United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Inclusive Social Development

Expert Group Meeting on Family Policies for Inclusive Societies

Summary of the proceedings

The work of the Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) is grounded in a focus on three 'I's: Inclusion, (the reduction of) Inequalities, and Impact. DISD carries a mandate from the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen to put people at the center of development, with key areas of work focusing on poverty, decent jobs and employment, social integration and inclusion, and the reduction of economic and social inequalities. To this end its work must necessarily involve issues of concern for families and disadvantaged social groups, such as persons with disabilities, youth, older persons, and indigenous peoples. In this context, emphasis must be placed on intergenerational solidarity, all various age groups in families, in the context of the evolution of what "family" has come to mean in the contemporary world.

The Expert Group Meeting "Family policies for inclusive societies" was a contribution to the ongoing discussions on the role of families and family policies for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The focus of the meeting was mainly on Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 11 and targets 16.3, 16.9, 11.3 and 11.7 under those goals.

The EGM's theme and topics under discussion are relevant for the current and subsequent Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) High-level Political Forum (HLPF) session themes of "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies" (2018 session focusing on, inter alia SDG11), and "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" (2019 session, focusing, inter alia on SDG16).[1]

Rapid demographic and social changes necessitate effective policy responses. Consequently, the purpose of the EGM was to highlight current trends relating to family policy development for the achievement of selected SDGs and offer recommendations including practical, novel solutions based on specifically-identified trends at the national, regional, and global levels.

Family policies and Sustainable Development Goal 16

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents a holistic focus on ending poverty, promoting economic prosperity, protecting the environment, and on social development and enhancing people's wellbeing. The Sustainable Development Goals fundamentally build on the

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[1] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf

philosophical foundation of the United Nations- that everybody, regardless of where one lives or what one does, has a right to the basic necessities of life. This includes social rights as well.

The rule of law and the provision of legal identity to all are key for the fulfillment of these rights. Social rights are a basis to creating peaceful and sustainable societies and so are families. Programmes, policies, and laws toward the 2030 Agenda must take a family-focused approach, such that the context under which individuals make decisions (within the family) is accounted for. The focus of efforts must be on strengthening, supporting, and identifying families.

Families play an important role in shaping how people interact with societies. The very concept of family differs in arrangement and across regions and demographic groups. There are numerous challenges to crafting effective family policies without a clear concept of family that recognizes the many different forms it may now take.

While the predominant definition of family is one that is focused on the nuclear family, heteronormative, and Eurocentric, the reality of contemporary family life is far from these standards. Notions of family in reality are often looser arrangements than those dictated by legal and policy definitions. Restrictions inherent in these definitions limit the scope of influence for current family policy. An inclusive definition of family is needed. New definitions of "family" in policy must encompass the many flexible forms that exist in reality, both in terms of physical arrangements and shared spaces, and family structure and relationships.

Regardless of the definition, there is a need for stable and supportive family units that enable positive cognitive, physical, and social development of children into peaceful adults. Such family units require tools and instruments offered by comprehensive family policies to be empowered to prepare children to become resilient "citizens of tomorrow."

Goal 16 is about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies; providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. Under target 16.3, the efforts are to focus on promoting the rule of law and ensuring equal access to justice for all. Target 16.9 refers to providing legal identity for all, including birth registration.

As access to justice and strong institutions is of importance to families. How to realize this target must take into account the concerns of families who may live between different societies or legal jurisdictions, with a particular attention to the needs of indigenous families.

Families matter in individual decision-making across the world. Despite attitudes that play down the role of families in some particular functions, it is a fact valid for all countries and regions. This is so for a number of reasons. Families give individuals their initial sense of personal and social identity. They are also a basic unit of support, providing shelter, food, and clothing for their dependents. Families are the most efficient unit for rearing and nurturing children and providing care for vulnerable individuals- whether they have disabilities, are ill, or of advanced age.

The most basic and fundamental foundation for families revolves around economics. A wealth of research suggests that when families are faced with extreme poverty, cannot access health insurance, have poor childcare or educational institutions, or are exposed to extreme political violence, they are impeded in performing their functions well.

Moreover, these stressors have long-term effects not only on early childhood but follow youth into adult life. Poverty is also accompanied by inequality in its malevolent effects on human development. Bad health, social problems, and inequality are linked, and inequality within societies has even stronger measured effects than inequality between societies in this regard. A disintegration of society begins when there is substantially unequal access to the services that societies provide.

As globalization advances, the integration of markets and governments deepens, and economic systems rule the quality of life. The effect has been the shrinking of government or state support for families. As a result, family relationships have become more important, since individuals rely more on their families for their economic resilience. One example of this is in housing, where rising housing prices mean an increased reliance of young people on families to be able to afford housing, particularly amidst a growing global emphasis on home ownership. Still, this unfortunate circumstance, contributes to family solidarity.

Another issue facing families is the growing refugee crisis. 65.6 million people displaced currently is the largest number since the Second World War. Refugee flows are caused by political conflict and climate change. Beyond the human rights violations that often occur when families are displaced, the family unit and the compact between individuals, families, and their governments are disrupted. Children are especially vulnerable here.

While there is a substantial lack of data to measure the impact of the challenges, estimates from UNICEF suggest 28 million children have been forcibly displaced globally, over 1 million of whom are seeking asylum, and in Europe in 2017, there were approximately 170 thousand lone child refugees. Children make up 51 per cent of the world's refugees despite making up less than 1/3 of the global population: the majority of refugees are children. When children grow up under the circumstances of an average refugee, their life chances are severely impacted.

Likewise, a growing global youth population poses many challenges as well as opportunities for societies. There have never in human history been more young people alive than today (UNFPA, 2014), with over 1.3 billion young people to an estimated global population of 7.4 billion. The growth of the youth population is primarily in lower- and middle-income countries, but also, exceptionally, in the United States. This growing youth population can be an asset or a challenge depending on how it is dealt with. All of these young people need education, training opportunities, and must be eventually incorporated into the paid labor force.

Every year approximately 120 million young people reach working age. They need meaningful employment and to be integrated into civic life. Without jobs young people do not have a clear understanding of their own life courses and cannot adequately prepare for the future in terms of

education, future employment, building social relationships and families of their own. Vulnerable economic conditions thus create instability at the family level, eventually leading to social unrest. This has already begun in some parts of the world, and is further fueled by inequality and the visibility of inequality through mediums like social media, where people can see differences in opportunities available within and between different communities or countries. Relative deprivation must be paid attention to as individuals are more aware of inequality of opportunities available to them.

Children who grow up in extreme poverty, lack legal identity, or are displaced are less likely to grow into productive, healthy, committed citizens. However, when families are supported through appropriate policies and programmes, societies nurture children into citizens who care and contribute to peace and development.

Families are the primary units to promote peace in society both at micro and macro levels. A large body of research from the field of early childhood psychology suggests that when children attach securely to a caregiver they grow into more peaceful individuals as adults- less hostile, with more stable adult personalities and relationships. Families, as such, are their own basic socialization units for creating peaceful children and citizens.

How, then, can the rule of law help support the family? Legal frameworks provide protection especially for the most vulnerable people in society- persons with disabilities, the poor, older people and children. Additionally, under global legal frameworks, children have a right to family life. The European Court of Justice, for example, has determined that children have a right to family life whether they are born in or out of marriage, if the parents have divorced, and still retain inheritance rights. Moreover, the rights of women are also protected under the legal frameworks of every country around the world, though whether protection is secured in practice -not only through the formal framework- is questionable.

