
#1euroafamily. Forum Foundation: resumption of the campaign. The stories of those who gave and received

#1euroafamily (#1euroafamiglia), the financial support campaign for families facing financial difficulties, promoted by the **Family Associations Forum Foundation**, a branch of the **Family Associations Forum network**, is back on track. The findings of the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) show that in 2020 there were more than 2.6 million households in relative poverty (10.1%) corresponding to approximately 8 million individuals (13.5%). This figure reflects a consistent drop in average monthly household consumption expenditure recorded in 2020 (-9.0%). The far-reaching impact of the health crisis, affecting the economy and society as a whole, has drained household savings and is not yet over, with growing numbers of families experiencing financial difficulties. The Family Associations Forum, through the Foundation that bears the same name, sounded the alarm and gave renewed impetus to the "*#1euroafamily*" fundraising campaign, based on small contributions aimed at helping families struggling to pay their mortgages or utility bills, depleting their savings. The initiative is not limited to financial support: thanks to family counselling services provided by a network of 596 associations operating at national, regional and local level, and specialised in family support, those in need are offered guidance and counselling services covering various family needs.



"#1euroafamily is a project we are very keen to promote, as it stems from grassroots level and families have shown their appreciation for it:

it can be described as a popular shareholding of families for families",

said the President of the National Family Associations Forum and Foundation president, **Gigi De Palo**. "We are still at the beginning. A number of technical problems have slowed down the process, but our goal is to turn this initiative and the Foundation into a contact point for working middle class families facing temporary difficulties that can be resolved. We strongly believe in this idea and, given the number of requests for help received, we are working hard to find solutions. We play a subsidiary role to municipalities, to the government... Subsidiarity also involves projects of this kind. *Our projects have improved the lives of many families, we felt helpful. People's lives have been improved simply by connecting families. This is very inspiring, especially at this time.*"



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People experiencing financial difficulties are invited to call +39 329 9057101 from 9.30 to 11.30 am. A helpline staff member answers the call and, if they meet the criteria, activates the Family Fund. If the applicant families meet the requested criteria, verified via phone interview, they will receive a code to complete the application form. The family will then be contacted by consultants from the Foundation to finalise the financial assistance request. Details on applying for support and/or becoming a benefactor can be found at fondofamiglie.org. A dedicated Evaluation Committee then releases a substantiated statement confirming that the applicant family's requirements have been met, thus providing access to benefits from the Family Fund, monitoring the situation until the critical situation is resolved.



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"The #1eurofamily project received a surprising response, with extensive participation and donations. This has encouraged us to enhance the project, which required considerable effort over the last few months, also because we upgraded the fundraising and family support system to ensure that no one was left out. Donors and the families they help form a single network, reflecting the social value of families as a valuable resource for the resilience of our country. Donors discovered that they could receive help, and those who asked for help realised that they could help in return. Each in their own way", said the national vice president of the Family Associations Forum **Cristina Riccardi**.



"We are a young married couple with a little girl. My husband is self-employed and I have chosen to dedicate myself to my family," explained a young woman helped by the Family Associations Forum. The Covid pandemic marked a trying time for us, financially and otherwise. My husband works closely with people, he captures emotions and happy moments in people's lives, our family thrives on what has been taken away by the pandemic. In this time of hardship, we continued paying the rent and household utilities, plus all those expenses that come with being a family with children. We ended up draining all of our savings. During this "extremely difficult period", the woman remarked, "we have often felt and still feel alone and at a loss. I must confess that we also struggled to feel God's presence, to make sense of it all." Then they discovered the #1euroafamily initiative, "A concrete initiative for the common good. A beautiful project that gave hope to those who like ourselves were at the mercy of the storm. My thoughts went out to all those donating 'a small sum' that would turn into a larger contribution for others. I was touched by this, because talking about and experiencing solidarity today is almost a utopian dream." Asking for help is not easy: "It hurts not to work, to be at a standstill feeling that you can't meet your family's needs." "Knowing that we could count on the support of the Fund was a great comfort. The fact that the month's rent was already covered was a huge relief. I want to thank all those families and individuals who donated a little or a lot to keep this project going", she said. Once back to normality, "our efforts will focus on continuing to increase what we have received, because, as we are told in the Gospel, 'freely you have received, freely give'". The testimony of another family: "No words can describe our present conditions, but your help is precious in recovering whatever can be recovered and, above all, in feeling that we are part of something greater and that we are supported in a special way by those who still believe in the power of doing good. It gives us great joy." There are also those who receive and donate in return. "Helping one another. This is the message of the Family Fund initiative, that sees our family as part of a close network of giving and receiving. Just like other families, each with their own strengths and difficulties, we applied for financial support motivated by difficulties caused by the pandemic. But from the outset we decided to offer, in our own small way, a symbolic monthly contribution to the initiative to sustain the vision of a large family, which we are all members of.

One day I will be helping you and the next day you will be helping me - that's how it works.

Being a small part of this system is inspiring. In fact, it is even more inspiring to see such wide-ranging and far-sighted projects come to fruition without delay". "We see it as a multi-faceted mutual aid system, consisting of both economic and human resources, where each person's request for help is answered by a single person, via financial as well as social support. Where everyone puts their talents - whether tangible or abstract - at the service of others", concluded one of the testimonies.

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