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INTERNATIONAL  
DAY OF FAMILIES  
15 MAY [2024]



[2024] THIRTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR OF THE FAMILY

# Climate Change and Families

## UN Policy Brief on Climate Change and Families

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1 NO  
POVERTY



2 ZERO  
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



5 GENDER  
EQUALITY



12 RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE  
ACTION



## Brief Introduction

- The paper emphasizes the effects of climate change on families, focusing on mitigation, adaptation, and contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 12 and 13, and their interconnectedness with SDGs 1 through 5.
- The effects of climate change on families vary based on a number of factors.
- Locality-specific and culturally relevant recommendations is critical.
- Address concerns about adaptation as a public policy strategy to ensure family engagement and avoid resistance.
- Involve families in education about the climate crisis and encourage their participation in drafting responses.
- Leverage their collective support system to bridge the knowledge-behavior gap.



# Families and Climate-Induced Disasters

*'Vulnerability is...a product of social and political processes that include elements of power and (poor) governance...in ways that are often deliberate and anchored in social and political structures'.*



- Deconstruct social mechanisms to alleviate suffering.
- Impact of disasters on families varies based on a number of factors.
- Through their action to support SDG 12 and 13, families can mitigate their vulnerability to climate change.
- Strengthen research to better understand impacts on vulnerable and “non-traditional” families.



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## Intergenerational Relationships and their Impact on Climate Change Decisions

- Examining power dynamics within intergenerational relationships is crucial to understand family involvement in climate change.
- Youth activism has spurred many countries to engage in climate-friendly initiatives.





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## Family Contributions to SDGs

- Working within families facilitates: *teamwork, intergenerational trust, a foundation to understand others, partnerships (SDG16), and a commitment to health and well-being (SDG3) of the wider community.*
- SDG 8 targets economic growth and can foster well-paid opportunities to support families.
- Women often play the role of providing safe and healthy food and environments for their children to be raised in (SDG 2, 3, 5).





## Engaging Families in Climate Action

- Co-production of policies with families will be essential in developing locality-specific, culturally relevant policies.
- Families play a crucial role in achieving climate goals and addressing various SDGs.
  - Their involvement is essential for global success, necessitating action from all families, particularly those in the global north to confront and significantly reduce their high carbon footprints.





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## Actions to be Taken by Policymakers and Guidelines for Practitioners

### Policymakers

- Acknowledge agentic qualities held by families.
- **There isn't a one size fits all solution!**
- Global partnerships with families will increase cooperation and collaboration
- Provide security, support, resources, and funding.
- Eliminate fossil fuel usage, maintain economic prosperity, and create new green jobs.
- Value indigenous perspectives.

### Practitioners

- Organize discussions on climate change in connection to families.
- Educate families on the climate crisis.
- Encourage resistance to ***climate change dysfunctionality***.
- Support women's empowerment.
- Develop lobbying skills.
- Co-drafting policies
- Facilitating recreational enjoyment of nature
- Green Social Work



## Findings and Discussion

### SDG 12

- Targets sustainable consumption and production to prevent environmental degradation, safeguarding people and the planet from fossil fuel-related harm.
- Transformative potential exists in redefining how families meet daily needs, shifting away from fossil fuel reliance towards sustainability.
- Upholding the three pillars of sustainability—economic, social, and environmental—is vital, aiming to eliminate poverty, achieve gender equality, and redistribute wealth while recognizing the link between fossil fuels, consumption, degradation, and the need for action.
- Families have critical roles to play in reducing and eliminating energy, food, and water waste production in the household.

### SDG13

- SDG 13 emphasizes climate action and low-carbon planning to mitigate the worst effects of climate change, aiming to keep temperatures below 1.5°C and develop low-carbon development strategies.
- SDG 13.3 targets education, awareness-raising, capacity building, GHG reduction, and early warning systems (EWS).





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## The Role of Families in Climate Action

**Families can contribute through roles as:**

- **Educators**
- **Consumers**
- **Advocates**





## Recommended Actions to be Taken by Families

- Global solidarities with other families
- Make joint demands of policymakers and practitioners → feelings of empowerment.
- Strengthen the relationship between humanity and the earth's resources.
- Encourage children to engage in climate friendly behaviors.
- Engage in education and advocate for the inclusion of climate change in the school curriculum.





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## The “9 Rs” for a Circular Economy

Families can educate and foster environmentally friendly behaviours among family members through the “9 Rs”: ***rethinking, reducing, redesigning, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, remanufacturing, recycling, and repurposing.***



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## Rethink

Families should be mindful of their activities and consumption habits, and consider how they can reduce their environmental footprint.





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## Reduce

Families can cut down on the number of products and services that they purchase.





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## Redesign

Families can advocate for and push manufacturers to better design products to prolong its lifespan.





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## Reuse

Families can close the loop by buying products that can still be used, but were discarded by someone else.





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## Repair

Families should maintain damaged or broken products so its lifespan can be prolonged and continue to be used with its original function.







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## Refurbish

Families can retrofit and restore old/out-of-date products to bring them up to date and reduce waste.





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## Remanufacture

Families can advocate for companies to reuse parts from discarded or defunct products to produce new ones with the same function.





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## Recycle

When products cannot be reused or repaired, families should recycle and discard products responsibly.





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## Repurpose

Using discarded products or its parts to create a new product with a different function.





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## + **One More R: Refuse**

Families can support sustainability by not buying products they don't need and refusing to buy products that are not sustainable.



\*Not included in Dominelli's paper.



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## Families as Education Advocates

- Parents and caregivers can advocate for the inclusion of climate change in the school curricula throughout the child's life.





## Families as Advocates

- Families can act as environmental **lobbyist** and **protectors**.
- Organize to demand public policies that endorse and support renewable energy usage and sustainable physical environments.





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## Families as Consumers

- Families can harness their power as consumers by voting with their wallets for environmentally friendly products and services.
- Support renewable energy-based patterns of production.







## Conclusions

**Families have incredibly significant roles to play as implementers of the SDGs because they are critical in the lives of most of the world's population. Below are a number of ways that families can support:**

- Taking on the role of advocates
- Provide psychological and social support.
- Socializing the next generation.
- Providing family members with resources.
- Promoting sustainable food production and animal, bird, and insect-friendly environments.
- Demanding family impact assessments of all policies and practices linked to climate change.





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*“Families are rooted in geographic space, namely the locality of their community, and this grounding helps them to find locality-specific and culturally relevant adaptations across the climate change disaster cycle.”*



Towards Sustainable Development for All



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## **Selected sources:**

Lena Dominelli (2023) Climate Change and Families: UN Policy Brief on Climate Change and Families. Stirling: University of Stirling, Scotland.