

**International Symposium : Perspectives on the
family and parenthood in the Indian Ocean**

October 27 - 29, 2015 La Réunion



WHEREAS

- Representatives of 8 Indian Ocean countries gathered to “cross perspectives on parenthood in the Indian Ocean” (Comoros Islands, France, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles Islands, South Africa, Tanzania)
- Participants to this international symposium found the meeting most valuable and want to perpetuate the impulse that gave rise to it
- Participating countries expressed the desire to work in closer collaboration with each other
- There is already an Observatory of Parenthood located on La Reunion island, at the initiative of the Caisse d’Allocations Familiales (CAF) of La Reunion

IT IS PROPOSED to give the following mandate to the Scientific Committee of the Symposium:

1. COLLECT all of the Symposium proceedings as well as the suggestions made by each of the delegations and each discussion table in order to entrust them to the CAF of La Reunion so that it can send all to all participants;
2. PROVIDE for the enlargement of the Scientific Committee based on the operational wishes of each country, and respecting the importance of keeping this committee as operationally efficient as possible (i.e.: the Scientific Committee is not a representative assembly but an organizing entity responsible for content¹);

¹ In order to ensure maximum relevance of the themes chosen for future conferences and training sessions that the Scientific Committee will organize, it is important that its members not only come from academia but also from the community organizations and representative bodies it aims to serve (young, women, etc.). It would also be important to seek the best expertise available, even when it does not come from countries belonging to the Indian Ocean (e.g.: Canada, if it agrees to contribute).

3. ENCOURAGE the creation of national observatories of parenthood in each country of the Indian Ocean, along the lines of what is done elsewhere and, in particular, on the model of what La Reunion is in the process of setting up. The aim of such observatories should be to promote the development of the best parenting skills through identification and dissemination of best practices around each of the following four invariants:
- a. Families as secure and stable FRAMEWORK where the flourishing of children and other family members will succeed with a maximum level of unconditional love and care, whatever the family types considered;
 - b. Families as FILIATION apparatus, integrating children in a genealogy and family history, whatever the family types considered;
 - c. Families as co-actors in the EDUCATION of children, especially in collaboration with schools (education being meant here to include acculturation and instruction²);
 - d. Families as primary actors in the SOCIALIZATION of children, together this time not only with the school but with many other people and institutions with whom the child must also learn to interact;
4. In conjunction with the establishment of national Observatories of Parenthood, BUILD the foundations of what could become an Observatory of parenthood in the Indian Ocean. This observatory would ideally federate the observatories of each country and would be financed by each member country. In the interim period, the 'federal' observatory could compensate for the lack of national observatories in some countries, and seek funding from international bodies such as the IOC and other public or private international providing development aide. The aims of this observatory would be to promote intercultural dialogue between the different observatories as well as the various government and non-governmental actors in order to identify best practices and to stimulate the creativity of all while respecting the cultural specificities of each. The division of labour between national observatories and the "federal" observatory (at the Indian Ocean level) would be tilted in favour of the 'federal' observatory whenever unnecessary duplication can be avoided, overall costs can be reduced and quality of information produced can be

² By education, we understand here not only instruction (which is about acquiring literacy, numeracy and general & scientific culture) but also acculturation (which is about customs, traditions and societal values) and socialization (which is about learning the rules of living together and the skills to acquire in order to live not only with minimal respect of those rules but in constructive harmony with the rest of society). And though socialization is indeed a part of education, we treat it separately in the fourth invariant, to the extent that instruction and acculturation do occur largely through schooling, while schooling does not play as important a role in the socialization process of children. It does play an important role but not as important a role as it plays with regard to instruction and acculturation.

improved; it would be tilted in favour of national observatories for everything that concerns the respect due to the cultural specificities of each and/or for anything that can only be done on a local basis because of the sort of funding received.

