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## **Quarterly Bulletin of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family**

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**Vienna NGO Committee on the Family**  
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Dear Readers of 'Families International',

Not only did the most recent Full Committee Meeting (FCM) on November 7th 2022 take place in person again, it also offered a comprehensive agenda for the participating board members and member organisations. As part of the International Forum during the first half of the FCM, Prof. Vanessa Gash from the University of London presented her paper entitled "Two Steps Forward, Two Steps Back: Challenges in Gender Equality Research and their Policy Implications." Prof. Gash's paper can now be read in this 124<sup>th</sup> issue of the Quarterly Bulletin 'Families International'.

What is more, the election of the new board for November 2022 until November 2025 took place at the past FCM. Among other election results, Valeria Foglar-Deinhardstein was voted the new Chairperson of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family. This issue of FI includes her introduction to the Committee in the form of a text "From the Desk of the Chairperson" on page 3.

As always, contributions from member organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family are also featured, namely two texts from the International Council of Women (ICW) and one from Make Mothers Matter (MMM). Additionally, a research brief by UNICEF Innocenti on the topic of gender-transformative education is included.

Finally, a list of recent and upcoming events can be found at the end of this 124<sup>th</sup> issue of 'Families International'.

Sincerely,  
Karin Kuzmanov, M.Sc.  
Executive Editor

<b>Table of Contents</b>
--------------------------

**From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family**

From the Desk of the Chairperson	3
Two Steps Forward, Two Steps Back: Challenges in Gender Equality Research and their Policy Implications	4

**From UNICEF Innocenti**

Gender-transformative pre-primary education	14
---	----

**From Member Organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family**

International Council of Women (ICW)

International Council of Women Report on COP27: Filling an empty bucket? Compensating for Loss and Damage.	18
--	----

Child and Family Report, October 2022	20
---------------------------------------	----

Make Mothers Matter (MMM)

Maternal mental health issues must be better recognised and addressed	21
---	----

<b>Recent &amp; Upcoming Events</b>	24
-------------------------------------	----

<b>Impressum</b>	25
------------------	----

*From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family*

From the Desk of the Chairperson



Family and the matters that concern such are at the core of my beliefs and my civil society efforts. I believe, that as often, we are at a crossroad at the moment with; Climate Crises, 8 billion inhabitants on our planet, wars and conflicts all over the world. Families, especially in the southern hemisphere are the most affected by all these developments.

It is my mission in life to help understand the needs and problems of families (especially those who do not have a voice) all around the world and pinpoint and raise awareness for measures, that could be taken worldwide to ease the situation and create a more egalitarian and peaceful world.

I do not want stop at pinpointing though because, as it is my nature, I will also take action and „DO something“. Together with the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family and your trusted organizations, the voices of the families have to be heard loud and proud in the United Nations Committee on Social Development and in the United Nations as such, as well as by the governments of the respective countries.

I am very happy to take over the Chairperson-ship from Wolfgang Engelmaier (Kolping International), who has guided the Committee through the pandemic and was engaged for the Committee in many important activities. I personally want to thank Peter Crowley, who is active in the Committee in various roles for so many years, and has supported me in my candidature.

What does Valeria have in common with the NGO Committee on the Family:

- Like the Committee, I was born in 1985
- Like the Committee, I do not only have my own family (I am a mother of Matteo (3), and Emilia (5) and married to Bernhard), but I would like to change something for the better for families worldwide.
- Like the Committee, my view on the family does not stop at, looking at mother, father and children, but rather looking at the whole ecosystem, from climate, education, violence against women and children, to economic issues.

As for my Vita, after various stages - studying Business, working in the public sector and in large Corporations in Milan, Brussels and the UK - I finally decided to follow my passion and became an entrepreneur. I have founded my own company together with my husband and a business partner. We produce, market, and sell veterinary care products and are now active all over Europe. Further, I am active as a local councilor in my district in Vienna, and have also founded the so-called 'Brussels Alumni Club'. I have always had great interest engaging in European Networks promoting European Integration. That is why I joined the European Union of Women (EUW), the organization, which I am representing in the Committee.

Having said that, I am looking forward to getting to know you and your organizations in the next three years and thank you in advance for your trust.

Yours sincerely,

Valeria Foglar-Deinhardstein  
Chairperson,  
Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

**‘Two Steps Forward, Two Steps Back. Challenges in Gender Equality Research and their Policy Implications’, paper presented for the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family**

Monday, 7th of Nov 2022

Vanessa Gash, DPhil Oxon.

In this paper I aim to review challenges for policy development which have arisen from three different bodies of work on gender equality, two of which are (currently) based on some of my own empirical work. The first body of work concerns research on the partner pay gap, with the partner pay gap typically measuring the differential economic contributions of a husband and wife to household income. The second body of work looks at the gender pay gap, and here I look at how rising earnings inequality is problematising strategies to decrease pay inequality between women and men. Finally, the third body of work examines recent controversies in gender equality research, concerning the correct conceptualisation of gender, and the implications of this for researchers in the field

### *1.1 The Partner Pay Gap*

*Background:* In recent research, Gash and Plagnol (2020), I have sought to determine the effect of the partner pay gap (PPG), which measures the difference in earned income between co-resident partners, on the life satisfaction of women and of men. We sought to determine the well-being effects of the PPG, as previous research has tended to find that men earn the biggest share of total household income (Bertrand et al., 2015; Moen and Sweet, 2003; Van Berkel and De Graaf, 1998) and that women tend to earn approximately one third of total household income (Bianchi et al., 1999; Stier and Mandel, 2009). That equal-earning continues to be elusive despite the dramatic rise in female employment in most OECD countries (OECD, 2019), was something we thought needed investigation and so here we tried to determine whether couples were happy with this earnings inequality between them or not. The research question was also motivated by some of my earlier research which looked at trends in the PPG and here we found very little change in the PPG over time (Dieckhoff et al., 2016). The paper investigated this puzzle using multiple waves of a nationally representative data for the UK, the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS). As the data is longitudinal it allowed us to examine the effect of recent changes in the PPG as well as recent changes in labour force position, allowing us to control for concurrent and, potentially, competing predictors of life satisfaction.

