



Expert Group Meeting on Family Policies for Inclusive Societies

Recommendations

General Recommendations for Governments

Prioritise family policy development, implementation and monitoring through family-focused Government ministries or other state agencies using action-oriented frameworks at national levels

Prevent and reduce statelessness and loss of legal status, as well as provide measures for the attainment of legal status so individuals and families may access public services and assistance

Boost efforts to enforce the rule of law with a focus on gender equality and marginalized individuals and populations

Acknowledge and revise policies to reflect an awareness of the many diverse ways of understanding what a family is and the many arrangements it takes

Encourage the dissemination of information about early child development, positive youth development, gender equality, and family communication and relationships

Create an intergenerational council, ministry or task force charged with conducting an intergenerational environmental assessment designed to determine what intergenerational programs exist and where the prime opportunities reside

Ensure that family assistance programs and anti-poverty programs are not merged, and qualification and impact are assessed independent of one another

Allow access to family benefits and assistance programs for various arrangements of family, not only traditional nuclear families

Facilitate the exchange of good practices in family policy making through creating forums where stakeholders can exchange information about policies that support and strengthen families

Engage with families as units and consider their needs, desires, resources, and capabilities within the adaptive family unit at a policy and planning level

General Recommendations for academics / civil society

Engage in global family-focused research with emphasis on cultural contexts to assist local, national, regional and international policy makers/advisers

Monitor progress of the implementation of the social aspects of the SDGs 16 & 11 with a focus on families through inter alia participatory reviews

Create interdisciplinary research teams to investigate the relationship between families and local and global conditions leading to the creation of a repository of good practices in family policymaking

Assist states with relevant quantitative and qualitative data collection focused on families

Design educational family-focused programmes that are relevant in a globalized world

Advocate for skills attainment and inclusive participatory decision-making models that include different family members both individually and as family units

Advocate for social protection with a family focus, recognizing family as a transversal connector for the array of services and programming typically targeted toward individuals

SDG16

“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels”

Participation & community engagement

Create comprehensive tools for families to become active participants within city management and policy making processes. Break down institutionalized barriers to participation of the public in planning and management processes, and provide opportunities for the public to engage with city administrative officials

Prioritise the inclusion, protection and participation of vulnerable populations and families by providing safety nets for families living in conflict zones or areas prone to natural disaster

Increase civic participation through digital media, including social media, and encourage dissemination of information related to community events and planning through these channels

Engage youth in decision-making at all levels of society to create peaceful, sustainable communities and nations

Promote solidarity and mutual support in urban environment through volunteerism, the use of technology as well as information and training on crisis situations

Foster active engagement in the volunteering sector to conserve and restore the cultural and touristic identity of the city, as well as tools to facilitate access to cultural activities for all through affordable prices and ad hoc exhibitions and locations for museums, theatres, etc.

Support innovative measures for improving the sharing of skills and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups, such as time banks, where time spent by an individual of one skill can be exchanged for the services of another individual with a different skill or function

Migrants

Revise family reunification policies to account for modern and flexible conceptions of family. These include extended family members like grandparents, siblings, cousins; intimate partners that are not married or do not cohabit, and same-sex or common-law partners. Ensure the participation of these groups in family policy-making

Remove mandatory cohabitation as a requirement for family benefits or family status in immigration or reunification policies

Reduce residency requirements for access to public services like education or healthcare within countries

Create national and transnational capacity by building teams including social scientists, policy makers, NGOs as well as family representatives, community leaders, and other stakeholders to increase engagement at the local level

Streamline the asylum process to reduce waiting periods and facilitate refugees' economic and social integration into host societies

Developing policies to facilitate families to immigrate together and reduce processing times in the family reunification process

Develop multidisciplinary professional teams to work with refugees (lawyers, social workers, family counselors) and provide systematic and coordinated services to facilitate refugee integration

Inclusive access to services & support

Labour market

Facilitate easier access to the labor market and employment by reducing barriers for refugees and migrants to work in host countries, noting the impact of work opportunities

on integration by enabling interactions, increasing opportunities for learning local language, and providing opportunities to build a future and regain confidence

Education

Promote inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning for all leading to the improvement of accessible and affordable childcare facilities in locations close to the residence or workplace of parents, parenting education, participation of older persons in educational activities for the youth, intergenerational meeting places for cultural and leisure activities, youth integration practices as well as second chance schools and chances to reintegrate in society

Invest in university programmes and research centres world-wide, in sociology, psychology, family studies and related fields that focus specifically on improving family relationships and early childhood and adolescent development. Disseminate findings to policy makers and general audiences

Assure refugees and persons seeking asylum access to education systems

Remove structural barriers to accessing educational opportunities like residency or citizenship as well as mandatory school fees or 'dues' that disadvantage those of lower socioeconomic status and prevent many from attending school

Ensure that policies aimed at boosting educational attainment by providing families with cash transfers do not solely use proxy measures like attendance for evaluation of benefit eligibility, given that they may incentivize students to return to dangerous or exploitative learning environments

