



A week for

CHILDREN OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ALCOHOL PROBLEMS



Monday



Alcohol-Free
Childhood



Seen with the eyes
of our children,
the world we live in has
an alcohol problem.



Facts and explanation of the problem:

Alcohol harms children and young people disproportionately. Children suffer from neglect, maltreatment, poor mental and physical health, academic difficulties and violence perpetrated by adults, often parents, due to [alcohol](#).

Evidence shows that younger age increased the risk to experience alcohol harm due someone else's alcohol consumption.

- Alcohol can push people into poverty and lock them, their families and entire communities there over generations. The direct costs of alcohol harm to the household are often considerable and frequently underestimated.
- Also parental alcohol use around their children that is not a not dependence affects children negatively. Scientific evidence shows that the levels of and motivations for parental alcohol use, as well as children's exposure to a parent under the influence of alcohol or even intoxicated, all influence children's likelihood of experiencing negative outcomes.**
- Alcohol exposure during preconception and conception periods can harm children. For example, parental alcohol exposures during preconception and conception are significantly associated with the risk of Congenital Heart Disease in the offsprings.***
- A 2017 landmark study showed that the global prevalence of alcohol use during pregnancy in the general population amounts to almost 10%. The study estimates that one out of 13 women who consumed any alcohol at any point or frequency during pregnancy delivered a child with FASD.
- Alcohol use during pregnancy is associated with increased morbidity and mortality in infants and children.
- The prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) among children and youth in the

- general population exceeds 1% in 76 countries.
- Especially in poorer communities, in families affected by alcohol problems, and in Low- and Middle Income Countries (LMICs), alcohol tends to crowd out other more productive household spending, for example on education, health care and healthy food.
- Alcohol undermines norms and conditions for academic performance.
- In the family and community setting, alcohol is a major risk factor for poor educational outcomes, contributing to: Neglect and abandonment of parental roles, Wasting of scarce resources on alcohol, instead of healthy food, leisure time activities and school material, Resulting (mental) health issues even exacerbate the dire situation, and fuel the vicious cycle, and Norms and conditions for academic performance are undermined and eroded.
- Children are also exposed to alcohol-related inequalities. Harms from a given amount of alcohol consumption are higher for poorer alcohol users and their families than for richer alcohol consumers. In general, lower socioeconomic groups consume less alcohol overall and are more likely to be abstainers, but they experience higher levels of alcohol-related harm than wealthier groups with the same level of consumption; they also more likely to live in closer proximity to alcohol outlets, compared to those who are financially better off and living in areas that are better resourced.

References

- ** Lucy Bryant, Anne Marie MacKintosh, Linda Bauld, An Exploration of the Impact of Non-Dependent Parental Drinking on Children, Alcohol and Alcoholism, agz086, <https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agz086>
- *** Zhang, S., Wang, L., Yang, T., Chen, L., Zhao, L., Wang, T., ... Qin, J. (2019). Parental alcohol consumption and the risk of congenital heart diseases in offspring: [An updated systematic review and meta-analysis. European Journal of Preventive Cardiology.](#)



"Millions of silently suffering children are the first hurt and the last helped when alcohol problems enter their homes."

Sis Wenger
CEO / President
National Association For Children of Alcoholics, USA

Children thrive when at home they

- **can have their basic needs covered,**
- can engage in family rituals, such as birthdays,
- experience caring adults,
- are provided regular eating and bedtime routines, as well as rules and boundaries,
- experience kind and gentle communication,
- are part of thriving social connectedness and warm relationships,
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- can enjoy their childhood, play, have fun and be carefree.

All children benefit from these elements of a safe, healthy, and enabling home. Children thrive and have a better chance to develop their full potential when their homes are characterized by these eight elements.

But too many children grow up in homes affected by parental alcohol problems where many or even all of elements of an enabling home are jeopardized. Millions of children are growing up in households with alcohol problems and for them home is the most dangerous place.

"Seen with the eyes of our children, the world we live in has an alcohol problem."

Kristina Sperkova
International President
Movendi International

Tuesday



When home is the most dangerous place, society needs to step up to protect the wellbeing and development of our children.



