



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

REPORT OF THE MEETING

United Nations Expert Group Meeting
In preparation for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of Family 2024
New York, 7-8 September 2022

Megatrends & Families: Focus on Digital Technologies, Migration and Urbanization

Introduction

Considering family units rather than individuals is essential if we wish to position families as the focus of policy discussions. A family lens allows greater insight into how rules, regulations, and legislation address the needs of families and in doing so it lays the groundwork for evaluating the culture and practices of policy makers and organizations by recognizing their strengths, weakness and gaps. The mega trends of new technologies, migration and urbanization dominate current social policy discussions but we need greater focus on the analysis of their impacts on families in order to design adequate social policies to respond to these trends, harness their positive effects to benefit families and protect households from their negative impacts.

Technology use is an extremely important topic for families and although parents have to educate children, they often do not know how to do it and need support and skills development. Moreover, the question is not only how to use technology but decide what role technology should play in family life. Parents are often overwhelmed and lack confidence in technology issues while technology companies are very poorly regulated with low ethical standards. Governments and civil society should then assist parents in navigating the field of new technologies.

Guidelines are also needed on how to teach about technology and protect individuals and families from the harmful impacts of excessive technology use. Parenting education is essential in this area. It is also important to hold public discussions and hold media campaigns about the impacts of technology and other megatrends on family life.

There are many interlinkages between technology use, migration and urbanization. Such linkages increase the impact of megatrends on all generations in families, influence family decisions and impact their behaviour as family members and members of larger communities. It is hoped that the overview of these trends and their impacts on family functioning and wellbeing will positively influence current and future family policy development.

Digital technologies and families: interlinkages with migration and urbanization

Internet provides a plethora of benefits to society with 5 billion people accessing the internet (63 per cent of global population, up from 20 per cent in 2005) and 4.65 billion people are social media users online. Families have been profoundly impacted by the 'tertiary phase' of the Information Age as the internet and mobile devices made efficient communication, global commerce and industry, social interaction and education possible. Within the family system, information and communications technology (ICT) facilitates connectedness and cohesion among family members, important indicators of well-being. This includes communication with extended family members, particularly during times of separation, such as the COVID-19 quarantine or transnational living.

ICT has also reduced space and time barriers between work and family, enabling parents to assert more agency in fulfilling multiple roles and responsibilities. For children and youth, the integration of technology in education has extended possibilities for learning, both practically to reach learners in remote and rural locations, and pedagogically, through the individualization of instruction with creative and collaborative applications. Efficiencies for health care, money management, entertainment and 'smart' living have made life easier for many families, freeing up time for other pursuits. However, there are costs as the flow of information across networks and improper handling of data can leave families vulnerable to privacy, security and safety issues which can have severe consequences for family well-being.

New technologies and urbanization

Infrastructure that influences family life - livable cities, efficient governments, industry, and global societies - also are impacted by ICT. Of the 'pillars' of globalization, information has experienced the steepest rise since 2007. 'Smart' cities impact quality of life through improved emergency services and safety (such as real time crime mapping and emergency response time), transportation efficiencies and traffic reduction, health services (including patient monitoring, air quality information and infectious disease surveillance), and a healthier environment through reduced emissions and waste, and water preservation.

E-commerce has blossomed particularly with the COVID-19 pandemic and internet tools have heightened access to a range of resources. Access to the Internet is critical for all families, including the homeless families, to find housing, job opportunities and apply for services. ICT appears to also impact urbanization by contributing to a reversal in the trend toward migration to large cities. As COVID-19 forced many professionals to work from home, employees, and a significant number of employers desire more flexible work arrangements. Employees are finding it less expensive to live and work from home in non-urban areas. Working in the gig economy and as digital nomads may contribute to this anti-urbanization trend as well.

New technologies and migration

Access to the internet is particularly critical when families are mobile or migrate, live transnationally, and/or are separated owing to military service or employment. So called 'amplification of migration' has introduced products that offer efficient transfer across groups, and sense of empowerment when integrating into new societies. The inclusion of charging ports for mobile phones is sometimes seen as critical as food, health care and sanitation. Technological integration of migrants is also often considered as important as the social, political, and economic integration.

Connection with family and friends is the primary function ICT offer for migrating families. Popular apps like WhatsApp, Zoom, Line, Facebook and Instagram messaging and Viber can provide free and low-cost ways to communicate. These connections enable emotional support and reduced stress (e.g., knowing how family members are faring either during migration or back home). Connectivity with familial culture is also useful for unaccompanied minors who remain in refugee camps or shelters.

Within these social connections ICT facilitate the fulfillment of familial roles. These include family care regimes, particularly for women whose traditional

responsibilities include continuing care for family members and education for their children despite migration. In some cases, migrating women are aided by 'transnational care collectives' in home countries who look out for family members and use ICT to communicate status updates. ICT also facilitates efficient transfers of money between family members, compared with costly efforts in the past that depended on agents, or were time consuming, particularly during large scale disasters when getting support to family members was time critical. And ICT-enabled documentation of family status and purpose for migration aids in verifying information needed for family reunification and reduces burden on immigration sponsors.

Digital technology helping with the integration into a new society has become a part of nearly every education, health, housing and employment system that families encounter during migration or transnational living. The access to mobile technology, and ability to tailor smartphone capabilities to individual needs creates a sense of agency and empowerment, in part through the ability to stay connected in two places at once. Applications make geolocation, banking, active language learning, access to news and shopping easy, which heighten familiarity with new locations. Local information is often supplemented with that derived from the informal network of social capital built from connections with already-migrated family members and friends. Blockchain technology, a decentralized system of shared information and digital processing that makes transactions more transparent and within the control of individuals, help transnational families who need exchanges to be speedy, private and at a minimal cost.

Technology skills are a constant in reports of future employability in the United States and elsewhere. Preparing migrants and refugees with the skills to take on jobs in the tech sector and job skills that rely on tech knowledge and language is a clear way to improve employment sustainability regardless of location or reintegration. Making informed choices about who they work for through centralized employer information banks and advocacy for visa portability regardless of employer are ways that migrant workers are empowered through ICT. Future efforts will address the ethical, legal and practical challenges of migrant worker apps and developing systems that promote immigrant labor sustainability.

Inequitable access to the internet and to digital technologies means differences in urban and migrating families' abilities to take full advantage of technological efficiencies, access to information, connectivity and interactivity for learning and employment. Global data indicate that on average, at least 77 per cent of the world's population has at least some access to the internet but the

distribution is uneven. Close to 87 per cent of individuals use the internet in developed countries, those in countries with emerging economies report lesser use. The International Telecommunications Union reports that it is no longer necessary to have a computer at home to access the internet and for some families, a smartphone provides household internet access. Cell phone ownership is also higher in countries with developed economies.

Lack of access and use create a digital skills gap, affecting comfort in basic computer skills which contributes to 'information poverty' for immigrants. For 40 of the 84 countries with available data, less than half of the population have basic computer skills (e.g., copying a file, sending an email with an attachment) and fewer than half in 60 countries report having standard skills (e.g., installing software). Among immigrants, digital literacy varies widely depending on the age, education and incomes and prior exposure to ICT before migration. Younger migrants are more tech savvy and assist older family members with technology use during immigration. Lack of digital skills also contributes to migrant and refugee negative attitudes about ICT, further widening the divide on access.

During COVID-19, children in families with limited internet and/or computer access fared more poorly in school participation and academic achievement. According to Pew's US survey of families with children during COVID-19, 53 per cent indicated that the internet was essential with 94 per cent reporting that their children's schools were online. For many families this was a challenge as 29 per cent indicated that their children needed to do homework by mobile phone and using public Wi-Fi (22 per cent). These numbers are higher for low-income families and those who live in rural areas. Fully 36 per cent of low-income families reported that their children were unable to complete work at home without a laptop. Other reports indicate a reduction in use of telehealth services by families, including First Nations people, during COVID-19, raising the concern about poor health outcomes in populations at risk of chronic disease. As a result, gaps in access only contribute to and exacerbate challenges brought about by disparities in income, education, employment, housing and sanitary living conditions and health care in families' lives.