The literature which examines the effect of income on life satisfaction suggest that what is crucial for subjective well-being is *relative income*, rather than absolute income levels, with social comparison to relevant others key to a person’s evaluations (e.g. Clark, Frijters, et al., 2008; Easterlin, 1995). Though relative income ranking is understood to be important, few studies have considered a spouse as a relevant reference point for income comparisons with couples within the one household often regarded to be part of one non-competing household unit. Some notable exceptions include work by Nikolova and Ayhan (2019), who found that men and women’s life satisfaction were negatively affected by their

spouse's unemployment though these negative effects lasted longer for wives than for husbands, perhaps reflecting the fact that many men in households had been majority earners. This, alongside other research on gendered attitudes to breadwinning, led us to expect that gendered norms of who 'should be' the breadwinner may differentially affect how men and women feel about their relative income status within the home. Additionally, the literature on the within-family dynamics that produce sex-role specialisation, as outlined by Gary Becker (1981), led us to anticipate the maintenance of economic inequalities within (heterosexual) relationships. Becker (1981), presented conventional allocations of paid and unpaid labour within the home as both economically and biologically optimal. Household specialisation places male partners in paid work, allowing households to profit from men's stronger earning capacity, while female partners are allocated unpaid care work, allowing households to maximise on her 'natural affinity' for care work. Though sex-role specialisation is problematised by those who are in support of equality between the sexes, even modern theoretical accounts of household specialisation expect an maintenance in these inequalities until, or if, women's economic outcomes match men's (Breen and Cooke, 2005). Whether gender norms cause, affect, or mutually reinforce a family's economic strategy, they too are deemed to be rigid in their allocation of paid and unpaid labour by biological sex (Shelton and John, 1996; West and Zimmerman, 1987). Indeed, gender norms are considered to be such a central predictor of individual behaviour, that some researchers have established a tendency for women to try to 'correct' for their breadwinning by contributing *more* to domestic work if their paid work threatens traditional views of appropriate work-care allocations (Bittman et al., 2003). Broadly speaking, the literature in the field led us to believe that men and women may have very different attitudes to earnings inequalities in the home given ongoing values and norms of male breadwinning within families.

*Method:* The paper used the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS, also known as Understanding Society; University of Essex, 2017), a nationally representative panel survey based on a sample of approximately 40,000 households (Knies, 2017). Information was collected on all adults within the household and we were able to match partner information within households allowing for a measure of the partner pay gap based on *individually* reported earnings, which maximises the accuracy of estimates of within-household inequalities (Cooke, 2006). The final sample was based on matched married co-resident respondents with full information on key covariates for at least two consecutive years; it covered 10,923 person-year observations for men and 12,657 observations for women. Our key outcome variable measured respondents' life satisfaction on a scale ranging from (1) completely dissatisfied to (7) completely satisfied. Two covariates were central to our analysis, they were: (1) the partner pay gap, and (2) *changes* in the partner pay gap between two time points. The partner pay gap ranged from 0, for those who contributed nothing, to 100, for those who were sole breadwinners. The variable was recoded, allowing us to distinguish between (a) secondary-earners, those earning between 0-39% of total earned income, (b) equal-earners, those contributing between 40-59% of total earned income, and (c) majority-earners, those earning 60% or more of total earned labour income. We also include a measure of (2) *changes* in the partner pay gap between  $t_{-1}$  and  $t$ . Our measure of change in relative earnings is of central

importance: Due to the psychological process of *habituation* we anticipate recent changes in relative income will better reflect potential discontent with the partner pay gap than (potentially) long-term relative earnings status.

*Findings:* The paper found notable differences in earning status between women and men in the home. Married men's earnings accounted for 60% of total household income on average, while women's earnings accounted for 32% on average. We also found that only 8% of female respondents were majority earners (defined as contributing 60% or more of total household income) while this was true of 54% of the male sample. Equal-earning, however, was the second most common category for both sexes, accounting for in and around a third of the male and female samples. Meanwhile, secondary-earning, which describes those whose earnings contributed to less than 40% of total earned household income, was the majority category for women, accounting for 62% of the female sample, while it accounted for a comparatively small 12% of the male sample. The regression analysis used to determine whether men and women in the UK were equally happy with the effects of the PPG established that men who were secondary-earners reported significantly *lower average life satisfaction* than equal-earning men, while the women in our sample neither experienced a psychological penalty nor dividend when they out-earned their husbands. This finding underscores the differential effect of breadwinning status on the psychological well-being of women and men. *Breadwinning status matters more for men.* We also found recent changes in relative earnings to be positively associated with the life satisfaction of men and again found no significant effect for women. These results are important as they suggest that the psychological dividend enjoyed by recent increases in the partner pay gap as well as the psychological penalty of secondary-earner status for men might contribute to the persistence of earning inequalities within households. Men who gain psychologically from out-earning their partners have an incentive to pursue and maintain a traditional division of paid and unpaid labour. Similarly, men who suffer psychologically from earning less than their wives may be more reluctant to share parental leave, prioritise their wife's employment, or make any other employment decisions that might put them in a less advantageous earning position at home. Women who are, perhaps, more used to prioritising their partner's employment and earning prospects over their own, on the other hand, were not found to experience a psychological penalty based on their earning positions. Policy makers need to be mindful, therefore, of how powerful norms and values are at structuring individual behaviours.

