showing that potential concerns about a trade-off between promoting women's employment and children's well-being are unfounded (Engster/Stensöta 2011). These policies are especially important in developing countries, as

maternity leave helps to decrease infant and child mortality (Fallon et al. 2017). More generally, in developing countries, gender equality on the societal level is directly tied to health outcomes in children, as studies have suggested that the status of women is associated with children's undernutrition (Osmani/Sen 2003). For example, a study with Bangladeshi women has found a link between women's empowerment and decreases in malnutrition and low birth weight in their children (Kabir et al. 2020).

Gender equality within the family

In addition to gender equality within society at large, gender-equal norms and practices within the family also matter for happiness, relationship satisfaction, and child welfare. For example, the division of labour within each household affects the well-being of the family, especially that of women. While research shows that men's happiness is largely unaffected by hours of paid work and housework, women become happier if they spend more time in paid work and unhappier with each additional hour spent on housework (Boye 2009). However, particularly detrimental to women's well-being is the so-called 'second shift'—when, after their (full-time) job, women also perform most of the housework (Alvarez and Miles-Touya 2016). Interestingly, the strength of this effect depends also on the gender-egalitarian culture: Doing a large share of the housework has an even worse effect on life satisfaction in more egalitarian contexts, which suggests that inequality within the family weighs particularly strong on women when it is less normalised through cultural norms and expectations (Mencarini and Sironi 2012).

Unsurprisingly, the division of household tasks affects not only women's happiness but also how they experience the quality of their partnership. Gender roles are an essential factor in marriage (dis)satisfaction: Women are happier in their relationships when the husband contributes fairly to the housework (Nourani et al. 2019). The same is also true for the involvement in childcare. When the father is more involved, *both* partners are happier around birth and after (Agache et al. 2014). But importantly, fathers' childcare involvement (relative to mothers') also increases the mothers' satisfaction with the relationship and leads to overall more stable relationships (Schober 2012).

Of course gender equality within the family does not just concern the division of housework (and paid work) but also about the gender attitudes and behaviours towards each other. Sexist attitudes in men, for instance, are linked to sexist and violent behaviour. We know, for example, that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are more likely to also show violent behaviour towards their female partners, in everyday interactions, and conflict situations (Cross et al. 2017). A study from the Zimbabwean context links gender inequality within the family to intimate partner violence: Men are less likely to perpetrate violence against their partners when the woman is as educated as her husband and has an equal say in decision-making; however, the strongest predictor of violence remains men's patriarchal attitudes and behaviours (Fidan/Bui 2016). The effects of the violence continue to have an effect long after, as they affect how children think about gender roles and relationships. Although children witnessing marital violence are not necessarily more likely to be violent themselves, they tend to become more accepting of violence in relationships (Lichter/McCloskey 2004).

This observation is in line with what we know about the transmission of gender attitudes, roles norms, and behaviours more generally. In early ages, we learn what boys and girls should and should not do (e.g., in terms of appearance and playing behaviours) (Koenig 2018). Childhood is an important phase in life when humans learn how their society and/or culture understand the role of a man and that of a woman; toddlers and elementary aged youth internalise this knowledge as a gender schema, which they use to process and organise their experiences

later on in life (Bem, 1981; 1993). It is hence not surprising, that gender role beliefs and gendered behaviour in the family shape, for instance, the occupational aspirations of children. For example, mothers' explicit beliefs about the division of labour predict the same beliefs in their children, and fathers who behave against traditional gender roles, for example by doing a larger share of the housework, raise daughters who themselves are more interested in working outside the home and in less gender-typical occupations (Croft et al. 2014). This is a form of parental role modelling, where parents' implicit and explicit beliefs, but also their behaviours, shape their childrens' beliefs, identities and and behaviours (Endendijk and Portengen 2022). Gender equality in the family is, therefore, especially important, as it can help challenge extings norms and expecations and hopefully contribute to a more gender-equal society for future generations.

What can we do to achieve equality?

The most fundamental step for individuals, families, communities, organisations, firms and state agencies and institutions is to take scientific evidence seriously: on the one hand, scientific research shows that gender equality is beneficial not only for societies, political communities and economies, but also for families and for individuals (incl. health and well-being) across the life course. On the other hand, studies reveal not only that gender inequality still exists, but also that it takes many forms. Inequality is caused by *structural bias,* which concerns institutional patterns and practices that advantage men and disadvantage women; in turn, structural gender inequalities (e.g., education, health) (re-) produce gender bias at the individual *level,* which can be *explicit* or *implicit.* Gender bias is the opposite of being neutral towards human of all genders – and in particular the aversion to women or the preference for men.

We would like to highlight here that implicit (unconscious) gender bias is an existing yet invisible source of gender inequality. This is a form of bias of which we are ourselves are unaware. Even if we are not aware of this bias, it does affect our evaluations of performance and qualities (Avitzour et al. 2020; Régner et al. 2019). Studies have shown gender bias – preference for boys/men and aversion to girls/women- to exist not only among boys/men, but also among girls/women. For instance, both male and female workers tend to devalue the performance of women in management (Eagley and Karau, 2002; Warning and Buchanan 2009). Scientific evidence can help design policy interventions to increase awareness of such biases (and of their detrimental effects) – a fundamental prerequisite for reducing stereotypes and creating a more encouraging environment for girls and women. Given that implicit biases, are produced and reinforced by structural inequalities (e.g., education, health), the effective promotion of gender equality necessitates policies that address bias at both macro and micro levels (state/society/market and individual). Changing the narrative about women and reducing gender stereotypes must go hand in hand with undoing practices and policies that sustain gender inequalities (ibid.). At the macro level, policies that forbid unequal pay for equal work as well as policies that promote fairness, justice and transparency not only in recruitment and advancement processes, but also in care responsibilities are necessary conditions for gender equality.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES
15 MAY 2022

Families and Urbanization

Online Webinar in Observance of the

2022 International Day of Families

Friday, 13 May, 10:00-11:15 AM (New York time)

Programme

Introductory remarks

H.E. Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani
Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations
"The Importance of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2024"

Moderator

Angela Mwawi
Chief, Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit Urban Practices Branch, Global Solutions Division UN-Habitat

Launch of Background Paper & Keynote Address

"Migration, Urbanization and the Family Dimension"

Bahira Sherif Trask, PhD.
Professor & Chair
Human Development & Family Sciences
University of Delaware

Panelists:

Brenna Hassinger-Das, PhD.
Assistant Professor
Psychology Department
Pace University
"Designing Cities for Children and Families"

Piotr Całbecki
President
Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region, Poland
"Venice Declaration on Inclusive Cities for Sustainable Families: Good Practices at the Local Level"

José Alejandro Vázquez Alarcón, PhD.
Representative to the United Nations (NY)
Strategic Partnership Coordinator
International Federation for Family Development (IFFD)
"Civil Society Declaration for IYF+30"

Q&A Session

Issues for discussion:

- The importance of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2024 (IYF+30)
- Current urbanization trends & family-related issues
- Family-oriented policies facilitating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals linked to urbanization (SDGs 1, 3, 10 & 11)
- Good practices in sustainable and family-friendly urbanization
- Current preparations for IYF+30
- Civil society initiatives including Venice Declaration* & Civil Society Declaration for IYF +30**

*
http://www.familyperspective.org/icsf/VeniceChart.pdf
**
Civil Society Declaration for IYF + 30

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FUTURE OF THE WORLD

POLICY BRIEF NO 133

Migration Trends and Families

INTRODUCTION

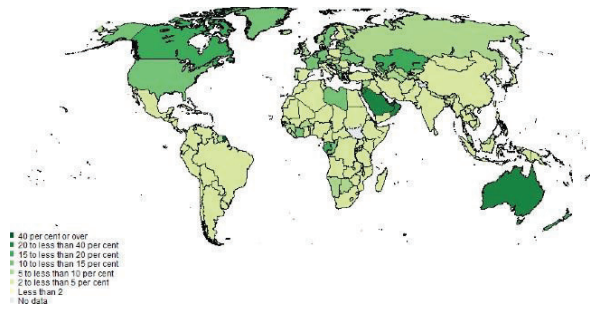
In preparation for the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2024, UNDESA supports research and awareness-raising activities on the impact of current megatrends including technological, demographic, urbanization, migration and climate change trends on families. In 2022, migration (along with urbanization) and its impact on families is the topic under consideration. As migration-related issues are visible throughout the 2030 Agenda and elsewhere at the United Nations forum, focusing on migrants and their families through effective policies grows in importance and deserves more attention.

Key messages

- The COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep-rooted inequalities around the world, at the same time demonstrating that migrants constitute the big part of essential frontline workers and their remittances contribute to global development.
- It is indispensable to incorporate a family perspective into migration policy analysis. Since families socialize and provide economically and emotionally for the next generation, they should be seen as essential for migrants' integration into new societies. Thus, policies facilitating family reunification, social protection and intergenerational support are key in successful integration.
- Migrants need various types of support in addition to economic assistance. They need access to quality education, health, including mental health, housing and other social assistance helping not just individuals but families supporting their cohesion. As transnational motherhood becomes a global phenomenon, policies supporting migrant women and facilitating reunification with their children are key.
- As global data on migration is fragmented and incomplete, it is difficult to design policies supporting well migrant families and their members, especially children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities. Increased availability, quality, and comparability of data disaggregated by migratory status, as well as of the use of different types of data sources, such as statistical descriptors and qualitative evidence, supplemented by case studies at local level, are indispensable for evidence-based policymaking.

MIGRANTS AND REMITTANCES

Figure 1: International migrants as percentage of total population, 2019, UNDESA



Map data source : Geospatial Information Section, United Nations
Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

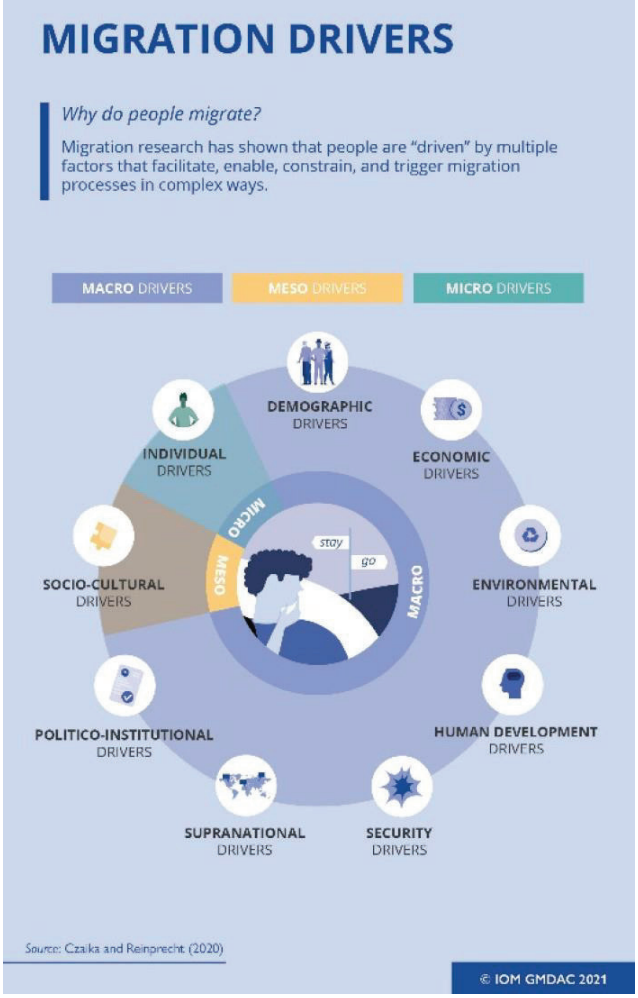
The number of international migrants has been steadily rising from 173 million in 2000 to 281 million in 2020, constituting 2.8 per cent and 3.6 per cent of the global population respectively. In 2020, women accounted for 135 million of migrants (3.5 per cent of the world's female population) while men accounted for 146 million (3.7 per cent of the global male population). Remittances are a primary form of income for many families in countries of origin and a financial safety net for their members but they are also critical for economies, accounting for over 10 per cent of GDP in many low-and-middle-income countries. Remittances have been associated with improving human development outcomes across areas such as poverty, health, education, and gender equality. As of the mid-1990s, international remittances have significantly surpassed official development assistance (ODA) levels defined as government aid aiming at promoting the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Remittances to low-and middle-income countries reached an all-time high of $589 billion in 2021 and exceeded the sum of foreign direct investments (FDI) and overseas development

Authors: Renata Kaczmarska and Masumi Ono, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN DESA.

assistance. Defying initial forecasts of the COVID-19 impacts, remittances registered just a 1.7 per cent drop in 2020 and are projected to increase by 7.3 per cent in 2021.[1]