Online technologies enable telecommunication companies' access to data about the user; data that can be sold to market products and create a digital footprint that the user (including a child) has little control over. Cybersecurity breaches occur in schools, public access points (such as libraries), and from workplace-issued devices as well personal computers. Identity theft and access to financial and health data are threats families face. And the level of digital literacy

for many individuals may only exacerbate these issues. According to Commonsense Media half of early teens 12 to 15 years old, for example, believe it's easy to delete their information online.

For migrating families, using the internet and digital technologies present privacy risks. For many migrants, particularly older adults, suspicion around the privacy of data and surveillance is a barrier to ICT use. Traffickers can seize on migrants as revenue sources (particularly homeless teens and women), using algorithms that track phone use and social media accounts, blackmail family members to prevent violent crime and assault, particularly against youth. Smugglers or traffickers can also exploit the Internet, social media and popular software applications to recruit customers from migrant youth, usually those traveling alone, to arrange trafficking services including the provision of fraudulent travel documents, and to make and receive payments. As a result of heightened use of the internet, data has become a critical commodity and its worth increases as more is produced. The control of the flow of data has become an indicator of democratic governance. While some degree of control is beneficial for security, authoritarian governments' restrictive data practices encourage surveillance and affect cross-border data flow, digital products, and internet enabled services.

Safeguards in policy standards that apply to all families, including migrant families, such as COPPA privacy protections and the General Data Protection Regulation in the European Union are useful by restricting access to social media by age. The newly formed 5 Rights Foundation advocates for policy action as the UN Commission on Child Rights Article 25 has extended children's rights to online environments. Industry recommendations for privacy dictate that children are not tracked nor profiled online, nor subject to ads based on their online activity and that children be able to easily modify the personal information they choose to share; that families educate themselves on privacy options, and agree not to share children's information without their consent.

Online child sexual abuse and exploitation (OCSEA) is a growing phenomenon in need of more attention. It is estimated that 1 in 9 children has experienced online solicitation. Perpetrators create and distribute sexual content and seek vulnerable children to abuse online. Rates of posting online child sexual content exceeds the ability to manually review such content and there is an increased anonymity of perpetrators. Many national laws do not clearly codify legal protections for children online.

There are many good practices in child online protection, especially those with emphasis on inter-governmental collaborations and inclusion of civil society.

For instance, WeProtect Global Alliance formed a Model National Response with over 80 countries, 20 global technology companies and 24 civil society organisations. Good practices recognize that current responses need to be assessed and gaps identified with support of all stakeholders and international cooperation. Moreover, responses cannot be confined to national jurisdiction. Some collaborations include those within the Council of Europe and African Child Policy Forum. The strongest protective factor for OCSEA is involvement of actively engaged parents utilizing positive parenting practices with a focus on respect and interest in the child. It is important to avoid excessive internet restriction or punishment. Parents must remain an integral support system for children even during adolescence when children often seek greater autonomy. Siblings and cousins can provide essential support as well, especially in adolescence.

Good practices at the community level include school-based programmes with a focus on skill-building and behavior change over attitude and awareness with long-term, intensive, and interactive focus. It is important to utilize specific examples and scenarios that children will relate to with trained teachers equipped with support and guidance. The bottom line is to be able to access good practices; foster international collaborations; adopt clear international standards for enforceable laws to protect children; develop clear plans to assess prevalence rates, identify indicators of successful intervention, and establish a budget (financial and human capital) keeping in mind that interventions should include primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

As OCSEA is a problem that is expected to grow in magnitude over the next decade as more individuals gain access to the internet, successful approaches to address OCSEA must recognize the value of each level within society so that children can maximize the benefits of technology while minimizing the dangers.

Urbanization and families

General observations

There are many definitions of urbanization, e.g., by population or commuting density, travel distance, number of people, etc. Currently, 6 billion people live in urban areas, with most people inhabiting medium size cities. Urbanization is closely related to societal, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities and linked to all aspects of life, usage of resources, family life, etc. Urban sprawl and urban expansion to new places is very rapid. Currently a quarter of global population lives in slums; one in three households live in sub-standards housing

(one in seven people). Urban areas are often dangerous for women, there is also violence in schools, harassment in means of transportation.

Housing is no longer seen as human right. Since 1990s Scholarly research documents that rapid urbanization leads to fragmentation of family life. There are fewer children in urban families and many cities are “kiddy-desserts”. Urban margins are populated by migrants from rural areas.

Gentrification resulting in luxury construction is mostly seen as a positive development but it disrupts the lives of low-income families losing social networks and this side of gentrification is rarely discussed. Urban planning may also disrupt family life. Building of infrastructure, like highways often results in disrupted communities.

In some countries, like Canada, Singapore and Qatar multigenerational housing is growing and incentives are offered to family members to live in proximity. Multigenerational living arrangements often benefit families as grandparents transmit values to children. Research also demonstrates that the notion of co-housing promotes better quality of life and increased feeling of empowerment.

Extended families are shrinking in size and number. This trend is linked to globalization and modernization. Still in some areas extended families have survived in the urbanizing contexts. Sometimes it’s a matter of necessity. Research in Arab states indicates that marital relationship for the first 5 years of marriage have been impacted by the interference of extended family, with 30 per cent, positive effect, which includes financial support, help to raise their kids, but also negative interference was observed at 21 percent. Importantly, urbanization impacts household size as fertility decisions are impacted by housing conditions. When grandparents are available for children’s care, families tend to be bigger. Such care is of great value to society and taxpayers.

Migration and urbanization trends in Africa

The push factors in African countries play a major role in the migration of individuals and this includes low socio-economic status, increased unemployment, war, genocide, inadequate healthcare and corruption. Environmental and climate change may also influence migration patterns on the

continent as Africa is one of the most susceptible continents to climate change. Research confirms that migration and conflict are clear consequences of environmental change emerging from the environment-migration and climate-conflict subfields. The pull factors include individuals' demands for better healthcare services, better rights and freedom, a lawful environment and economic opportunities.

Africa accounts for 14 per cent of international migrants, whereas migrants from Asia constitute 41 per cent and from Europe account for 24 per cent of the global migrant population. Although, the focus on African migration has always been on displacement and irregular migration, a significant body of research has findings to the contrary. The majority of African migrants do not wish to leave the continent, and displaced people and refugees would prefer to return to their home countries. African migration is mainly intra-continental and predominantly across land borders. Movement from rural to urban happens as a result of poverty and food insecurity, drought, lack of economic opportunities, lack of resources, and climate change.

While migration policies have become a priority for African states, the implementation and practice of such policies is lacking. The revision of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) in 2017 and 2018 offered member states the opportunity to prioritize the implementation of strong policy and institutional frameworks to manage migration processes and to recognize it as a key development strategy that could enhance the economies of countries. With strong policies, migration governance on the continent can be transformed.

The lack of reliable official data compounds African migration research, together with an absence of large-scale sampling frameworks. However, more recent available migration databases have significantly expanded the scope to conduct analyses on migration from and within African countries. Still missing is the macro-data that would allow the overall tracking of migration patterns from, to and within Africa over the past centuries, as Africa has always been a migrating continent.

Research from national border posts shows that migration will continue to increase across the continent. The World Migration Report of the IOM (2019) concurs that African migrants move within their respective regions. In countries where data is available, households show that one member has at least migrated internally or externally.

African migrants move in search of economic opportunities, security and better educational facilities. Employment is one of the main drivers for migration. Households with international migrants are known to be wealthier than households without migrants. Migration is used as a strategy to improve livelihoods and family wellbeing to minimize risks and to diversify income sources.

Voluntary migration can benefit the country of origin and host countries, and the communities, migrants originate from and locate to. Research shows that within regions and between countries, cross-border migration is prolific. In some cases, there is endless daily border crossings by traders, predominantly women who have become the main heads of households.

International migration is less common compared to internal migration on the continent, with the exception of Senegal, Kenya, and Burkina Faso. International migration is very costly, and from the emerging data, it is evident that internal migration is viewed as a first level resource to accumulate funds before long distance migration can be considered.

Most migrants are male, between 15 and 34 years of age. Young people migrate in search of employment opportunities and other livelihood options. Women migrate mainly for family reasons inclusive of family reunion, marriage and divorce. Education and family reasons are the most important drivers of migration.