For many, however, the reality is that they do not have access to legal procedures despite formal frameworks specifying such measures. One example of how many are excluded is via eligibility requirements, whereby only those in the paid labour force can access benefits. Different levels of law and contradictory laws, as well as the lack of access to law and legal literacy for individuals, can further complicate how individuals interact with the law of their societies and the support they can access through them.

Legal identity is another issue. An estimated 1.1 billion people do not have legal identity, critical for exercising a wide range of rights but also for accessing services like healthcare, education, finance, etc. Legal identity is the focus of SDG target 16.9 for this reason, as without it, quality of life and access to opportunities are severely restricted. Legal identity not only is key for accessing social protection systems, but also helps to keep governments accountable for providing the services individuals need. Women are particularly at risk for lack of legal identity for a variety of cultural and political reasons.

To remedy this situation, we need more data collection and awareness among policymakers about the linkages between family functions, family contributions and creating peaceful and inclusive societies. Youth must be engaged in planning processes and provided with opportunities. It is also important to update the education systems to provide all youth with training applicable to the labor market.

Information about early childhood and youth development, as well as gender equality need to be disseminated through social and digital media. Family ministries and family hubs should be pursued by Governments that allow individuals or families to access a number of different resources in one place, such as legal advice, training opportunities, medical advice, etc.

Moreover, academics need to contribute more quantitative and qualitative, interdisciplinary family-focused research and assist governments in creating rights-based curricula targeted to both females and males. A systemic, family-focused approach is the only way to reach the most vulnerable individuals worldwide and to assist them in enhancing their own capabilities and reaching their full potential. Only then will it be possible to fulfill the full purpose of SDG 16, to have a more inclusive and peaceful world.

Families and inclusive societies: regional perspectives

Families and inclusive societies in Africa

Family is the foundation of African societies, recognized in African charters as the fundamental social institution "where the building of a society begins." These charters recognize family in a traditional African sense- that which other parts of the world often call "extended family" to include aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and other relatives. These relatives form a unit that functions in unison. While charters already recognize this extended family structure, there is also acknowledgement and affirmation of the diversification of family structures in African charters.

There are a number of important contextual elements essential to fully understand African families. The meanings of family and household are distinct and do not connote the same thing. Likewise, the conception of lineage is not exclusively a biological one but is sociological too and sometimes changed without legal instruments. Lineage also connects relatives both far and near, and as migration increases families are increasingly spread across large distances.

This means that family plays a large role in supporting relatives far beyond their local home or in times of crisis. An example to illustrate this comes from the 1980s, when approximately one million Ghanaian migrants were deported from Nigeria. While Western aid agencies planned intervention, a large share were reintegrated into their families and communities in as little as two weeks, due to the broader conception of family, and connections and support networks it provides. Remittances from relatives who have moved away for more opportunities also play an important role in maintaining extended families.

Social strife and spatial inequalities result in constant movements in the African continent; those movements are often also gender-biased. Many straddle places of work and places of origin. One problem complicating this is the restrictions of political borders which divide families, communities and linguistic groups. This makes it difficult for families of those working in other countries to join their relatives. High cost of living in cities also makes it difficult for those who move there as individuals to support both themselves and their families in their place of origin. Despite this, many still feel obligated to send remittances.

Other prohibitive features include the high cost of communication and transportation. While mobile phones play an important role in connecting families, the cost of use remains very high, particularly for mobile data. Poor or nonexistent road and rail infrastructure likewise makes physical reunification very difficult for individuals to move between their places of work and places of origin.

A number of options exist for improving policies related to families in Africa. First, the further recognition of the complexities and diversification of families must accompany the acknowledgment of extended families and be reflected in policies and programmes. Positive family values systems already popular in concepts like *Ubuntu* should be emphasized. Further opportunities to support families and enhance social integration include providing more affordable communications technology and services, such as mobile phone data, as well as increasing investment in transportation networks for safe and accessible movement between places of work and origin. Finally, better migration policies allowing for reunification of families split by national borders would greatly contribute to social inclusion.

Family policies for social inclusion in Asia with a gender perspective

There is remarkable diversity between Asian countries in terms of family policies. While some family policies contain an assurance to upholding the traditional family, others offer a pragmatic approach based on acceptance of the variety of forms contemporary families take. Many combine these two perspectives. Most Asian governments recognize the importance of the family, however, in general, family issues have seen a gradual decline in prioritization on the national and international development stage.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals country level commitments obligations are needed to ensure inclusive and equitable support to families with a focus on gender equality and empowerment. The family can both protect and be detrimental to women's and girls' lives and well-being, such that it is of great importance that a gender perspective is included in the formulation of family policies.

Three key concepts – redistribution, recognition, and participation – are useful for understanding how to increase social inclusion, particularly in terms of gender parity. These concepts help to illustrate how, despite policy commitments and other efforts toward gender equality in many Asian countries, significant differences remain in economic, social, educational, and employment

opportunities. There is commitment, but the extent to which that commitment leads into action and change varies and can be analyzed through the three concepts.

The unequal relationship between men and women remains rooted in cultural norms and social relationships. Mainstream analyses of inequality and welfare states often neglect to include gender aspects, though gender is one of the most important factors to be considered in analyses of inequality and distributive processes, particularly those for which the family and household are the basic unit of observation.

Several areas relevant to family policies would benefit from a gender perspective, including fertility. While fertility decline in Europe and much of the rest of Western countries took time, in Asia the speed of fertility decline is very rapid. This has worrying implications for some countries, particularly for those where the fertility rate has dropped below the replacement level. Though still a concern, this is less often the case for southeastern Asian countries like the Philippines and Malaysia. Fertility decline began in Japan much earlier than other countries and reached replacement levels by the 1970s, but was followed by Singapore, Republic of Korea, and Taiwan through the 1960s and China in the 1970s and 1980s.

A gender perspective helps to explain this phenomenon. The mean age of first birth has increased dramatically due to better access to education for females and the associated increase in mean age at first marriage. A link is observed between later marriages and declines in fertility. Several Asian countries also are experiencing a female "flight from marriage" and crude divorce rates have grown steadily, important particularly as the share of couples with children who divorce has risen significantly. This comes despite a general preference for two-child families, considered an "unmet need" because it is desired by most though not fulfilled. This leaves space for policies to support this goal and supports the idea that important barriers exist in these societies to having a desired number of children.

Policy initiatives to support child rearing households vary, but typically are provided in cash benefits. Japan features universal support as a child allowance; the Republic of Korea and Singapore offer non-universal but expanded support in the form of a "baby bonus"; and China, Hong Kong, and Malaysia give support for poorer children. Though these aim at social inclusion of children and may play a redistributive role, they have minimal impact on gender equality due to the lack of a gender perspective in their formulation.

Employment inequality is another area that could benefit from a gender perspective. The female employment rate in most East-Asian countries has been on the rise since the 1990s, though there are important distinctions to make between countries as to the effect of rising female employment on gender equality. While countries broadly considered to be "developing" like Vietnam, China, and Thailand may show relatively high female employment rates since 2010, a larger number of women in these countries still engage in traditional agriculture or informal sector work compared to men.

Though upper middle-income countries have an upward trend in female labour force participation, a decline is observed at the age in which women typically have children (approximately 25-35 years). Difficulties of balancing work and family life lead many women to drop out of the labor market, most often linked to marriage, childbearing, and childrearing. Though many East and South Asia countries feature increasing female labour force participation rates, the lack of work-family balance policies is directly related to women dropping out of the labour force.