Facts and explanation of the problem:

That children have to grow up in homes with parental alcohol problems is an invisible and silent crisis - worldwide.*

As their parents cannot provide shelter and often basic support, also society is failing to protect and promote the rights of these children.

- In the United States, more than 10% of children live with a parent with alcohol problems.
- In the EU, 9 million children grow up with parents who have alcohol problems.
- There are 2.6 million children of school age living with parental alcohol problems in the UK alone.
- In Australia ca. 1 million children live in households with at least one adult being addicted.
- The number of children living in homes that are ravaged by alcohol problems sky-rockets considering the countries around the world that are currently not even measuring the issue.
- But so far, society has largely left these children to fend on their own.
- Even in Sweden, only 2,615 out of 400,000 children of parents with addiction problems were offered support from their respective municipality.**
- The problem of children growing up in homes with parental problems is exacerbated by:***
- Authorities' inability to identify children and offer support, for example in schools.

- Local and national governments' failure to provide effective structural prevention programmes and sufficient services to affected children.
- Governments' failure to provide treatment services for parents with alcohol problems, especially programs that help the entire family.
- The lack of enabling and safe environments for children, if home is no place to go to.
- Governments' shortcomings in implementing the Best Interest principle enshrined in Art. 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



References:

- * [Alcohol Obstacle To Development](#)
- ** [Junis report 2017](#)
- *** [Joint Open Letter 2017](#)



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Wednesday



Development through alcohol prevention

Millions of silently suffering children are the first hurt and the last helped when alcohol problems enter their homes.



Facts and explanation of the problem:

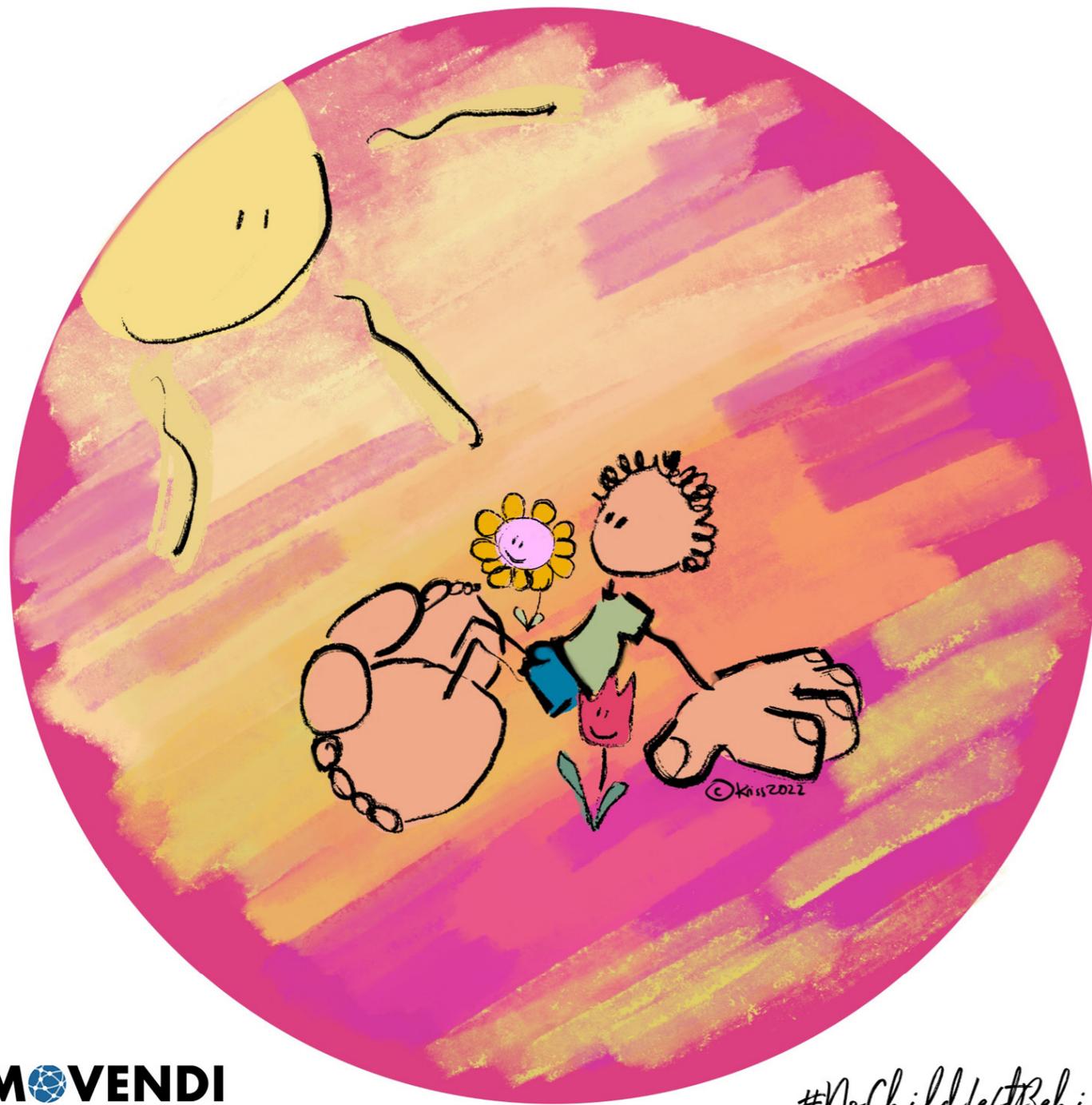
Negative impacts on children due to parents' alcohol use are of epidemic proportions and a real crisis. All available evidence shows that the problem is massive.*