More current research demonstrates that women are migrating independently and without family members, leaving behind children in the care of left-behind family members. Evidence shows women migrating independently as migrant workers because of increasing divorce rates and lack of local economic opportunities. These women are also becoming the primary breadwinners and send remittances to the families left behind. Women's remittances go towards healthcare, food, nutrition, housing and education while men's remittances focus on investment needs. On the plus side, migration is said to improve women's autonomy, self-worth, authority and standing in the community.

While migration may lead to potential benefits for women, in the form of greater freedom, increased autonomy and livelihoods, the downside of women migrating independently leads to increased family tensions, increased vulnerability to health and sexual violence, and the potential for xenophobic

attacks. Women migrants faced social exclusion through labelling and prejudice because of their low socio-economic status.

Women who were forced to migrate experience depression due to separation from their families. A broader body of research on left-behind children in Ghana show that reverse remittances and marital instability has an adverse effect on left-behind children's subjective well-being which negatively affects migrant mothers in host countries. In South Africa, the intersection of xenophobia, racism, and patriarchy exposes African women to these triple forms of discrimination, increasing their risks and vulnerabilities in the host country. Women are further disadvantaged in the agricultural sector as they make up most of the labour force and are more susceptible to climate change and environmental disasters. Other migration drivers that are given less attention that contribute to the migration flows of women are demographic changes, urbanisation, land grabbing, the freedom to practice their religion, and tolerance of LGBTQI groups.

African migration is mainly intracontinental. South Africa is a magnet for international migrants with over 4 million migrants, followed by Côte d'Ivoire with 2.5 million. Europe is the favoured destination for African outbound migrants. In 2019, the African Migration Report recorded that 26.9 per cent (i.e. 10.6 million) of the total 39.4 million Africans worldwide lived in Europe. Asia accounted for 4.6 million and North America was 3.2 million. In contrast to the media portrayal of Africans flooding Europe, the number of African migrants in Europe is one of the lowest. While this information relates to regular migration, data on irregular migration is difficult to access. Draft statutes to enhance data and analysis of Africa's migration management was signed in February 2020. Once more accurate data can be obtained about the continent's regular and irregular migration flows, governments can be better informed, prepared, and put support measures in place.

Between 2000 and 2019 international migrants comprise 2 per cent of the total population in Africa, compared with 3.5 per cent for the world, we see an increase in international migrants in Africa from 15.1 million to 26.6 million. This was quite a significant increase of 76 per cent among all major regions of the world. Even though this increase was sharp, the total number of international migrants in Africa is modest compared to other world regions. International migrants make up 2 per cent of the total population in Africa, compared with 3.5 per cent for the world. It is interesting to note that Southern Africa hosted the largest migrant population at 6.7 per cent. Seven countries in Africa hosted

more than 1 million international migrants, including South Africa (4.2 million), Côte d'Ivoire (2.5 million), Uganda (1.7 million), Nigeria and Ethiopia (1.3 million each), the Sudan (1.2 million) and Kenya (1 million). [GOOD FOR THE REPORT?]

Africa continues to bear the scourge of record levels of forced displacement and **internally displaced persons (IDPs)** because of rapacious governments, political in-fighting, civil wars and violent extremist groups. In 2021, it experienced a record level of forced displacement. In 2021, an estimated 32 million Africans were either internally displaced refugees or asylum seekers. Violence, natural disasters and climate change are contributing factors of displaced populations. In 2019, globally, there were 41.3 million people displaced internally, the causes of which are violence and conflict, of this number, 41 percent were in countries across Africa. In addition, that same year, environmental disasters such as drought, floods and tropical cyclones displaced another 2.6 million people. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are not refugees, they do not receive international protection that comes from crossing a national border in times of crisis. Sub-Saharan Africa is noted as the world's fastest urbanizing region. While IDP's are drawn to urban areas to seek assistance, they often end up in with the urban poor in slum areas, exposing them to additional health hazards, other risks and forced evictions, increasing their vulnerability. Fleeing persecution and conflict has a detrimental effect on the family members' well-being.

Urbanization and migration trends in Asia (focus on India and China)

Urbanization in Asia continues at a fast pace with urban population in China and India exceeding 1 billion people. This massive scale of urbanization has unleashed enormous pressures on housing, land use, and the environment. The lessons from China and India have huge implications for other Asian countries. Census indicates that 64 per cent of Chinese citizens and 37 per cent of Indian citizens live in urban areas. However, each country uses different criteria to define what is urban. In India, the criteria, used for the past 60 years classify places as urban if they have a municipal status or, if they meet a set of demographic thresholds, such as population size, density, and the ratio of male employment in non-agricultural sectors. The criteria are so strict so that many urbanized small towns in India were classified as rural in the census. In contrast, China, often changes its urban definition in the census, and its current urban definition in the 2020 census is so broad so that it classifies a vast number of places under rural administration as urban and counts the residents as urban

population. In both cases, the national census offers only an incomplete picture of the extent of urban population growth.

Depending on classification different government subsidies and development projects apply. In India, most poverty alleviation and employment programs target rural localities only, and therefore, many urbanized small towns resist being designated as urban for fear of losing state subsidies. In China, the stakes of municipal designation are high. Local governments can gain more revenue, decision-making power, and resources if they obtain a municipal status. Residents can access better social security benefits if they change their status (*hukou*) from rural to urban.

Currently, about 20 per cent of India's urban population live in census towns without municipal governments which results in the lack of taxation power and therefore the lack of revenue with which to provide basic services such as water and sanitation. The quality of life in these places is compromised for lack of effective governing institutions and sufficient revenue.

In China, one major challenge is how to provide for migrants from rural areas who do not have the local *hukou*. Every Chinese city has a large migrant population without *hukou*. Without local *hukou*, migrants are treated as second-class citizens with limited access to social welfare, such as health insurance, unemployment insurance, and public rental housing. In both countries, the urban vs. rural categories bring real benefits and disadvantages, and they simultaneously include and exclude. The "cities without governments" (i.e., census towns) in India, and "people without rights" in China (non-*hukou* migrants) present major challenges for achieving equitable and sustainable urban growth.

Rural-to-urban migration has been the predominant driver for China's urban population growth since the 1980s. China's migrant workers are older than those in India and other Asian countries and averaged 36.8 years in 2021. In contrast to the past when migrants left their children behind in the countryside, today more and more migrants move together with their spouse and children, which creates challenges in providing education and welfare for migrant families. Despite the ongoing *hukou* reforms, migrant workers still face discrimination at workplace and have limited access to social welfare and services. In 2019, the central government announced an ambitious plan to extend urban *hukou* to 100 million rural residents, but most of these "new urban citizens" will be directed to small- and medium-sized

cities. However, it's important for first-tier cities to launch policies to attract migrants by offering an easier path to obtaining local hukou.

The 2011 Indian census reported 454 million migrants, about 37 per cent of India's population. Two characteristics distinguish India's migration patterns from that of China: first, a combination of work and family reasons that drive people to migrate, and second, India has a much larger number of seasonal migrants than China. The primary reasons for migration include marriage, joining family, seeking education and employment. These categories are not mutually exclusive, as people who move due to family reasons often seek employment in their destinations. Among the migrant population, nearly 40 per cent comprises women who migrate because of marriage, and another 35.6 per cent comprises people who migrate for family reasons. In comparison, migration driven by education and employment comprises only 3.3 and 13.1 per cent respectively.

Most rural-to-urban migrants work in the informal sector without job contracts and employee benefits, such as in construction, manufacturing, and services. The semi-skilled and unskilled migrant workers have been struggling to achieve economic footholds in cities, and they also face barriers in accessing affordable housing, basic services, and social welfare schemes as many can't secure local identity documents which are often required to access these benefits and services. As rural migrants cannot vote in cities where they work, they tend to be neglected by politicians. What's more, language barriers pose challenges in the education of migrant children and cultural differences often create social tensions and animosity between migrants and locals.

Many rural migrants in China and India settle in urban villages and slums in destination cities. In Mumbai, for example, nearly half of the city's population lives in slums, and in Guangzhou, a mega city in south China, more than 40 percent of the city's population lives in urban villages. Slums and urban villages are often referred to as informal settlements in the urban scholarship. In India, slums are "informal" settlements as residents do not have legal ownership of the land they occupy; in China, informality does not mean lack of land ownership—urban village land is collectively owned by villagers; it suggests violation of urban planning codes and construction regulations. Many slums and urban villages occupy prime locations, and they have become targets for speculative property development.