## 1.2 The Gender Pay Gap

*Background:* In this paper, along with my colleagues Wendy Olsen, Myong Sook Kim and Nadine Zwiener-Collins, I have tried to examine why there has been very little improvement in the gender pay gap in many countries. The body of work which examines why ongoing differentials between women and men's economic outcomes remain, despite multiple years of equality legislation, has sought to identify the barriers that account for this 'stalled revolution' (Sullivan *et al.*, 2018; Rubery and Grimshaw, 2015, England, 2010; England and Li, 2006). One explanation as to why declines in the gender pay gap have stalled, is that there remain unresolved tensions between gender and class inequalities which prevent

agreement on actions to resolve pay inequalities. Our research, therefore, sought to examine different predictors of the gender pay gap (GPG) at the mean and for different income groups to discern possible variation, and/or incongruence, in policy need. We examine the United-Kingdom as a case study as it presents a useful test case for heterogeneity in predictors of and solutions to the GPG given its higher-than-average unadjusted GPG (Leythienne and Ronkowski, 2018, p.21) and its higher-than-average earnings inequality (Goos, Manning, and Salomons, 2009) with conflicting policy agendas between groups more likely under such conditions. We examine the role of women's reduced attachment on the GPG by examining data on respondents' retrospective work-histories which detail variance in working-time and unpaid labour force attachment on pay. Our findings engage with devaluation theory (e.g. England, 1992, England and Li, 2006, Magnussen, 2009) which asserts that women are culturally regarded to be inferior to men, and that; the types of jobs they do and the skills they hold are devalued which results in their lower pay. We test whether cultural devaluation of women is in evidence through analyses of the effects of differential returns to sex-segregated occupations as well as assessments of the proportion of the GPG due to respondent sex<sup>1</sup>. Estimates are provided at the mean and for two sub-groups to determine whether different predictors of earnings inequality hold sway at different points of the earnings distribution, allowing us to examine how conflicting policy agendas might act as barriers to earnings equality between women and men. While previous gender pay gap research has found clear associations between women's reduced supply and their pay, what is less well known is the cumulative effects of a *lifetime* of reduced attachment in its different forms, on pay. This is important as we can expect reduced attachment to manifest in different ways for different groups, and we can also expect differential penalties to different forms of detachment. While prior research has examined the effects of historic labour force attachment on pay, e.g. England *et al.* (2016) and Boll *et al.* (2017), neither study examines the full range of forms of attachment which we proposed in this paper.

*Method:* We use a nationally representative panel data the UKHLS. Our dependent variable offers a measure of gross hourly pay, the measure includes assessment of both usual hourly pay as well as bonus receipt. The work-histories variable measures six different forms of labour force participation and identifies the number of months spent in each of the following six labour force categories: full-time work ( $\geq 35$  hours a week), part-time work ( $< 35$  hours a week), unemployment, sick leave, parental leave and family care work. The measures range from 0 to 480 months (with some respondents providing 40 years of retrospective data). Our variables that measure the effects of sex-segregated occupations identify the percentage of women in different occupational groups using Standard Occupational Classification codes (SOC). In our analysis the working-poor are defined as those living in households with equivalised income  $< 60\%$  of median earned income (£1,335 or less), the standard cut-off in poverty research. In our sample, this poverty threshold is equal to the bottom 12% of households. We apply a similar cut-off on the right-

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<sup>1</sup> The UKHLS collects indicators on respondent's sex via interviewer coding. Respondent's sex has been collected in this manner since the first wave of the survey and mimics the data collection protocols of the panel which preceded it, the British Household Panel Survey which began in 1991. We repeat the original and current labelling of the variable here for precision and continuity.

hand side, also looking at households with equivalised income above 160% of median earned household income (£3,616 or higher). The paper applied regression analysis and decomposition analyses to determine the main explanatory factors behind pay inequalities.

*Findings:* The paper theorised that women would have reduced labour force attachment relative to men and we expected women to be penalised for their reduced attachment. We expected women to have reduced labour force attachment compared to men as women disproportionately engage in unpaid care work and as women bear the full weight of biological reproduction. We found work-histories to be one of the biggest predictors of pay inequality, women were found to earn less than men as they have less overall full-time work experience, which is generally well paid, and more experience of part-time employment and unpaid care work, which generally earns a pay penalty. While the empirical evidence at the mean suggests that policy should try to encourage women's pursuit of full-time employment and men's engagement in part-time and unpaid care work, we also found that this strategy would be problematic for poor households. It would be problematic in poor households as here we found the penalty to part-time work history to be higher for men than for women, and here we also found the pay penalty to care-work history to be higher for men than for women. These findings were unanticipated, though are in line with researchers who have found significant heterogeneity in the quality of part-time work, with men in part-time jobs found to suffer poor job quality and low job satisfaction (Warren and Lyonette 2020). So, for our sample of working-poor households, the policy recommendation would be the opposite of what they are at the mean, where men have been encouraged to 'share the load' by taking up more part-time positions and by becoming more involved in unpaid care work. Moreover, these policy prescriptions become particularly problematic for the working poor, if the recommendation increases household poverty risk.

Using our work-history variables we established that male involvement in unpaid care work is extremely low and while others have also found that men tend to be highly resistant in their adoption of parental leave (Kaufman, 2018), the sheer size of the differential is noteworthy. Men on average spent less than 3 weeks in unpaid care work in their entire lifetimes, while women had an average of more than two years of unpaid care work. It appears safe to suggest that policies that have sought to encourage male take-up of care work have had a very small impact, at an aggregate level, and will likely continue to face significant barriers given current tendencies.