- In the United States, mothers convicted of child abuse are 3 times more likely to be alcoholics and fathers are 10 times more likely to be alcoholics.
- More than 50% of all confirmed abuse reports and 75% of child deaths involve the use of alcohol or other drugs by a parent.
- USA: 13% of child abusers are under the influence of alcohol.
- Europe: 16% of all cases of child abuse and neglect are alcohol-related.
- Alcohol is a major factor in domestic violence. Children are more likely to develop aggressive tendencies where there is a lack of parental monitoring, or where parents provide aggressive role models.
- Alcohol fuels and exacerbates child maltreatment, and physical and sexual abuse.



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Thursday



Development through alcohol prevention

The current pervasive alcohol norm is hurting our children.



Facts and explanation of the problem:

Evidence shows that children as young as 4 to 8 years become increasingly knowledgeable about alcohol norms in specific situations. This implies that they know in what kind of situation alcohol consumption is supposed to be common human behavior. This knowledge may put them at risk for early alcohol initiation and frequent alcohol use later in life.**

Scientific evidence shows that even “normal” levels of parental alcohol use might trigger children to develop anxiety and/or depression in adolescence and early adulthood. Kids may be more likely to develop depression and anxiety when their parents are regular alcohol users, even when neither parent consumes enough to be considered having an alcohol use disorder.

- Children were 52% more likely to have anxiety or depression when both parents regularly consumed alcohol.***

The alcohol norm hurts children’s health and wellbeing and their academic performance - adversely affecting both the present and the future of children from families and communities with parental alcohol problems.*

- The WHO, UNODC and UNESCO list a number of risk factors on the family level such as parental substance use, parental mental ill-health, parental abuse and neglect, and material poverty.
- They also list a number of risk factors on the community level, such as easy and wide availability of alcohol and other drugs, social norms permissive to substance use and detrimental to academic achievement, lack of positive contact with other adults.

Alcohol fuels all these risk factors.