In the last decade, both China and India have experimented with policies to improve the condition of migrants in cities. In China, the central government has been trying to deepen the hukou reform, by extending urban hukou to more rural residents; some cities are experimenting with conservation-based approaches to redeveloping urban villages. In India, state bureaucracies often make concessions to allow slums to stay. However, rather than piece-meal experiments, a holistic approach is needed, in both countries, to integrate informal settlements with the rest of the city. In that regard, China and India has much to learn from other countries—such as Brazil, which has progressive favela-integration programs. Overall, the urban challenges faced by China and India can be found in other Asian countries as well therefore, a comparative perspective is necessary in order to better understand the common problems and to find local solutions.

Migration trends in Latin America

As of 2019, there were 40.5 million migrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), equivalent to 15 per cent of the world's migrant population. Mobility has grown and intensified with mixed migrations, composed of asylum seekers, economic migrants, unaccompanied children and adolescents, environmental migrants, migrants in an irregular situation, victims of trafficking, and strand migrants. Many of these flows are forced, and many migrants are in vulnerable situations. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated these vulnerabilities and modified migratory flows, in some cases accentuating emigration and, in others, the return to the origin countries. However, contrary to expectations, it has also boosted remittances.

There are three main migration patterns in LAC: emigration from the region, historical immigration from overseas, and intra-regional exchanges, with emigration to developed countries, especially the United States of America and Spain. Intraregional mobility has been rising, while in 1990, it reached 50 per cent of the total migrant population, in 2019, it increased to 70 per cent. The number of countries where migration takes place has also grown with large outflows from Venezuela to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile; from Nicaragua to Costa Rica, and from Haiti throughout the continent. Immigration from overseas to the region, was prevalent until the 1970s, accounting for 70 per cent of the total immigrant population. In contrast, intraregional migration only reached 24 per cent. In 2019 this trend reversed: 70 per cent of the immigrant population is intraregional, and 30 per cent comes from overseas.

Feminization of mobility can be observed with children and adolescents' displacement with their families or unaccompanied, and "migrant caravans" as distinctive patterns. They are the new recent protagonists and indigenous migrants forced by environmental issues or conflicts. Another problematic feature is that the transits of migrants of multiple nationalities are longer, whether they go to Chile, Argentina, or the north, to Mexico and the USA.

The Covid-19 pandemic and its confinement measures exacerbated inequalities in the migrant population and created new ones. Recent research has identified four factors that produce it: 1) migrants' economic integration is precarious, as they usually have informal jobs, with salaries below the law and other labor and social insecurities. 2) the overcrowded conditions of their homes, exposing them to contagion; 3) the growth of xenophobic reactions by the receiving populations and institutional racism in the health and educational systems. And 4) restrictive migration policies and border closures prevent their legal regularization in the destination countries, leading to the internal and international return of migrants to their original communities and countries. All this has led to humanitarian crises in several border areas, has put the health of migrants at risk, and has favored the proliferation of irregular crossings and human trafficking networks.

In terms of remittances, especially from the USA to Mexico and Central America, they increased considerably during the pandemic with estimates indicating that LAC was the region that recorded the largest increase worldwide. Remittances are an essential foreign exchange source for several countries. They represent at least 20 per cent of GDP in some countries, such as El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, and Haiti. These resources have been the main informal social protection mechanism for families and the mainstay that helped them cope with economic difficulties. Migrant remittances, for example, in New York, have also been promoters of local development. Businesses have been created for the sale of native products and the provision of parcel and money remittance services indicating that migration infrastructure and transnational businesses are created through remittances.

The Central American subregion stands out for its interconnected mobility and the large volume of flows between its member countries, resulting in highly complex social, economic, and political processes, and humanitarian crises.

Migration flows from Central America to the US has been growing due to the lack of job opportunities, poverty, and social and gender violence experienced in the sub-region. The "Caravans of Central Americans" have been a recent distinctive feature of this collective migration of 3,000 to 6,000 migrants transiting together. They are composed of whole families, unaccompanied minors, older adults, people with disabilities, and persons with chronic diseases. These migrants are at risk of exposure to predatory violence, sexual abuse, rape, trafficking, food insecurity, discrimination, and social exclusion. The number of asylum applications from displaced migrants in the USA and Mexico has been growing with their profile changing from single men to entire families, women, and unaccompanied children and adolescents.

Mexico also stands out as a country of origin, transit, destination, and return of unaccompanied Central American children and adolescents. About two-thirds are boys, and one-third are girls, their average age is 15 years, and they lack social protection, although the governments of these countries have established some legal child protection measures. However, every year in the northern Central American countries, 700,000 young people reach the working age of 14 or 15 years, as established by their legislation. Such legislations contribute to reinforcing the idea that young people can undertake the search for better job opportunities by migrating to the USA or Mexico. This factor is compounded by others, such as family reunification, the need to leave behind domestic or social violence situations, the consequences of natural disasters, and poverty boost the idea of migration as an option.

In the Caribbean, migration has had a very high impact in this subregion because countries and their populations are small. Migrants from this subregion represent about 20 per cent of the total population of the Caribbean. In 2019, the USA and Canada concentrated 77 per cent of the emigrated population. Mobility is linked to disaster situations and events caused by climate change, as well as emigration of the skilled labor force. Natural disasters have had a powerful impact on these countries displacing over 6.5 million people, primarily Cubans and Haitians, between 2008 and 2017, resulting in significant material and infrastructure damage. Assistance and protection have been a challenge for the Caribbean, not only because of insufficient and confusing information on the beneficiaries of humanitarian visas and people in temporary shelters but also because the support in areas such as health and education implemented by governments has been

insufficient. Substantial development of policies related to climate change is thus required.

Skilled labour emigration records the highest rates in the world and poses challenges to healthcare and education sectors with outflows of professional women employed in those sectors. Declines in skilled labour average 70 per cent. Nevertheless, emigration has also offered opportunities. The most important are remittances, stimulating financial activities, promoting trade and investment, and reducing poverty among migrants and their families. In Jamaica, the Government seeks to link international migration with development introducing measures reducing the cost of sending remittances and adopting international agreements aimed at the diaspora to facilitate labor migration, portability and transfer of pensions, and incentives to invest in Jamaica.

South America has seen growth of intra-regional mobility, which places several countries as scenarios of emigration, immigration, transit, and return, especially of women mainly engaged in paid domestic work, including caring for children or older adults. Historically, this type of work in Latin America has been an essential source of labor, mainly for women from poor, indigenous, and Afro-descendant households. With industrialization and urbanization, their demand gradually increased in the middle classes, in addition to the upper sectors. Their expansion has been such that in the second half of the 20th century, Latin America had the highest proportion of paid female domestic workers in the world. This mobility has shaped the so-called "global care chains". Care chains have resulted in a widening inequality gap within and between countries. Commonly, domestic and care workers do not have social security coverage and sustain informal contracts, which reduces their bargaining power vis-à-vis their employers. Women depend on the remunerations established by the latter. Socially, the employer-worker relationship is structured intersectionally based on class, race, and ethnic prejudices; their work is not highly valued and is associated with low social status.

Transnational families

The definition of the transnational space in the debate about understanding transnational families created by migration has been crucial. This space refers not only to the place of origin and destination of migrants but also to a social space constructed by migrants and their families from the broader conditions that shape their lives. Transnational families construct and reproduce their lives beyond

national borders with several studies questioning the idea that family separation due to migration generates mainly adverse and disintegrative effects (marital abandonment, separation, divorce, teenage pregnancy, and poor school performance, among others). This view does not consider other effects of mobility; the capacity of families and their members to cope with the constraints they face in their daily interactions. The multiple ways in which migration transforms, reorients, and changes the order of priorities in family relationships; and how spousal and parent-child relationships move into the transnational social space.

Decision-making regarding mobility implies that family structures and arrangements, their views about gender and intergenerational relations, family roles, and parenting may be transformed, reoriented, and negotiated among members of the nuclear family and the kinship or extended family network. Redefinition may involve considerable tensions and conflicts. It is common for the family structure to change, but some traditional views and gendered attributions of family responsibilities remain unchanged. Therefore, transnational families must mediate existing inequalities among their members, including differences in access to mobility, individual and family resources, different types of capital, and lifestyles.