MIGRATION, INEQUALITY AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Figure 2: https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/family-migration



Migration, linked to globalization, illustrates economic disparities between different regions as well as rising inequalities between societies, with migrants relocating in search of better economic opportunities. Thus, in the 2030 Agenda, migration features under SDG10 (reduced inequalities), target 10.7, stipulating facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Other targets within different SDGs note labour migration, remittances and migration data issues. Such visibility of migration in the 2030 Agenda emphasizes the need for support of migrants through adequate policies and investment in data gathering. As global data on migration is fragmented, incomplete and rarely disaggregated by age, sex, and disability, it is difficult to design policies supporting well migrant families and their members, especially children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities. Increased availability, quality, and comparability of data on migrants and migration, obtained from different data sources, including at local levels, would facilitate the design and implementation of effective migration policies. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration has recognized some of such policies noting the need to facilitate "access to procedures for family reunification for migrants at all skills levels through appropriate measures that promote the realization of the right to family life and the best interests of the child, including by reviewing and revising applicable requirements, such as on income, language proficiency, length of stay, work authorization, and access to social security and services."

As the COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep-rooted inequalities around the world, at the same time demonstrating that in some countries, migrants constitute the bulk of essential frontline workers[2] and their remittances contribute to global development, urgent action is needed to promote fair migration policies.

MIGRATION AND FAMILY LIFE

Migration is often driven by multiple factors, including socio-cultural drivers such as family. Importantly, migration itself is mostly a family decision and even when the migration decision is taken unilaterally, most migrants have a sense of family obligation and contribute to their families left behind, mainly through remittances as noted above. Both internal (mostly rural to urban) and international migration impacts family life. Individual family members leave behind their families embedded in social networks and face challenges rebuilding or creating new social networks in host countries. Labour migration often puts strain on families and contributes to family breakdown. Intergenerational relations between parents, grandparents and children as well as spouses and siblings are often negatively impacted as well. For instance, a growing phenomenon of 'left behind children' when young adults migrate to urban areas and leave their children in care of grandparents is likely to lead to intergenerational disagreements over parenting styles and expectations.

Irregular migration poses great risks and dangers to unaccompanied minors, who are often abused and exploited during irregular migration journeys to work in another country or to reunify with parents who migrated. Most countries are set up to only deal with a very small number of cases and large inflows of unaccompanied minors need special facilities, guardians, and create enormous challenges for the educational system.[3]

1 United Nations, Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2022. (New York: United Nations, 2022), available from: https://developmentfinance.un.org/fsdr2022

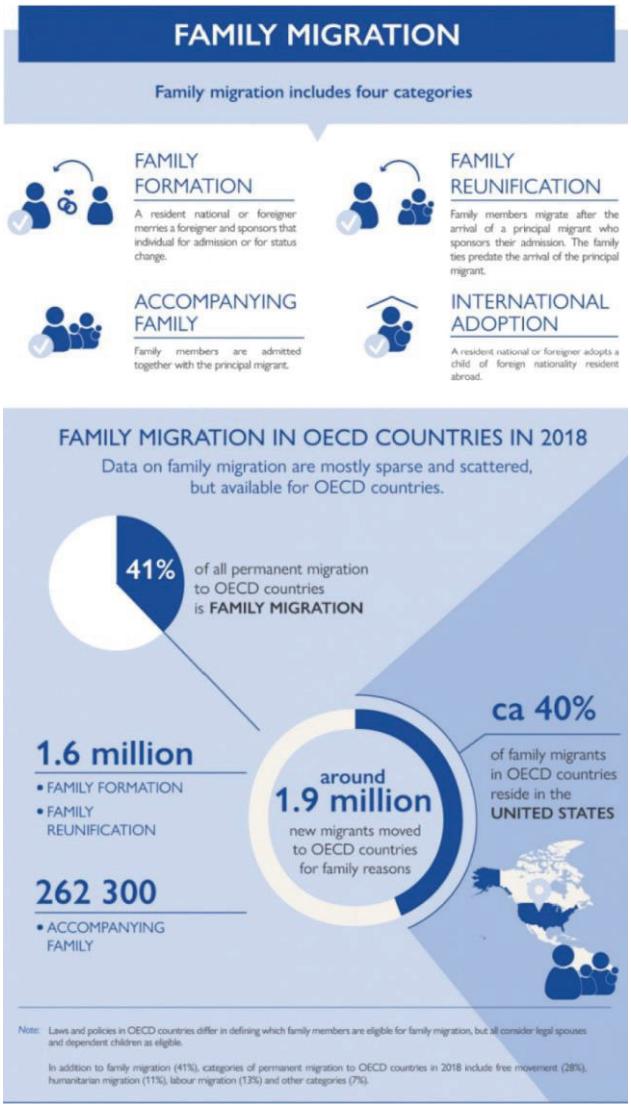
2 For instance, 69 per cent of all immigrants in the United States labour force are essential workers. Data from Center for Migration Studies available at: https://cmsny.org/data-on-essential-workers-recent-publications-and-tables/

3 Sherif Trask, Bahira (2022). Migration, Urbanization, and the Family Dimension (background paper prepared for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, Division for Inclusive Social Development, forthcoming)

Contemporary migration has been impacted by technological changesaswellasgeopoliticalandenvironmentaltransformations. For instance, thanks to advancements in transportation and communication technologies, families can stay connected and multi-local families can maintain family relations. Countries, however, increasingly tend to restrict family reunification and prevent migrants from having family members visit or reside with them. Many countries tightened their borders and established restrictive laws to deter migrants from entering and obtaining legal status, with COVID-19 travel restrictions making family reunification even more difficult. Such policie have led to household fragmentation and put into sharper focus inequalities associated with international migration.

FAMILY MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES

Figure 3: https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/family-migration



Notably, notwithstanding regional variations, family is the major driver of migration today. Family migration refers to family reunification, family formation, accompanying family members of workers as well as family adoption. Data on family migration is limited but available for OECD countries indicating that in 2018 around 1.9 million migrants moved to OECD countries for family reasons and family migration constitutes 41 per cent of total migration into OECD countries. Although family migration increased in most OECD countries from 2014 to 2018, in some countries, family migration diminished due to the shrinking of family reunification programmes with several countries imposing restrictions.[4]

Transnational families, whose members are physically separated between two or more nation-states but maintain close ties and relationships, are a growing phenomenon with the bulk of research focusing on transnational families in host countries (as opposed to those left behind) and transnational motherhood.

