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GOVERNANCE FOR THE FAMILY

FAMILY SUSTAINABLE CITIES: THE CASE OF MEXICO

Abstract

Family-oriented public policies and the family perspective are possible when governments, at the national and subnational levels, dedicate efforts and resources together with civil society organizations. In Mexico, various subnational, state and municipal governments are implementing public policies oriented towards the family and the family perspective with a high degree of collaboration with citizen organizations. This paper describes two good practices, both from civil society organizations, with the Family Governance Model, and from governments at the local level, with the Family Sustainable Cities project, in the implementation of family-oriented policies and the family perspective. family. The link between these two practices is an adherence document, the Venice Declaration, which generates a commitment on the part of the politicians who head the municipal governments.

Keywords: *good practices, public policies, mainstreaming, governance, sustainable development, Sustainable Development Goals, sustainable cities, family-oriented policies, family perspective.*

Introduction

Family-oriented public policies and a family perspective are possible when governments, at the national and subnational levels, combine efforts and resources with citizen organizations. It is up to the governments, and the politicians who lead them, to make the decision, allocate resources and organize those responsible for designing and implementing those family policies and perspectives. However, due to their organizational logic and workload, governments require support, encouragement, support and a combination of resources to carry out their task. This need can be met by organized citizenship, which contributes those resources to make possible family-oriented public policies and the family perspective in all other policies.

In Mexico, various subnational, state and municipal governments are implementing public policies oriented towards the family and the family perspective with a high degree of collaboration with citizen organizations. This collaboration has given rise to two good practices that civil society organizations and governments can study to consider in their activities.

This paper describes two good Mexican practices, both from civil society organizations, with the Family Governance Model, and from governments at the local level, with the Family-Friendly Sustainable Cities project, in the implementation of family- and community-oriented policies. family perspective. On the one hand, the Family Governance Model describes a proposal for civil society organizations to combine knowledge, skills and capacities to include the family in the decision-making cycle of public policies. On the other hand, the Family Sustainable Cities project shows how training is the first step to understand the importance of including the family in the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to achieve the mainstreaming of a family perspective. The link between these two practices is an adherence document, the Venice Declaration, which generates a commitment on the part of the politicians who head the municipal governments.

The description of these good practices, their link and the proposed theoretical models come from the experience of the Institute for Family Policy Analysis (IAPF, for its acronym in Spanish), as a pivotal actor in both models. The main source of information used for this description is the IAPF document collection, including studies, and reports. Likewise, the descriptions contained consider public documents and speeches made by the political actors of the municipal governments involved.

In addition to this introduction, the document contains two parts and a conclusion section. The first part develops the basic theoretical framework of both good practices. The second part describes the Family Governance Model and the Family Sustainable Cities project as good practices of both civil society and city governments.

Family Perspective, Sustainable Development and Governance

The Family Governance Model and the Family Sustainable Cities project are based on the practical application of concepts and theories related to sustainable development, new governance, public policies, family-oriented public policies and the family perspective. Each of these practical concepts come from Donati's (2013) literature review on family sustainability; Omss (1984), Valdez (2011) and IAPF (2021), in matters of family perspective; Aguilar (2011), Merino (2013), Cejudo (2009, 2017), Cejudo and Michel (2016), on issues of public policy and governance.

Regarding sustainable development, the work of good practices takes up the classic definition: sustainable development is development that implies responsible consumption of current resources without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In this sense, Donati (2013) states that family sustainability refers to the need for society to renew the family as a source of social capital. Society receives social resources from families, but does not renew them. In the family, new citizens are formed, members of society; in it affective needs, care and access to resources for the personal and community development of its members are met. To maintain the development of families, governments and other social actors can carry out two activities to strengthen families through cohesion: bonding and bridging. To maintain the sustainability of society's development, it must allocate part of its resources to family strengthening.

Theodora Omss (1984) states that public policies of all kinds can include a family perspective. Public policies with a family perspective have the potential to make it more efficient and effective. The central approach of the Omss proposal is that there is a reflexive influence between public policies and family dynamics. The author also proposes six specific actions to implement the family perspective in public policies: sensitivity to family patterns; understanding family; appreciation of family dynamics; evaluation of family impact and; family-oriented professional training. On her part, Valdez (2011) states that the family perspective implies that government programs recognize, support, protect and promote the family.

Governance, as government action that includes many social actors in the conduct of society and, in this case, in public policies. The concept of governance used is that of Aguilar (2006) "the premise that the central or sole agent of social management is the State" since "the number and importance of political, economic and social, internal or external actors grows. National and local communities, which are powerful, productive, and autonomous", and that "the number and importance of marginalized and poor social sectors grows, which with greater political independence and self-organization demand services and opportunities".

Description of good practices

This section of the paper will develop a theoretical and empirical description of each of the good practices and the Venice Declaration as a link. In the first section of the section, the paper describes the Family Governance Model, as a strategy for combining resources from a wide variety of actors with the purpose of including an issue on the public agenda and promoting public policy decision-making. . In the second part of the section, the paper describes the Sustainable Family Cities project as a series of public policy actions that seek, first, that decision makers acquire the basic knowledge to implement family-oriented public policies and the family perspective mainstreaming.

