**2025 Report on Family and Children Issues**
By Loreta Kelbauskaite – Serpyte
Child and Family Advisor, ICW

**Introduction**

Family remains the foundation of individual well-being and societal stability, yet it continues to be shaped by evolving economic, demographic, political, and social challenges. In 2025, global trends highlight persistent gender disparities, economic struggles, geopolitical conflicts, and their impact on children and families worldwide. These challenges align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly **SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).**

**Current Global Challenges**

**Geopolitical Conflicts and Their Impact on Families**

By early 2025, ongoing conflicts in **Ukraine, Gaza, and the Sahel region** have displaced millions, affecting children’s education, security, and mental health. The UNHCR estimates that **over 6 million Ukrainian children** remain displaced, while **the Israel-Gaza conflict** has left **1.5 million children** in need of humanitarian aid [Source: UNHCR, 2025]. These crises reinforce the urgent need to achieve **SDG 16** by ensuring protection for vulnerable populations.

**Economic Pressures and Rising Inflation**

The post-pandemic global economy continues to struggle with inflation and income disparity. **One in four families in Europe and North America** faces financial distress, struggling to meet children’s basic needs [Source: Eurostat, 2025]. High living costs have led to increased reliance on food banks and social assistance programs. This situation highlights the importance of **SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).**

**Education Disruptions and Digital Divide**

Remote learning inequalities persist, particularly in low-income countries. **Over 250 million children globally** still lack access to formal education, while internet and digital resources remain limited in conflict and rural areas [Source: UNESCO, 2025]. Addressing these gaps aligns with **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** by promoting inclusive learning environments.

**Gender Inequality and Work-Life Balance**

Despite efforts to reduce gender disparities, **women continue to perform 70% of unpaid caregiving duties worldwide**, significantly impacting their economic participation [Source: ILO, 2025]. In the European Union, **46% of women spend more than four hours daily on childcare**, compared to **27% of men** [Source: EIGE, 2025].

The economic cost of unpaid labor contributes to a **global GDP loss of 4.7%** annually. Addressing this issue supports **SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).**

**Reproductive Rights and Legislative Changes**

Access to reproductive healthcare remains a contentious issue. While **10 countries have expanded access to reproductive rights in 2025**, **23 nations maintain strict abortion bans**, affecting over **85 million women** of reproductive age [Source: Center for Reproductive Rights, 2025]. These restrictions contradict **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).**

**Child Labor and Child Abuse**

Although global child labor rates have declined, **152 million children worldwide** are still engaged in forced labor, particularly in **Africa and South Asia** [Source: ILO, 2025]. Stricter regulations and enforcement are required to support **SDG 8 (Decent Work) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).**

UNICEF reports that **1 in 3 girls and 1 in 12 boys experience abuse before age 18**. Strengthening child protection measures is crucial to ensuring their safety and well-being [Source: UNICEF, 2025].

**Conclusion**

As 2025 unfolds, families continue to face multidimensional challenges. Economic instability, geopolitical conflicts, and gender disparities remain pressing issues that must be addressed to create equitable and secure environments for children and caregivers.

**Recommendations**

1. **Enhance Refugee Support** – Improve integration programs focusing on education and healthcare (**SDG 3, SDG 4**).
2. **Promote Economic Security** – Strengthen social policies to protect vulnerable families (**SDG 1, SDG 10**).
3. **Ensure Gender Equality in Work and Care** – Implement policies supporting equal work distribution (**SDG 5, SDG 8**).
4. **Strengthen Child Protection Laws** – Expand resources to prevent child labor and abuse (**SDG 16**).
5. **Expand Reproductive Rights** – Advocate for access to reproductive healthcare (**SDG 3, SDG 5**).
6. **Address Digital Learning Gaps** – Increase investment in education technology and internet access (**SDG 4**).

By implementing these measures, policymakers and global leaders can help build a more sustainable and equitable future for families and children in 2025.