Historically, migration was seen as a male phenomenon resulting in the weakening of ties with family and community. Nowadays, however, with the expansion of jobs in manufacturing and service sectors, women account for 48 per cent of all international migrants. Transnational motherhood, characterized by mother-child separation is becoming more common with young mothers leaving their children with mostly female family members in search of economic opportunities lacking in their countries of origin. Whereas most migrant women obtain domestic service and care work legally, stricter immigration policies have led to more women taking on service sector jobs through illegal means which could lead to abuse and exploitation.

Transnational mothers take on the breadwinning role thus redefining gender roles and struggling to be perceived as good mothers and meet the social expectations ingrained in societies they leave behind. They tend to send remittances to other females in their families (rather than their husbands) to support their children's wellbeing and education. Such economic support replaces physical and emotional support with many left behind children struggling emotionally and psychologically. Such arrangements are referred to as global care chains linking migrants and families left behind through financial obligations and unpaid care work. Studies on transnational motherhood indicate that women find it difficult to justify and negotiate their parental roles at home and abroad. Little is known, however, about broader impacts of transnational motherhood on families left behind.[5] In this context, it should be emphasized that there is an urgent need for a more equal distribution of unpaid care work between men and women, so that fathers/male guardians take more equal share of the parental work.

4 Migration Data Portal available at: https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/family-migration

5 Sherif Trask, (2022).

Focusing research on transnational family units and not only its members is essential in order to understand how family members organize their economic and social obligations and continue to care for each other. This can lead to more strategic policy and programme planning.

CURRENT MIGRATION POLICIES

The migrant integration policy index (MIPEX) identifies the following categories: labour market mobility, education, political participation, family reunification, access to nationality, health, permanent residence, anti-discrimination. Integration policies in 56 MIPEX countries are, on average, only halfway favourable with as many obstacles as opportunities for migrants to settle and integrate in host countries. Immigrants mostly enjoy basic human rights and long-term security but do not have equal access to opportunities to participate in all areas of life. On average, migrants in top destination countries for immigration, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States benefit more from equal rights and opportunities while immigrants in the Middle East and Asia face many obstacles in most dimensions of integration policy.[6]

Moreover, current policies in place are only to some extent favourable for promoting family reunification and integration. Reunited families tend to benefit from a secure status and basic rights but disagreements persist about what defines a family and what the conditions of reunification should entail. For instance, many Western European countries restrict eligibility to nuclear families and require transnational family members to have high incomes and pass language or cultural tests. High-skilled family members are favoured while the most vulnerable such as those in need of social protection are ignored. Moreover, in the current political climate, transnational families face an uncertain future and family reunification is regarded as a controversial issue with increased restrictions on reunification put in place in several countries.

CONCLUSIONS

Migration policies and programmes should reflect the reality that migration is not an individual phenomenon. Family migration is a driver of overall migration and as such family needs should be recognized in overall policymaking. When migrating individually, migrants are still part of families, and their migration decisions are largely motivated by the desire to improve the wellbeing of other family members, especially children. Rather than being perceived as victims, however, they should be seen as capable and active agents of their own lives, eager to become productive and economically independent citizens.

Better policies and better data are needed to facilitate orderly migration and recognize the contributions of migrants. To create supportive policies and programmes, more research is needed. A

6 Ibid

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Caregiving in Crisis

Mothers taking on additional unpaid care work

1 March 2022

117

iffdpapers

The recession shadowing the COVID-19 pandemic has been frequently characterized as a "shecession," implying disproportionately negative effects for women. Yet the crisis might more accurately be called a "momcession," as women's work losses were driven in large part by the outcomes of mothers specifically. Across countries, one group stands out as faring especially poorly in labor force and unpaid work outcomes: working mothers with school-age or younger children.

International comparisons of the effects of the recession on mothers have been limited thus far due to lags in the cross-national availability of detailed labor force and time use data by parenthood status.

A survey conducted by OECD in 2020 helps to fill a gap in our understanding by combining self-reported employment and experienced labor market penalties and stress. Some of the main findings regarding mothers suggest:
- Mothers were nearly three times as likely as fathers to report that they took on the majority or all of additional unpaid care

The OECD's 2020 Risks that Matter survey presents cross-national evidence that when schools and childcare facilities shut down, mothers took on the brunt of additional unpaid care work – and, correspondingly, they experienced labor market penalties and stress.

The findings serve as another reminder that governments must consider inequalities in unpaid work and take a gender-sensitive approach when building their policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

Extracts from the study "Caregiving in Crisis: Gender inequality in paid and unpaid work during COVID-19". Available at https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/caregiving-in-crisis-gender-inequality-in-paid-and-unpaid-work-during-covid-19-3555d164/#endnotea0z4.

International Organizations Department of the International Federation for Family Development.

work related to school or childcare facility closures: 61.5% of mothers of children under age 12 say they took on the majority or entirety of the extra care work, while 22.4% of fathers report that they did.

- Mothers of children under age 12 were the group most likely to move from employed to not employed status between Q4 2019 and Q3 2020, on average across OECD countries.

- Gender gaps in a household's unpaid care were largest, on average, when the father continued to be employed while the mother was not. This relationship was not reciprocated to the same degree in households where the father was out of paid work and the mother was in paid work. Indeed, consistent with existing literature, RTM 2020 data show that mothers' participation in paid employment did little to mitigate inequality in unpaid work conditions.

A "Shecession," or a "Momcession"?

The recession shadowing the COVID-19 pandemic has been frequently labeled a "shecession," implying disproportionately negative economic effects for women, relative to men. Gender gaps vary across countries, but, on average, cross-national OECD and global estimates indicate that women's hours worked and women's employment rates declined at a greater rate than men's in the early months of the pandemic [1]. This stands in contrast to what have typically been larger job losses among men in recent recessions [2].

These initial declines were driven by demand- and supply-side shocks on labor. Women disproportionately work in sectors that were hit hardest by the early lockdowns (such as retail and hospitality). Women are also more likely to work in part-time and irregular jobs, which were more likely to be terminated or furloughed in the early months of COVID-19 [3]. Finally, restrictions on labor supply resulting from increased unpaid care responsibilities (e.g. the need to care for children during school closures) were disproportionately borne by women.

