

# THE CATHOLIC PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON OFFICE (CPLO)

*The Cost of Staying at Home:  
The psycho-social consequences of the  
Lockdown for families*

Go back to you households .....

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7 slides:

Slide 1: introductory thought

Slides 2-6: content development

Slide 7: concluding thought

What do we want of a family?

*“To undertake activities, programmes, projects and plans to promote, support and nourish well-functioning families that are loving, peaceful, safe, stable, and economically self-sustaining; that also provide care and physical, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, and intellectual support for their members.”*

(White Paper on Families 2013)

## What do we know of the family?

The home ... the household ... the South African family has been in crisis for many decades. The crisis precedes COVID-19. More than half of the population (30.5 mil) is chronically poor. Many people live in indigent households – highly dependent on social grants rather than the labour market. More than 18 million people receive a grant. **(StatsSA Pre-COVID-19)**

Pre- and post- apartheid, and colonial administrative and economic systems placed unbearable burden on family cohesion eg migrant labour patterns decreased family functioning in terms of marital unions, increased labour / economic burden of women and breakdown in the role of men as fathers.

- Psychosocial **wellbeing of the family** has been one of the ignored problems that the pandemic has now magnified
- Emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, psychological health of the **family unit has not been addressed** (Review of WPF)
- Delivery systems have not provided from a **holistic perspective** eg support to abused women, to hungry children, to vulnerable elders, a substance abuser, etc
- Psychosocial support (if accessible) is provided to a **constituent member NOT to the family unit** – almost always away from the home / household
- An abused woman is taken to a shelter, a hungry child is fed at school, a vulnerable elder goes to the clinic, grants to 18 million **individuals**, etc – the **silo approach addresses the individual**
- **During lockdown** the decrease in assaults, robberies, hijackings but **increase in GBV has come as a surprise** (?) to those that have ignored domestic violence /GBV

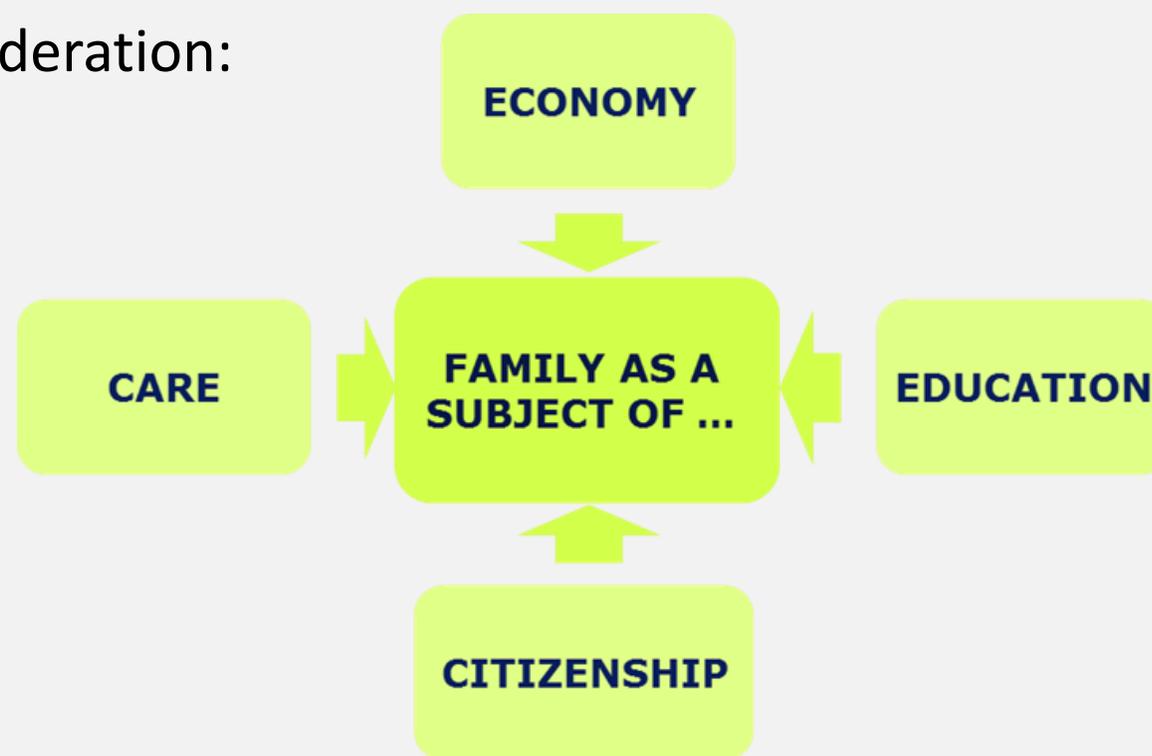
## REVIEWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHITE PAPER ON FAMILIES (October 2018, CSDA, UJ) ... review was scathing

