

Unpaid Care and Public Services

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Why we work on Unpaid Care

- Unpaid care is more difficult to do in the context of poverty.
- The burden is disproportionately borne by women and girls.
- Women's responsibility for care leads to the **violation of the basic human rights** to an education, political participation, decent work and leisure.
- The gendered division of labour contributes to gender inequality.

Who does Unpaid Care?

- Globally women perform the majority of unpaid care work – and work longer hours than men overall.
- On average, women spend **twice as much time** on household work as men and **four times as much time** on childcare.

What is the impact of women's disproportionate 'care burden'?

- Limits opportunities for paid work and therefore limits their income generating opportunities.
- Forces women into precarious, low paid, informal sector jobs which they can combine with care work. This limits their rights, security and social protection.
- Limits time and opportunities to participate in education and public life.

What is the impact of women's disproportionate 'care burden'?

- Caring roles can increase women and girls vulnerability to violence eg risk of assault when collecting fuel or water.
- Care work can isolate women and prevent them from seeking support when they are at risk.
- Heavy burdens of care work can take their toll on women's health eg returning to paid work soon after childbirth.
- Reinforced subordinated gender roles.

Unpaid Care as a Human Rights Concern

- Beijing 1995 tackling inequality in care essential towards achieving gender equality.
- CEDAW, ICESCR, ICCPR , CRC and CRPD require States to address unpaid care.

2013 Extreme Poverty and Human Rights UN Report

- Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights report 2013 positioned **unpaid care as a major human rights issue.**
 - Analyses relationship between unpaid care and poverty
 - Clarifies the human rights obligations of States re unpaid care
 - Provides recommendations to States on how to recognize, value, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work.

Responding to the challenge

- Recognise eg in national statistics or when developing social protection policy
- Reduce eg minimise the burden by providing convenient supporting public services
- Redistribute – care as a collective responsibility

Unpaid Care and Public Services

- The burden of unpaid care is intensified in the absence of public services women rely on.
- Cuts to or privatisation of public services negatively affect women who are forced to assume responsibility for the caring role which may have once been provided by the state which no longer exists or is unaffordable – thereby reinforcing gender inequalities.

Threat of Cuts to Public Services

- If government spending on crucial public services such as health or water and sanitation decreases → women's unpaid work intensifies even further
- If output declines because government spends less → higher unemployment → households with less income forced to compensate by producing more goods and services at home

Without enough public services women will continue to subsidise the state through their unpaid care work

Unpaid Care and precarious work

- Women with care roles are vulnerable to exploitation in informal labour market particularly when they combine unpaid and paid work eg home work, night shifts etc
- Short-term flexible contracts can raise challenges for women reconciling their paid work and unpaid care work eg contract terminated because of pregnancy
- Employment contexts where rights to maternity leave or family leave are limited – women have no choice but to leave

Post MDG Framework and unpaid care

“reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work through shared responsibility”

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Open Working Group Paper – 12th Session, 2 June 2014

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html>

Unpaid care work in Nepal



Social security and early childcare centres

1. Programme with women's groups
2. Policy mapping and stakeholder mapping
3. Coalition building – Mahila Adhikar Manch



Unpaid care work in Nigeria

Early childcare centres and recognition

1. UCW programming in rural/urban
2. Policy mapping and stakeholder mapping
3. Coalition building – Ministry of Gender, trade unions, NGOs



<http://interactions.eldis.org/unpaid-care-work/policy-findings>

Film

- <http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/womens-rights/unpaid-care-work>