5. One of the first tasks of what could become a Parenthood Observatory for the Indian Ocean would be to MAP all that is being done already and all that's missing within each country using a matrix table (see the Appendix at the end of this document) where one of the axes would be composed of the four invariants of good parenting (previously mentioned) while the other axis would include the following 7 criteria:
 - a. Encourage and support the deployment of best practices for each of the four invariants of good parenting
 - b. Remedy the deficiencies observed around each of those four invariants, when the observed deficiencies require more than just encouragement and support
 - c. Promote and defend the rights (of children, women, men) related to each of the four invariants of parenting, including in particular the rights to safety, health and schooling (either by use of police and the courts, or by use of social or legal mediation)
 - d. Respect the languages used by beneficiaries as well as the customs of each country while performing the work around each of the four invariants of parenthood mentioned above
 - e. Promote the role and responsibility of men (not just of women) around the four invariants of parenting, as well as the role of women outside of parenting (e.g.: as citizen or as economic and social actor, etc.)
 - f. Pay attention to the positive or negative impact of new communications technologies on the work accomplished around each of the four invariants (i.e.: does it support the services offered to parents or does it complicate their tasks?)
 - g. Implement measures to improve the economic and social conditions within which each of the four invariants affecting parenthood are exercised.
6. In parallel with the mapping exercise just described, BUILD a register of all the organizations working in the field of family and parenthood in the different member countries, including the names and contact details of key leaders within each organization and a description of what each organization is doing and in what cell(s) of the "invariants / criteria" matrix each organization is located. Ensure that the registry includes family associations, schools, NGOs, organizations related to

parenthood (genetics, LDCs, adoption), legal mediation, conflict management, defense and promotion of human rights, social entrepreneurship, etc.

7. As part of future conferences, or as follow up to these, ORGANIZE training sessions on one or the other of the following themes
 - a. FOR ALL PROFESSIONALS OR VOLUNTEERS CAPABLE OF RECEIVING (AND TRANSMITTING) THESE TRAININGS: Train the trainers and equip them with appropriate teaching and learning tools (PowerPoint presentations, training tools, etc.) concerning the following topics:
 - i. Early childhood, childhood and adolescence development, as well as education to parenting at each of these development steps
 - ii. Most serious problems faced by parents or people helping / replacing parents at each of those development steps
 - iii. Legal resources available to promote or defend rights (for each country)
 - iv. Training in the art of listening
 - b. FOR NGO MANAGERS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING OF NGOs AS WELL AS OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE FAMILY:
 - i. Training in strategic and operational management for all directors of agencies involved in helping families
 - ii. Entrepreneurship education in general and in particular social entrepreneurship
 - iii. Training on major international aid programs and the way to access them
 - iv. Opportunity for networking with major charitable foundations and / or international aid agencies
8. IMPLEMENT remote training techniques and 'live' or 'delayed' broadcast of symposia via the Internet, thereby reducing the costs of travel / accommodation related to any training program
9. BUILD a website to make available the Symposium proceedings, the mapping and registry that will be built, current and future trainings, teaching tools that can be used by members, a database on parenting and family in the world as well as in the Indian

Ocean, etc. The website should provide member associations with the possibility to update themselves registry data that concern them, or to add new members

COUNTRY ACHIEVEMENTS AND GAPS MATRIX

REGARDING ASSOCIATIVE SUPPORT OF PARENTHOOD

1 Matrix to map the strengths (achievements) and

1 similar matrix to map the weaknesses (gaps)³

	FRAME	FILIATION	EDUCATION	SOCIALIZATION
Encourage and support	1	8	15	22
Remedy deficiencies	2	9	16	23
Promote and defend rights	3	10	17	24
Respect languages and customs	4	11	18	25
Promote the involvement of men in the family and of women in the society at large, outside the family	5	12	19	26
Positive or negative impact of new technologies	6	13	20	27
Improve the social and economic conditions within which parenthood is exercised, as well as the inequalities between the level of support services offered to families amongst countries	7	14	21	28

³ The numbering of compartments aims is dedicated to facilitate the follow-up of the actions. So the action 8 is the one which concern accompagnement and support regarding filiation