

Home Renaissance Foundation  
Nottingham Trent University  
*In Collaboration with*

United Nations  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

**Experts Meeting 23**

# HOME/FAMILY & CLIMATE CHANGE

Understanding the power of home to transform societies in the face of  
Climate Emergency

**Venue:** Nottingham Conference  
Centre,  
Nottingham Trent University,  
Nottingham, UK

**Date:** 28-29 Sep 2023



Centre for Architecture, Urbanism & Global Heritage  
Nottingham Trent University

## Experts Meeting 23: Home, Family and Climate Change

### *Understanding the power of home to transform societies in the face of Climate Emergency*

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**Academic Leaders:** M. Gamal Abdelmonem and Antonio Argandoña

#### **Introduction**

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was established on 21 March 1994 with two prime objectives; to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including carbon dioxide, and to commit financial support to developing countries that require assistance to adapt to the impact of climate change. Almost 30 years later, little has been achieved on both fronts, whilst the concerns are growing of the impact of Climate Change that showed extreme weather conditions almost everywhere on the planet. On 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022, The United Nations Environment programme released a report ahead of COP27, confirming there is *“no credible pathway to 1.5C in place limit”* today, whilst UN Secretary General, Antony Guterres, further commented: *“we are headed for economy-destroying levels of global heating. We need #ClimateAction on all fronts – and we need it now. We must close the emissions gap before catastrophe closes in on us all.”*

Climate Change has a variety drastic impact across the globe that reach each one of us. Whilst rising average temperatures, rising sea levels, and melting Arctic ice are experienced first-hand by limited number of world populations, their long-term impact is far more devastating. We all experience, lengthy and extreme summer temperatures, decrease in average river flows, in some cases by more than 20%, extreme frequent, longer and more intense heat waves and wildfires. Global warming is also associated natural disasters and increasing waves of displacement and desertification, food shortages, draughts and decline in crops production across the globe. With the Climate Clock is set by researchers for 9 years (2031) as when we will reach the 1.5C rise that is mark of no-return, there is no escaping that Climate Change is reaching each household, at varying degrees.

Many studies associate critical approaches to limit Carbon Dioxide and limit the rise of global warming sits on two key pillars; concentrate many activities within homes and limit the use of any carbon emitting machines. In a drastic vision by researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in the journal Science, they cited that for California to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels, by 2050, workers need to lock the door to their net-zero homes, hopping in battery-powered cars, then heading to uber-efficient offices powered by solar panels. Such technology led solutions are largely technical processes that overlook the other factors and opportunities surrounding the home, family and community. Simple analysis of the family homes, planning and urban/sub-urban patterns of life and consumption seem to have larger impact on both the family and its carbon footprint.

The proximity of single-family home, to local stores, places of work, job centre, healthcare facilities or the shopping district seem to have significant impact. Economic and job patterns

including working from home have provided clues on both the efficiency of an economy working on minimum energy consumption in city centres, whilst activating the economic values and credentials for the home. Equally, the footprint to a multi-family home in a walkable urban neighbourhood seem to offer a serious place to start thinking about effective methods to combat climate change. Yet, most approaches and investment into climate change focus to large extent on advanced technology of electrical and carbon neutral cars and devices, but little focus is made on community power and the centrality of home to societal shifts in economy, mobility, infrastructure and livelihoods.

***Vision: CARE OF THE PLANET***

***One PLANET, One HOME: Reversing the Clock of Climate Change***

*“The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home.”*

*Confucius*

Central to the collective response to Climate Change is the individual sense of insecurity, and the risks that comes with global warming and face families and homes. The missing link is the global action or political vision is the sense of love and care of the planet as our shared and universal home, on whose ground, all our homes and safe havens do exist. Research and studies largely focused on the technical and economic side of climate change, whilst rarely touched on the philosophy of love and care of the planet as one’s home; the simple message that grasp’s public attention and concern. We will protect the planet, when we truly understand it is our home. As much as we take care of our smaller home, our most intimate home, it is equally important to take care of the big home, the one that houses and shelters the whole of society. It is not caring for the sake of caring but for the inherent love that the person transmits in the act of caring.

Many common themes emerged over the years regarding specific climate change effects on certain sectors, economies, consumptions, transportation, or natural environments. However, rarely were detailed or critical multi-disciplinary study of how the home and family as social unit are impacted directly by Climate Change nor how it can help us change course in reversing it. As much global the Challenge is, the impact and potential response needs to be centred around the home and family capability of transformation and change. This is the key lesson we got from the global and effective response to the drastic impact and risks of COVID-19. With a choice between economic collapse or full-blow catastrophe, our societies have no option to but to act, and for the home to be revisited as the central and most powerful institution where universal values could be instilled, and collective actions become a reality of everyday life.

