



São Paulo Report

Families on Mission



The São Paulo forum brought together teams from GCF, GOPlay, GO Health & Fitness, Generous Generation, family.fit and Rede Mãos Dados. Together we seek to serve children, young people, and families with a special focus on missional families, exploring how we can grow as learning communities, incubating infectious ideas together and including a special focus on investing in younger leaders.

There has been growing momentum around the needs of families and how we can best serve them alongside children. Recent discussions posed the challenge of how we might see a million families around the world embracing what it means to think and act missionally. Looking at the needs around us in our world, and as Kingdom partners, we began to dream how we might see God open a way to equip and release 100 million missional families as we explore and serve together.

As global movements prioritising children and families, around 120 people met to initiate a mixture of working groups and projects. These included looking at local churches, the role of parents and grandparents, the regional, global and digital scope, and a special group exploring the whole area of generosity.



"I felt encouraged because I saw Jesus in so many people and in their enthusiasm for God's Kingdom!"



"My faith and hope were strengthened this week."





A brief overview of the Forum groups and outcomes

Generous Generation

The Generous Generation group (now known as "GenG") has begun work on a variety of activities and resources. They are also looking at a GenG "Launch Experience" (inspired by the Journey of Generosity; although unique in its expression), which is geared toward families, churches, and potentially social media (YouTube, TikTok, gaming, etc.).

Global Connections

The Global Connections group wrestled with how we can be infectious carriers in the steps we take forward. We want to be intentional about the networks and churches we engage with. We want to empower key voices and champions.

The current focus is to develop a roadmap for the next three years — the first steps of which are to work on a simple descriptor, a longer statement and a theological framework to help others engage collaboratively.

Local Church Resources

We recognise the central role of local churches as they minister with and to families. We want to invest in this area by the following:

- A survival kit for pastors (they have broken families too)
- A church resource called 'Family Day' to help families come together and have fun and work on support, relationships, rhythm and priorities

Family Resources

We are focusing on building a toolkit which will incorporate the following:

- A video for communities and churches
- A manual for mothers (Solo Mama)
- A game to be played by a family to talk about what they like and don't like in the way they interact with each other — a good way to listen to children



Digital

Digital is relevant to all the groups and continues to support the development and communication of projects. We are also working on the following:

- Developing the use of the [gcf.com](https://www.gcf.com) website and exploring how that can support the wider community
- Exploring how we get Families on Mission resources to people — both equipping and empowering. For example, we are looking at developing templates and resources for organisations to help them begin making new Families on Mission resources

family.fit

The family.fit program continues to excite and inspire. We are currently working on the following:

- Extending the training available on the website and making that more accessible for training schools
- Recording multi-language video explaining FF to pastors
- Improving current videos by adding subtitles to improve clarity
- Training material for family.fit distributed to 70+ schools
- Social media team has been formed to create new family.fit content
- A WhatsApp Group for family.fit champions has been created to support, share ideas and encourage one another as a community of best practice.

Parenting

Parents are important! They are foundational to families, role models and responsible for leading families on mission. Amongst many ideas, there are two which are focusing on first:

- A keystone resource as a practical guide for families to come alongside other families in their missional journey
- A resource for church leaders to train on parenting

Grandparents

The role of grandparents can be hugely significant. We are currently working on the following:

- Creating a first steps resource: 10 ideas for grandparents to be on mission (to be available both online and in print)
- Working on a resource pack for churches to raise the profile of using these resources





"I left the gathering so motivated and with a lot of hope for families in this broken world."



"The personal impact on my ministry has been indescribable."





Latin Region Outcomes and Initiatives

Hosting the meetings in Brazil gave a wonderful focus to the energy and initiatives in this regions. Here we are working on the following:

- Finding champions in our region
- Connecting to global networks and partnerships
- Starting small by showcasing examples that can be adapted and multiplied in our region

AEL, The Latin Regional Evangelism Alliance

The time shared by our AEL members in the Forum was very useful for strengthening strategic relations with the World Evangelical Alliance and initiating links with the Evangelical Alliance of Africa – Children.

The representatives of the AEL Niñez commission also had their own meeting following the Forum to evaluate and address regional issues that will be developed for this year, strengthening strategic teams at the national level. Likewise, work has been done to have, in Latin America, a high-profile global hybrid training in Leadership around Children with the endorsement and certificate of Bethel Seminary, USA.

Rede Mãos Dados, Brazil Children's Ministry Network

A significant benefit of meeting in Brazil was the opportunity for cross-fertilisation between the different movements. Key priorities for the Rede Mãos Dados team include:

- Working on a game for families to explore better ways to communicate their everyday grievances in a healthy way.
- Learn more about the modus operandi of GCF and to grow closer to this way of manifesting the call for unity in Christ's kingdom.
- Learn more about family.fit and to get more involved.
- Learn more about the Leadership Experience plans
- Exploring how to find ways to include younger leadership within the network.



São Paulo Statement on Families on Mission

God has created us to be in **communities**, the smallest of which are **households**. These combine with other families to form larger communities (villages, cities etc.).

Together, Christian homes form churches.

All these Christian families are called to be '**on Mission**': shaping both the lives of their own families and the lives of others, being **salt** and **light** in society and calling each other to **reflect the image of God**.

What if **every Christian household** embraced being on Mission? What if **all Churches** supported those households to be on Mission so that the Church became what God intended the Church to be, together **impacting wider communities**?

What if, together, Christian households were like '**cities on a hill**', shining light and bringing hope to others?

Such a vision calls for all Christian homes to be '**Families on Mission**', reflecting the purpose, identity, and calling of Christian families.

We pray that we will let the love of Jesus into our homes to share His light with others.



The future

As we look to the future, it is clear that the work of the São Paulo Forum is just beginning. The discussions and initiatives that emerged from the forum reflect a growing momentum around the needs of families and the desire to equip and release missional families worldwide.

The working groups and projects initiated at the forum provide a framework for continued collaboration and exploration. The challenges of serving families in a rapidly changing world require ongoing innovation and adaptation. The forum participants are committed to exploring new ways to meet these challenges.

Through ongoing partnership and dialogue, the São Paulo Forum will continue to foster learning communities and incubate infectious ideas, focusing on investing in younger leaders and any other relevant tool that will make every child everywhere walk with Jesus.

By working together, we can impact the lives of children, young people, and families worldwide and see a world where mission-focused families are the norm rather than the exception.

Our next meeting

Our next GCF meeting will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 7th-12th November. For more details and to register please visit:

<https://gcf.community/events/ethiopia2023/registration/>