- There is currently no evidence that South Africa's family policy has achieved these outcomes – WPF 2013.
- The actual budgets for the implementation of the family policy are obscure. It is therefore not an unfair conclusion to reach that the policy exists on paper but not in practice.
- Coordination of services ..... the findings show that better coordination has not been achieved at national and provincial levels, while it is non-existent at local government level .... (should be) playing a central role in family services as they are closer to the real lives of families.
- Current implementation of the WPF amounts effectively to the implementation of the Children's Act (2005)

What has the lockdown meant for family wellbeing? What has the lockdown meant for family relations? For family resilience?

Psychosocial weakness of families translates into weakness of society – domestic violence, GBV, substance abuse, neglect and abuse of children and elderly, abandonment of babies /children, increase in illegal unwanted births, etc

Four domains for consideration:



COVID-19 has additionally affected family and household functions .....

## **ECONOMY – weakened assets base and financial resilience**

- Increased numbers of indigent households with inability to provide basic needs (food parcels and additional grants cannot cover ongoing need)
- Increased financial stress resulting from loss of work. Financial uncertainty will lead to *forced* shared / multigenerational homes with increasing pressures in terms of planning for the future

## **CARE – poorest face greatest burdens**

- The care burden has placed on families beyond what is reasonable eg cancer, substance abuse, domestic violence, raising children, persons with disability, elderly.
- The PRIMARY CARE GIVER BURDEN (mainly women) has been taken to another level – in terms of basic needs eg water, food, fuel and keeping the peace!

## **EDUCATION – growing gap between the 2 economies**

- Primary caregivers (mainly women) have now had to become teachers / facilitators of content of children's formal education – *“mountains on her back!”* – now an additional COVID mountain
- There is a growing gap educationally and skills because of the move to online knowledge acquisition; poor and under resourced homes are being left behind

## **CITIZENSHIP – “not now because of COVID!”**

- The voices of citizens have been diminished as the COVID agenda overwhelms family issues eg domestic violence, care of family members, substance abuse, education
- Families themselves are being further weakened because government and other stakeholders who have weak implementation of family policy now have to rethink operations that suit the new normal – we can't because ...

# Sekwele Family Strengthening Programme – Building Healthy Families

Family: as per White Paper on Families (2013)

Healthy families: refers to wellbeing as a function of economy, education, care and citizenship

Family resilience: ability to manage economy, education, care and citizenship through the family life cycle

Empowerment: ability to make decisions that affect family wellbeing

Behaviour change: ability to recognise negative behaviour and make changes to affect family wellbeing

Theory of change:

“family ability to build and manage resilience through empowerment and behaviour change”.

4-Pillar family strengthening model

KNOWING

DOING

GETTING HELP

TEACH OTHERS

ECONOMY

CARE

FAMILY AS A SUBJECT OF ...

EDUCATION

CITIZENSHIP

# Conclusion:

The White Paper on Families 2013 and the NDP 2030 can only be achieved if there is a clear focus on implementing government policy through the lens of the family.

The CPLO, the CBC, dioceses of the church, partners and stakeholders must implement and support a family approach ...

go beyond the silo approach, only spiritual needs, the paper approach ...

Sekwele: Building family resilience one household at a time!

# Thank you

Sekwele Centre for Family Studies

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