

NEWSLETTER

Jan 2024 Issue



Impact of Demographic Changes on Families and Population Trends

1- Executive Director, Dr. Sharifa Noaman Al-Emadi's Message

Dear Readers,

Demographic transformations have a major impact on the population growth movement in any society, this transformation naturally affects the state of families, and under its umbrella falls enormous issues and problems, from the determinants of fertility to early childhood development to parenting, and the responsibility of both genders, all the way to the transmission of poverty between generations and the process of social integration for young people. This year has a certain particularity as the world population has reached 8 billion people, setting a record, and it is expected to reach 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 in 2100, which puts the world before serious challenges, the most important of which are the environment, urban sustainability, and climate factors.



It is no secret to anyone that population increase is a double-edged sword, as it increases youth energy in society, but in return, it makes it more difficult for families to face the challenges of securing the needs of adolescents and children in terms of medicine, education, and food.

DIFI's research on "Social Determinants of Fertility in Qatar", shows that the total fertility rate of Qatari women according to the data of the Planning and Statistics Authority during the last two decades has declined from 5.3 in 1986 to 4.6 in 1997, then to 2.9 in 2017.

The causes of this decline were attributed to several factors, including personal and structural factors related to the decline in marriage and the high divorce rates, as well as economic, educational and health factors.

DIFI thus recommends development and implementation of policies that promote work - family balance, as well as the provision of policies providing a kind of financial support for marriage and childbearing, while noting the importance of raising awareness on fertility rates.

People who suffer from chronic poverty remain poor for a long period of time. As a result, poverty may be passed on from generation to generation, contributing to malnutrition, inadequate health care, and lack of opportunities.

On the other hand, the basics of children's emotional, intellectual, social, and physical development play the greatest challenge for parents, and with the great challenges facing families, children's growth and safety have become at risk due to poverty, disease, malnutrition, civil conflicts and the collapse of traditional structures in societies.

In another context, education and parenting program initiatives have become insufficient, despite the great importance they play, from enhancing parental behaviors and practices, to developing positive discipline techniques, learning child development skills, promoting positive interactions between parents and children, and identifying and using community services and support.

With the significant increase in population in many countries of the world, we have started hearing the term "social inclusion of youth," which is the process through which young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion obtain the opportunity and resources to fully participate in economic, social, and cultural life and enjoy a standard of living and well-being. In addition, the social inclusion of youth ensures greater participation of vulnerable groups and individuals in decision-making that affects their lives, as well as their access to their basic rights.

On the other hand, taking care of the elderly and providing them with the necessary care is a great responsibility. Although a rewarding experience, family caregiving can be a difficult, sometimes thankless, and expensive task. For this reason, sick, frail and disabled individuals as well as the elderly suffer when family caregivers are unhealthy and unsupported.

These major topics, impacting the threads of our societies and more will be discussed by the global conference commemorating the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family, which will be organized by the Doha International Family Institute in October this year.

In another context, there is a close link between wars and demographic changes, as they refer to changes in the demographic composition of society and spread shifts in the levels of birth and death, as well as in population migration, the dispersal of youth, the spread of poverty, and the lack of the minimum care and support that the elderly and children should receive.

Thus, we cannot end our present message except by sending a message of love and reverence to the people of Palestine and Gaza. The Doha International Family Institute is praying for the safety and peace of families who are suffering from the brutal attacks.

Dr. Sharifa Noaman Al-Emadi
Executive Director
Doha International Family Institute

2- International Studies

How Individual Microlevel Family Decisions Impact Macrolevel Population Trends and Demographics?

This study done by the University of California in Los Angeles, and published in 2014, aims to understand how individual microlevel decisions about childbearing, marriage and partnering, geographic mobility, and behaviors that influence health and longevity aggregate to macrolevel population trends and differentials in fertility, mortality, and migration.

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Mothers Left without Fathers: Poverty and Single Parenthood in China

Published in 2020, this article endeavors to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by single mothers in China. With most single-parent families in the country being led by women, this demographic has become one of the swiftly growing groups experiencing poverty. The article sheds light on the influence of Chinese familism culture on the struggles of single mothers and advocates for the integration of a gender perspective into the frameworks of family policy and other pertinent social policies in China.

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Exploring Factors Influencing the Rise in Marriage Age: A Focus on Policy Considerations

The rise in the average age of marriage holds particular significance as an indicator influencing the postponement of family formation and a decline in fertility rates. In this 2023 publication, conducted by the University of Tehran, in Iran, the findings highlight key factors impacting marriage age, such as diminishing religious convictions, the empowerment of women, the increased prevalence of friendships between genders before marriage, and concerns related to securing suitable housing. The paper proposes policy programs at the micro level aimed at fostering a positive attitude towards marriage, along with macro-level welfare initiatives implemented by governments.

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Palestine – A Land with A People: Observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People November 29, 2023

The annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (Solidarity Day) has been a tradition since 1978, occurring on November 29th to coincide with the anniversary of the adoption of the UNGA Palestine partition resolution in 1947. This year, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) will host a Special Meeting to honor the occasion in the ECOSOC Chamber at UNHQ in New York. Simultaneously, an exhibit titled "Palestine – A Land with A People" will be inaugurated on November 29th at UNHQ in the Visitors' Lobby, commemorating the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe). The exhibit features photographs, videos, and artwork portraying various stages of the Palestinian journey before, during, and after the Nakba.