After the initial shock, women's work hours rebounded somewhat in the following quarters and were stabilized throughout the pandemic by women's continued participation in essential sectors like health care and teaching. Labor force participation and employment rates between the fourth quarters of 2019 and 2020, measured in labor force surveys, show that job losses were spread across men and women, though effects were often larger for women.

Yet many female-dominated jobs still have not returned in the way that male-dominated ones have, for example in construction and manufacturing in some countries. And the "pull" factors keeping some women out of the labour market – namely irregular school openings and childcare availability – are still ongoing. Whether (and to what degree) these gender gaps in paid and unpaid work will persist will depend on the nature of the ongoing pandemic and on governments' responses.

Country-specific studies have helped to illustrate the cause and nature of women's labor market losses. School and childcare closures were a causal driver of parents' – and especially women's – reduced paid work hours. These closures forced parents, and especially women, to take on additional unpaid care work in countries as diverse as the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and United States [4].

Related to this, women's work hour reductions in many countries were disproportionately borne by those workers who were unable to stay home and telework. These were by and large the women who had to choose between continuing to work or caring for their children at home. While the hours worked by women decreased cross-nationally, countries with well-designed care leave systems and/or job retention schemes were often better able to stave off more dramatic drops in women's work [5].

The study, taken together, suggests that the COVID-19 "shecession" should more accurately be called a "momcession." Women's work losses were driven in large part by the outcomes of mothers, specifically, who often took on additional hours of (unpaid) care of their children during school shutdowns. Yet cross-national comparisons of the effects of the recession on mothers have thus far been limited due to lags in the cross-national availability of detailed labor force microdata by parenthood status. When comparing women and men with comparable parenthood status, the gender gap in employment was greatest between mothers and fathers of under-12s. On average across countries, mothers of under-12s were over 3 percentage points more likely to have left employment than fathers of under-12s at some point between the first and the third quarter of 2020. This represents the early months of the pandemic, and the period with the most intensive public lockdowns. In Germany, for example, mothers of under-12s were about 6 percentage points more likely to have left employment than fathers of under-12s, whereas women who are

not mothers or are mothers of children 12 and over had little difference in employment outcomes relative to their male counterparts.

Beyond outright job losses, other job disruptions took their toll on families, too. It is not possible to assess with RTM data to what extent women versus men experienced job disruptions such as layoffs or placement on a job retention scheme in 2020, as RTM 2020 asked about job disruption in the household of the respondent, not the respondent individually. These job disruption results therefore cannot be disaggregated by gender.

But given widespread school closures during the pandemic, it is unsurprising that about half of respondents with children under age 18 experienced some kind of job disruption in the household due to COVID-19. Gaps emerge in particular when looking at work-hour reductions and taking leave from work. Across the sample, about 15.2% of respondents with children under 18 report a member of their household having their work hours reduced or being put on a part-time job scheme, compared to just 12.3% of other respondents, on average [6].

Additionally, many parents took leave from work. 15.6% of respondents with children under 18 had at least one member of the household take paid or unpaid leave from work, compared to just 10.8% of respondents without children. The rate of paid or unpaid leave-taking from work increases further, to 17%, when looking only at parents with younger children under age 12 [7].

It is worth noting, too, that in the households where no one took leave, someone may have already been available to care for children due to a different type of job disruption. Across countries, on average, 41% of households with children that did not take (paid or unpaid) leave reported some other form of job-related disruption, such as job loss, a temporary lay-off, work hours reduction, and/or placement on a job retention scheme [8].

Mothers took on more unpaid work than others

Aside from labour market factors, one of the biggest drivers of women's reduced employment, labour force participation and reduced working hours during COVID-19 is the fact that mothers typically took on more additional unpaid childcare obligations than fathers and non-parents. This is the case in most countries that have been studied so far [9].

RTM 2020 provides new, cross-national data to assess this link. We find that women report taking on more of the additional unpaid childcare work during COVID-19 than fathers, and we find that the burden of unpaid work is associated with a decreased probability of being in paid employment by Q3 2020.

Mothers were more likely than fathers to take on additional unpaid care work

In the absence of widespread, cross-nationally harmonized time use statistics during COVID-19, RTM 2020 offers evidence across OECD countries that women took on more unpaid care obligations than men when schools and childcare facilities shut down. Respondents whose children were affected by school or childcare facility closures were asked, "In your household, who took on any additional care work as a result of school or childcare facility closures [during COVID-19]?"

On average, mothers of children under age 12 were nearly three times as likely as fathers to say that they took on all or the majority of additional unpaid care work related to school and/or childcare facility closures. These gender gaps are fairly consistent across ages of minor children.

61.5% of mothers of under-12s report that they took on most or all of that additional unpaid care work, compared to just 22.4% of fathers reporting that they took on most or all of the additional unpaid care work – a gap of 39.1 percentage points. The gender gap is smallest in the Netherlands, but even there, the share of mothers reporting taking on the majority or entirety of additional care work is 15.9 percentage points higher than the rate for fathers.

It is important to note that these results present perceptions of who took on more work. Unlike traditional time use surveys, RTM 2020 does not monitor hours spent on specific paid and unpaid activities.

Yet fathers, too, corroborate that their partner took on more of the additional care work than they did – albeit to a lesser degree. While 22.4% of fathers self-report taking on the majority or entirety of additional unpaid care work, 25.9% of fathers report that their partner took on the majority of entirely of additional unpaid care work. The most common answer for fathers of under-12s is that the additional unpaid care work was split evenly between them and their partner: 40.8% of fathers claim this, compared to 20.7%of mothers.

This inequality in unpaid work is negatively associated with women's employment. A high unpaid care work burden is highly correlated with moving out of paid work. Of course, causality likely moves in both directions: the additional available time for a respondent who left employment could drive them to take on more unpaid work, or an added unpaid work burden could result in respondent's departure from paid employment.

Mothers' participation in paid work did little to mitigate inequality in unpaid work

Academic research suggests a shift toward more paternal care. Even if mothers took on more of the additional unpaid care work, researchers and policy makers have suggested that COVID-19 may mark the start of a change towards more egalitarian norms and behaviour. This convergence notion suggests that by getting to know and appreciate the effort that goes into family care work at home, fathers might permanently increase their share of such work [10].

However, this shift towards more paternal caregiving seems to be more pronounced when fathers are unemployed or furloughed rather than working from home, suggesting that the shift emerged out of a supply-side shock (fathers have more time), rather than the demand-side shock (higher need for childcare and housework). Fathers' childcare provision is much more sensitive to employment status than that of women's [11].