The home has consistently been the most resilient and adaptable social and economic unit where fundamental challenges or changes to our world have been met, endorsed or resisted. From responding to natural disasters, divisions, conflicts or instability, family was the base from which resilience or rebuilding emerge and evolve. More recently, when COVID-19 global pandemic led to international Lockdown across the planet and social and economic systems came to a halt, our societies withdrew to the safe territory of the home and the social support of the family. As the economy, healthcare and social care moved from public systems to the local and community support system, the family become as the centre of a resilience and rebuilding. In Parallel, mobility and travel were curtailed, our Carbon footprint were substantially reduced, our cities became

greener, we became reliant on local supplies, produce and social support. In the face of a global emergency, the home and family instantly and instinctively emerged as the resilient unit on which our society can rely and through which we can adapt and reset our systems and global operations; Lessons learnt, adaptably and flexibility were tested, and it worked.

Why, therefore, we look elsewhere to build resilience and response mechanism to combat Climate Change.

This Expert Meeting aims to explore the role home and family play in the transition towards a sustainable and carbon-neutral planet, where our Carbon footprint is neutralised by offsetting our consumption with the production of clean energy and sustainable lifestyle. Building on the lessons learnt during COVID-19 Pandemic, and the global response to a universal emergency, this meeting will bring experts, scholars and scientists from diverse disciplines, professions, and research backgrounds to debate the challenges and opportunities facing the home as societal institutions to achieve that goal. It tries to respond to a key question, *'how can we engage more effectively with the home and family as a resilient unit to help societies and economies compact Climate Change?'*

As part of the Home Renaissance Foundation mission to tackle global challenges facing the home, this meeting makes an important contribution to building a home-centred framework that enable the family to play a central and effective role in the global response and action plan to combat Climate Change. In coordination with the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other international partners, this meeting will organise specialist panels of experts under thematic topics to produce an edited report, policy briefing, set of recommendations and action plan to raise global awareness and set key principles of the possible routes towards home-centred response on the Micro and Macro levels. It will bring expert from different disciplines and backgrounds in economy, social science, healthcare, architecture, urban culture, environmental sciences, psychology and policy to collect evidence on both the impact of Climate Change and global warming of our families, and how the home can become effective domain of combating it.

The meeting shall investigate the Home and Climate Change under a few themes such as: *Health and wellbeing, home ecologies and carbon footprint, micro-economics of the home, Net-Zero home and 20-minute neighbourhood, culture and education, mobility and infrastructure*. It will attempt to compile an evidence-based report, backed up with scientific-based data analysis in a clear and concise manner to help the public message reaches both specialist and public audience. The report will cover two principal sections: Risks and Impact; Opportunities and Scenario. It will summarise the state of play and progress on Climate response when Home becomes the centre of the strategy and policy.

## **Project Description**

With the changing global economy and political situation, we need to take a slow, in-depth look at how this may affect households, how we can curb what is harming the planet, and what household-related policies can be implemented. In this context, this proposal attempts to reposition the home and family at the centre of climate change. It studies the impact, project the struggles and offer insights into novel insights and effective approaches to home-based solutions. It enables us to understand the way families could be engaged with the challenges of global warming and how policy, planning, architecture and economy can be re-envisioned to support the home within the framework of national and international policy circles. It further asks how

families and households are directly impacted by the global warming and how they need to develop their resilience and capacity to operate in a framework of sustainable living.

HRF's goal is to highlight the role of the home and family in society and explore ways to improve our understanding of the impact of Climate Change on the Home and family as the building block of society and its key social and economic unit. At the heart of HRF vision is the value of what is offered by the home fundamentally is cultural and social for each family member, encouraging independent of income and resilience to external circumstances.

The current proposal is to hold a meeting entitled 'Home, Family and Climate Change, an opportunity for conversation and reflection on how people and institutions can generate a sustainable home within an ecosystem of net-zero homes and neighbourhoods. It will highlight the direct impact of Climate Change on each home and how homes can be better prepared adapted and be more resilient and responsive to societal and climatic changes. However, this response is not limited to one sector or aspects of family livelihoods or lifestyle. It goes through several sectors, policies, opportunities and changing our way of life and enable new innovations and opportunities. The selection of experts allows for the two-fold multiple perspectives and material evidence to be collected and collated in concise and informative reports and essays.

## **Key themes**

### ***1. The Care of the Planet: Love and care at the heart of Climate Response***

Our planet is our shared home. It is key to our survival and our perception of living. On the personal and cultural levels, we care for our planet because we truly understand that the planet is our home. As we ought to take care of our individual and most intimate homes, it is also imperative to take care of the all-encompassing home, on which we live and the one that houses and shelters our nations. Under this strand, we will discuss the philosophical meaning of love and care within the context of care for the home and family. It connects the universal home, the planet and its wellbeing, to the very personal and intimate home of the family.

### ***2. Climate Change & Public Health: The health and social care of the home***

This strand will discuss current and projected impact of global warming on family members and potential risks to essential support systems in healthcare, social care and wellbeing of individuals and vulnerable groups. Many studies reported the effects of extreme weather and heatwave on the health of older and more vulnerable people who need care. This covers variable factors that influence our health, from direct impact through excessive heatwave, torrential rains, wildfires, poor air quality, and enduring dry seasons to indirect ones that result from the limitation to our healthcare systems and their capacity to increasing demands. This strand will distil the multiple studies and evidence on such change on households and potential risks. It will then recommend a set of steps that enable future healthcare policy to counter those impact and prepare the state response mechanism in the context of adverse conditions.