Our findings lend support to devaluation theories which assert that in many different contexts, women are regarded to be inferior to men and that this cultural devaluation translates into a pay penalty for female-typical employment including sex-segregated occupations. Here we found that a fifth of the pay gap is due to the pay penalties to occupational sex-segregation. Crucially, standard economic theories do not justify differential returns to sex-segregation and so the accepted account for such pay penalties is that women are problematically devalued. Discriminatory pay is rarely examined as a central mechanism of the gender pay gap. We assess it as a component of the cultural devaluation of women and suggest that the comparative absence of discussions of its role in the GPG is reinforced by



decomposition measures which do not allow researchers to disentangle unmeasured pay penalties from pay penalties associated with sex discrimination. Our article applies a decomposition technique which provides an observed measure of differential pay by sex and thereby offers a clearer proxy of discriminatory pay practice than standard measures. We established that the gender pay gap, at the mean, would be 31% smaller if women did not earn a pay penalty for being female. We also found considerable variation in this penalty by income group, with women in poor households in receipt of an extremely high penalty. This finding is of considerable importance as, as far as we have been able to establish, there have been no similar assessments of 'discriminatory' pay by income group. Moreover, research on perceived pay discrimination finds the opposite, that it is those in the higher-socio-economic groups who are more likely to report concerns of discriminatory pay (Andersson and Harnois, 2020).

Overall, we found women to suffer significant pay penalties to reduced labour market attachment. A history of part-time work, time spent in unpaid care, as well as pursuit of employment in feminised occupations, strategies predominantly adopted by women to balance paid employment and unpaid household labour, remain significantly penalised and explain a very large portion of the earning differences between women and men. We have little reason to predict significant declines in the gender pay gap without direct challenges to the ideal worker norm which continues to offer premia to those engaged in full-time continuous employment, despite its peripheralization of women engaged in reproductive labour. We also noted the importance of a gender-integrated class analysis given increasingly divergent labour market conditions for different income groups, as while it was women who had shorter full-time work histories, at the mean and in poor and more wealthy households, men in poor households also had noticeably lower full-time work histories than men in other income groups. Additionally, men had greater penalties to part-time work history than women in poorer households. Therefore, it now appears that efforts to close the gender pay gap need to be more strongly tied to an agenda of good quality employment for all, targeted at the declines in job quality for those on the left-hand side of the distribution. This is crucial as calls for pay equity, which are illustrated by dynamics at the right-hand side of the distribution, e.g. insufficient women in high powered positions, do not serve, and also risk alienating, those in households where both partners earn similarly low wages.

### *1.3 Controversies in Gender Equality Research*

Finally, I thought it worth briefly reviewing recent controversies in gender equality research, within the context of renewed attention to the academic freedoms of those who research 'sensitive' topics, of which gender equality is one. Public support for the scientific enterprise (i.e. Allum et al. 2008), alongside recognition of the need to ensure institutional and legal supports for scientific neutrality are widely held ideals. Yet, these ideals do not preclude the common occurrence of political interference in research agendas, with inevitable variance in support for different policy agendas by different political groups. At a macro-national level, the support for gender equality is recognised as a desired and legitimate goal with commitments by the G20 to increase female labour force participation (Waylen 2022). Yet these desired increases have not materialised (ILO and OECD 2015), with multiple barriers noted from underinvestment

in the care economy (DeHenau et al. 2016) to ongoing barriers to female economic empowerment to name a few issues (Langou et al. 2018). So, while gender equality has been enshrined as a principle within international law beneath these macro-policy commitments there remain fundamental disagreements between scholars of gender, politicians and members of the public of what we mean when we use the term 'gender' and therefore 'gender equality'.

These disagreements and debates are problematically amplified on social media platforms which has led to a deep sense of uncertainty and even fear about what one can and cannot say on the topic. Indeed, the deterioration of the calibre of discourse is such that a recent report on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression was submitted to the UN General Assembly, with a recommendation that the international community ensures a 'safe digital space for women's equal enjoyment of freedom of opinion and expression', with a specific recommendation to the Human Rights Committee to 'affirm gender and sex as grounds protected under article 20 (2) of the Covenant and further develop the threshold test for the prohibition of online misogynistic speech'(Kahn 2021 : 24). The problematic of freedoms of expression identified by Kahn (2021) are also asserted by Suissa and Sullivan (2021) who identify a suppression of academic freedoms for those researching topics relating to sex and gender, with no-platforming, disinvitations and shutting down of academic events documented by them in their research. Key to the dispute concerns what we mean, and indeed the appropriate mechanisms through which we define 'gender'. In the social sciences the term 'gender' is frequently used interchangeably with, or as a polite version of, the term 'biological sex', but the same term is also used to refer to cultural or social norms relating to appropriate/expected behaviour by biological sex. Gendered norms are culturally, and historical constructed, with known variation through time, national context, and also for specific social groups. While biological sex does not change, one's gendered normative context and one's gendered self-expression can. One can also use the term gender to refer to both gendered self-expression and to one's subjective sense of self as a woman a man or, in the case of non-binary people, their rejection of either category. A person's gendered sense of self is embodied, congruently or not, and often implies critical reflections of how best to negotiate and express sense of self within prevailing sex-stereotypical norms. That the one term is used to refer to three analytically distinct concepts is clearly a problem for the field, not least as there have been attempts to prevent data collection on biological sex and gender identity as distinct categories (e.g. Alsalem 2022, Sullivan 2020). Without data which collects information on these analytically distinct categories we will be unable to assess the divergent tendencies and requirements of different social groups. We will also become unable to empirically monitor gender equality targets. Further problematising the issue is the alignment of academic and non-academic activism with scholarship on the topic, and so dialog is often couched in a 'winning or losing' framework which makes open discussion more difficult. So, here, my final point is simply to draw attention to these issues and to make a plea for calm, reasoned and evidenced debate. As gender equality remains a vital and important goal, open discussions about what we mean by gender equality and how we mean to achieve it will become increasingly important on the road ahead.