Importantly, fathers' involvement in childcare seems to be highly sensitive to their partners' working arrangements. The main driver of the shift toward more paternal care was the inability of working mothers to telework, further suggesting that fathers' involvement came out of necessity (mothers cannot) rather than opportunity (fathers can) [12]. For example, women working from home in the United Kingdom, were found during COVID-19 to have been doing as many additional hours of childcare as men on furlough, and a study of time use data in the United States finds that moms working from home spend over 20 minutes more per day on childcare than telecommuting dads. This gap is even larger when looking at non-care housework [13].

RTM 2020 data corroborate this general consensus that working mothers were not immune to the additional unpaid work burden. Working mothers with an employed partner are more than twice as likely as working men with an employed partner to say that they took on the majority or all of the additional unpaid care work. 53.4% of employed mothers, versus 20.9% of employed fathers, report taking on the majority of entirety of additional care work when schools and childcare facilities closed.

The gender gaps in caregiving are largest, by far, when a mother is not employed and the father is employed. 76.9% of not employed mothers (with employed partners) say that they took on most or all of the additional unpaid care work. When the situation is reversed – the father is not employed while the mother is employed – only 24.5% of fathers self-report taking on most or all of the additional unpaid care work.

This inequality in caregiving during COVID-19 is unsurprising in light of longstanding gender norms and gender inequalities in unpaid work. Throughout OECD countries, and indeed throughout the world, women have historically spent far more time on unpaid work than men. Public policies will influence whether COVID-19 deepens or mitigates these inequalities in the longer run.

[1] Alon et al., 2021; OECD, 2021; Bluedorn et al., 2021.
[2] OECD, 2012.
[3] Bluedorn et al., 2021; Adams-Prassl et al., 2020
[4] Andrew et al., 2020; Sevilla and Smith, 2020; Del Boca et al., 2020; Farré et al., 2020; Zamarro and Prados, 2021; Alon et al., 2021.
[5] Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Alon et al., 2021. OECD, 2021.
[6] OECD, 2021.
[7] OECD, 2021.
[8] OECD, 2021.
[9] Andrew et al., 2020; Del Boca et al., 2020; Farré et al., 2020; Sevilla and Smith, 2020; Zamarro and Prados, 2021; Eurofound, 2020.
[10] Boll, Müller and Schüller, 2021.
[11] Sevilla and Smith, 2020; Zamarro and Prados, 2021.
[12] Boll, Müller and Schüller, 2021; Margaria, 2021.
[13] Sevilla & Smith, 2020; Lyttelton, Zang and Musick, 2021.

A Decade for Parents

Global Day of Parents: Family Support and Parenting

1 June 2022

A decade ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to proclaim the Annual Observance of the Global Day of Parents. Since then, June 1st has marked the celebration to honor parents throughout the world and foster support for their role as caregivers and secure the best layer of protection for children and youth. After the pandemic, it is important to highlight the role of parents to protect their children and promote the best outcome for their families.[1]

In this regard, UNICEF Inoccenti contributed with a report that examines and analyses policies and provisions for family support and parenting support. The goals of the research are to identify relevant global trends and develop an analytical framework that can be used for future research and policy analysis. For these purposes, new evidence was gathered and existing evidence systematized and analyzed.

The report is based on general literature searches and evidence gathered from 33 UNICEF national offices, located in different parts of the world, and detailed case studies of nine countries. The focus was on the features and characteristics of interventions, the underlying rationales and

The United Nations's Convention on the Rights of the Child is clear: Parents, legal or customary guardians have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. But so do governments, non-governmental actors and community-based organizations.

According to article 181 of the Covention, states must "render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children."

Extracts from 'Family and Parenting Support Policy and Provision in a Global Context' *Available at https://www.unicef-irc.org/ publications/pdf/01%20family_support_layout _web.pdf*

International Organizations Department of the International Federation for Family Development.

philosophical orientations, and the factors that are driving developments.

Policies and provisions for family support and parenting support are relatively under-researched, especially in a global setting , so there is an information gap. But there is also what might be thought of as a knowledge gap, as there is no analytical framework taking an integrated and global approach to both family support and parenting support. Aimed at providing such a fr am ework, this report examines the main approaches being adopted in different locations in the name of supporting families and parents. It identifies the different modalities of policy and provision and links them to the underlying rationales and the contextual and other factors and considerations driving developments.

The goals of this report are aligned with the broader research priorities of the UNICEF Office of Research, centred on building evidence in this rapidly expanding eld. More concretely, this study aims to research and identify global trends in policy and provision of family support and parenting support and to provide an analytical framework that can be used for future research and policy analysis.

Family is a contested concept, with different cultural traditions and understandings of family prevailing within and across countries. This makes for complexity and variation. In this report, the variation and sensitivity around family are acknowledged from the outset. Policy and debate in this area are not purely technical matters but are interwoven with ideologies, values and culture in fundamental ways, and the provisions that are put in place these.

The research undertaken centred on a scoping of policy and provision across a range of world regions. New evidence was gathered and existing evidence systematized and analysed to identify common trends and gaps in policy and practice. The evidence was analysed through four main lenses or research questions:

- What are the forms and modalities of relevant policies and where are family support and parenting support located in national policy portfolios and provisions?

- What are the theoretical underpinnings and guiding rationales of family support and parenting support?

- What are the key features of the policy background and the main actors involved?

- What are the most outstanding gaps in research, knowledge and information?

Family Support and Parenting

Concerns about the conditions and practices of child-rearing, and factors relating to children's well-being and development, are leading to a growth of measures oriented to family support and parenting support. In some cases this involves the introduction of new policies and provisions ; in others, it involves a re-orientation or reframing of existing policies.

Family support and parenting support vary widely in practice. In some regions of the world, for example in South-East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, systematic, government-led support initiatives are rare. Regions where support seems to be developing strongly include Europe, the Central and Eastern European and Commonwealth of Independent States regions, Latin America and a few countries in Africa and Asia. Countries vary in the emphasis they give to one form of support over another.

The evidence suggests that, where it exists, family support is being developed in two main forms, through services - especially social, health and psychological services to families; and the establishment or re-orientation of economic support to families, especially cash payments.

Parenting support, on the other hand, is primarily focused on imparting information , education, skills and support to parents in the form of health-related interventions for parents and young children, and educational support on child development and child-rearing for parents. While parenting support is much broader than educational parenting programs, the latter play an important role and are one of the main ways in which parenting support is being developed within and across countries.