That women are often solely responsible for caretaking must be addressed, with the general policy direction transforming child and elder care to a public-family partnership that supports families (and subsequently gender equality) with prolonged parental leaves, provision of childcare and childcare subsides, and extended public care services for older adults. This helps women to avoid dropping out of the workforce and poorer women from re-entering the informal economy. Additionally, these measures help to address the social exclusion of women and mothers from the labor market by removing the obstacles to their participation, supporting their financial independence, and reducing their vulnerability to unequal power dynamics through situations of abuse.

Like childcare, care for older adults is another substantial reason women drop out of the labour force, though this often occurs at a point when women should be reaching the peak of their careers. These women may lose out in terms of pension and social security benefits when they are older, risking vulnerability and poverty in older age.

Developing countries in Asia have experienced numerous changes in family structure and togetherness (in terms of proximity and co-residence) that accompany declines in family fertility. In general, Asian countries must work on formulating family policies that account for these changing patterns of life and demographic trends, taking into account a gender perspective to reduce the strain of ever-increasing responsibilities of work and caretaking.

The division of labor as it stands is unsustainable and hinders the inclusion of women, requiring a pro-egalitarian model for policy development that includes both government financial support and cultural engagement for greater sharing of responsibilities within family units.

Indigenous communities & social inclusion in Latin America

For the simple purpose of defining the population discussed hereafter, people of indigenous background (in the Latin American context) are those who descend from the population that inhabited the region of the Western hemisphere at the moment of conquest, encounter, or the establishment of state boundaries.

Data is sparse on the exact size of the indigenous population, and complicated by the necessity of self-identification, which itself requires individual consideration of their relationship to territory, common origins, linguistic and cultural correspondence to one or more of the more than 1000 indigenous communities which exist in Latin America. Official figures estimate approximately 45

million indigenous people in Latin America, though this figure is underestimated, on average, due to the desire to not self-identify for fear of stereotypes and discrimination.

Many Latin American nations both acknowledge indigenous communities and their rights to land, though normative acknowledgment aside there are major inequalities and exclusion disadvantaging indigenous families. Legislation generally aims to protect indigenous people and their rights, but exclusion and usurpation of ancestral lands often occurs. Likewise, poverty and lack of access to services is prevalent. This can sometimes be the result of Government policies which attempt to "normalize" and homogenize indigenous groups, which can, even with good intentions, disregard the heritage and culture of indigenous groups. Definitions of citizenship rarely take into account indigenous and other non-Western types of group identity membership.

Fragmentation of families can occur when indigenous lands are intersected by national boundaries and right to movement is not recognized. Similarly, to the experience of many African countries, fragmentation of families also occurs when working-age family members leave ancestral lands for work opportunities, which can leave behind other family members (especially children and older adults) and strain family functioning. High dependency rates for both children and older adults are prevalent throughout the region.

Girls and women are particularly vulnerable among indigenous groups. Discrimination, human trafficking, abuse, exploitation in the labour market, etc. are prevalent, despite their origins often in rural areas. What may account for this is the growing share of indigenous people who reside in urban areas. Still, life expectancy is lower among indigenous compared to the general population, with a gap of up to 13 years. Poor educational attainment limits opportunity to improve prospects and upward mobility.

Imperative for improving life prospects for indigenous groups is the improvement of their educational access and quality, though plans to do this must consult indigenous representatives for community trust and relevance. A gender perspective should also be used to analyze both the purposeful and unintentional consequences of policies pursued and to improve current strategies.

It is imperative to close the substantial public service gap between indigenous and non-indigenous groups. In addition, more research must be conducted to determine the desired medical care facilities and procedures by indigenous people, and how collaboration can expand between Western medical care and indigenous-preferred methods such that healthcare assistance will be utilized. More data is crucial for monitoring progress on social inclusion of indigenous peoples.

Social integration of migrants

Family-oriented migration and family reunification policies

Migrants, estimated at 244 million and refugees, estimated at 22.5 million, face lack of policies aiming at social integration and family reunification. Their sense of belonging into host societies is often impeded by restrictions to family unity, with some family members, particularly

grandparents and parents, often falsely regarded as obstacles to integration. Moral panic against minoritized migrants as comparatively "unproductive" newcomers, socially regressive, and/or economic and social burdens fuel these sentiments. They also contribute to a view of integration that it is not a mutual process, but one that involves adjustment only on the part of migrants. Such views are deployed to justify immigration policies which limit family accompaniment in migration.

In contrast to these views, having family members accompany migrants helps to improve economic, social, and health outcomes of migrants. A difference in policy for different migrant categories is often a complicating factor here. While highly skilled migrants are typically able to bring their families with them, lower skilled migrants (according to national migrant categories) are not. Additionally, while most countries allow citizens and permanent residents to bring their families, or specific family members, restrictions still often exist based on age, skill-level, and relationship to the sponsor.

Significant restrictions to the reunification of families and the prolonged separation families suffer often have a deleterious effect on immigrants, their families, and their host societies. Immigrants themselves experience profound psychological effects like isolation from their host societies. They have a greater difficulty in establishing a sense of belonging and involvement in their new homes. This may negatively impact the participation in civic life that aids the goal of immigrant integration. Prolonged familial separation may also exacerbate economic difficulties and deepen stress on families, particularly for females, due to changing relationship dynamics among family members and the additional burden of coordination of care for separated family members.

Restrictions for those immigrant families that are reunited must also be examined. Labour market access plays a significant role here. Racialized migrants and their families face particular challenges in the labor market in terms of securing work commensurate with their education and experience. They also face challenges in locating decent, affordable housing and contend with multiple forms of personal and systemic racism. Importantly, these experiences lead to alienation rather than facilitate social inclusion and integration. They also have demonstrable negative intergenerational effects.

Some good practices including modifications in immigration policies have been pursued in Canada. Canadian citizens and permanent residents are eligible to sponsor a spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, dependent children, parents, or grandparents, with applications for intimate partners and children prioritized. Recently, the Government of Canada took a positive step towards greater flexibility by removing the requirement that partners without children must have lived together for at least two years to be eligible for reunification.

An important family reunification policy that should be expanded is the removal of an undertaking of financial responsibility declaration to be signed by sponsors for their family members. No income requirements should exist for the sponsorship of partners and children.

Another important issue requiring attention is reduction of wait times for reunification permissions and time limits for refugees to sponsor their families. Moreover, investments should be made in

specific integration programmes which promote social inclusion by reducing inequitable access to health, education, and government services.

It is also important to embrace a more holistic definition of the family to include extended families consisting of (for example) cousins and grandparents. Requirements for sponsorship agreements need revisions as well. Finally, an intersectional lens should be used to analyse the intended and unintended consequences of policies in place and changes to them. A longitudinal, multigenerational research agenda should take this into account, and measure integration and inclusion beyond economic factors like labour market participation rates.

Refugees and social integration in Europe

The conceptual framework for immigrants' acculturation in a host country includes assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. Integration, considered to be the best approach is characterised as a two-way process and can only be successfully pursued by migrants when host societies are open and inclusive in orientation towards cultural diversity. Inclusiveness stipulates that refugees should be provided with equal access to housing, healthcare, education, training, and employment.

