

Family members who take care of their relatives play a vital role in society. Without such people, healthcare systems would collapse. This fact is not widely understood. Among family carers, 'young carers' are faced with specific challenges that can affect their entire lives.

The situation of 'young carers' deserves particular attention now, more than ever. As a result of the societal demographic shift, the consequent alteration of the age structure, as well as the current crises, such as the COVID-19 outbreak, considerable additional burdens are placed on the welfare, health, and care systems. This leads to an increase in the number of family caregivers. In this context, the focus of research, policy, and media attention is almost exclusively on adults, e.g. partners who provide care, forgetting that children and young people often take on a caring role. This leads to a lack of awareness and consequently makes access to support services more difficult. Young carers are confronted with special difficulties and therefore require specific support. In some countries, the term 'young carers' is already known to the public, but there is a lack of social awareness. In other countries, an appropriate term in the relevant language is yet to be developed or widely understood. It is for these reasons that the 2023 double-issue of the IGJR are dedicated to this important topic. While the focus of the previous issue (1/2023) was on the challenges of identifying young carers and the problems they face daily, this issue focuses more specifically on possible solutions and support measure.

The first article by Stephen Joseph, Joe Sempik, Agnes Leu and Saul Becker provides an overview of research on young carers to date and discusses methodological challenges in this context. They argue in favour of a participatory and action-oriented approach to research that can better capture the lived experience of young carers and meet their needs. Research findings indicate that 2–8% of children and young people are carers. This role has an impact on their professional and social opportunities, their health, and their overall well-being. The authors provide an important, but often neglected, international comparison which considers the situation for young carers outside of Europe. They note, for example, that understandings of childhood across the globe differ, and thus the term 'young carer' is subjectively construed. The *de facto* and *de jure* situation for young carers also differs from country to country. In some countries, young carers are offered well-developed services and are recognised in law, while other countries are still severely lacking in awareness of the problem. The article proposes a new agenda for the development of policy, research rigour, and more theoretical sophistication, as well as demonstrating the need for a greater awareness of the importance of interdisciplinary and multi-agency working.

No one should be penalised because of their caring role, either economically or socially. This is the position of the second contribution in this issue, a policy paper published by the European Association 'Eurocarers'. The paper demonstrates why the challenges faced by young carers must be recognised and addressed. It sets out a few key goals, which new measures to support young carers should aim to achieve. Central to this are provisions such as providing young carers with necessary information and advice, off-

setting costs through access to benefits, providing flexible working arrangements, recourse to formal professional care services and carers' leave arrangements, that enable the young people to pursue active social lives and extra-curricular activities. The policy paper highlights two main elements of support that can be provided. Firstly, they argue that to enable young carers to take time out and manage their time better, the provision of appropriate and intensive formal care must be promoted. This must be adequately and consistently supported by legal and policy frameworks at national and regional level. Secondly, they detail the kinds of direct support for young carers which could be provided through training, counselling, psychological, and emotional guidance. This must be preceded by an initial needs assessment by formal services based on a 'whole family approach'. This approach allows the health and social needs of the care recipient, carer, and family to be identified as a whole, which relies on a joint working and commissioning between adult, children, and health services. Such an approach leads to a 'virtuous circle between services', which in turn is important for the mental health of young carers. The policy paper argues in favour of a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention. The authors also argue that we must acknowledge the obstacles to accessing support services on the part of the families concerned. In some cases, a fear that family members could be separated makes young carers hesitant about asking for support or accessing services. Finally, the policy paper provides key messages for various institutions and organisations such as schools, the EU, and support services, with the intention of influencing their policies.

Finally, this issue closes with the book review section, which in this issue is dedicated to intergenerational issues more broadly. Zachariah Tailor reviews Livia Ester Luzzatto's *Intergenerational Challenges and Climate Justice: Setting the Scope of Our Obligations* (2022), which proposes a novel intergenerational theory of justice for dealing with the impacts of climate change on future generations. This monograph considers the circumstances in which responsibility and blame for their actions can be assigned to current people, providing helpful frameworks for national and international policy.

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