One of the key issues at the forefront of this research is the relationship between family support and parenting support. The results suggest that they are best regarded as related but distinct. Both have at their core a focus on the rearing of children, seeking to support or alter the conditions under which children are reared . Furthermore, they focus on this in a familial context (although neither is confined to a particular family setting) . But family support and parenting support have distinct orientations and it is possible for each to exist without the other. Parenting support is the narrower of the two, being focused on

parents and parental engagement and practices. It is therefore not necessarily oriented to the unit of the family or wider familial considerations. Family support is broader; concerned with the family as a social unit and its ecological balance - the relationships and resource flow between members as weil as how weil the family is embedded within supportive networks. Hence, family support is oriented to family stability and general family functioning as against the more parent-centered objectives of parenting support.

Some of the key observations coming out of the research are related to the fact that family support and parenting support are providing a focus for innovation and policy development within and across countries. Policies are driven by many rationales and aims: most typicaily they combine a mix of objectives relating to children, parents and family. In relation to children, there are four main rationales: furthering children's rights, ameliorating child-related risks, enabling positive early childhood development, and addressing antisocial and aggressive behavior, especiaily on the part of adolescents. In relation to parents, rationales driving policy and provision of services include improving parental competence and increasing parental engagement with the development of their children. Among the family-related rationales are improving family functioning and child-rearing, preventing child-family separation, alleviating poverty, facilitating adjustment to demographic developments, and supporting the family as an institution and way of life.

The provisions can be universal and targeted, although targeted interventions, for example for parents of young children and/or families experiencing difficulties, are predominant. This focus on young children and their parents works to the relative neglect of older children and adolescents, an issue that emerged from the case studies as being of pressing concern and one of the key recommendations.

Conditional and non-conditional cash payments to families for children are playing a significant role in generalizing family support and parenting support. The evidence suggests that both types of cash payments to families are bringing about a change in behavior, especiaily in regard to child-rearing. While mothers or female caregivers are the main targets and recipients of both family support and parenting support, including cash transfers, this can lead to the 'feminization' of programs, which insufficiently target fathers or other male members of the household and reinforce traditional gender roles.

While family support and parenting support are being introduced in very different settings, they take account of context to varying degrees and in varying ways. Challenges have been noted in the transferability of existing pre-packaged parenting programs because insufficient attention is paid to the context. The research has identified the following key contextual factors that have a major impact on the nature and progress of family support and parenting support: cultural and social factors, economic factors, and the institutional and political background (especially legislation, policy systems and the history of policy and public administration in relation to child protection, child welfare and family well-being, among other domains).

Key actors that stood out across contexts as playing a leading role in the introduction and running of family support and parenting support are state and other political actors, intergovernmental organizations and various community-level actors (including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious institutions and volunteers). Parents and children or young people are also important actors, although in most settings their capacity for influence and voice is modest and under-developed in policy and provision. Professional groups or individuals, market-based actors and employers are among other potential or actual actors associated with the growth and implementation of family support and parenting support.

The research also looked briefly at gaps in information and evidence. Here the dearth of information and knowledge on outcomes is very striking. Most information comes from parenting programs - standardized programs typically delivered in packages of sessions to parents - in a high-income setting. Other prevailing information gaps include evidence about: what provisions are in place; how they are being implemented; the conditions necessary for sustainability or successful delivery; the interaction between formal and informal support and their mutual consequences; the connections between measures oriented to the behavior of family and parenting and more structural support - such as anti-poverty and anti- inequality measures, as weil as human rights and other measures to address discrimination and stigma; how to change the political context.

The Universe of Possible Outcomes of Family Support and Parenting Support

TARGET	SHORTTERM	LONGTERM
Child-focused	Emotional and behavioural development Involvement in education and health monitoring Reduced risk of maltreatment; increased safety Greater participation in decisions that affect children	Reduced rates of child poverty. Reduced rates of mortality, stunting and wasting Higher immunization rates, breastfeeding, child safety Reduced risk of anti-social behaviour among children and adolescents
Parent-focused	Improved skill levels Improved attitudes and feelings, coping and con dence Improved knowledge and understanding of child development Improved knowledge of resources and support services available Engagement in social networks and community	Improved emotional and mental health (stress, well-being) Increased involvement of fathers Continuous involvement in the child's life (when in the child's best interest)
Parent-child-focused	Parent-child relationship. Attachment, bonding. Communication.	Increase in the use of positive discipline. Reduced rates of children's exposure to violence in the home.
Family relations **Family condition and family functioning**	Strengthened relationships . Less social isolation Increased care role and support by other family members.	Reduced poverty. Reduced rates of family conflict. Reduced rates of family breakdown. Reduced rates of child placement in alternative care.
Community **Capacity building**	Development and operation of policy, programme or intervention adjusted to national conditions. Use of volunteers. Making available materials. Training and capacity building of staff and volunteers.	Building up a portfolio of policies or interventions. Building up a trained sectoral workforce or resource pool (including volunteers). Change in local or national values and practices. Reduced rates of children's exposure to violence in the community and/or locality.

[1] undocs.org/ A/RES/56/138.

[2] undocs .org/ A/ RES/ 66/ 292.

Make Mothers Matter

MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

International Women's Day 2022: Time to recognise that #UnpaidCareWorkCounts

On the occasion of International Women's Day, MMM saluted the courage of all people living in zones of conflict and war which, in so many parts of the world, are destroying lives. The brutality and devastation they bring about have profound and long-lasting effects on all the people, particularly children.

When fathers are at the front, many mothers remain with their children. In Ukraine, many mothers are ripping themselves away from husbands and families to secure safety for their children in neighbouring countries. There have been many stories of courage and solidarity, of women saving children of strangers and getting them to safety at borders, of mothers giving birth in metro subways or underground bunkers…

Within the current world context, MMM will keep advocating for what we need most, in war and in peace, when young and when old: CARE.

Imagine a world where caring for each other is a priority, valued and celebrated. A world that recognises care as essential to peace and prosperity. A world where the well-being of people is the measure of how well countries develop. A world where the work of mothers caring for and educating their children, even if not financially compensated, is recognised as a fundamental contribution to communities, countries… and indeed to peace and prosperity.

Watch our International Women's Day video on https://youtu.be/riKbpCQjfWU.