Refugees' level of integration and adaptation depends on several factors from pre-migration experiences and the departure process to post-arrival experiences and environment. Many refugees and asylum seekers reach host countries having experienced severe trauma including mental and physical torture and mass violence and genocide. Some witnessed the killing of family members and friends, sexual abuse, kidnapping of children, destruction and looting of personal property, starvation and lack of water and shelter.[2] Departure may also have come with life-threatening risks. Even if the arrival in a safe place may provide initial relief, frustration may develop as new problems emerge, such as family separation, language barriers, legal status, unemployment, homelessness, lack of access to education and healthcare.[2]

Displacement and post-migration experiences continue to impact health and opportunity for adaptation and integration. Research shows that asylum seekers present even higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression than other refugees, due to compounded post-migration experiences of delays in the application process, conflicts with immigration officials, denial of work permits, unemployment, and separation from families.[3]

Children and adolescents comprise as much as half the world's refugees, and high rates of depression, PTSD, and behavioral problems are reported up to two years following resettlement.[2] Most refugees are left in an uncertain state with little influence over their life choices. As a result, their legal status makes a significant difference in their quality of life. For children, access to

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[2] Craig, T., Jajua, P.M. & Warfa, N. (2009). Mental health care needs of refugees. Psychiatry, 8(9), 351-354.

[3] Stenmark, H.Catani, C., Neuner, F., Elbert, T, & Holen, A. (2013). Treating PTSD in refugees and asylum seekers within the general health care system. A randomized controlled multicenter study. Behaviour Research and Therapy, 51, 641-647.

education is a significant determinant of health and may influence access to many health and psychological services when provided or identified in schools.

To improve current policies facilitating social integration of refugees, they should focus around three key target areas of economic, educational, and health interventions. Among the most important is facilitating easier access to the labor market and employment. For adult refugees it is the most important factor in securing the integration of migrants into society as it enables interactions, increases opportunities for learning local language, and offers a pathway towards building a future and regaining confidence.[4] Educational access is likewise imperative for children and youth, as schools serve not only as high-interaction facilities but also socialization instruments, and can help facilitate other health services (including mental health) when needed.

A scaling-up of already effective strategies for mental health interventions for refugees is also desirable for improving integration outcomes. A possible solution could be the World Health Organization's mental health Gap Action Program (mhGAP). Its scalable nature and design complemented by *task-shifting* means that such t interventions are originally performed by specialists before being transferred to less-specialized workers. Interventions are short in duration, delivered over five weekly sessions, address several mental health systems, and are delivered by non-professional helpers or by peer-refugees in training.

Promoting the development of multidisciplinary professional teams of lawyers, social workers, and family counselors to provide systematic and coordinated services, as well as the promotion of cultural sensitivity when interacting with the different cultural groups will assist to this end. Loosening restrictions on family reunification and a speeding of the reunification application process and waiting periods and facilitating refugee's access to education and adequate employment commensurate with their experience are exceptionally important for improving integration efforts.

There is a disparity between current policies and the results of research on family migration, given that the many restrictions to family reunification for migrants do not align with the view that families' unity and integrity within host societies are a key component to successful integration. Moreover, restrictions on family reunification tend to disproportionately burden women, and deprive children of some of their most common caregivers (such as grandparents) as well the social roles family members fulfill.

Legal status, as well as the ability to participate in the process of crafting policies that determine priorities for their assistance, help to enhance integration of migrants and refugees. Improving migrants' participation helps to address an issue, Governments often face in determining what resources to invest in integration- an issue which is aggravated by a view of migrants as transient rather than integrating agents.

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[4] Phillimore, J. & Goodson, L. (2006). Problem or Opportunity? As Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Employment and Social Exclusion in Deprived Urban Areas. Urban Studies, 43(10),1715-1736.

Reducing barriers to participation and helping to align and transfer skills of migrants into the language and employment frameworks of host-country systems would aid integration, as well as reduce negative social perceptions about migrants that they do not work or do not contribute to host countries. Additionally, aligning the skills migrants bring so that they can be employed would likely help to reduce labor deficits that exist in many sectors of host countries. Programmes to help transfer migrant skills would be particularly advantageous to countries facing acute labor or demographic demands.

As important as employment opportunities are for adults in integration is education for children. It is relatively easy for children to learn host country languages compared to adults, which is another reason for the streamlining of family reunification as children help to integrate adults by way of their newly acquired cultural knowledge. This can increase reliance on children among adults to navigate host-country culture, such that increasing access to education for adults and families as units (particularly in language) would be beneficial for promoting integration alongside family unity. Access and participation in classes should likewise include older adults, so that they are not left on the margins of society.

Moreover, the benefits of migrants to societies should be better outlined and communicated, not only in the Global North, but in all societies. Global North societies need to specifically dismiss the notion that granting migrants and refugees permission to stay in their countries is a "favour" and that such countries do not reap any benefits in return. Promotion of the assets these groups serve to host societies should be expanded, with a number of participants pointing to social media campaigns as a possible avenue for this task.

Several changes to national and regional policies on access can be pursued. Systemic reform to remove residency requirements for access to education, healthcare, and other social services are the most important. Making accommodations in those areas can generate substantial benefits to integration and reduce the escalation of problems migrants and refugees face over the course of years spent without sufficient access to these resources.

It would be useful to examine in greater detail programmes where groups of national permanent residents and citizens, as well as community and religious organizations, can sponsor the resettlement of refugees, such as Canada's private sponsorship model. Reports by the Canadian government have shown that refugees arriving under private sponsorship are significantly more likely to arrive speaking English or French, though refugees sponsored privately are also much more likely to have personal connections already in the country, or high levels of social capital to be able to navigate finding of a sponsoring group or institution.[5]

In addition, there should be more government and private focus on intergenerational shared spaces and multi-generation housing. Pursuant to family reunification, intergenerational solidarity, and building stronger community ties for migrants and refugees, more multi-generation housing options like that of Germany's "*mehrgenerationenhäuser*" should be pursued.

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[5] Government of Canada- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Evaluations Division (2016). *Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP)*

Moreover, governments should emphasize addressing issues at the family level over the individual level for applicable issues. They underline not only the reduction in administrative burden such an emphasis could support, but also the potential for supporting family closeness and stability. Families often address many of the social and economic challenges they face within the family unit, such that institutions which foster more unified, stronger and resilient families have potential for cost and time savings by supporting the insular family unit, rather than aiding the integration process as an outside body.

There is a mismatch in discourse among countries about the importance of family with the typical targeting of programming for integration being directed toward individuals. Vulnerability is a process, not a permanent state of condition. People are not "born vulnerable," instead their circumstances contribute to their vulnerability. Processes of social categorization and access to resources in crisis situations both contribute to vulnerability. Moreover, vulnerability exists on a spectrum and varies by context, to the extent that even wealthier or more educated migrants and refugees can be rendered more vulnerable when they face limited access to host country resources or services.

There are many services that are most effective when targeting the family unit, especially in the area of support for migrant families. Stresses of migration can strain familial relationships that impair family's ability to act as a self-supportive group, such that interventions by social workers and psychologists should focus not only on individual family members but the unit itself. These interventions should be both sensitive to the cultural origins of migrants, as well as the challenges migrant families face in host countries.

Migration issues in China

Family policies in China reflect how the government interprets family needs, and they may be considered to be restricted by social ecology and economic status. Family policies have been, for the most part, responses to challenges generated by China's rapid economic and social transformation. A number of factors influence how family policies developed.

One of these factors are the economic reforms that began in China from 1978, first in rural and then urban areas. Rapid urbanization and industrialization led to social and economic transformation, in no small part due to the creation of opportunities and need for labor in industrial zones, which precipitated the largest migration in human history. It is estimated that up to one third of the total working population of China may be internal migrants. The majority of them work outside of their home provinces, with a lower share of the total working within their home province but in different counties.

