



Oceania Expert Group Meeting in preparation for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of Family, 2024

The Intertwined Impact of Technological Transformation and Climate Change on Families in Oceania: Navigating the Policy Response

Brisbane, Australia, 30-31 May 2024

Introduction

The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of Qatar Foundation, in partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), are organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “The Intertwined Impact of Technological Transformation and Climate Change on Families in Oceania: Navigating the Policy Response”, which will be held in Brisbane, Australia, 30-31 May 2023. This meeting marks a pivotal moment in preparing for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30), aiming to analyze the impact of global megatrends, focusing on technology and climate change on familial dynamics in Oceania region, with the emphasis of exploring the policy implications.

The EGM is being organized and co-hosted with the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR), The University of Queensland. ISSR is one of Australia’s foremost leaders in equity and sustainable futures, undertaking solution-focused social science research and evaluation to achieve positive social impact in a changing environment.

Background

DIFI with the support from DESA is at the forefront of international efforts to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30). This global initiative culminates in the IYF+30 Conference in Doha, scheduled for October 29-31, 2024.

This EGM is building upon the IYF+30 preparatory regional EGMs focused on Arab, African, Asian and Latin American families, organized by DIFI, DESA, and the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD).

Objectives

The Oceania EGM seeks to explore the complex relationship between technological advancements, climate change, and family structures in Oceania. By gathering esteemed regional experts and practitioners, the meeting aims to generate insightful recommendations to inform policies that promote holistic well-being amidst emerging megatrends, focusing on technology and climate change.

Thematic background

In June 2020, an EGM organized by the Focal Point on the Family, UNDESA identified four key mega-trends impacting families in the lead-up to the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30). These trends are:

Technological Changes: Advancements in technology impact families in diverse ways. Fertility and assistive reproductive technologies are changing family formation, while increased telecommuting due to the pandemic has redefined learning, work, and family dynamics, with potential long-term effects on roles and responsibilities.

Demographic Trends: Family structures are evolving globally. While couples with children still represent the majority of households, single-female-headed households are increasing. Age of marriage rises, and child marriage remains a challenge. Additionally, aging populations and declining fertility rates present challenges for families and economies.

Migration and Urbanization: Migration, often driven by the desire to improve family well-being, necessitates addressing factors like access to well-paid jobs, food, healthcare, and education. Urbanization, as a social process, redefines family roles, responsibilities, and structures, impacting domestic dynamics, location choices, and work arrangements.

Climate Change: Climate change presents multifaceted challenges for families. Droughts, floods, and extreme weather events negatively impact food security and displace families due to resource scarcity and humanitarian crises. This results in lack of adequate shelter, food, and education, particularly for children.

These identified trends highlight the need for comprehensive and multifaceted approaches to address the evolving challenges impacting families across the globe.

EGM Thematic Focus

The Brisbane Expert Group Meeting will center around the megatrends of technology and climate change, exploring its profound impact on family and community dynamics, interlinkages between the megatrends, and policy responses.

It recognizes the place of the family within a socio-ecological conceptualization, capturing the influence of the individual, the family, community, and structural and environment contexts on people's lives. It also recognizes that some groups within society are more impacted than others and seeks to challenge entrenched and intergenerational disadvantage.

Sessions:

Empowering Families and Communities in a Changing World

This plenary session will set the scene for the EGM and explore the unique interlinkages between family, communities, technology, and climate change within the specific context of the region. It will examine current evidence, knowledge gaps, and start to frame potential solutions for how technology can bridge digital divides within families and communities, while also empowering climate action.

Focused Sessions:

Four focused sessions will consider the themes in more depth, with short presentations and facilitated discussion across the course of the EGM.

- ***Digital Identities and Divides: Bridging Gaps***
This session explores digital identities, inclusion and exclusion, and how technology both unites and divides families, addressing issues such as access, screen time, and digital parenting, along with how digital divides within society and across cultures might be broken down.
- ***Digital Literacy, AI & the Future: Navigating the Landscape for Families and Communities***
This session examines the centrality of media and digital literacy to families and communities and the intersection of AI and society, through ethical considerations of artificial intelligence, privacy concerns, algorithmic bias, the impact of advertising on digital media platforms on communities and cultures.
- ***Raising Climate Warriors: Cultivating Eco-Conscious Families & Communities***
This session will explore the practical tools families can adopt for sustainable behaviors in their daily lives, focusing on green parenting, eco-anxiety management, community action, and intergenerational climate education, as well as system-level levers for change.
- ***Climate Change & Vulnerabilities: Building Resilience Together***
This session looks at the prioritization of the specific needs and challenges faced by families and communities most vulnerable to climate change, with a focus on place and intersectionality, compounding crises, and opportunities to innovate change across system levels.