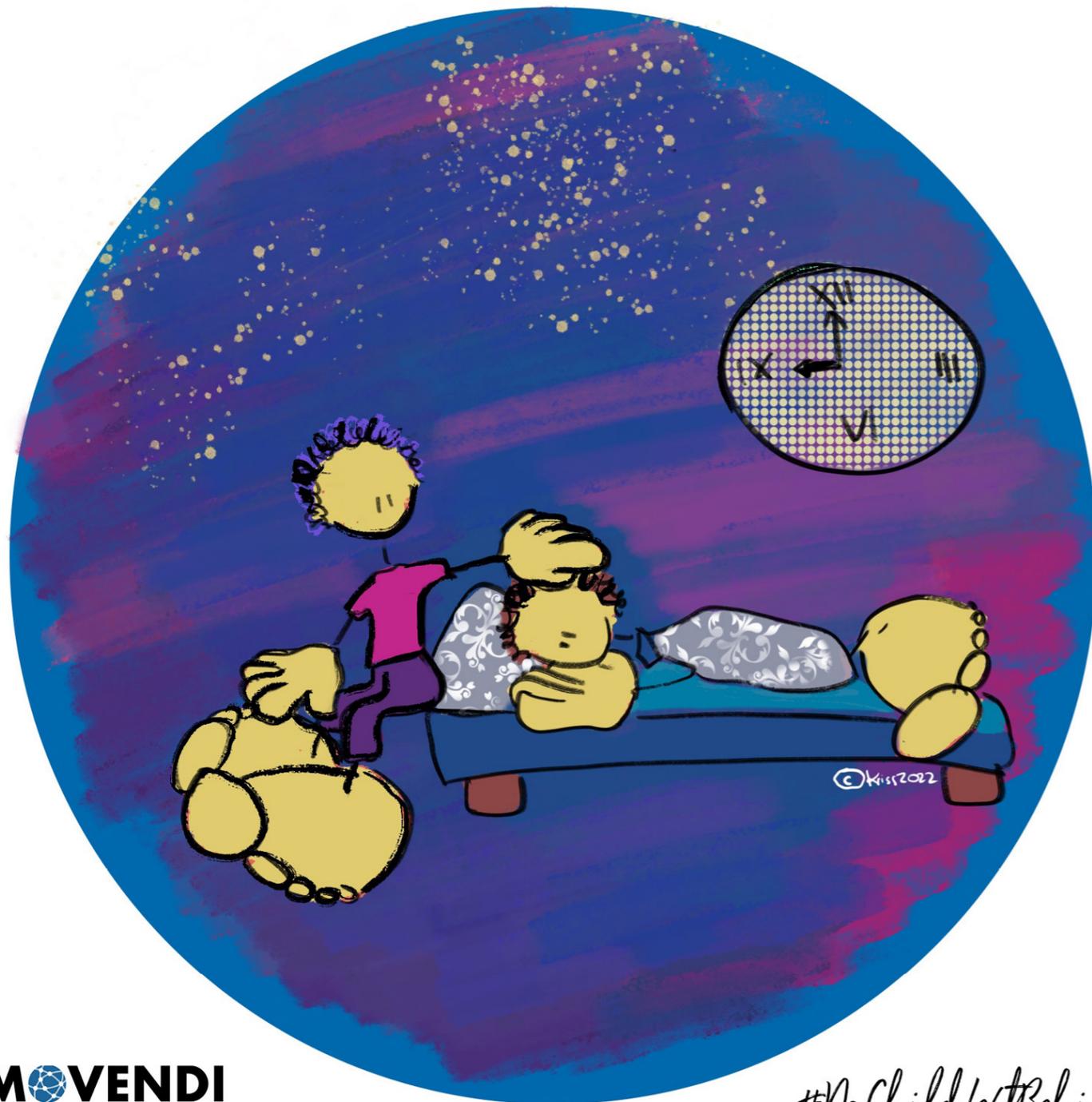


References

* [Alcohol Obstacle To Development](#)

** Carmen Voogt, Koen Smit, Marloes Kleinjan, Roy Otten, Tessa Scheffers, Emmanuel Kuntsche, From Age 4 to 8, Children Become Increasingly Aware About Normative Situations for Adults to Consume Alcohol, Alcohol and Alcoholism, agz093, <https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agz093>

*** Lund IO, Skurtveit S, Handal M, et al. Association of Constellations of Parental Risk With Children’s Subsequent Anxiety and Depression: Findings From a HUNT Survey and Health Registry Study. JAMA Pediatr. Published online January 07, 2019. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2018.4360



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Friday



The current pervasive alcohol norm is hurting our children.



Facts and explanation of the problem:

Alcohol marketing is all around us whether on TV and billboards, online, or in magazines and newspapers. All this exposure causes actual harm, especially to our children and youth.