Some obstacles to family reunification in migration are indirect, such as cost of housing, but others are more directly a result of policy. The residence registration system ("hokou") is of concern. Though reforms are ongoing, current policy means that in practice many Chinese citizens who work and reside in a different district than that of their registered birth cannot access public

services in their new district. Consequences of this system can be giving up land rights in exchange for applying to change one's registration to an urban area.

This is an obstacle to preserving family unity and has harsh implications for demographic trends. Not only do dependency ratios vary substantially between urban and rural areas due to "hokou" system, but at the family level this means large numbers of children (in the millions) and older persons are left behind in rural regions while working age adults leave to find work in urban centers. This separation strains family relationships and can have pernicious effects on child (and parental) psychological health due to attachment issues, and often require difficult arrangements whereby children and older adults, mostly grandparents, must take care of one another, and working adults send remittances with very infrequent trips home.

This is at odds with a country where family is considered of paramount importance, and a worrying trend when, according to statistics from the Chinese government in 2011, it was estimated that 93 per cent of the total population resided in family households.[6] While incomes and standards of living have risen substantially in the previous decades, this rise has disconnected families is concerning for the profound effects it has on well-being.

It is then important to relax residency requirements for access to public services, not only in Chinese administrative districts or provinces but in all countries. This serves numerous functions such as removing at least one barrier to the reunification of families, but also helping children to access schools and all residents to access healthcare. Another is to ensure that policies address discrimination against migrants in labor markets, education, financial services and other sector such that migrants are not excluded from integrating into host societies at both official and personal levels. It is also vital to promote in policy and public life a recognition of family in all its diverse forms. This should be pursued in tandem with a push for more awareness among policymakers on the linkages between family resiliency and family functions as conducive to creating peaceful and more inclusive societies.

Families, Housing, and Sustainable Communities: Focus on SDG 11

Urban population increases creates different challenges in more and less developed regions. Importantly, housing is not limited conceptually or practically in its impact as shelter: "…a decent place for a family to live becomes a platform for dignity and self-respect and a base for hope and improvement. A decent home allows people to take advantage of opportunities in education, health, and employment- the means to get ahead in our society. A decent home is the important beginning point for growth."[7]

Family well-being depends on the availability of housing and physical and other housing conditions, such as quality and safety. Affordability is also an important factor, as is the neighborhood and community.

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[6] National Bureau of Statistics of China. (NBSC, 2011). *China statistical yearbook 2011*

[7] Bratt, R. (2002). Housing and family well-being. *Housing Studies, 17,* 13 – 26.

The UNDP estimates that currently 828 million individuals live in substandard housing, which leads to insecurity, health concerns and stalling of life opportunities. A challenge is the commodification of housing, which has been tied to globalization. The 2016 study finds that housing prices have risen by over 50 per cent in the last five years.[8] This financialization of housing contradicts the notion that housing is a human right and is a fundamental challenge to inclusive societies. Housing being bought and sold for profit and treated as a means for the accumulation of wealth is the primary contributor here.

Another trend which contributes to inequality within and between societies is that while the standard of living in certain places has risen, it has also increased prices in those areas. This pushes out people with lower incomes, including young people, to the margins of society and increases resource stress, often along with reliance on family assistance for financial support. Inequality amongst residents rises substantially between those who own property in various areas, and those who are pushed into surrounding neighborhoods.

One of the solutions to this problem could be encouraging of homeownership by expanding options for viable alternatives for lower wealth individuals and families. Importantly, favoring of homeownership alone may increase inequality with families who cannot afford to buy homes in markets where the average price is far beyond their means are pushed out. Consequently, a variety of options, not just home ownership should be promoted. Moreover, housing policies must target the poorest families, but also those in the middle class of societies and at different stages of the life course, as housing needs differ substantially at different stages of life cycles.

Multigenerational housing with public spaces and services, where families and individuals of different age groups and of different needs live in the same buildings and complexes are a promising option being pursued by some countries, such as Germany. Investments in a variety of multigenerational housing arrangements through tax incentives, health benefits, housing, and care supplements are needed. Preferences for single family housing in regulations should be relaxed to allow for more flexibility in housing arrangements and increasing available supply for lower and middle-income families.

Importantly, new or updated developments and housing cannot become solely an object of profit, bought by investors who will not live in units as residents. Housing developments should integrate locals by policy and cater first to their interests, so as not to further push out those locals at high risk of displacement. Moreover, quality and accessible transportation networks for connecting housing with opportunities, both in increasing the mobility and access to services for those living on the margins of urban centers and for promoting environmental sustainability are vital.

Increasing access to housing is indispensable for creating more inclusive societies.
A focus on participation of marginalized groups in the planning process can start by creating forums in which planners and leaders interact with those who they represent, or of the community

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[8] Sassen, S. (2016). The Global City: Enabling Economic Intermediation and Bearing its Costs. *City and Community 15:* 97-108.

in which they are working. Ideas offered include bringing city officials and council members to communities where residents can interact with demand creating opportunities for residents to work alongside these officials in their communities. Measures for increasing inclusiveness and participation must be directed not only at public officials, but private business, developers, and employers.

Inclusive cities: trends and new initiatives

UNESCO estimates that by 2050, 66 per cent of the world population will live in cities. Already, cities today generate 80 per cent of GDP. Representatives of cities and municipalities play an important role by interacting directly with constituents, as service influencers and providers, as well as custodians of public spaces.

Inclusive cities follow several different tenets. They are governed by democratic institutions, feature transparency, promote accessibility, equal opportunities, and sustainable development. They are also responsive to the needs of different groups residing within them. A key component for inclusiveness of cities and intergenerational solidarity, can be measured along six dimensions: structure (geographic distance), association (frequency of social contact), affect (feelings of intimacy), consensus (in opinions, values, lifestyles), function (financial support) and norms (obligation towards other members).[9]

There are many cities with good practices in those areas. For example, the participatory budgeting program of Porto Alegre, Brazil, promotes citizen involvement to combat urban inequality, along with regular public assemblies on several key themes, like "public transportation", "health and social welfare." Medellin, Colombia, should be noted for its community engagement, representative governance, and violence suppression agenda that has contributed to a fourfold drop in intentional homicides in the city since 2000.

Oher cities include Amman, Jordan, for its Child Protection Initiative (CPI) project and provisions of educational and cultural activities and services to families specifically in disadvantaged areas. Another good practice example is that of District Jhelum in Pakistan, with its CBR initiative "Inclusive Community Development through Mainstreaming People with Disability in Social Mobilization" and local citizens' community boards. Indonesia's Network of Indonesian Mayors for Inclusive Cities in Indonesia, with 14 mayors signed to its charter, and the city of Yogyakarta's (Java) Committee for the Protection and Fulfillment of the Rights of People with Disabilities are likewise promising projects for increasing urban inclusivity. Finally, the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) of Johannesburg, South Africa, focused on increasing "development synergy" through road infrastructure improvement, community police forums, community health committees, and civic education is promising.

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[9] Silverstein, Merril, and Vern L. Bengtson. "Intergenerational Solidarity and the Structure of Adult Child-Parent Relationships in American Families." *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 2 (1997): 429-60.

There are several indicators for inclusion for cities to pay attention to. These metrics include an accessible built environment (buildings and city infrastructure; in public and private spheres), the degree of a positive social environment (attitudes, perceptions, and common knowledge) and affordability (financial accessibility) are the first three. The final four are geographical availability (inclusive policy projects), quality (of information, services), meaningful participation (direct engagement from targeted groups; affirmative action where needed; political and civic representation), and transparency and good governance.