A Sustainable Future? Preparing Policy Responses to Technological and Climate Changes

This final session will promote dialogue for participants to share experiences, best practices, and challenges related to climate change, technology, and their impact on families and communities in the region to set forth an agenda for the creation of a sustainable future. Key topics will be:

- Expert reflections on the EGM plenary and focused session discussions.

- Best practices for fostering systemic change to build resilience and well-being in families and communities facing these challenges.
- Collaboration strategies and concrete policy recommendations and responses for advocacy efforts with a regional perspective.

Structure

Governance and Flow:

- The first session will be in a plenary format, to set the scene for the EGM, with four 15-minute presentations.
- This will be followed by four focused discussion sessions, which will start with two introductory presentations (15-minutes each) to frame questions for the following discussion, followed by an open panel discussion with all participants.
- There will be two recommendations sessions, which will be in an open dialogue format and moderated to draw together diverse perspectives and concrete policy recommendations.

Moderation: Designated moderators will oversee sessions, guiding group discussions and ensuring active participation from all attendees. Rapporteurs will summarise key points and compile recommendations generated during sessions.

Interactive Approach: Discussions and brainstorming will serve as the primary methods of engagement, fostering dynamic exchanges of ideas and perspectives among participants. The meeting aims to cultivate an inclusive atmosphere conducive to open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.

Outcomes

- Participating experts will prepare 15-minutes presentations as per abstracts submitted. Presentations should include current evidence, knowledge gaps, and frame questions for the discussions that follow (relevant examples of presentations can be found on the following link: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/meetings-events/impact-of-covid-19.html>).
- Participating experts are invited to submit written papers, ranging from 3 to 7 pages in length, post event. These papers can delve into pertinent issues outlined and offer insightful policy recommendations. Expert papers will thoroughly address agenda topics, elucidating their significance, backed by both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Written papers should be submitted to Ahmed M. Aref aaref@qf.org.qa by 30 June 2024 (relevant examples of papers can be found on the following link: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/meetings-events/impact-of-covid-19.html>).
- Following the EGM, DESA will compile a comprehensive report summarizing discussions and presenting policy recommendations.

- Both the report and the experts' presentations and papers will be made publicly available on the DESA website, fostering transparency and wider dissemination of insights.
- Relevant outcomes will be used in the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on IYF+30.

Logistical Details

- **Venue:** The meeting is scheduled to take place in-person at [UQ Brisbane City](#), 308 Queen Street, Brisbane CBD, from 30th to 31st May 2024.
- **Attendance:** Attendance is primarily in-person, but hybrid online facilities will be provided for some participants.
- **Recording and photography:** Sessions will be recorded to support preparation of the EGM report. Photographs will be taken throughout the event. Please advise an ISSR staff member if you do not consent to being photographed.
- **Language:** English will serve as the official working language of the meeting.
- **Travel and Accommodation:** DIFI (Doha International Family Institute) are covering expenses related to travel, accommodation, and local transportation for participating experts. Travel and accommodation queries should be submitted to Ghazal Othman gothman@qf.org.qa.
- **Catering:** Morning Tea and Lunch will be provided to in-person participants on 30 and 31 May; tea, coffee and water will be available throughout both days. An Expert Group Meeting Dinner at [Patina, Customs House](#), 399 Queen Street, Brisbane, will be held on Thursday 30 May for those attending (dinner attendance and dietary requirements must be confirmed by **21 May**).

Agenda

Day 1 : Thursday 30 May

TIME	SESSION
9:30	Arrival
9:45-	Welcome
10:15	Acknowledgement of Country (ISSR) Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISSR • DIFI • DESA
10:15-	Scene setting: Empowering Families and Communities in a Changing World
11:30	
11:30-	Morning Tea and Networking
12:00	
12:00-	Digital Identities and Divides: Bridging Gaps
13:15	
13:15-	Lunch Break
14:15	
14:15-	Digital Literacy, AI & the Future: Navigating the Landscape for Families and Communities
15:30	
15:30-	A Sustainable Future? Preparing Policy Responses to Technological and Climate Changes [Recommendations Session 1]
16:45	
16:45	Day 1 [END]
18:00-	Expert Group Meeting Dinner (Patina, Customs House)
20:00	

Day 2 : Friday 31 May

TIME	SESSION
08:45	Arrival
09:00-9:15	Welcome Acknowledgement of Country (ISSR)
9:15- 10:30	Raising Climate Warriors: Cultivating Eco-Conscious Families and Communities
10:30- 10:45	Morning Tea
10:45- 12:00	Climate Change & Vulnerabilities: Building Resilience Together
12:00- 13:00	Lunch
13:00- 14:00	A Sustainable Future? Preparing Policy Responses to Technological and Climate Changes [Recommendations Session 2]
14:00- 14:30	Summing Up Next steps
14:30	Day 2 [END]