Family Governance Model

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

- (i) The resources that each social actor is capable of contributing are: knowledge, skills and abilities. Theoretically, knowledge and skills are part of the necessary elements to generate competencies in an individual with respect to a specific subject. As for the capabilities sub-element, the work presents it as the executive skills provided by the social actors involved in the model to execute a project.
- (ii) The interrelation is explained as the combination of interventions that generate new knowledge, skills and abilities.
- (iii) The public interest is the value that the social actors involved jointly pursue; in this particular case, the public value is the family.

In March 2019, the IAPF began working as a civil society organization by providing public policy training to local legislators, civil society leaders, and political party leaders. Likewise, the Institute implemented the Diploma of Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents (DIPINNA). In addition, the IAPF developed a legislative proposal to include the family perspective in the development plans of state governments.

In October of this year, the IAPF organized the First Family Policy Congress. With financial support from businessmen in a personal capacity and a network of contacts developed by the general director of the institute and the current linkage area, this congress combined content produced by universities with family study programs, presidents of the legislative

commissions of families in five states, directors of the five municipal family institutes that existed in the country, the former president of the national system of family development, and leaders of organizations that made up a coalition for the family.

In October 2019, the Local Congress of the state of Querétaro approved to include in its Planning Law that the state and municipal governments would include the family perspective in their plans and programs. This legislative effort was replicated in various states of Mexico. In the state of Querétaro itself, various legislative proposals were presented, some of which were approved by the legislative Congress.

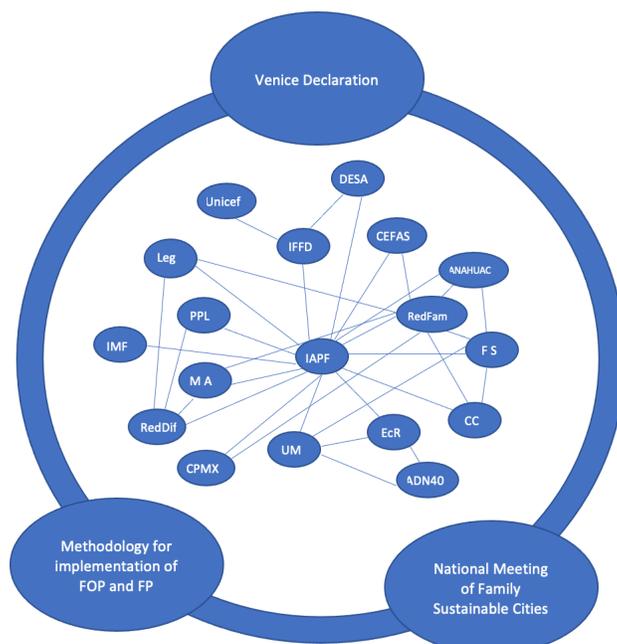
In March 2020, the IAPF organized the Childhood and Family Congress, with which the actors involved developed an interest in legislating on childhood with a family perspective. This gave the opportunity to develop a Positive Parenting law initiative with a family perspective, approved in three states: Querétaro, Coahuila and San Luis Potosí. Likewise, the states of Morelos and Aguascalientes promoted the creation of institutes and secretariats in charge of promoting family-oriented policies and mainstreaming a family perspective.

With the emergency declaration caused by the spread of Sars-CoV-2, the IAPF modified its way of working to venture into digital activities. In May 2020, work on legislation with a family perspective began to be carried out in the educational field remotely with other organizations. That month, the IAPF organized a series of forums in the framework of the international day of the family. In June 2020, the IAPF organized the Work-Family Balance Forum, the result of research work on issues of teleworking and regulation to avoid psychological risk factors in the workplace. That same year, in August, forums on breastfeeding with a family perspective were organized; in October, breast cancer forum with a family perspective; In December, the Family Perspective forum was organized to understand, prevent and eradicate violence against women.

At the beginning of 2021, the IAPF published the study Towards a family perspective, in which it synthesized a series of reflections and studies on family-oriented policies and the family perspective. In March of that year, the Second Family Policy Congress was organized, where a methodology for the implementation of family-oriented policies and the family perspective was presented.

In Mexico, 2021 was the year with the largest elections in history, considering the number of elected positions. The National Electoral Institute reported the election of 19,915 positions. By June 2021, 1,916 mayors in Mexico had been elected and would take office in September. For the month of October, the IAPF and the IFFD organized a national meeting of elected mayors. In this event, the resources of the network built since 2019 were agreed, which materialized the Family Governance Model.

Figure 1. Participants in the Family Governance Model.



Source: self made. Annex 1 contains a description of each of the elements of the resources and participants in this network.