Prevent the exclusion or separation of students with intellectual or functional disabilities from the classroom, and provide support for students with disabilities to align their learning with that of students in mainstream classrooms

Expand Family Life Education programmes that help educate parents about raising their children in a healthful manner in culturally specific environments thus spreading a culture of peace and raising stable, well-adjusted children

Health & healthcare

Organize campaigns to promote healthy habits and lifestyles and setting the necessary structure to stimulate innovation and intergenerational relations in hospitals

Assure refugees and persons seeking asylum access to health services and promote their use

Scale up already-effective strategies for mental health interventions for refugees (such as the World Health Organization's mental health Gap Action Program) and promote their usage

Childcare & older persons care

Initiate or advance policies for prolonged parental leave with the provision of childcare and childcare subsidies. Target efforts to transform childcare and elder care from the primary responsibility of women in the family to a public-family partnership, with the aim to promote female financial independence, reduce vulnerability, and prevent women from dropping out of the workforce or poorer women from re-entering the informal economy

Disseminate parenting materials and offer relationship guidance. Use contemporary technologies to disseminate appropriate family related academic materials

Encourage cooperation between care facilities for older persons and children through intergenerational shared spaces and care arrangements. Facilitate positive relationships between older and younger generations via programming that encourages each to share their respective skills and attributes

Gender equality and elimination of discriminatory practices

Eliminate discriminatory laws and practices and work towards eliminating discriminatory attitudes and norms in areas such as early marriage and domestic and caretaking responsibilities

Promote a more egalitarian model for family policies with gender equality at its core. This includes governments taking responsibility to help women combine paid work and family tasks, and urging fathers to play a larger role in household chores, elder and childcare

Provide greater backing for family resilience by scaling up programs that empower women and mothers at the local level

Prioritise actions to reduce gender inequalities in all relevant aspects of family and community work

Technology

Take steps to ensure that new technologies promote social inclusion and bridge the digital gap via, inter alia, training of older persons, professional careers and families in vulnerable situations

Promote of affordable communications technology that assists interaction between family members that are stretched across vast geographic space to connect with one another

SDG11

“Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”

Housing

Regulate runaway housing markets currently dominating the global rental and homeownership arena. Target the poorest families with a variety of housing option (so that private housing ownership is not the only option available to them)

Create tax incentives encouraging landlords to rent to low-income and vulnerable families

Invest through tax incentives, health benefits, housing and care supplements and other measures in multigenerational households in order to promote intergenerational relations and save on housing costs

Incentivize and partner with alternative housing arrangements such as inclusive housing cooperatives based on shared spaces between persons with disabilities, people of different ages, incomes or socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnic or racial origin, religion, family arrangements, or stages in the life cycle

Incorporate data on private wealth transfers with respect to accessibility of housing needs to ensure that low income individuals have access to affordable housing

Ensure city design responds to the needs of families, including flexible urban and environmentally sustainable planning and social services

Facilitate affordable access to housing for families in vulnerable situations, including youth, persons with disabilities and older persons

Accessibility & transportation

Adapt municipalities to accommodate people of different needs, such that any physical or mental disability does not prevent full participation in public life

Include socially-excluded and vulnerable populations, such as individuals with disabilities and older persons in planning, creating and monitoring the usage of public spaces and green spaces

Invest in efficient transportation systems which are key to increasing access to employment, health and community services and educational facilities especially for vulnerable populations. Inclusive transportation systems include walking and cycling spaces as well as public transport options for persons with disabilities

Plan and design accessible public transportation system, while promoting teleworking and recognizing and valuing time at home, unpaid care and domestic work

Intergenerational shared sites

Encourage national and local leaders to adopt an age-integrated approach to community and urban planning and commit funds to support the effort

Build new alliances between ageing, children and youth sectors to support intergenerational shared sites that build inclusive societies and support families and communities to promote integrated, efficient and responsive support and opportunities for all

Develop intergenerational living arrangements incorporating shared services, efficient energy-saving, flexible buildings and care provisions and commit to country-wide and local goals and action plans to reach the goal of establishing a certain number of intergenerational shared sites within a specific time period, and identify barriers, enablers and potential policy solutions to advance intergenerational shared sites

Environment & public spaces

Create green areas through, inter alia, tax benefits for garden buildings, progressive reduction of pollution produced by public transportation, increase the number of charging points for electric cars and support for circular economy

Establish safe, inclusive public spaces for all generations that allow for community-based activities, using collaborative methods between local stakeholders, residents, and city officials in planning and management

Research & data collection

Invest in relevant data collection, including disaggregated data, statistical descriptors and qualitative evidence all necessary for evidence-based policy making leading to stronger family policy formulation. Such data should be supplemented by case studies at the local level

Implement a longitudinal, multi-generational research agenda to evaluate the impact of family immigration and integration policies and programs which moves beyond basic economic indicators like labour market participation and includes migrant family perspectives

Deploy an intersectional lens in policy making and programmes, assessing impacts with intersecting markers of gender, socioeconomic class, ethnicity/racialized status/nationality, sexuality, disability, age, migration status, and other factors