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3- Regional Studies

The Dual Role of Marriage in Family Dynamics and Population Growth in the Arab Countries

Published in 2016, a study on population changes in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. The chapter dedicated to Arab countries specifically delves into the dual impact of changes in nuptiality. On one hand, these changes open up various new opportunities for individuals in the region; on the other hand, they pose new challenges, as it accelerates the decline in fertility and contributes to a more rapid slowdown in population growth.

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Child Marriage Practices Among Syrian Conflict-Affected Populations in Lebanon

Published in 2017, this study aimed to collect qualitative data on the factors influencing child marriage practices among Syrian refugees in the Al Marj area of the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, a predominant settlement for Syrian refugees. The objective was to formulate recommendations for alleviating the root causes and repercussions of child marriage based on the research findings. The study proposes intervention recommendations emphasizing that to be effective, interventions should be approached simultaneously and delivered with cultural sensitivity and practicality.

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4- Local News

Consanguineous Marriage and Hereditary Blood Diseases in Qatar: Exploring the Impact

This study published in 2023, investigates the prevalence and perception of consanguineous marriage among the Qatari population, given the high rates of hereditary blood diseases resulting from consanguineous marriages in the Arab community. The prevalence of consanguineous marriage among couples was 62.6%, with 81.7% marrying first cousins. Those with positive perceptions tended to be older, married, with lower education and higher income levels, lacking awareness of certain genetic conditions, and married to a relative. The findings emphasize the need for community-based campaigns to increase awareness about the issue and its potential impact.

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Qatar's Supreme Judiciary Council Establishes Specialized Department for Domestic Violence Cases

The Supreme Judiciary Council has designated a department to address cases of domestic violence, demonstrating its commitment to establishing specialized divisions for specific crime categories. The Domestic Violence Department within the Primary Criminal Court stands as one of the pioneering specialized divisions in the region. This department exclusively handles misdemeanors occurring within the confines of small family units, reflecting the council's emphasis on addressing this foundational aspect for the community.

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5- DIFI News

The Doha International Family Institute, in cooperation with the Permanent Delegation of the State of Qatar to the United Nations in Geneva, and the Ministry of Social Development and Family organized a side event in Geneva.



The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), in partnership with the Qatar Mission to the UN Office in Geneva and the Ministry of Social Development and Family, organized a high-level side-event on "Family Protection in the Context of the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: From Words to Actions" in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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The Doha International Family Institute, in cooperation with the College of Islamic Studies at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, organized a forum on "Family and Values in a Changing World", in the presence of experts, academics, researchers, policy makers, and NGOs



The "Family and Values in a Changing World" forum, organized by the Doha International Family Institute in partnership with the College of Islamic Studies at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, and held on December 6 and 7, 2023. The event brought together experts, academics, researchers, policymakers, and representatives from civil society institutions. Topics of discussion were: Family values resulting from wars and conflicts, constant Well-Being, and variable standards in Sharia and social studies and challenges of preserving values and absorbing change in light of globalization and cultural openness, the identity of the Muslim family between the criteria of religion, geography and global citizenship, the role of civil society in supporting the family in Muslim and non-Muslim communities, the role of policies and law in the social inclusion and exclusion of migrant families, and the forum was concluded with an open discussion on the priorities of the research agenda and recommendations for different participants.

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The Center for Gulf Studies at Qatar University organized the 8th annual international interdisciplinary conference entitled "Gulf Families: Continuity and Change" in collaboration with the Doha International Family Institute. This conference aims to advance the body of knowledge about the factors, directions, and magnitudes of change in Gulf families from an interdisciplinary perspective and to bridge a gap in our understanding of Gulf families. The opening remarks were given by Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Al Kaabi, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Qatar University, and Dr. Khalid Al-Naama, Director of Family Research and Policy at Doha International Family Institute.

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6- Video

This video, produced by DW News, and published in December 2022, examines how different parts of the world are dealing with the unique challenges arising from demographic changes. It delves into the necessary policies needed to ensure stability and emphasizes actions we can take to safeguard both our economic and ecological future.



In this video, Al Jazeera English conducts an interview with a Palestinian youth in her twenties from Gaza, revealing her struggles after the loss of her family members during the war.

8- Spotlight

We shed light on this month newsletter on the journey that led to the initiation of the IYF celebrations.

In 2020, we conducted a "Pilot Study" on 7 schools in Qatar (4 Qatar Foundation private schools, 1 other non-Qatar Foundation private school) and 2 public schools in Qatar. DIFI implemented a survey on 1157 participants pre-COVID-19 and 442 during COVID-19 between the ages of 12-15.

We presented our findings to policy makers as well as parents and school representatives, which was followed by workshops for parents, activities for the students that engages their families and we conducted a questionnaire to assess the intervention.

In 2022-2023, we partnered with the MoEHE and conducted a quantitative study with 76 public schools in Qatar – a sample of 9046 between the ages of 10-18. We then presented the findings to the policymakers in Qatar.

In 2023, Tanshi'a was born – a nationally implemented program on adolescent wellbeing in Qatar, led by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

If we invest in the health of children and youth, it's an investment in their future and the future of society. By providing necessary support and proper guidance, we can build a strong and promising generation that enjoys health and happiness.