It is essential to consider that gender inequality in family relations in existence before migration is likely to influence transnational family formation in the newly settled destination. The literature has insisted that migration social networks and transnational families are not necessarily egalitarian spaces. In fact, despite the changes achieved towards greater freedom and autonomy for women and more egalitarian relationships, life in this space continues to be profoundly gendered. Thus, flows in the transnational space include economic resources and the so-called social remittances signifying different norms, values, and beliefs around gender relations, parenting, and care. They are especially significant for the experience of migrant women as mothers, wives, partners, or relatives of male family members since patriarchal patterns of family organization generally prevail in Latin American societies.

Women (and men) are pressured through informal social control mechanisms to fulfill their traditional obligations as caregiving mothers, wives or partners, and daughters in the destination country with gossip, being a powerful informal control mechanism affecting the reputation, especially of women in their families and communities. In this sense, rather than allowing women to use

migration as a means to obtain relief from family constraints, transnational ties may confine them to traditional gendered practices .

Extensive literature has documented how familism has historically characterized Latin American and Caribbean societies and is part of kinship's cultural and organizational baggage. It has shown the variety of supports and exchanges between family nuclei and the kinship or extended family network. Familism has moved to the transnational space and has become a social remittance insofar as it is an organizational mechanism of support (economic, emotional, and care) at a distance. One of the organizational forms it takes is the activated multigenerational links through which other types of social remittances also flow. Many studies have documented how today, transnational families rely more on them to provide support, especially in parenting and caregiving tasks. Multigenerational ties thus represent a latent network of kinship connections ready to serve as a safety net and as an alternative resource of love, support, and comfort for children's well-being. It is an essential resource for migrant single mothers with limited resources.

Gender differences mark this multigenerational support, as grandmothers primarily assume the care of grandchildren when their parents migrate. In fact, their role (and that of grandfathers) is crucial for reinforcing the culture and identity of the native country. They convey to their grandchildren language, values, and customs and promote the sense of belonging to the native culture. At the same time, grandchildren learn about the destination country's culture through their relationship with their migrant parents. Likewise, grandparents can provide emotional support when children's parents migrate or for integration and maintenance of ties at a distance. Although grandparents' role in caring for their grandchildren cannot be overstated, geographic and legal restrictions accompanied by varied expectations between grandparents-parents-grandchildren may create conflicts and weaken intergenerational relationships.

However, familism expressed in multigenerational relationships often implies tensions and conflicts. Furthermore, they may activate informal social control mechanisms according to expectations and values associated with traditional gender roles. Geographic distance, legal restrictions, and different expectations and values between grandparents-parents-grandchildren can generate emotionally charged situations. If not properly managed, they can weaken grandparent-parent relationships and erode bonds with grandchildren.

Also, the resources available to grandmothers may be limited and hinder their tasks, all of which produce tensions.

It is the case, for example, of several Guatemalan grandmothers who are illiterate and face difficulties guiding their grandchildren in their school performance. Other inequalities intersect, such as ethnic/racial or rural-urban backgrounds. For instance, indigenous grandmothers receive fewer remittances than non-indigenous and have less decision-making power because they are subject to male authority figures in their family and community.

Poverty, labor market characteristics, and social and family violence have been crucial structural factors driving migration and transnational family formation. Migration policies have also greatly affected transnational families because they have been restrictive and tightened, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The USA, Spain, and several Latin American governments have significantly decreased migration by closing their borders, placing stricter controls, or trying to reverse it through massive deportations.

However, it is also necessary to consider the fundamental role of **family reunification migration policies**, as they establish the terms under which migrants and their family members are allowed to enter and settle in destination countries. Indeed, there is a close relationship between policies, migratory trajectories, and transnational families with such regulations being assessed by families when a member wishes to migrate and make decisions. These policies may facilitate or restrict migratory flows and the conditions under which they occur, strengthening, hindering, or weakening them. They can contribute to their well-being or expose them to processes of exclusion and risk.

Family reunification policies have surpassed labor policies for some time and regularly molded people's mobility. However, there are some differences between countries. For example, in the USA, these policies have been at the center of immigration legislation, and many visas have been granted for this purpose. However, the system is stagnating and collapsing due to the high demand. On the other hand, many requirements must be met for family reunification to be approved. Considering that many migrants send remittances to their families and rely economically on themselves, it is very likely that they will continue to have limited resources to meet the requirements and thus materialize the reunification.

Therefore, the option of the irregular route, such as hiring a coyote, may be considered more effective for emigration than requests for family reunification.

The European Union countries have viewed the family reunification policy as part of social cohesion policies for the last two decades. The family is seen as the vehicle for integration, cushioning cultural shocks and supporting to face the migrant harsh work conditions. However, this rhetoric has contrasted with a practice of ever-tighter cutbacks and restrictions. Indeed, apart from family reunification, asylum, and service sector work contracts, legal migration in most countries has been virtually closed since the 1970s. In recent years, most labor positions demanded in Europe concentrated in the service sector, especially in domestic work, including children and elderly care, activities considered primarily female. This explains why Latin American women far outnumber men and helps to understand the growing feminization of migratory flows.

Spain, the second destination for Latin Americans migrants has followed European guidelines. Although it has also granted a considerable proportion of visas for family reunification to Latin American migrants, especially women, their vulnerable economic conditions challenge complying with the requirements for the approval of their applications. In addition, Spanish legislation establishes that the right to family reunification is lost when children become adults. Consequently, in contrast to the USA, migratory project strategies are built around this policy, and transnational motherhood becomes a transitory strategy, especially for single-parent families headed by women. To access residency and legal status, some Latin American women, for example, marry a European man or a migrant with legalized status because this facilitates family reunification. This involves new relationships and new transnational family structures.

Stricter immigration policies in the U.S, or the administrative collapse when there is the possibility of reunification, have led to the stabilization of transnational families. Moreover, reunification at the destination is no longer a goal or is achieved by clandestine means. Consequently, transnational multigenerational motherhood, fatherhood, childhood, and multigenerational parenting have become more durable. Often, they imply forced arrangements. In fact, migrants, before leaving, already know that family projects involve the formation of new family arrangements, and they are experienced as part of the life cycle.

For some transnational families, especially when the woman has migrated, leaving the children behind, there are several reasons why family reunification may no longer be the desired goal. Some include the material and emotional hardships of reunion, the resulting family conflicts - especially intergenerational - the limited resources for women to cope with, the arrival of new children in the destination country, or when new partners emerge. Some of the resulting outcomes are family structures, where affective and material ties may be unstable. Furthermore, the legal recognition of stepchildren from other nationalities may be obstructed. In many cases, the native country ceases to be the only point of reference, which may weaken the desire for reunification.

Urbanization trends in Latin America

Urban areas in Latin America have been facing various challenges to achieving the social targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in relation to poverty, health, education and social protection. For instance, such a key urban-related investment as public spending on housing and community amenities showed an average rise of 0.03 percentage points, to 0.58 per cent of GDP from 2019 to 2021. This includes both the administration of urbanization matters and slum clearance related to residential development, construction and renovation of family homes, as well as the acquisition of land for housebuilding, family and community development, water supply and street lighting.

Urbanization is positively correlated with income per capita, as well as with capital, labor and productivity measures. However, in spite of displaying high urbanization rates, Latin American countries show relatively low levels of income, capital, labor and productivity. To overcome the negative effects of the pandemic and a more sustainable urbanization rate ahead, urban strategies need to move towards innovative ways to preserve the value generated by the urban areas and benefit the families living and working in them.

Currently, the region is characterized by a double transition: an urban transition (lower rate of rural-urban migration) and a demographic transition (from population growth to population ageing). A small number of large metropolitan areas concentrate most of the economic, demographic and administrative activities despite the rise of medium-size cities.

The Latin American urban areas have been growing at a mild pace, resulting in environmental and economic challenges, in addition to the rising cost of managing and providing inclusive access to urban services and goods. The urban-

rural wage gap continues to be a prime predictor of migration. That, in turn, could create a situation in which some urban economies may be unable to absorb the inflow of new workers, and they end up unemployed or underemployed.

