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**International
Union of
Family
Organisations**

WHAT THE IUFO IS



ORGANIZATIONS MAKING
UP THE UNION



WHAT THE UNION
HAS ACHIEVED



What the IUFO is.

All over the world the family has now become a subject of legislation. Every day it is increasingly regarded as an object of study and research for the different branches of science, such as sociology, economics and psychology, as well as educational theory. Everywhere too, the family is recognised not only as the basic social unit, but also as the essential foundation for a well-balanced development of the individual.

This "rediscovery of the Family by our contemporary world" is of primary importance to all nations and to all classes of society; hence it is impossible for any one country acting on its own and without close co-operation with the others, adequately to meet the problems arising in this vital field.

The IUFO is in fact the only international organization whose mission is to coordinate the efforts of those who, throughout the world, concentrate on the living conditions and welfare of families.

In the terms of its constitution, the aims of the IUFO are:

- to establish a link, regardless of race or creed, between all private or public organizations which throughout the world endeavour to promote the welfare of the family;
- to co-operate in the study of family problems, undertaken on a national or international plane, through its standing commissions and study groups;
- to collect and make known general information on the main problems relating to the family, and more especially those of a sociological, psychological, educational and economic nature;
- to champion the needs, wishes and rights of the family, influencing international organizations and public opinion alike.

How IUFO was born.

It was founded in 1947, following the World Family and Population Congress which was held in Paris in June. Its final constitution was adopted at the first General Assembly in Geneva in July 1948.

As early as 1948, it was granted consultative status under category B by the Economic and Social Council of UNO. In addition it has been recognised for consultative arrangements with UNESCO with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with UNICEF and with the Council of Europe. It is also registered on the special list of non-governmental organizations of the International Labour Office.

Organizations making up the Union.

These number 220, belonging to forty-two countries throughout the five continents, and comprising both unofficial and official bodies:

- Family associations and movements;
- Parent-Teacher Associations;
- Social and Family Welfare Organizations;
- Women's and Mothers' Organizations;
- Child Welfare, and Marriage Guidance Organizations; Schools for Parents;
- Social Work Councils and Associations of Social Workers;
- Research Centres for demographic, social and family problems;
- Social Security Offices, National Health Insurance, Family and Housing allowances Organizations;
- Organizations of a cultural and educational nature, as well as Family Holiday organizations;
- Public Institutes for Population and Family problems;
- Ministries and Government departments.

In short the Union gathers together two broad categories of organizations:

a) Voluntary Family Associations and Social and Family Welfare organizations, whose main aim is to further the welfare of family life in many ways;

b) Public organizations within the scope of which Family problems fall. These official organizations are most influential with regard to family standards of living because of their influence on legislation and their social and educational facilities.

Beside these, the Union has corresponding members, i.e. persons chosen among specialists in the various disciplines connected with family life, whether sociological, economic, psychological, educational, legal, or even those representing institutional or political points of view. These corresponding members may be research workers, professors or teachers, or again social workers or welfare officials.

All the member organizations of the Union constitute its General Assembly, which meets every four years. The General Council is the governing body of the Union. Elected for a term of four years by the General Assembly, it is composed of from 1 to 5 people per country, of government representatives and of "Union Advisers" without a right to vote. It meets once every year.

The General Secretariat is the permanent body administering the Union's everyday work and maintaining its relations with the member organizations and with international bodies, both public and private.

What the Union has achieved.

Technical commissions and study groups are among the main working activities of the Union.

The former—which are very varied in form—bring together a limited number of technicians from different countries, draw in competent experts, carry on research work and as far as possible lay the foundations for effective action, within the scope of their own field, on behalf of family life.

The Commission on Family Standards of living is concerned with the tendency of the standard of living to fall with the growing size of the family. A closer scrutiny of this concept of standard of living has brought the Committee to investigate first family incomes, then the increase of the theoretical basic needs with the increasing number of children, and lastly the need for the alleviation given in various countries through such means as family allowances and concessions in income-tax, education and public transport.

The Commission on Family Housing is concerned with the size and cost of housing proportionally to

the size of the family. Too often dwellings are planned for "middlesized" families, regardless of the varied needs resulting from different numbers of children. The Committee also studies the question of the mobility of families in rented dwellings, as well as methods of financing schemes for family housing.

The Commission on Parent-Teacher Relations was primarily set up with a view to finding means of promoting closer co-operation between parents and teachers, which seems increasingly necessary. To this end, it has established a system of exchanging information and also a link between organizations interested in this co-operating work such as Associations of Pupils' Parents, and Teacher and Parent-Teacher Associations. This particular form of co-operation is specially studied in relation to school and vocational guidance for children and teen-agers.

The Commission on Marriage Guidance is concerned with marriage counselling and reconciliation between couples, as well as with preparation for marriage, in both long-term and immediate aspects. Controversial questions and doctrinal problems are not shirked but are discussed with mutual respect and the desire sympathetically to understand the beliefs of others even when they cannot be shared.

STUDY-GROUPS were created in connection with the activities of "Family Movements" and also to meet sectional needs and problems, e.g. "Rural Families", "Family Action among the working classes".

To these should be added the Group on "Family and Social Techniques", establishing links between Family Movements and the various Social Services for families, such as Social Workers Services, Mother's Help and Home Help Services and Home Economics Education.

The Commission on European Action deals with the representation of families and the upholding of family interests in the various European agencies.

By means of Congresses, conferences, and international Study Sessions—which are open to all members of the Union, as well as to other organizations or individuals wishing to participate—experts from private and public services are brought into touch with the users of these Services, that is to say the representatives of the families themselves.

The wide range of subjects covered is sufficient proof of the way in which the International Union is promoting the study of the various elements—economic, social and psychological—which concern the very future of the family.

The IUFO has endeavoured to make an inventory of, and bring into contact the organizations interested in exchanges between families, more especially the Family Holiday Houses.

Lastly, it is concerned with studying the evolution of family structures and Social Services for the countries undergoing development especially in Africa.

Means of Information and publications.

The IUFO aims at making available to all its members and correspondents a general information service, reports, summaries and publications as well as quarterly review.

The Information Centre receives printed literature from all countries and in all languages. This documentary matter is set and all specific information is then classified thus facilitating the work of the Committees and Study groups, as well as supplying valuable information to organizations and persons interested in social and family problems. This information can be obtained by applying directly at the Centre, or it can be sent on request.

In the series "Family problems throughout the world", the IUFO publishes an outline the main studies of its Congresses and Study Sessions, as well as the work of its Commissions.

For the last ten years, the IUFO has published "FAMILLES DANS LE MONDE" a quarterly journal of information, containing studies on family problems and on developments in various countries, reviews, summaries and regular articles about legislation affecting the family and about social and family services, along with a detailed bibliography of the main publications relating to the family.

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F R A N C E

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