It is important to increase public access and influence in the municipalities. Breaking down institutionalized barriers for those of disadvantaged backgrounds and engaging youth is vital. We need more comprehensive tools for families to become active participants within city management and the policymaking process, and arenas for public engagement, community building, and dialogue between residents and state follow these tenets of inclusive governance. Opportunities should also be created to allow for peer-learning, and support should be provided for sharing collaborative platforms and good practices.

It is especially important to include mayors and local government representatives in the process, for both the closeness of their constituencies and agendas, as well as the local connections and knowledge they can provide.

The use of housing cooperatives is a potential remedy for improving access to affordable housing and community for people with disabilities. For instance, the Bridge Meadows intergenerational living community in Portland, Oregon, USA is an example of this. Promotion of the virtues of such spaces should be directed toward developers and landlords, with an emphasis on creating flexible, inclusive living spaces for people of different and changing needs, whether due to disability, family arrangement, income, or point in the life cycle.

Housing cooperatives can also offer the benefit of increased responsiveness to residents' and community concerns and needs. Additionally, a participatory approach to management and public services is warranted. Training youth and marginalized groups in the management of public goods and services with a cooperatives' model could be sought. Cooperative model ensures participation and is more inclusive. In addition, increasing local socioeconomic diversity and community ties by accommodating mixed incomes could be considered. Housing cooperatives where rental price is based on income and supplemented by programme assistance is an option that helps to increase the resiliency of residents by giving space for adaptation to shocks in families' income or other circumstances without being pushed out of their homes.

Inclusive cities for persons with disabilities

Making cities more inclusive for people with disabilities is in line with the recognition of Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights- that of the right to marriage and family, as well as the clear mentioning of people with disabilities in the Sustainable Development Goals and The New Urban Agenda. It is imperative that the right of people with disabilities to have families not be forgotten in this framework.

The relationship between families and people with disabilities is complex. Attention must be paid not only to how we commonly describe disability (it is not only parents with children who have disabilities), but expand it to understand that there are also families where parents and other members have disabilities. Additionally, the way that social and economic systems have overlooked people with disabilities marginalizes them such that their right to have families is restricted. We must look at the environmental settings affecting legal regimes that determine education, employment, and housing arrangements for people with disabilities.

There are many projects already being pursued in cities that incorporate standards of accessibility and inclusion, but these standards must be clarified. The effective participation of people with disabilities in any aspect of life in any setting is the accessibility component of this. When looking at inclusion one must also focus on the environment, and the success generated under the New Urban Agenda comes with progress for people with disabilities partially because of increased accessibility in buildings, service programs, and information-accessibility technologies. These are tools that should be used to help guide cities' approaches.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) necessitates that we cannot focus solely on one or a particular range of disabilities. Far more must be addressed than sidewalk width or audible signs, for example. A sense of belonging and ability to live adequately with independence and equal participation requires that people with disabilities feel safe and accommodated in the areas in which they choose to live.

Housing for people with disabilities faces challenges beyond accommodation. Affordability is one issue that cannot be isolated from the accessibility of work to people with disabilities. Ensuring that not only the home itself is accessible, but services and the public domain around it are also important. Persons with disabilities must be accounted for in transportation, retail space and jobs, in surrounding areas. Cities are not simply places for walking or living, but they are places in which all people -people with disabilities included- can feel belonging. To do this, not just particular services or public goods, but *all* must be accessible. Making housing accessible must also be promoted as positive aspects for landlords, real estate officials, and developers as a way to increase client base.

Projects to date have often siloed addressing issues for people with disabilities into singular elements but must be instead addressed systematically. More should be done to involve persons with disabilities in creating the standards and practices of localities, both for the opportunity it provides for people with disabilities to be involved in the design of their communities, but as their participation in the development and implementation of new projects can increase those projects' efficacy.

Some cities with good practices for people with disabilities include Glasgow and Washington, D.C., though even there, people with disabilities are often still limited to certain aspects of city life. For instance, in terms of language accommodation, Brail may be used for transportation signs

and elevators, but if stores and retail spaces do not also make such accommodations, the accessibility of persons with disabilities to public life is limited.

In employment, the unequal accommodations between job sectors and functions can severely limit the jobs that people with disabilities are able to pursue or are assigned to do. This limits the capabilities of people with disabilities in employment but by extension to family and social life, education, political and cultural life. As a result, the development of the person is restricted. Importantly, adequate accommodations ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to utilize their potential for not only their own benefit but also for the enrichment of society. Accessibility is imperative for societal improvements and individual advancements alike for people with disabilities.

Too often persons with disabilities are separated from their families into places where they may receive more accommodations. However, that often happens at the expense of family unity and social inclusion. More should be done to facilitate inclusion within the communities in which people with disabilities already live.

Governments have largely failed to recognize the benefits that follow smaller investments in making localities more inclusive, as well as the psychological and developmental challenges that can befall the families and communities which people with disabilities are separated from. Programmes that enhance the ability of people with disabilities to be self-reliant within their communities should be pursued.

Inclusive urbanization for all generations & intergenerational solidarity

Engagement and dedication to improving the lives of all generations through intergenerational collaboration is very important as indicated by surveys showing that
all age groups desire more interactions with those from different age groups.

Intergenerational shared sites are not simply public places that all ages have access to. They are locations in which multiple generations participate together in activities that are both planned and unplanned, with interaction as opposed to isolation or living parallel lives. Examples of shared sites with mutual benefits include preschools where older adults can help children learn to read and act as informal mentors. Some evidence suggests such intergenerational arrangements help to foster development of social and emotional skills.

Intergenerational interactions have a positive impact on both the children and older adults, who both receive greater attention and benefit from the communication with each other. It also provides a platform for older adults to feel helpful and be needed, and reduce social isolation as networks related to employment, family and friends tend to diminish with age. Through intergenerational interactions positive social roles and affirmative relationships are reinforced.

At the macro level, one positive externality to the growth of similar arrangements is also cost savings and reduced stress on staff providing care. Though dedicated roles for staff must include

the building of relationships between the age groups, overall one-on-one time spent with children may be able to diminish slightly, and older adults can help identify where there are challenges that require intervention by staff in individual children, so care and accommodation can be more targeted to those who require it. Another benefit is in reducing ageism amongst the young and old alike, as affirmative relationships reduce negative stereotypes that perpetuate against each group. This may help diminish the perceived generational gap that can threaten social cohesion, particularly in contexts of perceived competition for limited resources between generations.

There are many successful examples of intergenerational shared sites. Singapore is a good example for national-level operations. Its taskforce on intergenerational bonding and multiple centers combining daytime child care and elder care provide a co-location of services that enable both spontaneous and planned intergenerational interactions resembling those that would occur within families. Programmes and other mechanisms for vertical expansion of social networks across age groups can be promoted along with efforts to increase horizontal integration along different demographic lines. Intergenerational shared sites are an advantageous option to pursue for this task.

Policy-makers and planners should be encouraged to charge local officials with creating agendas that identify barriers and enablers for advancing intergenerational shared sites and housing. An example that illustrates this requirement of tailoring agendas to local contexts is in zoning laws which vary between localities.

The advantage of intergenerational shared sites is that they can help to relieve growing demographic tensions in places with large and/or growing demographic and dependency ratios. Such arrangements can help to ease cost and time constraints, as well as improve flexibility and accessibility while generating new value with comparatively little new investment.

The pressure to move in a more sustainable direction for elder care among many advanced economies is intensifying, particularly in Europe and East Asia where shortages in the supply of caregivers, medical workers, and spaces for older adults in assistance facilities are prevalent. Strategies to address these issues must be innovative, practically applicable, cost-efficient, and inclusive.