For instance, out of the total population in Latin America of more than 640 million in 2019, Indigenous Peoples represent 7 to 9 per cent of the total population. They are distributed in 826 distinct Indigenous Peoples living in diverse environmental settings, including the coasts, the Andes and other mountainous areas, and the Amazon forest. However, the majority live in urban settings due to territorial displacement, degradation, conflict or exploitation, or due to other socio-economic and environmental factors. Indigenous Peoples tend to remain among the poorest sectors in Latin American society and illustrate how the distribution of wealth remains extremely unequal, as the 2019 protests in different countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, and Colombia, have shown.

In Latin America, the extraction and exportation of primary materials predominately impacts the GDP, while the urban activities are characterized by the major contribution of the service sector, which employs on average 35 per cent of the population concentrated in urban and metropolitan areas.

Nevertheless, the negative externalities associated with urban growth due to the weak planning, in addition to low productivity, informality, lack of investment in infrastructure and knowledge economies, limit the benefits that cities can offer towards agglomeration economies and of scale, the proximity of the factors of production, the exchange of ideas and innovation. These gaps are particularly important for the quality employment of youth and women.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an opportunity for some cities to implement instruments to capture and distribute the value generated by digital transformation. The integration of local government initiatives in statistical and geographical information systems in a transparent manner has the potential to improve the urban democratic experience and contribute to more effective monitoring of urban development and generated value.

The cities of Latin America remain among the most **unequal** in the world despite considerable efforts and few achievements regarding poverty reduction and social inclusion. Among the achievements, Latin American cities reduced the quantitative housing deficit and urban informality with the slum population dropping from 25.5 to 21.1 per cent between 2005-2014. However, policies usually focused only on homeownership disregarding the connection to infrastructure and

urban services. Socio-economic residential segregation and unequal access to housing and urban land persist as spatial expressions of inequality.

An endemic inequality shows three interrelated dynamics in the Latin American urban settlements: discrimination, segregation, and fragmentation. Urban discrimination is expressed in a physical and normative way when a person cannot access urban services and systems. Urban segregation refers to the concentration of a social group in a specific area of the city, forming socially homogeneous or exclusive areas due to social, economic, and cultural conditions. Urban fragmentation is the physical rupture (through gated communities, differences in facilities and services) and symbolic (resistance, behavior, attitudes, and practices), a consequence of unequal societies.

The vulnerability of the region to climate change is due to the location of the main urban settlements and natural disasters in the Caribbean. Additionally threatening lives and the wellbeing of the population, have direct effects on economies, infrastructure, and social development, intensifying the urgent need for policies and measures for climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and urban climate financing.

Urbanization trends in Europe

Europe has effectively shifted from being an industrial and primarily rural continent to one that is urban and metropolitan in nature. The main current trends shaping urban issues in Europe are immigration, increase in life expectancy, population ageing, widespread use of new technologies.

Internal migration in Europe intensified with the addition of new members of the European Union from Eastern Europe. With democratization and economic growth in Eastern Europe, the east-west flows eased. Recent immigrants come from areas of conflict in the Middle East.

In terms of increased longevity, it is largely due to overall improvements in healthcare. However, the European life expectancy map has changed profoundly in recent decades, with very different rates of progress across countries. As a matter of fact, the steady overall increase in life expectancy conceals sharp divergences between regions in Europe.

The increase in longevity resulted in rapid population ageing further accelerated by falling fertility. With a decline in mortality, the elderly population

has undergone a twofold change in recent decades. Not only are more and more people living to retirement age, but retirement is lasting longer.

Europeans are becoming increasingly connected – 19 per cent use online shopping, 64 per cent use online devices to access live public transport schedule information, and 77 per cent of the EU population use mobile mapping and navigation services. A growing number of people living in cities (14 per cent in the EU27+UK, reaching as high as 32 per cent in Denmark) are also using digital technologies to telework and are abandoning the daily commute. Big data and global monitoring are part of daily lives. Sensor networks and new systems of data collection can now provide a real-time, constant stream of information that has a huge potential to improve city planning and tailor solutions to local conditions.

New forms of family union have been steadily rising in Europe. With traditional family models challenged by conjugal relations and parenthood outside of marriage, marriage itself happens less frequent and later in life. This, together with increased opportunities for women in the workplace, has further depressed fertility rates across the continent.

As the trends above present both challenges and opportunities, it essential to rethink the city from a family perspective, considering family needs, including decent housing, drinking water, electricity and internet connections to name the most basic ones. It is also essential to identify possible ways to meet the needs of families, within the circular economy. It means recovering, reusing, recycling, reducing the waste of irreproducible resources and extending the life of products or the possibility of their reuse. Every sector of the economy must be involved in the organization of the new city.

Climate change and demographic challenges are global issues and we need an international framework in which we can combat these problems. However, at the local level, local care services can be provided by using modern technology to inform citizens and create a culture of community service. Education is another very important aspect of dealing with these challenges. In that sense, the role of local authorities in sending and providing the information is vital.

To achieve these goals, family councils in local communities would be instrumental to have consistent communication with their local authorities.

Migration and urbanization trends in North America (focus on Canada)

Canada and the United States of America share common characteristics such as a high income, educated but their patterns of family experience of migration and urbanization differ due to unique political, economic, socio-cultural, and historical circumstances and admit immigrants for family reunification and to meet broader economic needs. The patterns of family experiences of migration and urbanization differ due to unique political, economic, socio-cultural, and historical circumstances.

In Canada, migration is commonly understood as either interprovincial (from one province or territory to another) or intraprovincial (from one region to another within a province or territory). Transnational migration is referred to as immigration. Immigration policies are directed towards groups such as refugees or economic migrants and have different consequences for families based on family structure. For instance, multigenerational families would not be able to migrate together since grandparents need to be sponsored after the parents and children arrive. This has implications for care and support of younger and older family members in both Canada and the home country. As such, immigration policies may fragment or unite families, may highlight inequalities among diverse family groups, and can ultimately enhance or undermine family wellbeing. For instance, priorities may be given to parents, families who fill employment needs, families who are part of identity groups that are valued, etc. Currently, four types of policies can be discerned: immigrants sponsored by family, economic migrants and skilled workers, refugees and other immigrants, people are considered based on family ties, best interests of children, settlement in Canada, as well as humanitarian or compassionate reasons. AS an illustration, in 2020 57.6 per cent were economic immigrants, 26.7 were admitted through family sponsorship, 13.9 per cent were refugees and 1.8 per cent were in the 'other' category.

Families and persons with disabilities

In Canada, the family member with a disability may be deemed inadmissible on health grounds if anticipated health or social service costs are deemed likely to exceed those of the average Canadian over a period of five years; or if the demand on health or social services would increase waiting times that could negatively affect the health of Canadian citizens or permanent residents. It is known as the excessive demands clause. Although the aim is to protect overuse of Canada's publicly funded social and health care systems, it treats the costs as a burden, rather than an investment in full participation, inclusion, and positive contributions to Canadian society. Refugees are excluded from this rule. Potential immigrants defined as family members, such as spouse, child, or common-law partner of a

person with a disability deemed to have excessive demands are allowed entry. Non-excluded family members may be reluctant to proceed with immigration if the family member with a disability is excluded, or they may still choose to immigrate even if the family member is unable to make the journey, which has implications for family wellbeing. A systematic review of mental and physical health outcomes for parents who were left behind, revealed that they can experience higher levels of mental health problems, lower life satisfaction, and more loneliness, among other outcomes. These outcomes are exacerbated by risk factors relating to gender, income, physical activity, rural residence and even to how often they adult children visit.

Although statistics on numbers of families who immigrate to Canada are not kept, from the diminishing numbers of individuals with disabilities it can be assumed that the number of families with disability is also diminishing. This reflects a burden-of-disability attitude becoming more entrenched in immigration policy, especially in the past 20 years. Immigrant families with disabilities face additional challenges including appropriate healthcare, accessible housing, transportation, employment, and respite care. The ability to meet these needs impacts family wellbeing.