For example, the [Kids' Cam](#) project in New Zealand revealed children are exposed to alcohol marketing around 12 times a day. The study was conducted among 168 children, aged 11-13 years old. The children wore cameras for four days, capturing what they saw every seven seconds. Researchers found the [packaging](#) and branding of alcoholic products were a key source of exposure to alcohol advertising in the home. It was also noted there was no strong distinction between the packaging of soft drinks and alcohol.****

The alcohol industry targets some of their marketing campaigns at children and young people; other marketing campaigns also expose children and youth to alcohol promotions and glamorizations. This is good business for Big Alcohol because there is a direct link between exposure to alcohol ads and earlier uptake of alcohol consumption; kids who see alcohol ads start using alcohol earlier, consume more if they are already using and are more strongly influenced to expect positive feelings from alcohol consumption.**

With the highest exposure to alcohol marketing being in the home, it's arguable parents should be the ones to make the decision on how best to safeguard their children. But a major problem is parents cannot fully protect their children when the alcohol industry is able to permeate into the home via media such as sports sponsorship and merchandise.

- For example, [the alcohol industry front group in the UK](#) puts the emphasis on parents - not to prevent alcohol use - but to "teach alcohol

use" to their children, despite clear evidence of the harms of this approach.

All this is extremely harmful to children and youth:

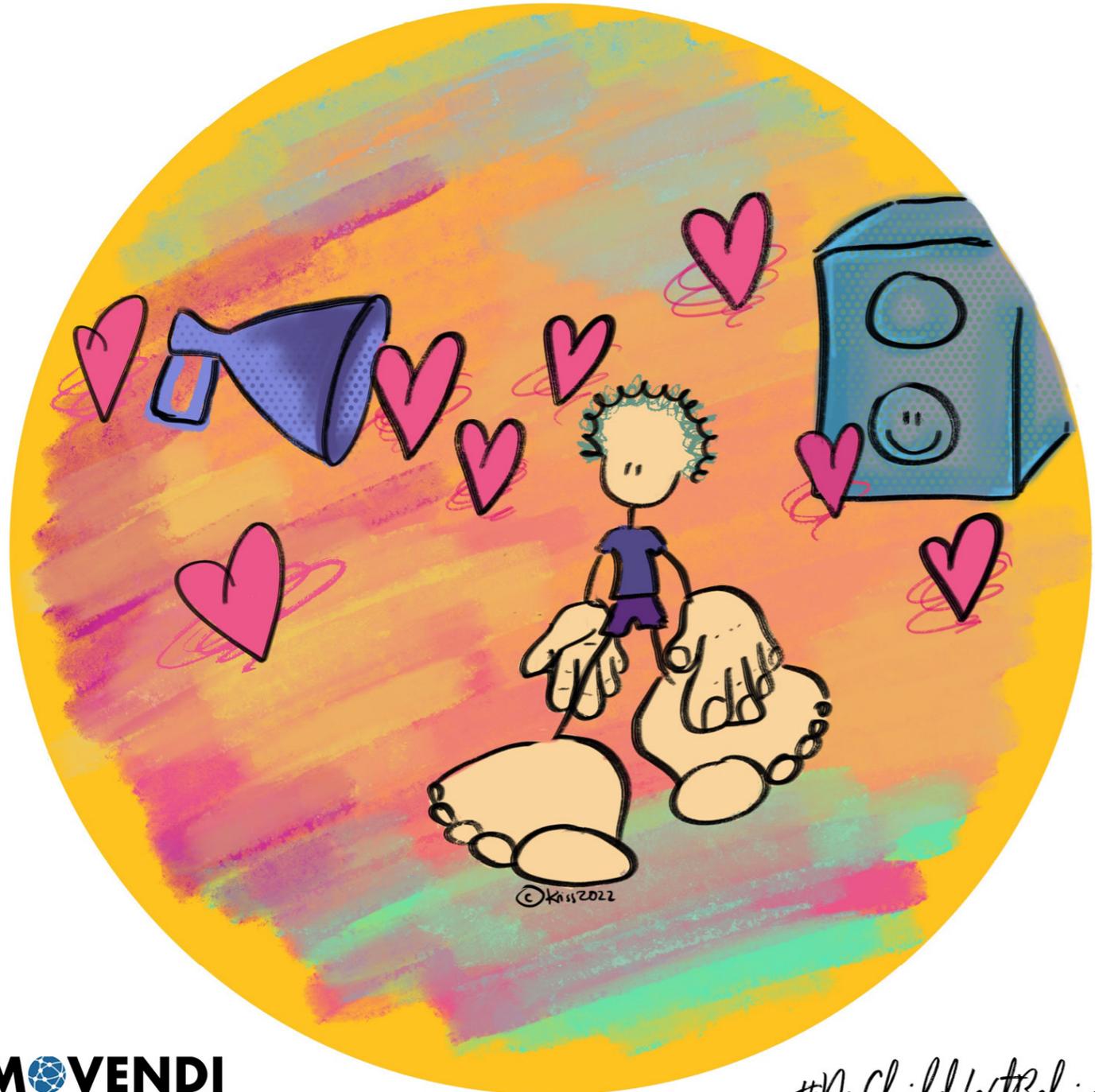
- Alcohol is neurotoxic to brain development, potentially leading, in childhood and adolescence, to structural hippocampal changes, and in adulthood to reduced brain volume.
- Alcohol is the most commonly used substance by children aged 13-15. One in four 13 to 15 year olds used alcohol during the past 12 months.
- Substance use can affect a child's well-being, and is clearly linked to academic underachievement.
- Negative education-related outcomes globally due to alcohol use include poor educational performance, truancy, school drop-out, incompleteness of secondary school and post-secondary education in a diverse array of developed and developing regions and countries.

