



“Big data, research, and evidence are important tools to support family policies”

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Big Data and Family Policies

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Family plays an essential role in society; it is the basic unit of education and socialization, and it also plays an important role in the health, well-being and cohesion of societies. Therefore, family policies that support families and promote their well-being are indispensable for a healthy society. Big data, research, and evidence are important tools to support family policies. Big data can help understand the needs and challenges facing families, while research and evidence can help assess the effectiveness of current family policies and develop new, more effective policies.

Big data can encompass a wide variety of information, such as demographic, economic, social, and health data of households, and is therefore difficult for traditional tools to analyze. Big data can help understand the needs and challenges facing families. For example, big data can be used to identify households experiencing unemployment, domestic violence, or living with disability. Such information can help develop family policies that target these families specifically and directly.

Research and evidence are also important tools for assessing the effectiveness of present family policies and developing new, more effective policies. Research and evidence can include a wide variety of studies, such as empirical, qualitative, and quantitative studies. The most accurate among them are mixed studies that combine life experiences, provide a representative statistical picture by means of quantitative tools, as well as there are many approaches to innovative policy research.

Here, I highlight just two of the many examples of the work of the Doha International Family Institute to make an impact on policy development. First, in collaboration with the Planning and Statistics Authority, we conducted a mixed study to identify the social determinants of declining fertility rates in Qatar, and the results were inputs for the development of relevant population policies. At the QF level, we are currently studying the impact of family-friendly policies on family cohesion and job productivity through cost and return approaches.

Finally, there are several recommendations that can be made to promote the use of big data, research and evidence in support of family policies:

- Increasing investment in household data collection and analysis: Big data requires significant investments in data collection and analysis. Governments and NGOs must invest in these areas to ensure the availability of data necessary to understand household needs and evaluate the effectiveness of family policies.
- Fostering collaboration between research and decision-making institutions: Researchers and policymakers should work hand-in-hand to share information and develop evidence-based family policies. This collaboration can help ensure that family policies are effective in achieving their goals since they are based on scientific evidence.
- Raising awareness of the importance of big data, research and evidence: Awareness of the importance of big data, research and evidence in supporting family policies must be raised. This can help ensure that these tools are used effectively to improve family well-being.