Indigenous families in Canada

Indigenous populations in Canada: First Nations, Inuit, and Metis represent over 50 nations and 50 indigenous languages. At personal level, indigenous family is seen as multi-faceted, socially and culturally based \, and with strong ties to community, language and mobility. At the institutional level, family is based on biological ties, household membership, or legal status. The lack of coherence between the two definitions occurs and has policy implications with certain non-Indigenous family forms, such as nuclear family structure taking precedence in what is considered a 'normal' family, not necessarily reflecting the diversity of family types. This raises concerns as it may limit access to resources and supports.

Indigenous families have been forcefully removed from their land and after the second world war were encouraged to leave reserves and assimilate into the dominant settler culture. In 2021, as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action they were allowed to use their traditional names in legal documents. Forced migration and relocation, sometimes to urban areas, as well as to remote regions was forced upon them with considerable impacts on families such as high levels of substance abuse in the first generation, women's depressive symptoms and less effective parenting in the second generation, as well as a greater risk of depressive symptoms and delinquent behaviours in the third

generation. Moreover, separation from grandparents has led to the erosion of intergenerational cultural influences and limited parental abilities. As essential services are lacking in remote parts of Canada, indigenous peoples are still evacuated to urban areas for different reasons such as the birth of children or assisted living for older persons often leading to disconnection with families, the land, and their communities.

Urbanization in Canada

In Canada, 83.4 per cent of households lived in urban areas in 2021. Immigration and urbanization are closely linked. Between 2016 and 2019, 9 in 10 new immigrants settled in census metropolitan areas (CMAs). Although cities offer better employment, healthcare, access to childcare and other social supports, rapid urban development may negatively impact the environment.

Changes in bylaws of some cities, like Toronto make it easier for multigenerational families wishing to reside at the same location to do so and it's often more affordable to do so. Affordable housing is linked to better quality of life, including better physical and mental health, feeling of belonging, reduced stress, and improved educational and employment opportunities.

Families with disabilities may move from rural to urban areas to gain better access to health care as well as community supports including respite care, supportive housing, transportation for the family member with a disability, and service coordination all indispensable for family wellbeing. Still, housing affordability and already stretched public healthcare system can be an issue.

More than have of **indigenous people** live in urban areas in Canada. They usually have a high mobility, moving into an out of urban spaces in line with family circumstances and the presence of other community and family members. Urban indigenous children, youth and families, including Indigenous Elders, are at a significantly greater risk of human rights violation in Canada such as racial and systemic discrimination in healthcare, education, child welfare and social settings by virtue of belonging to an Indigenous grouping in Canada with negative impacts on family wellbeing. To remedy this situation indigenous peoples need to be considered partners in development and media should move away from portraying them as victims and survivors.

In terms of migration and urban policies for families with disabilities in Canada, the Government keeps adopting a burden of disability perspective in immigration policies which may lead to disruption of family relationships by separating family members during the immigration process by applying the

excessive demands clause. In terms of indigenous families, policies should recognize their diversity and use the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's guidelines.

Migration and climate change

In 2020, there were 40.5 million new internally displaced persons out of which 76 per cent (30.7 million) were triggered by weather-related disasters. More families will migrate or be uprooted due to natural disasters including storms, earthquakes and tsunamis. Moreover, slower onset changes in climate, like droughts increase the likelihood of migration to a larger degree than natural disasters. Such slow onset changes in climate disproportionately affect indigenous people, fishing communities, and farmers. When families depend on the land for their livelihoods, resources and cultural presentation and identity, they tend to adapt and stay in place for as long as possible.

Framing migration as a continuous process and spectrum, ranging from voluntary to involuntary, allows us to: account for multiple factors simultaneously driving migration; better understand why some families migrate and others do not, and more accurately represent how climate change contributes to migration. Of those who can and do migrate because of climate change, many relocate to cities and urban areas. People in rural settings can be more exposed to the elements, and changes in ecosystems can be the final push factor that leads vulnerable families to migrate to cities from their rural habitats.

Cities, at first glance, seem like a logical place for families to migrate to with flows from rural to urban areas linked to economic modernization, improved education, service sector growth, and the concentration of economic activities in towns and cities. While urban centers are projected to become more popular destinations for all migrants (rural in origin, climate-induced, and otherwise) in the coming years, this involves risks as many cities are in hazard-prone locations, including deltas, coastlines, and seismic zones. Unfortunately, this means that climate displacement risk can be largely concentrated in urban areas, too.

Rural-urban migration increases pre-existing inequalities between the rich and the poor, as well as strains urban and social services. People escaping environmental and socioeconomic shocks in rural areas may end up in precarious, substandard housing and slums in urban climate hotspots.

Climate change is an important driver of migration but can be difficult to measure. Although movements that are primarily or partially induced by climate have significant cross-border implications, most migration is internal, highly localized, and increasingly projected to be rural-to-urban. Furthermore, climate change is only one part of an often complex and multicausal migration story among families. Migration decision-making accounts for climate perceptions and experiences, with “climate change” encompassing a combination of shorter and longer onset events, in addition to socioeconomic, familial, and cultural considerations.

Urbanization and homelessness

Homelessness is a manifestation of inequality presenting itself in different forms. It is ‘a condition where a person or household lack habitable space with security of tenure, rights, and the ability to enjoy social relations, including safety. Homelessness is a manifestation of extreme poverty and failure of multiple systems and human rights. The most prevalent and visible form is people living out in the open with extreme example of street homelessness in the urban areas. Equally prevalent are less visible forms of homelessness mostly in the Global South manifesting in precarious, overcrowded, or inadequate housing conditions with no basic services or secure tenure.

Global homelessness is estimated at 150 million people which is around 2 per cent of world’s population. Moreover, more than 20 per cent of global population live in inadequate housing and more than 100 million have no housing at all. The number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness is growing throughout the world.

For women and children, homelessness is often invisible. The dangers they face on the streets motivate families to exhaust all other options available within their cultural context. Family homelessness has sociocultural, economic, and political causes that governments, civil society and the private sector can address. Family breakdown is both a cause and effect of family homelessness. As an effect, families are split up in shelters, and poor children are subject to state and other interventions. Additionally, people migrating from rural to urban areas in

developing countries often move directly into slums and/or housing that is inadequate because they lack alternative opportunities.

Privatization and financialization of housing are occurring globally, spurred by neoliberalism. Relatedly, emergency accommodation overshadows other approaches to housing, in both budget and use. Governments should reevaluate neoliberal policies, while ensuring social protection floors are enacted immediately.

Family homelessness should be seen as one human rights issue among many and seek to understand the histories and contexts from which family homelessness has stemmed. Globally, women, children, and girls are vulnerable to adverse personal and familial circumstances in addition to the structural/systemic causes of family homelessness, as well as the accompanying issues of displacement and trauma.

Good practices

The Venice Declaration

Back in 2017, the International Federation for Family Development promoted the Inclusive Cities for Sustainable Cities Families project. Its purpose is to configure an alliance of territories from all over the world aiming to be inclusive of sustainable families by being responsive to their needs. The contents are included in the Venice Declaration, with the following 10 areas: Housing, New Technologies, Education, Healthcare, Safety, Clean Air, Transportation, Affordability, Leisure and Tourism, and Vulnerable Families.

The founding members were the Veneto Region (Italy), the Department des Bouches-du-Rhone (France) and the Region of Attica (Greece). Other signatories that have already joined are several Brazilian territories, more than 40 Mexican cities and a Polish region. By joining the Declaration, they are committed to submitting a Monitoring Report every year to be presented to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs by the International Federation for Family Development secretariat, with information of the previous year on the progress made on those topics that is assessed by academic.

In 2019, the first Annual Technical Meeting of the Signatories was celebrated in Curitiba, Brasil. After the pandemic, a second Annual Technical Meeting of the

Signatories was held in Brussels in March 2022. Its main conclusions included creating an online platform to compile good practices from which a manual can be produced for signatories, adapted to their needs; creating a thematic working group on food security, energy security and circular economy; and working on the update of the Venice Declaration in light of the post-pandemic era, to repair what has been damaged, and to prevent the risks of tomorrow. With this, the project takes up the challenges European regions, cities and municipalities are increasingly suffering from the consequences of the pandemic, climate change and natural disasters.

State of Carinthia (Austria)

Carinthia understands housing as a fundamental right supports the unemployed and vulnerable families. Its initiatives are linked to the social protection network and the local social assistance actions.