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From UNICEF Innocenti

## GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

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## A system-wide approach to tackling inequalities from the early years



### Key findings

- **Mainstreaming gender within pre-primary education is a priority in tackling gender-related inequalities from the early years.**
- **Such mainstreaming requires the commitment of a variety of stakeholders within the education system and beyond**, such as different units within education ministries, pre-service and in-service teacher training providers and teacher unions, other ministries, academia, and civil society organizations.
- **Advocacy for gender-transformative pre-primary education should centre on the five core components of quality pre-primary education systems:** planning and budgeting, curriculum development and implementation, workforce development, family and community engagement, and quality assurance.

## Context

Pre-primary education can have a transformative power over gender inequalities, tackling them and challenging common gender norms and stereotypes while they are being acquired by the youngest learners.<sup>1</sup> This policy brief aims to support education ministries to advocate with and engage partners within and outside the education sector on how pre-primary education can deliver on this potential. It presents key 'asks' or advocacy points to engage these partners, as well as enabling conditions to achieve them following a system-wide perspective.

## Key asks and advocacy points

Key 'asks'/Advocacy points	Enablers	Key partners to engage
<p><b>1.</b></p> <p><b>Mainstream gender within pre-primary education policy and programming.</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use <b>multiple sources of gender-disaggregated data</b>, to showcase gender differences in access and learning, highlight the need for gender-transformative systems, increase political buy-in and inform pre-primary education sector planning.<sup>2</sup> In addition to EMIS data, national census data, household surveys and administrative data from other sectors can provide information on the intersection of gender and other factors of disadvantage.</li> <li>Involve <b>donors, NGOs, private providers, families and communities</b> in gender-responsive and/or transformative programming to create a shared view of the system and increase ownership. Identify and enable champions among community leaders to pursue and promote gender-transformative approaches and strategies.</li> <li>Apply a <b>gender-responsive lens for pre-primary education budgeting</b> processes to restructure expenditures and redirect funding allocation to promote gender equality.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education, including Education Management Information System (EMIS) unit</li> <li>National Statistics Office</li> <li>Ministry of Finance</li> <li>Civil society organizations and development partners</li> <li>Private pre-primary education providers</li> <li>Pre-primary teachers</li> <li>Families and communities</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>Improve the working conditions and professionalization of the pre-primary education workforce.<sup>4</sup></b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse the <b>feasibility and availability of funds</b> for a progressive increase of teachers' salaries.</li> <li>Involve different <b>stakeholders within and beyond the education sector</b> to design and implement accredited training programmes for pre-primary education teachers according to their needs.</li> <li>Engage <b>teacher unions and organizations working for women labour participation</b> to advocate for continuous improvements in the working conditions of the highly feminized pre-primary education workforce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education, including Human Resources/Workforce Development Unit</li> <li>Ministry of Finance</li> <li>Ministry responsible for civil service/public service</li> <li>Pre-service and in-service teacher training providers</li> <li>Teacher unions</li> <li>Civil society organizations</li> </ul>

Key 'asks'/Advocacy points	Enablers	Key partners to engage
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p>Attract more men to teach in pre-primary education, as well as more women to other parts of the education system where they are under-represented.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement <b>communication campaigns</b> to reinforce the importance of pre-primary education and build the case for male participation.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Engage <b>teacher unions and organizations from civil society</b> to advocate for gender-balanced recruitment processes in all levels of education.</li> <li>• Engage <b>secondary schools and pre-service teacher training institutions</b>, including <b>providers of career counselling</b>, to provide gender-transformative information and strategies for teaching career pathways.</li> <li>• Increase <b>research to understand the root causes of the under-representation of men in the pre-primary education workforce and of women in other education levels and/or streams</b> (e.g., science, technology, maths) to develop context-specific recruitment strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Pre-service teacher training providers</li> <li>• Career counselling institutions</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Teacher unions</li> <li>• Civil society organizations, community leaders</li> <li>• Universities/Research centres</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p>Leverage pre-primary education as a platform to engage fathers and male caregivers in gender-transformative parenting.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve <b>public and private pre-primary education providers</b> on developing gender-transformative strategies to engage male caregivers.</li> <li>• Engage <b>civil society organizations representing parents and caregivers and parent-teacher associations</b> to support fathers' and male caregivers' involvement in pre-primary education.</li> <li>• Implement <b>communication campaigns</b> on the importance of fathers' and male caregivers' role in early learning.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public and private pre-primary education providers</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Civil society organizations</li> <li>• Parent-teacher associations</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p>Design a gender-transformative quality assurance system for pre-primary education.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage a <b>wide spectrum of stakeholders</b> within the education system to develop <b>quality assurance standards</b> that are aligned to the aims of the curriculum, including gender-transformative principles.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Involve <b>gender experts</b> in the design of <b>quality assurance indicators and assessment tools</b> to monitor gender-responsive pedagogical practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Quality Assurance Department</li> <li>• Curriculum Department</li> <li>• EMIS unit</li> <li>• Universities/Research centres</li> </ul>

These key 'asks' or advocacy points are aligned with the five core components of pre-primary education systems: planning and budgeting, curriculum development and implementation, workforce development, family and community engagement, and quality assurance. Following a system-wide perspective, the related enablers should be activated together to contribute towards the progressive mainstreaming of the gender perspective within pre-primary education systems.