The 1st National Meeting of Family Sustainable Cities has the attendance of 27 mayors from all over Mexico from the different political parties. This meeting manifested the resources provided by each of the actors of the network (i); This interrelation made it possible for the mayors to attend and contributed the content of the conferences and proposals, which gave way to the implementation methodology of family-oriented policies and the mainstreaming of the family perspective and; With the signing of the Declaration of Venice by the Elected Mayors, it allowed the application of concrete actions in favor of a public value, the family, through the Family Sustainable Cities project.

Venice Declaration

The Venice Declaration has linked both good practices. For the Family Governance Model, the signing of the declaration is an objective that commits politicians and the governments they lead to carry out public policy actions. For the Family Sustainable Cities project, it has been an initial document of commitment and guidance in the government actions that are expected to be carried out. As of August 2022, 40 mayors from different states and political parties have signed the declaration and some of them are starting to implement the project.

Family Sustainable Cities Project

The Family Sustainable Cities project is the product of the combination of knowledge, skills and abilities of various social actors that generated a methodology and a commitment by the mayors of various municipalities. In September 2021, one month after The 1st National Meeting of Family Sustainable Cities, several mayors expressed their commitment to convert their municipalities into Family Sustainable Cities. The mayors of Chihuahua, Chih., Guadalupe, Zac., and Irapuato, Gto., included in their opening speech the commitment to family sustainability.

Some of the mayors who signed the Venice Declaration decided to implement the Sustainable Family Cities project. This project includes five elements:

- **Diagnosis.** Through the "Encuesta de Dinámica Familiar – (EDIFAM)" (Family Dynamics Study) two variables are analyzed: social backwardness and family functionality. For social backwardness, indicators such as housing, economy and public services are studied. For functionality, indicators such as parenting skills, care work and work-family balance are studied. Through these variables, the intervention needs of families are identified for the design of government plans and programs aimed at supporting and strengthening families based on their care needs.
- **Design.** Through the "Programa Municipal de Perspectiva Familiar (PROFAMILIA)" (Municipal Family Perspective Program) an analysis is made of the government programs of the municipal authorities (health, education, economic development, culture, among others) through which their goals and indicators are aligned to the components of the Family Perspective (recognition, support, protection and promotion) and to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Citizen participation.** Through the "Family Perspective Advisory Councils" a permanent meeting is set up with representatives of civil society, the private sector and the academic sector who, with their knowledge and experiences, provide recommendations for decision-making and implementation of family policies in the community. This participation is carried out through a participatory, purposeful and social co-responsibility methodology.
- **Capacity building.** Through the "Capacitación en Perspectiva Familiar (PERFAM)" (Capacity building in Family Perspective) the generation of knowledge and skills in holders of municipal instances, operational positions of municipal instances and members of the Family Perspective Advisory Council is promoted. The training contains theoretical and practical content that allows participants to understand the relevance of family strengthening for sustainable development, the context of the family at a global and local level, the relationship of family policies with the 2030 Agenda and the family perspective with transversal axis of public policy.

Until now, the implementation of this project is in its first stage of capacity building. They have done this through a training that generates knowledge and skills through PERFAM, a training for mainstreaming family perspective in the municipal public administration.

In total, five training sessions have been given to 304 participants. The first occurred in Chihuahua, Chih., on February 18 and 19; 20 people attended this edition, including the mayor Marco Bonilla and his wife Karina Olivas, as well as all top-level officials. The second training was in San Nicolas de los Garza, where 22 people attended, including the mayor Daniel Carrillo, his wife Sammy González, and top-level officials. The third training was in virtual mode; 58 people attended. The fourth edition of the training took place in Irapuato, with the assistance of 55 people, including Mayor Lorena Alfaro. The fifth training took place in Chihuahua, which was attended by 59 people.

These trainings sensitize first-level officials and implementers of municipal public policies about the importance of . This, in addition, generates a shared language in relation to public policies oriented to the family and the family perspective.

PERFAM attendees develop family-oriented policy proposals that can be applied. Likewise, the municipalities of Chihuahua and San Nicolas plan a diagnosis of family dynamics. For their part, those municipalities, in addition to Guadalupe and Irapuato, are working on the design of the "Municipal Family Perspective Program (PROFAMILIA)"

Conclusions

Research, training, dissemination and proposals on various topics have made it possible to generate a coalition that, through the Family Governance Model, promotes the implementation of family-oriented policies and the mainstreaming of the family perspective. The various forums, congresses and meetings organized by the IAPF and other social actors developed between 2019 and 2021 served as inputs for the methodology for the implementation of the Family Sustainable Cities project.

The Family Governance Model is an active process that continues to be developed and updated based on implementation and evaluation. It is considered more of a cycle than a linear route and for which attention to the process is just as important as the result.

The IAPF considers important the link between the study of the literature to generate theoretical frameworks with the implementation models in the public management of governments, as well as the social and political context of the community.

The model seeks to provide general guidelines for the planning and implementation of family policies considering that the social, political, and cultural contexts change according to the regions and the moments of their application. It is important to encourage research, development, and implementation of frameworks regarding the family, sustainable development, family perspective and governance., as well as models of social co-responsibility, political commitment and implementation methodologies.

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