City of Marseille (France)

Policies adopted for the inclusion of families in the plan of new technologies can be highlighted. The city uses ICTs as important tools for public management. It develops advanced support and training programs for older people, to overcome the digital gap and understands technology as an instrument to bring people and communities together.

City of Vicenza (Italy)

Vicenza's highlight is its policies for vulnerable families. There is an innovative notion of transient vulnerability responsible for shaping specific policies and focused on overcoming momentary difficulties, arising, for example, from economic conditions — such as employment for young people — or resulting from the breaking of the family bond, due to a separation, for example.

Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region , Poland

The local government established Family Support Centers to offer comprehensive and specialized support for families, allowing parents and other carers to strengthen their competencies instead of replacing them, subsidiarizing all the resources they may need for it.

Veneto Region, Italy

The Region approved a new law on “Interventions to support the family and the birth rate”, pursuing integrated and organic policies aimed at supporting families in the performance of their social function; promoting actions to encourage solidarity between generations, social relations and the choice of life paths for adolescents and young people; supporting parenting; and developing research initiatives, continuous monitoring of the situation of families and the impact of family policies on the territory.

Sao Paulo

The city in their climate action strategies has recently committed to the expansion of urban security and improvement of the municipal transport system, with the aim of providing the use of alternative and non-polluting modes of transport. Also, regarding new technologies, the city has created “Empreenda Fácil”, a platform that allows entrepreneurs to open and license their low-risk company completely online without the need to move. This initiative allows small companies to be legalized in the city, since the process has been simplified and the entrepreneur himself can carry out all activities without the need to hire an accountant.

Paraná

Creation of various technological tools to connect their citizens and provide services such as: the PIA app, which brings together more than 400 online services to assist citizens, the creation of the Paraná Solidário app that unites people interested in donating to some charity, and the Paraná Serviços app that unites an autonomous service provider with the population that seeks a certain service.

Perú

The Think Tank “Escucha al Perú” has promoted an initiative that inserts the microentrepreneur into the digital world and formalizes them. It consists of providing free internet service to microentrepreneurs with the condition that the beneficiaries must digitize their payment and collection processes and become bank users. In this way, the entrepreneur will receive the benefit of being able to increase their productivity and sales by having access to Internet (several economic studies show higher incomes in entrepreneurs who have internet); they will also have access to credits committing them more to formalization and see its benefits.

Colombia

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the District Secretariat for Women of the Office of the Mayor of Bogotá have jointly established technical criteria and a number of gender-based indicators geared towards the design and implementation of the District Care System from a territorial perspective. A territorial approach to care policy means taking account of the socioeconomic, demographic and geospatial characteristics of territories and ensuring that care policy considers and is aligned with other territorially based interventions (ECLAC 2021).

Ecuador

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has urged governments to plan the distribution of the vaccine based on a human rights and equity approach; and, in this framework, to pay special attention to indigenous peoples in immunization campaigns, given their heightened vulnerability to the pandemic. Ecuador considers indigenous populations living in urban areas, having issued specific operational guidelines for the implementation of the campaign among indigenous peoples and nationalities, Afro-Ecuadorians and Montubios (FELIPE 2021).

Mexico

In Mexico, as of August 2022, 40 mayors from different states and political parties have signed the Venice declaration and some of them are starting to implement the project. In particular, two good practices have been supported by civil society – IAPF: the Family Governance Model, as a strategy for combining resources from a wide variety of actors with the purpose of including an issue on the public agenda and promoting public policy decision-making and the Sustainable Family Cities project, a series of public policy actions that seek, first, that decision makers acquire the basic knowledge to implement family-oriented public policies and the family perspective mainstreaming.

The Family Governance Model arises from the work of the IAPF in conjunction with associations of national and international influence. It has articulated a support network that has achieved the commitment of municipal governments to include the family perspective mainstreaming in their narrative and public policies for subsequent family-oriented policies application. This network is the result of the application of a model of social co-responsibility, which contains three elements (i) resources, (ii) interrelation, (iii) and a public interest.

The Family Sustainable Cities project is the product of the combination of knowledge, skills and abilities of various social actors that generated a methodology and a commitment by the mayors of various municipalities. In September 2021, one month after the 1st National Meeting of Family Sustainable Cities, several mayors expressed their commitment to convert their municipalities into Family Sustainable Cities.

Housing First - Intervention in supporting individuals to break the cycle of homelessness by providing them with a home and supports they need to recover from trauma.

Mukuru Promotion Center (Kenya) – located in a slum, it provides healthcare services including a medical clinic with HIV/AIDS testing center, and a hospital complemented by a community-based health care programme. Educational facilities include schools and rehabilitation center.

Housing and Land Rights Network (India) -secures safe housing for families and individuals and advocates for the homeless emphasizing housing first model.

The Homeless People Federation of the Philippines, Inc. (HPFPI) – an NGO using five community-driven approaches to alleviate local displacement – securing tenure, upgrading and housing, basic urban services, disaster reduction and post-disaster reconstruction. It commits to community development by hosting temporary and permanent housing initiatives, which is crucial source of support for displaced Filipino families.

Pathways Housing First Institute (USA) programme offers immediate access to housing for families as a right. The programme achieved housing stability rates of about 80 per cent.

Sophia Housing (Ireland) takes the housing first model a step further, seeing the quality of a home and the environment placed in as a trauma intervention and a key element in breaking the cycle of homelessness, in particular intergenerational homelessness. Sophia Housing as well as other initiatives are supported by **UNANIMA International** which has committed to extensive research and ongoing advocacy homelessness, specifically the niche and often overlooked issue of family homelessness and that of women and children. Working with the ethos “nothing about us without us,” the research and advocacy continues to place emphasis on bringing the voices of those with lived experience into the global conversation. In “Hidden Faces of Homelessness, International Research on Families” UNANIMA focused on five regions and conducted case studies within them with a human rights perspective.

Vanier Institute (Canada)

The Institute created a Family Diversity Framework based on the principle that families are diverse in terms of structure, (e.g., family formation, dissolution, inheritance, parental rights) family work (e.g., paid and unpaid work) and family identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, immigrant status). Such criteria allow for consideration how families might be marginalized by identities that act to exclude. Another part of the framework is that family wellbeing is the desired outcome. Family wellbeing consists of material, relational and subjective wellbeing.

Conclusions

To achieve sustainable urbanization, a constant diagnosis of urban strength is needed to enable the prioritization of actions and identification of investments. This evaluation must be holistic to better assert the city's vigor, including an open dialogue among stakeholders. One key stakeholder and societal actor is the family unit. The family unit has proven to be the main agent for development within societies and the cornerstone for a sustainable city.

Focusing and analyzing the impact of urban policies on the family unit should show an accurate assessment of the needs for inclusive cities, especially in terms of investment in infrastructure and social development. To achieve this objective, families may need to be provided with adequate tools for strengthening their ability to reach their potential as productive, engaged, and capable agents of sustainable development, contributing fully to their members and communities and making of their urban setting a resilient societal group.

One of the most important contributions of Latin America and the Caribbean to the global debate on inclusive urban development is the promotion of the right to the city, a collective right based on the democratic control of the processes of urban development. Without good governance or participation in the decision-making, urban settlements in the region lack management and data collection capacities. It is key for the region to explore a better public participation with important implications for promoting transparency and accountability; and urban legislation and jurisprudence that enable the application of inclusive urban development instruments.

Likewise, the strengthening of urban financing is a key element for enabling sustainable urban development by increasing fiscal authority and instruments that allow the capture of the value generated by urban development; and promote public-private partnerships, regulatory asset base models, private investment, international cooperation, and increasingly diversifying sources for climate finance.

To promote fair migration policy, the way forward must include the voices of families. It needs to address harmful climate practices, historical injustices, and policies that inhibit the integration of migrants and their families. As families respond to social and environmental circumstances before deciding to or being forced to migrate, there is a growing need for more family-strengthening, climate centric, and just migration policies.

In terms of homelessness, although personal circumstances leading to homelessness may differ for each family, many of the structural and systemic failures contributing to family homelessness are quite similar, in particular in urban environments. Housing first approach and providing families with good quality homes with supports helps cities to play an important role in empowering families and meeting the targets of the 2030 Agenda.