Given the impact of pre-primary education in children's development, in tackling social inequalities and in providing a solid foundation for economic growth<sup>8</sup>, the establishment of a strong pre-primary education system should be a national interest. This implies a high level of participation and commitment of a variety of stakeholders within and beyond the education system to ensure the equitable provision of quality pre-primary education services.



## Further reading

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# For every child, a fair chance

### UNICEFINNOCENTI – GLOBAL OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND FORESIGHT

**UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight** tackles the questions of greatest importance for children, both current and emerging. It drives change through research and foresight on a wide range of child rights issues, sparking global discourse and actively engaging young people in its work.

UNICEF Innocenti equips thought leaders and decision-makers with the evidence they need to build a better, safer world for children. The office undertakes research on unresolved and emerging issues, using primary and secondary data that represents the voices of children and families themselves. It uses foresight to set the agenda for children, including horizon scanning, trends analysis and scenario development. The office produces a diverse and dynamic library of high-level reports, analyses and policy papers, and provides a platform for debate and advocacy on a wide range of child rights issues.

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for every child

**From Member Organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family**

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN REPORT ON COP27,  
held at Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, November, 2022.  
Report by Wendy Rainbird, ICW Habitat Adviser.

**Filling an empty bucket? Compensating for Loss and Damage.**

At the Conference of Parties 27, COP27, held in November, 2022 in Egypt, it was hoped that there would be compensation for loss and damage provided to developing, and often low-emitting countries, by the developed countries that have benefitted financially and economically from the power generated by burning coal, oil and gas over many years.

As we know burning fossil fuels has led to increases in carbon dioxide and methane gasses that have a greenhouse effect. This causes temperatures to rise. With warmer land and oceans more water is evaporated and is a major cause of increases in severe storms, flash flooding or massive flooding as in Pakistan and Australia recently. Plus other effects.

There is a rising frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

In an IPCC Working Group Report, it was assessed that:

1. Losses and damages are already being experienced: Existing global warming of 1.1°C has already caused dangerous and widespread losses and damages, led to disruptions in nature as well as affected the lives of billions of people, despite people's efforts to adapt.

2. Future losses and damages will rise with increased global warming: With increasing global warming, losses and damages increase and become increasingly difficult to avoid, while strongly concentrated among the poorest vulnerable populations.

3. Losses and damages are unavoidable and are unequally distributed: Adaptation cannot prevent all losses and damages. Losses and damages are disproportionately experienced by developing countries and by vulnerable groups, such as people of low socio-economic class, migrant groups, the elderly, women and children.

4. Losses and damages are not comprehensively addressed by current financial, governance and institutional arrangements: Particularly in vulnerable developing countries, existing international, national and sub-national approaches to address loss and damage are insufficient. (Ref. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/adelle-thomas-loss-and-damage>)

"The insights document, compiled by the *Climate Research Programme* and supported by UN Climate Change ([UNFCCC](https://unfccc.org/)), also highlights that **many of these consequences cannot be avoided with mere adaptation measures** and that acting swiftly to reduce emissions is a much better option." (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130422>)

"**Vulnerability hotspots cluster in 'regions at risk'**: Vulnerability hotspots – areas with the highest susceptibility to being adversely affected by climate-driven hazards – are home to 1.6 billion people, a number projected to double by 2050. The report identifies vulnerability hotspots in Central America, the Sahel, Central and East Africa, the Middle East, and across the breadth of Asia. [People in Small Island States are experiencing serious effects on their habitats already. WR]

"**New threats on the horizon from climate–health interactions**: Climate change is adversely impacting the health of humans, animals and entire ecosystems. Heat-related mortality, wildfires affecting our physical and mental health, and growing risks of outbreaks of infectious diseases are all linked to climate change.

There will be more displacement of people, and more migration.

**“Private sustainable finance practices are failing to catalyse deep transitions:** “Sustainable finance” practices in the private sector are not yet catalysing the profound economic transformations needed to meet climate targets. This reflects the fact that these are mostly designed to fit into the financial sector’s existing business models, rather than to substantially shift the allocation of capital towards meaningful mitigation.”

**“Loss and Damage – the urgent planetary imperative:** Losses and damages are already widespread and will increase significantly on current trajectories, making it imperative to advance a coordinated global policy response. Deep and swift mitigation and effective adaptation are necessary to avert and minimise future economic and non-economic losses and damages.

**“Inclusive decision-making for climate-resilient development:** Decentring and coordinating decision-making across scales and contexts, while prioritising empowerment of a broad range of stakeholders, are key ways for climate action to be more effective, sustainable and just, as well as necessarily more reflective of local needs, worldviews and experiences.” (Ref. <https://10insightsclimate.science>)

At COP27, it took persistence and extra time to pass the agenda item on Loss and Damage eventually announcing that: COP27

1. *“Acknowledges* the urgent and immediate need for new, additional, predictable and adequate financial resources to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, especially in the context of ongoing and ex post (including rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction) action;

2. *Decides* to establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries in responding to loss and damage, including a focus on addressing loss and damage by providing and assisting in mobilizing new and additional resources, and that these new arrangements complement the existing arrangements for financial support from other sources, funds, processes and initiatives, including outside the Convention and the Paris Agreement; **“(COP agenda item 8(f) / CMA agenda item 8(f) Matters relating to funding arrangements responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including a focus on addressing loss and damage. Version 19/11/2022.)**

In the document there were decisions about having workshops in 2023 on how to fund for loss and damage. (p3 op cit).