49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council: Making #UnpaidCareWorkCounts

MMM again took the opportunity of the Human Rights Council to make several oral statements aimed at connecting the dots between the gender "care gap" and other issues.

- In relation to the presentation of the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, we highlighted the **structural discriminations that women farmers, in particular mothers, continue to suffer all over the world**. Women make up almost half of the world's agricultural workforce. They are also often the seed stewards of their community. Yet, in most cases, they do not own land and their work remains unpaid.

  For rural mothers, this unpaid agricultural labour comes on top of the unpaid domestic and care work of which they do the vast majority. They have no time for income generating activities, no access to adequate social protection and suffer high levels of poverty, which in turn hinders their bargaining power and their ability to participate in decision-making.

  It is time to recognise the huge and multiple contributions of rural women, in particular mothers, to food security and human development. They must be better supported and empowered, including as leaders.

  Read the full statement on Food security and human development: time to recognise the contributions of rural mothers.

- In another oral intervention, **MMM reasserted the need to recognise and support the essential yet often unpaid work of caring as an essential pillar of peace and prosperity**.

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We therefore called for governments to recognise the work of mothers caring for and educating their children as a fundamental contribution to a peaceful society, and to foster the development of a society where caring for each other is a priority and adequately supported. In particular, our economy should be centred on care, and the well-being of both people and the planet should serve as a measure of how well countries develop.

Read the full statement on Care – key contributor to peace and security.

- We also had the privilege to get one of the 4 CSO slots for our Colombian member, EDO Group, during the high-level segment of this session. This provided the opportunity to **denounce the many human rights violations and discriminations suffered by indigenous women, mothers especially**, in Colombia and beyond, and to call for action.

  Indigenous people are driven out of their own land, intimidated and forcibly displaced. They are denied their most basic rights, whether civil, political, socio-economic or cultural. They live in situations of dire vulnerability. The interests of multinational companies are prioritised over their welfare and well-being, and the sustainability of their land and natural environment.

  Indigenous women, mothers in particular, face additional challenges and human rights violations. In addition to poverty, exclusion, discrimination and rampant violence, they are totally excluded from local politics and decision-making impacting their lives. The pandemic only made matters worse.

  It is time for the international community and governments across the world to:
  - stop being complicit in these all too systematic human rights violations against indigenous people;
  - hold transnational companies accountable so that they fully respect the human rights of indigenous people, work with local communities, and positively and sustainably contribute to the development of these regions;
  - work with and invest in local indigenous communities, by developing basic infrastructure and services, including education, health, water and sanitation, transportation and telecommunications;
  - recognise that there is much to be learnt from indigenous communities across the world, and therefore give them a seat at every table.

Read the full statement on Call for an end to systematic human rights violations against indigenous mothers.

An almost Perfect Mother – new podcast series with Isabelle Roskam

MMM is delighted to launch the new podcast series ***An almost Perfect Mother,*** featuring **Isabelle Roskam, professor of development and parenting psychology at the University of Louvain, Belgium,** and a specialist in child behavioural disorders and parental burnout.

The weekly program covers many issues of concern to mothers including ***The perfect mother syndrome*** and its consequences, not just on children, but on the entire family.

Isabelle explains to Laurence vanden Abeele, presenter of the show and Head of MMM Belgium, **how society asks a mother to raise her children as if she had no job, to work as if she had no children, and to look like a woman who has no children and no job.**

Another topic the program looks at is ***parental burnout*** – is it a buzzword or a reality in parenting today?

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The role of the father also comes under the spotlight, because parenthood obviously involves not just the mother but the father too. Isabelle tells Laurence how important it is for the father to take his place as a responsible family man, even in cases of separation.

Happy parents, happy children! tackles the key question of whether a happy mother has a more fulfilled child. Isabelle emphasises that we tend to think only about the well-being of the children, forgetting that the well-being of the parents is just as, if not more essential.

For the broadcast in French, you can listen to the full interviews here: https://soundcloud.com/user-504650562.

Our thanks go to LouïZ Radio for the use of their studio.

If you are interested in the topics discussed and would like to learn more about the burnout prevention tool created by Isabelle Roskam and Moïra Mikolajczak, please visit their site: https://parentsurlefil.com/.

Make Mothers Matter strongly welcomes the launch of a European Care Strategy

In these unprecedented times when Europe is navigating a global pandemic, when political tensions boil over and heinous attacks on civilians in Ukraine threaten the global order, it is important to reflect on the people who hold the fabric of society together. The pandemic has shone a light on the vital work of care workers, who continue to save lives every day, even if it means risking their own.

Most of these workers are women, but for women, care work does not end at the hospital or nursing home.

Behind the scenes, in millions of homes around Europe, women and mothers work every day to ensure that their families and children are fed, educated and healthy. When schools closed during the COVID19 pandemic, mothers stepped up to care for and educate their children.

Their work and personal investment in their families and their children place them amongst the most important care providers. The pandemic has shed light on this valuable yet invisible and undervalued work: unpaid care work. Without it, our societies would grind to a halt.

Mothers are also care recipients. Maternal health is an indicator of global health. A healthy mother can take on her educational responsibilities and fully participate in economic and social life. Maternal health also ties into issues of economic inequality between genders, since a mother who is unwell and has insufficient access to maternal healthcare may be unable to participate in economic and social life.

Access the full policy paper here.

MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

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, Head of MMM UN Delegation, and Johanna Schima, Head of MMM European Delegation.

Recent & Upcoming Events

June

- June 23-24: International Conference on Family and Marriage (Vienna, Austria, digital)
  https://waset.org/family-and-marriage-conference-in-june-2022-in-vienna

- June 27-28: International Conference on Family Law and Children's Rights (London, United Kingdom, digital)
  https://waset.org/family-law-and-childrens-rights-conference-in-june-2022-in-london

July

- July 12-13: International Conference on Comparative Family Studies (Prague, Czechia, digital)
  https://waset.org/comparative-family-studies-conference-in-july-2022-in-prague

- July 21-22: International Conference on Mass Media and Families (Berlin, Germany, digital)
  https://waset.org/mass-media-and-families-conference-in-july-2022-in-berlin

August

- August 08-09: International Conference on Family Law and International Family Law (Lagos, Nigeria, digital)
  https://waset.org/family-law-and-international-family-law-conference-in-august-2022-in- lagos

- August 16-17: International Conference on Family and Sociology (London, United Kingdom digital)
  https://waset.org/family-and-sociology-conference-in-august-2022-in-london

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