The justification for elder care policies should be somewhat similar to that of childcare policies. Time and flexibility in schedules should be allocated to working-age adults through policy in order to maintain strong relationships and enable care from within the family unit or in place, with government and community support personnel when needed. This allows the preservation of close family units and can be more financially feasible for countries facing large demographic waves of older age adults. Further, grandparents often play a profound role in caring for young children and providing stability, especially in the absence of working-age adults.

Policies that help working-age adults to care for their older adult parents may also then reduce reliance on state support for child caregiving and help maintain independence and a higher quality of life for seniors. Aging in place, as it is sometimes referred to, is cheaper and can help address

accessibility issues limiting seniors' mobility and people with disabilities if support is provided for adapting physical spaces and care structures alike.

There are pilot projects in several cities of the Netherlands, and the United States which place college students in need of more affordable living options with seniors as roommates. Care and household chore arrangements can either be worked out by organizational policy or between the individual roommates. States should examine alternative programs like these for opportunities for expansion, particularly in the context of difficulties for securing affordable housing among all ages, as well as the distributional consequences to having the limited supply of caregivers available also tasked with care for older adults who have only minor care needs.

In terms of intra-generational support, there is a wide range of skills and abilities older adults contribute which can also be applied for support within their age group and to others. Care does not need to be solely through working-age adults but should be supported through flexible working and time-sharing arrangements between and among those who require care to different levels and share different capacities. Older adults can assist other older adults, both in different age groups and at different levels of physical ability and health. Social relationships than have the freedom to develop more naturally as peers than on the lines of a more transactive "caregiver" and "receiver" dynamic.

Inclusive cities for sustainable families guidelines

Guidelines for Focal points for cities developed by the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) emerged from proceedings at the UN Conference Habitat III (Quito, 2016), a Commission on Social Development high-level panel at UN headquarters 6 February 2017, World Cities Day observation at UNHQ in 2017, and a focus group to design the contents of the project in Venice 21 November 2017.

They aim to make cities more livable for families. In terms of housing, it is important to keep in mind that cities design should include all family situations and social groups, flexible urban and environmentally sustainable planning, and social services to meet every need.

In terms of new technologies, they should connect people in an effort to promote social inclusion. Here it's important to bridge the digital gap via training of seniors, professional carers and socially disadvantaged families.

Access to quality education is another important aspect of inclusive cities. Education for all and promotion of lifelong learning (SDG 4) should lead to the improvement of accessible and affordable childcare facilities in locations close to the residence or workplace of parents. Also, to be pursued is parenting education, participation of older persons in educational activities for the younger, intergenerational meeting places for cultural and leisure activities, youth integration practices as well as second chance schools and chances to reintegrate in society.

In terms of healthcare, campaigns promoting healthy habits and lifestyles, especially those targeted to prevent mental disorders and to meet the needs of senior citizens, setting the necessary structure to stimulate innovation and human relations in hospitals as well as medical attention of visitors and tourists are an important aspect of inclusive cities.

As for urban safety, creating a welcoming environment based on solidarity, mutual support and social interaction is vital to create a sense of community. Promotion of volunteering activities, especially among youth also helps in this area.

Creating of green areas and pollution reduction are vital for sustainable urbanisation. They can be promoted by introducing and expanding tax benefits for garden buildings, progressive reduction of pollution produced by public transportation, increase of charging points for electric cars and support for circular economy.

Access to well-designed and inclusive public transportation is another aspect of inclusive cities. Encouraging telecommuting has a potential to reduce the overcrowding of public transportation systems.

Access to affordable housing, especially for low-income families continues to be a challenge in many cities around the world. Here some solutions could be the promotion of smart co-housing solutions for different target groups with common use of services, efficient energy-saving and flexible buildings, and intergenerational arrangements to provide care for the older and cheaper housing for the younger generation.

Inclusive cities invest in leisure and tourism and foster active engagement in the volunteering sector to conserve and restore the cultural and touristic draw of the city, as well as tools to facilitate access to cultural activities through special offers and ad hoc exhibitions and locations for museums, theatres and other cultural entities.

The last aspect of inclusive cities in the Guidelines refers to establishing specific programs to recognize the value of unpaid work and care, and address the needs of families in vulnerable situations, including single-parent's families, large families, migrant families, etc. and social services to meet every need

A good practice for inclusive urbanisation from Barcelona assumes that quality of life should be at the heart of municipal planning at three levels: family, community, and city as a whole. Here five points are stressed to its fulfillment: visibility of families; coexistence and civic collaboration between families; activities in the city accessible to families; involvement, participation, and territorial link; and conciliation of timetables.

To these ends, it is important to empower citizens so that they can participate in local government decisions, including youth in school who should be able to interact with city councilors. Moreover, opportunities should be developed that bridge generations in the city and provide for those communities that lack opportunities, with places with high youth unemployment as an example.

So called "time banks", organizations where a diverse set of skills of individuals in a community can be tapped into by members on the basis of time contributed, have been growing in popularity in Barcelona.

Another important point is to support families throughout their life cycle, especially when they need to adapt to new situations characteristic of each life cycle and facilitate their capacity to care for, protect, and educate their children. Life cycle and family orientation, family caretakers, crisis and conflict of daily life, major vulnerability, and family diversity all contribute to the stability of the family in the transition between life cycle period sand must be accommodated for in city planning.

Another important angle contributing to intergenerational solidarity and civic responsibility is positive parenthood training which focuses on developing positive relationships between parents and children. City projects in Barcelona focus on family values and habits, families with young children (between 0-3), families with teenagers, and research on family time use.

In terms of family living conditions, there are several thematic areas of objectives to improve the living conditions of families in a situation of crisis. Attention is paid to habits of family health; the impact of socioeconomic crisis, housing, and occupation; cultural models and access to information; knowledge of the environment and environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

All these city efforts are aim at increasing family resiliency. The ability to manage conflict, in terms of economic and social stressors and life changes in the needs and stages of the life cycle are paramount to this model. The family is a connector for the implementation of different policies and the locus of individual and community development.

Cross-cutting issues

Resilience, vulnerability and social protection

In the context of the family, resilience is sometimes a misunderstood concept. Resilience could be understood as the ability to successfully navigate changes in challenging circumstances. Dispersion of families strongly restricts that ability as challenges must be confronted by individuals without the dynamic support that a family can provide. This extends back into the argument of how families are defined, as extended family members (particularly grandparents, but also aunts and uncles, cousins, etc.) may play important supportive roles to the functioning of families.

From a different perspective, conceptions of families are often so flexible as to warrant a consideration of "dependents" rather than children explicitly, due to the large number of families without children and adult children caring for ageing parents. Resilient families can be seen as well functioning families. Characterising families as 'strong' is also a vague concept adding into the complexity of such terms.

In terms of social protection and family benefits, they emerged independently of anti-poverty policies, though are now often conflated in many countries. However, family policies must be

distinct from anti-poverty policies, and though anti-poverty policies may help assist in reducing the vulnerability of families and their individual members in the short term, anti-poverty policies show little promise for increasing the long-term resilience of families as well as their integration and participation in societies.