So, at COP27, there was no progress on lessening greenhouse gas emissions, with no follow through on phasing down of coal nor to phase out all fossil fuels, which are the actions needed to mitigate climate change.

“Public mobilisation and activism, market forces, aid and development programs, and legislation at local, state and national levels are all important sites of climate politics – and potentially, significant change.” (Ref. M.McDonald, <https://theconversation.com/cop27-one-big-breakthrough-but-ultimately-an-inadequate-response-to-the-climate-crisis-194056>)

ICW has been calling for activism, and we should be ready to influence decision makers, and be the decision makers so as to reduce the damaging effects of climate change on our communities around the World.

ICW members should be asking for funding to help the most vulnerable.

That is why my heading is “Filling an Empty Bucket?”

**Child and Family report, Oct. 2022,**  
from ICW-CIF Advisor for Child and Family, Loreta Kelbauskaite Serpyte,  
President of Lithuanian NCW

The pandemic has changed the world. Now we are living in a changed reality. It is hard to estimate the damage done to the global economy. The COVID-19 crisis is a worldwide, all pervading, social, health care, economic, political, and cultural crisis.

For overcoming this crisis all the countries in the world had to adopt countermeasures in politics, economics, and social sphere as well as to find new ways to communicate between people which had never been used before. These measures have had a huge impact on families and children.

Poverty has increased worldwide, human aggression grew, the new and the continuing wars encourage huge refugee flows. The Russia-Ukraine war made more than 5m. people leave their homes. The small Georgia which has about 4m. inhabitants had to accept 500 000 refugees from Ukraine and now Russian men escaping the mobilization started arriving. Poland accepted 3m. refugees. 90% of the Ukrainian refugees are women and children. Men from 18 to 60 years of age cannot leave the country. The children and families of Ukraine have endured more than six months of escalating devastation and displacement. Children continue to be killed, wounded, and deeply traumatized by the violence all around them. Schools, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure on which they depend continue to be damaged or destroyed. Families have been separated and lives torn apart. Can children grow in a healthy emotional environment when the parents are living in horror, experience panic attacks and depression?

Family problems are global. Despite great progress in school enrolment in many parts of the world, more than 175 million children are not enrolled in pre-primary education, missing a critical investment opportunity, and suffering deep inequalities from the start. 6 out of 10 leave primary school without achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. This challenge is compounded by the increasingly protracted nature of armed conflicts. This is the data from the UNESCO report.

The countries of the third world, mostly in Africa, Latin America and Asia are traditionally characterized by low standards of living. The incomes are small, the inequality big and the population is growing rapidly. A large proportion of the population is either starving or malnourished. This leads to short life expectancy and high infant mortality.

The life of the contemporary family is disturbed by violence, unemployment and fear. The number of divorces is growing, the age of suicides is getting younger, and homelessness, due to poverty, is on the rise.

Social problems give rise to numerous other negative consequences which influence families. Many countries report fewer marriages and, as mentioned, a greater number of divorces. All this has a negative influence on children's socialization, the stability within society and image of the nation.

Discussions about what makes a modern family are very active at the moment. There is a constant debate about the same-sex family and their right to adopt children. In Lithuania a public movement, Family March, has been established after COVID as a form of protest. The society is divided in two. One part of the society participates in meetings and demands support of the traditional family as, according to the Family March movement, it is the basis for the survival of the nation. With Lithuania and neighbouring Poland being Catholic countries, there is strong support for the Family March. The rest of the population has a broader, European outlook and values and appreciate diversity. The conflict between both sides has an impact on all families and children in Lithuania. This conflict is being constantly debated in other European countries as well, especially when questions arise about the legalization of same sex marriages.

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## MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

### Maternal mental health issues must be better recognised and addressed

#### MMM's response to OHCHR/WHO call for input

Responding to a call for input on a draft joint OHCHR/WHO Guidance Note on mental health, human rights and legislation, MMM called for a specific focus on peripartum mental health, highlighting the high prevalence of mental health concerns among pregnant women and new mothers, such as postpartum depression, the stigma around these issues, and their important impact on mothers and their children in particular during the early years, as well as their costs to society as a whole.

*Pregnancy and the first year postpartum – referred to as the peripartum period* – constitute a period of tremendous physiological, psychological and social changes in women's lives. It is now well-established that the transition to motherhood is increasing women's vulnerability to the development of mental disorders.

It is estimated that globally, nearly 1 in 5 women will develop mental health problems during pregnancy or within the first year postpartum, although there are important variations between countries<sup>1</sup>. The most prevalent peripartum mental health problems are depression and anxiety.

Additionally, research shows that many cases of postpartum mood disorders are undetected and therefore, untreated<sup>2</sup>. This means that a large number of mothers suffer in silence, as the stigma and the lack of knowledge surrounding peripartum mental illnesses are significant barriers to accessing healthcare.

**Peripartum illness not only adversely affects the mother and her overall health, but it also disrupts the mother-baby dyad and family relationships, which, in turn, affects the baby's health and early development. We know that the earliest experiences shape a baby's brain development and have a lifelong impact on their mental and emotional health, as well as their physical, intellectual and social development. The neglect, stress or even violence that can result from a mother's mental health problems can produce physiological disruptions or biological memories that undermine a child's development and their potential for productive participation in society later in life.**

This also translates into a high financial cost on society as a whole: a 2014 study by the London School of Economics has shown that economic costs of peripartum mental illness for the UK society are about £8.1 billion for each one-year cohort of births, of which 72% relates to the child and 28% to the mother<sup>3</sup>. The LSE report also suggests that the cost to the public sector of peripartum mental health problems is 5 times the cost of improving services.