### ***3. Consumption & ecological footprint: Energy, Food and Transportation***

This strand will focus on everyday lifestyle and consumption, through multiple examples of household consumptions in both developed and developing world. It will put into perspective the disparities of CO2 emissions and consumption of energy through work, food supply chain and transportation (essential and luxury). Whilst studying current patterns of societies, it will summarise best practice in active reduction of carbon emission in progressive states and cities to recommend practical steps in achieving sustainable lifestyle and consumption patterns.

#### ***4. Remote economy and home-based work: digital homes changing economic and Work/Life balance***

This strand will pick on several studies that debate the critical role the redistribution of economy, job markets and trade in offsetting the carbon consumption through remote patterns of work and trade from home. It will look at recent change in economic operations, and digital infrastructure that are needed to support families working from home and connect them to wider network of trade and markets. It will gather evidence on how this model may or may not support a permanent shift in our life/work balance at home and how we can be active economically with minimum use of travel and public transportation. This strand will map effective economy and corporations that relied managed to remain active during the Pandemic, those new economies that emerged to compete with traditional sectors.

#### ***5. Connected Locality: Net-Zero Homes & Neighbourhoods***

Under this strand, we aim to discuss the design of carbon neutral housing and the development of net-zero cities through multiple models around proximity of the family to essential services, markets, local supplies. It considers the effective and practical impact of the 20-minute neighbourhood model, where self-sufficiency of family needs and domestic network of supplies, services, and daily needs exist in walking distance of 10 minutes. It will investigate architecture, innovation and artificial Intelligence in the make-up of greener homes and developing new forms of construction to cope with periods of torrential rains and extreme temperatures.

#### ***6. Building Climate Resilience: Raising awareness through art and culture and education***

Under this theme, we aim to explore what means of art and cultural education can help young individuals for developing awareness of the role of their homes and families in responding to climate emergencies and its consequences, like increased deprivation, displacement, and health risks. It will investigate our learning institutions consideration of the home, family practices and power of education to change societal attitudes towards the environment. It will study the influence of public art and culture in shaping the public knowledge and awareness of the centrality of the environmental concerns to every day's life of the home and family. This will consider art and culture response to extreme weathers and natural disasters as a man-made catastrophe.

### **Key Questions**

1. How far do we understand the impact and consequences of climate change and global warming on the health and wellbeing home and families at home?

2. How far is the home, as central social unit, is considered in the current policies, plans and international response to Climate Change?
3. What are current conceptual, theoretical knowledge gap about the potential role and value of the home in achieving net-zero cities' targets?
4. What scientific evidence do we have on the obstacles and challenges facing households and the opportunities they offer in responding to extreme weather conditions and situations?
5. What are the frameworks that enable the home and family to become effective plays in productive and carbon-neutral economy and trade? What policy approaches we can adopt in response.
6. To what extent our neighbourhood planning, land use, digital infrastructure enables the home to play a key role in re-distributing our Carbon emission and
7. How can the results of this work be incorporated into new policy and actions?

### **Key Goals and Outcomes**

The key goal of EM is to promote and raise the awareness of the role of the home on human response to fundamental and global challenges of global warming with effective repositioning the home as a missing link in international initiatives and national policy about practical approaches towards sustainable homes.

#### **a. Outcomes:**

- (i) Building a network of scholars reflecting on the topic of home and climate change that cover diverse approaches and contextual differences.
- (ii) Enable scholars to deepen our understanding of the importance of the Home in the context of climate change and reposition the home as a powerful institution in building resilience and adaptive mechanism.
- (iii) Identify policy and research gap in approaches that overlook the central role of the home and family in combating the effects of climate change.

#### **b. Outputs:**

The Experts Meeting facilitates and empowers scholarly debates, collaborative work and interdisciplinary discussions to reach overarching findings and recommendations with a vision for a sustainable future. EM23 shall coordinate the work of all speakers and scholars to produce:

- (i) A collective and interdisciplinary edited volume: "Home, Family & Climate Change", typically published by Taylor & Francis.

[Previous volumes: *The Home: Multidisciplinary Reflections, 2017; People, Care and Work in the Home, 2020; The Home in the Digital Age, 2021; Happiness and Domestic Life, 2022.*]

- (ii) Policy paper and recommendations that identify critical impact of climate change on families and household and proactive approaches in these contexts.
- (iii) An innovative communication/testimonial report with the enhanced perspective on the home
- (iv) Material to enrich the communication of HRF's vision and mission and that of the expertise fostered and promoted by HRF and NTU. This will contribute to HRF Blog.

### **Key Dates**

Confirmation of participation	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Abstract submission	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023
Full paper	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2023
Expert peer-review feedback	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Final paper (copyedited)	21 <sup>st</sup> August 2023
Experts Meeting date	28-29 <sup>th</sup> September 2023

### **Key Contacts & Organisers**

This Experts Meeting is a co-organised by the Nottingham Trent University, Home Renaissance Foundation and United Nation -Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA)

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***We look forward to welcoming and meeting you in Nottingham.***