References

** Fact page: <https://movendi.ngo/the-issues/alcohol-facts/alcohol-marketing-kids/>

*** News story: <https://movendi.ngo/news/2020/01/30/sweden-fewer-parents-think-alcohol-use-around-kids-is-inappropriate/>

**** Louise N. Signal, Moira B. Smith, Michelle Barr, James Stanley, Tim J. Chambers, Jiang Zhou, Aaron Duane, Gabrielle L.S. Jenkin, Amber L. Pearson, Cathal Gurrin, Alan F. Smeaton, Janet Hoek, Cliona Ni Mhurchu, Kids'Cam: An Objective Methodology to Study the World in Which Children Live, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Volume 53, Issue 3, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2017.02.016>.



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Saturday



Alcohol-Free
Childhood

Development through
alcohol prevention

Alcohol prevention
is a catalyst for
happier, healthier
childhoods
and adult lives.



Facts and explanation of the problem:

The alcohol policy best buys are evidence-based, high-impact and cost-effective solutions to prevent and reduce harm. Alcohol taxation, alcohol availability regulations and alcohol advertising bans are highly effective in reducing alcohol consumption and thus in preventing and reducing alcohol harm.*

- Region and the Region of Americas - many families, including children, are affected.

Preventing alcohol harm and providing support services to families affected by parental alcohol problems are significant contributions to fostering happier and healthier childhoods.

- Millions of adults across Europe and North America (where the problem is recognized and studied) live with a legacy of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).
- A 10% reduction in ACE prevalence could equate to annual savings of 3 million disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs) or \$105 billion.
- USA: 1% increase in state-level excise beer tax resulted in a 0.3% reduction in child abuse rates and a 3% reduction in domestic abuse.
- Alcohol advertising bans help protect children and youth from exposure to alcohol promotions and thus prevent alcohol initiation and harm.
- Alcohol availability regulations are effective in creating more alcohol-free environments that benefit children and youth especially.
- Alcohol taxation is the single most powerful solution to alcohol harm in children: it reduces consumption, promotes health and generates revenue for governments to reinvest into important services - for example for parents with alcohol use problems and their children.