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<sup>1</sup> Hahn-Holbrook, J., Cornwell-Hinrichs, T., Anaya, I. (2018). Economic and Health Predictors of National Postpartum Depression Prevalence: A Systematic Review, Meta-analysis, and Meta-Regression of 291 Studies from 56 Countries. *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2017.00248> (Last access on 5 November 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Coates, A.O., Schaefer, C.A., Alexander, J.L. (2004). Detection of postpartum depression and anxiety in a large health plan. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research* 31, 117–133. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02287376> (Last access on 5 November 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Bauer, A., Parsonage, M., Knapp, M., Lemmi, V., & Adelaja, B. (2014). The costs of perinatal mental health problems. London: Centre for Mental Health and London School of Economics. <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/59885/> (Last access on 5 November 2022)



November 2022

## MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

**It is therefore crucial that peripartum mental health problems be better recognised and addressed. The Guidance Note provides an opportunity to put a spotlight on these issues so that more can be done on prevention, detection and treatment. MMM's recommends that a maternal mental health assessment be systematically included in planned antenatal and postnatal care visits and that the related costs be seen as an investment.**

### MMM's action with RiseUp-PPD

MMM is part of RiseUp-PPD<sup>4</sup>, an EU-funded COST Action dedicated to promoting women's mental health in the peripartum period and to achieving a more standardised and unified approach in recognising, treating and preventing peripartum depression (PPD). It is an international, interdisciplinary network that joined forces to bring about changes in the field of perinatal mental health.

The studies presented at the international [RiseUp-PPD Conference](#) organised by the network in 2022 confirm that the earliest experiences of a child shape their brain development and have a lifelong impact on their mental and emotional health, as well as their physical, cognitive and social development. Furthermore, the neglect, stress or violence that can result from a mother's mental health problems can produce physiological disruptions or biological memories that undermine a child's development and potential for productive participation in society later in life.

According to Professor Hilmar Bijma from the Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands, stress has a significant impact on foetal/a child's (brain) development, since the brain undergoes major development during and following pregnancy. During pregnancy, stress hormones reach the baby through the placenta. Too much stress during pregnancy will trigger lifelong stress on the baby. There is enough evidence proving that maternal stress can cause cardiovascular, neurological and metabolic disease.

But DNA is not the only determinant on how a human body develops. A large amount of stress is expected to change epigenetics, since the environment impacts the functioning of the DNA. The parent-child interaction is therefore of crucial importance during this period. Without the correct response of the mother/parents after pregnancy, the child could be unable to regulate actual stress during their early childhood years, but could also experience problems in managing stress later in life. An emotionally disconnected mother produces a dysregulated autonomic state (also known as the emotional unavailability of parents). The ability of the child (and even future adult) to relate to the world is related to the stress system. If a child's stress system is impacted, the world can't be trusted, and it is complicated to interact in the short and long term with the environment. It is known that a strong infant-parent relationship helps buffering stress and building resilience in life.

Professor Alain Gregoire's research (University of Southampton, UK) shows that:

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<sup>4</sup> <https://riseupppd18138.wordpress.com/> (Last access on 5 November 2022)

November 2022



## MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' ROLE AND RIGHTS

Childhood emotional adversity predicts

- poor mental and physical health even across generations
- the severity and course of illnesses
- suicide attempts
- neuropsychological structural and functional changes, similar to those seen in trauma exposure associated with PTSD and other disorders

Childhood emotional adversity (of the mother as a child) predicts

- perinatal depression, anxiety, suicide attempts
- teenage and unplanned pregnancy and domestic violence
- dysfunctional mother-infant interactions, insecure and disorganised attachment
- poor infant socio-emotional development

### Recommendations/interventions

- Social support (including by professionals and policy-makers) and group support programmes, starting with pregnancy
- Parents need to facilitate these neural connections. And they need support via programmes that facilitate the parent-child interaction already during pregnancy.
- Awareness of stress is essential.
- Timely diagnosis of stress and mental illness
- Timely treatment of mental illness
- Transgenerational and intergenerational awareness and understanding of mental health, mental illness/injury, physical health and illness and the human condition
- Continued research and studies on the effects of multigenerational childhood emotional adversity and awareness-raising

Compiled by Irina Pálffy-Daun-Seiler, MMM Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, with input from Valérie Bichelmeier, Vice-President and Head of MMM UN Delegation, and Johanna Schima, Vice-President and Head of MMM European Delegation.

## Recent & Upcoming Events

### 2022

#### *December*

29. – 30.: 16. International Conference on Comparative Family Studies (Vienna, Austria); <https://waset.org/comparative-family-studies-conference-in-december-2022-in-vienna>

### 2023

#### *January*

23. – 24.: 17. International Conference on Family Economics and Family Policy (Amsterdam, Netherlands); <https://waset.org/family-economics-and-family-policy-conference-in-january-2023-in-amsterdam>

30. – 31.: 17. International Conference on Family Planning (Sydney, Australia); <https://waset.org/family-planning-conference-in-january-2023-in-sydney>

#### *February*

06. – 07.: 17. International Conference on Marriage and Family (Lisbon, Portugal); <https://waset.org/marriage-and-family-conference-in-february-2023-in-lisbon>

06. – 07.: 17. International Conference on Family and Human Life (Guangzhou, China); <https://waset.org/family-and-human-life-conference-in-february-2023-in-guangzhou>

20. – 21.: 17. International Conference on Divorce and Family (Tokyo, Japan); <https://waset.org/divorce-and-family-conference-in-february-2023-in-tokyo>



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