There are many complications when family and anti-poverty policies are merged, including that anti-poverty policies can promote dependency on the individual(s) receiving benefits, and thresholds will need to be constantly re-evaluated based on individual and household earnings, as well as indirect challenges like natural disasters and economic shocks that intensify vulnerability. Importantly, family benefits should be apolitical in the best interest of creating resilient families, both as a matter of policy and as with families as a focal point for dealing with issues internally and efficiently.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is a prerequisite for inclusive societies with non-discrimination at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To this end, UNICEF Innocenti study on the impact of disability on school attendance in 15 developing countries was carried out in 2016. The study uses the Washington Group Short Set (WGSS) of disability-screening questions, covering five functional domains of seeing, hearing, mobility, self-care, and remembering, and collected information on educational status. Some of key findings from the study note that "(i) the average disability gap in school attendance stands at 30 per cent in primary and secondary schools in 15 countries; (ii) more than 85 per cent of disabled primary-age children who are out of school have never attended school."[10]

Relatively small changes in policies can have large impacts on both national and individual outcomes. The OECD's popular Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has some problems. Namely, it encourages the exclusion of students with intellectual or functional disabilities, giving countries that wish to perform well an incentive to adopt policies that remove students having difficulties in learning material from the mainstream education path. Policies adopted to separate students with intellectual or functional disabilities may need to be required in some individual cases, but the creation of parallel educational paths for students with and without disabilities often leads simply to their exclusion and capping of their potential rather than the goal of bringing learning of students with disabilities to parity.

Other things to pay attention to include the risk and vulnerability children and their families face. Education both impacts and is impacted by health, material risk behaviors, and material well-being. Evidence from longitudinal studies suggest that risk and vulnerability have larger impacts on future performance in school than even prior education. Compared simply to enrollment, risk and vulnerability a child's family faces may be an even better measure of the likelihood that child

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[10] Mizunoya, S., S. Mitra and I.Yamasaki (2016).Towards Inclusive Education:The impact of disability on school attendance in developing countries, Innocenti Working Paper No.2016-03,
UNICEF Office of Research, Florence.

will perform well in school. Improving the well-being of the child and his/her family and decreasing the vulnerability of that unit through policies which promote resiliency, integration, and inclusion are vital for assuring better school performance, completion, and long term positive outcomes that education is associated with.

More attention should be paid to the removal of structural barriers to enrollment that particularly impact families of lower economic status. School fees for enrollment or mandatory annual dues are one particular example. Restrictions to indigenous children and ethnic minority children to entering schools by way of explicit policies or district barriers must also be addressed. Access to quality education must not vary based on ethnic or minority status, as education provides a platform for the self-improvement of circumstances for children and can help to insulate against potential future vulnerability for already-disadvantaged groups.

Caution should be used in the use of proxy measures such as school attendance, time spent in the classroom, or place of residence for determining assistance to families. Use of these proxy measures can obscure a number of reasons why students may not be present in school beyond a necessity to work in the absence of financial support. Sexual or physical abuse, discrimination or marginalization in the classroom, dangerous facilities, need for caregiving at home, or isolation due to disability are all reasons that a child may not attend school, and why tying attendance to benefits that could potentially decrease vulnerability may negatively impact the child by forcing attendance in a hazardous environment. Decreasing vulnerability at home and ensuring a safer, more stable, and inclusive classroom environment are better methods for improving not only school attendance but learning capabilities.

Access to services in education facilities that promote attendance which may help to address risk among pupils is often overlooked. In places without widespread access, the provision of improved WASH (water, sanitation, hygiene) facilities in schools can make a substantial difference, particularly where conflict is prevalent. Schools may also serve as a platform for the delivery of mental health, nutrition, and other social services.

Another important point is the composition of classrooms and school diversity along with school access. Building more high-quality schools is not enough if access to them is limited to those with greater resources. Good educational services available only to a portion of the population or those located in an area of high vulnerability but with advantaged students coming from different areas are no solution. Access should be prioritized for those who are more vulnerable against those that have numerous other options but simply choose those new schools.

Additionally, simply having more ethnically diverse classrooms does not make them more inclusive. Social inequalities are likely to prevail there because problems like poverty and vulnerability extend into the classroom, and fundamental differences in access to resources including social capital can compound in classrooms that are more populated by students of disadvantaged backgrounds. A further example of this complexity is homeless youth.

Consequently, policies should be pursued that allow access to services including education regardless of residential status for the most vulnerable students. This is a priority for homeless children and the large population of children without formal residence status, or who live in arrangements outside of their registered home.

The issue of adapting school curricula for students with intellectual disabilities only further marginalizes them from the classroom and society by way of decreased competencies compared to mainstream students and, in the long run, limited labor market opportunities.

Moreover, sometimes, without minor accommodations students with disabilities can fall behind their peers, so small changes in required material or teaching method can help such students to progress. There is general agreement, however, that more must be done to help accommodate students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms so that they are not isolated into classrooms from peers. The practice of isolating students with disabilities is inconsistent with the goal of inclusive societies, and in practice may harm the potential of both mainstreamed students and those with disabilities while limiting their future opportunities to contribute to the society.

Research

The SDGs&Families Global Research Project has aimed to show how family policies can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, while trying to reflect pragmatic processes and procedures to assess: how family policies work to affect different social progress goals (as defined in the SDGs) in different parts of the world; how the actions of non-government actors working in support of families contribute to the issue; and how family attributes at household or national level impact on the effectiveness of the previously identified family interventions.

It is urgent to move the discourse from where we want to go, to how to get there, regarding the 2030 Agenda. The project's view of the family has been taken as a conduit to social change, as the fundamental unit of society, the smallest social unit and as the foundation in where we build everything else, including all of our social interaction. Also, despite the politicization of the family, between 60 to 70 per cent of national investment is going onto policies that face the family. So, the family unit is the main vehicle where we intervene mostly when we want to intervene for children and their dependence, when we want to support labour market access, when we want to encourage health and when we want to reduce violence.

The results on SDG 3, Families and Health research proved that health interventions at family level showed improvements in patients' and their families' knowledge about the illness; increased commitment for healthy life changes -diet, weight management, physical exercise; improved family relations and support. For instance, the interventions increased parental involvement in management of illness; improved family functioning and reduced adolescent suicidality and other psychiatric symptoms.

In terms of SDG16 targets on ending violence against women, family related policies matter. There are large gaps in research on the prevalence of the different forms of interpersonal violence at a global level. Even in the West, poor data exists on maltreatment of children. In terms of effectiveness of different family related strategies, there is available some of the better data in relation to prevention strategies relating to domestic and family violence, but at the population level there is poor data on what actually works to prevent violence against children, including the effectiveness of some of the strategies that the literature says might be effective. There is a need of scale, measure and evaluate strategies to see whether they work when implemented at a whole of population level such as: parenting, respectful relationship education and prevention strategies directed at children who are at risk of violence and abuse.

Concerning SDG5, family policies can contribute to gender equality. Here, family leave policies play an important role in terms of the impact of parental leave on women's labour force behaviour and income and what encourages men to take parental leave. Although there has been a gradual expansion of parental leaves with longer and more generous coverages, they do not necessarily promote gender equality in the labour market. On the other hand, the leave reserved for fathers is a promising scheme to encourage them to take leave from work. The results have shown that gender equality in the public sphere can never be achieved unless unpaid domestic and care work is shared more equality in the public sphere. Future family policies should give more attention to the contradictory demand that they are trying to fulfil, they must ensure the well-being of children while making sure that there is progress in achieving greater equality between men and women.

The findings of research on SDG 8 and Families and Youth indicated the need of more evidence on the role of family in promoting youth employment and school to work transition, the importance to make policy interventions to strengthen families and avoid intergenerational transmission of weak labour market attachment. Other issue requiring more attention related to better assistance for parents in finding decent work. Inclusion of youth in family policies also needs more attention as part of comprehensive sustainable development strategies.