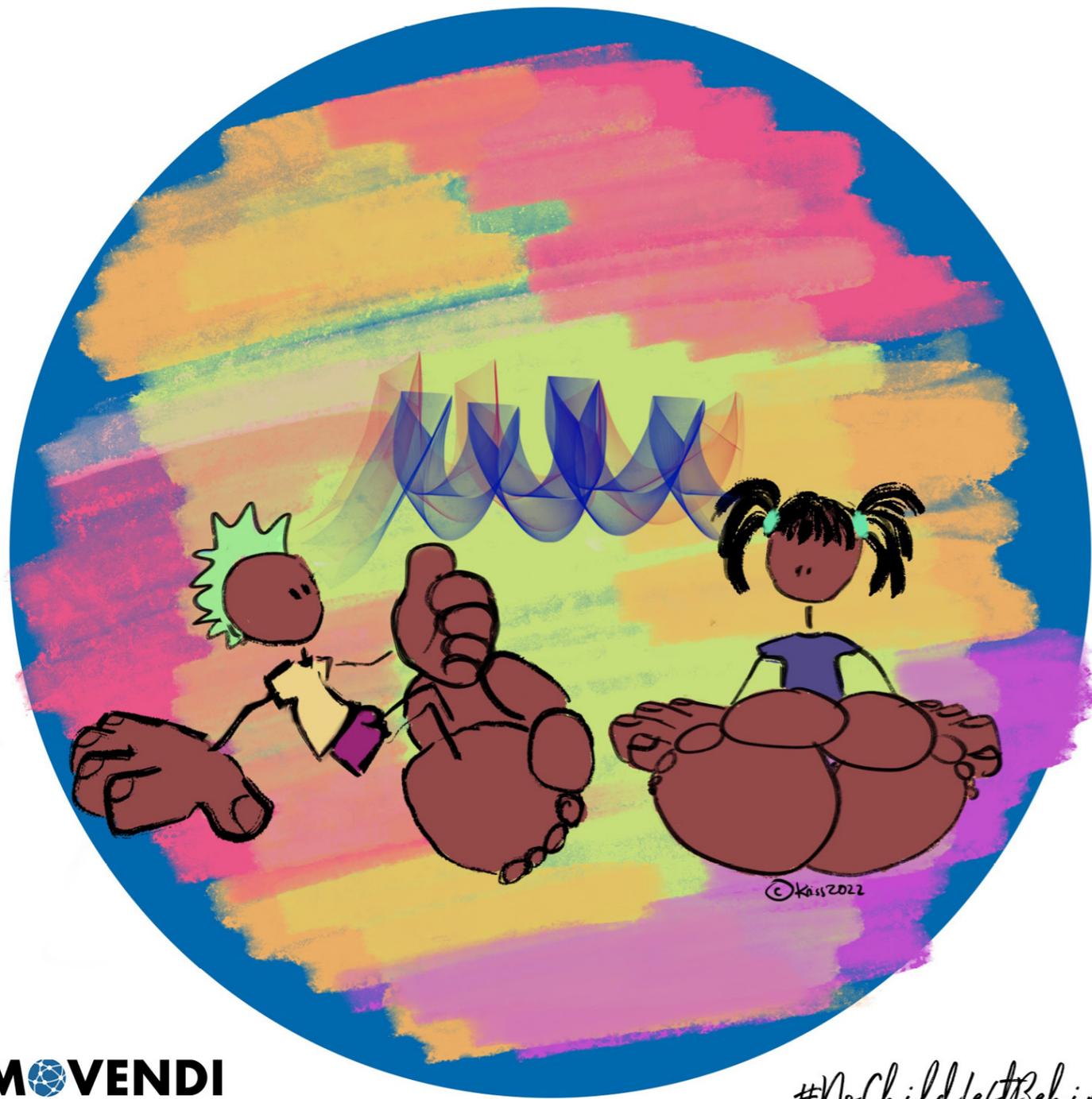
- Globally at least 237 million men and 46 million women have alcohol use disorders, with the highest prevalence of alcohol use disorders among men and women in the European



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An alcohol-free childhood is a Human Right.



Development through alcohol prevention



Facts and explanation of the problem:

The effects of parental substance use disorders can lead to the following problems in their children:

- Mental health problems,
- Relationship problems,
- Financial problems,
- Family problems, and
- Imitation of risky behaviors.

Parents have an immense influence over their children’s behavior during adolescence and on their children’s well-being through the life-course.*

- Adolescents growing up with parents who have substance use problems are more likely to turn to self-destructive behaviors such as suicide attempts.
- Parental alcohol problems seriously increase the likelihood that children will develop alcohol problems themselves later on in life.

These facts show that children of parents with alcohol problems are exposed to serious infringements of their Human Rights. Human Rights enshrined in Art. 5, 16.3, 22, 24, 25.1, 25.2, 26.1, and 27.1 are all adversely affected for children from homes with parental alcohol problems.**

In combination with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, such as Art. 3 and Art. 33, the evidence is clear: alcohol is a threat to the Human Rights of children.

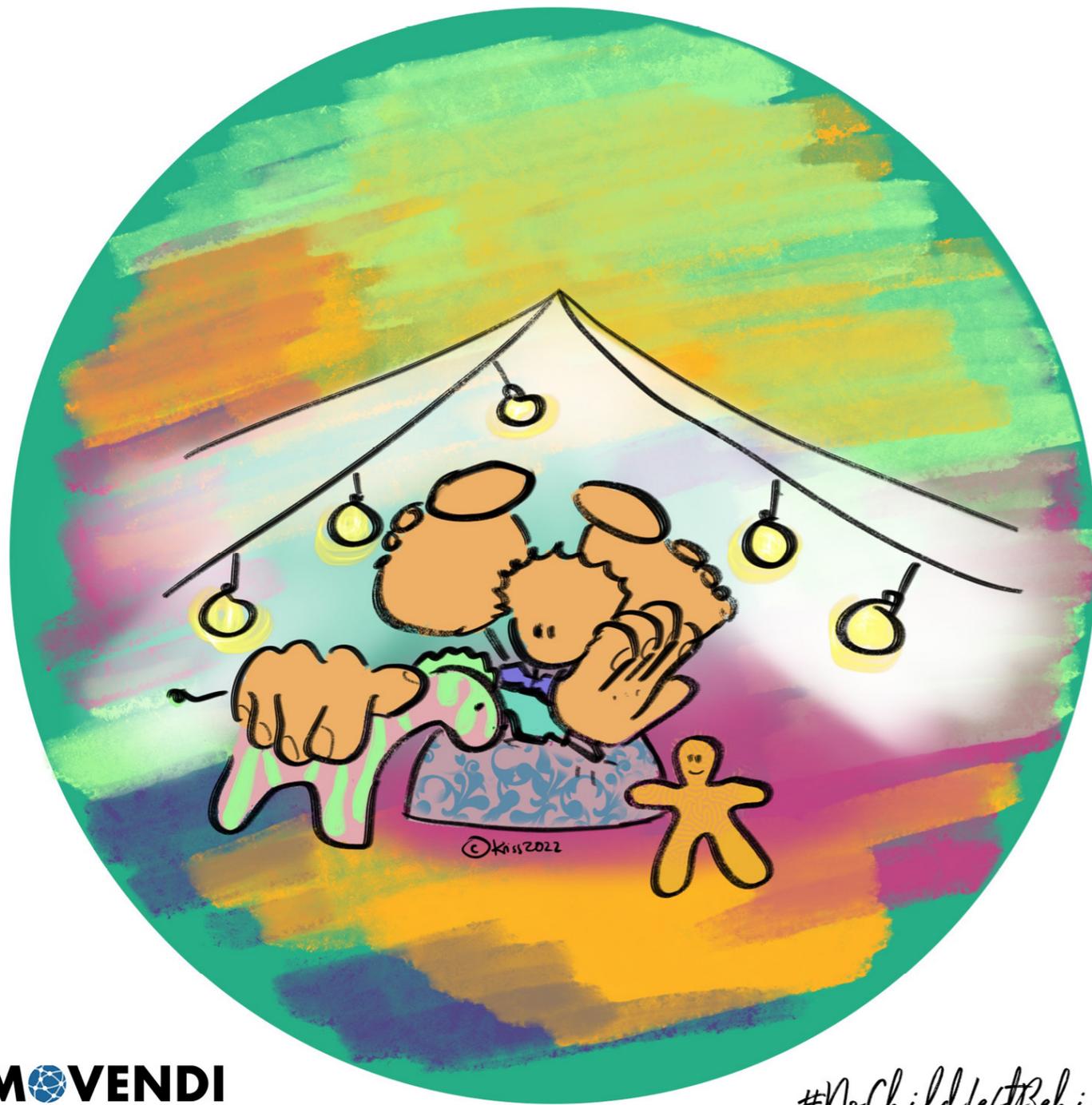
Growing up in an alcohol-free childhood is a Human Rights issue.



References

* [Alcohol Obstacle To Development](#)

**Movendi International booklet: <https://movendi.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/UDHR-CoA-booklet.pdf>



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