

Households and families, markets, the state and civil society are all involved in the design, funding and delivery of care. These institutions interact in different ways in different countries, and although it is important to support context-specific solutions and take budgetary constraints into account the state does have an important role to play. The state decides who has access to quality care and who bears the cost of such provision, and although it may not be able to fund care services it can support care solutions through tax alleviation, by regulating care provision and controlling the basic quality of services. Other measures to facilitate redistribution of care work are policies and laws enabling the reconciliation of work and family obligations, supporting parental leave, ending discriminatory legislation and creating programmes that challenge the tradition of women taking primary responsibility for care work and expand women's opportunities and choices.

Sida can contribute to the redistribution of women's unpaid care work and unpaid work by:

- Encouraging the adoption of economic and labour market policies that uphold basic ILO principles on rights to reconciliation of family and work and the human right to decent work: flexible working arrangements, provision of parental leave, provision of affordable child care, social security, pension credits, tax allowances and care services for the elderly.
- Supporting improved access to health care services and promoting the reduction of transportation and user fees. Improving the quality of care, changing the opening hours of health centres (to meet the needs of families) and raising the skills level of public care workers also give families more scope to make use of public care services rather than relying on women and girls to undertake unpaid care work.
- Drawing attention to interesting care arrangements carried out by NGOs, women's self help groups, labour market associations, communities and others, and supporting research into how these initiatives could be scaled up.
- Supporting analysis of possible disincentives to a more equal sharing of child care responsibilities in laws, regulations and social benefits, for example the fact that parental tax benefits are often paid to the father as the assumed head of household. Such studies could also identify remedies and explore tax and other incentives for a more equal sharing of child care.
- Contributing to a change in the gender norms that allocate the responsibility for care to women and girls, through dialogue and through supporting the work of civil society organisations, such as women's organisations or men's groups challenging these norms.
- Supporting male role models and initiatives that enable men to take on more care work, by providing funds or giving such change agents a platform where they can meet with government representatives, donors, the media and others. Examples of such initiatives are "father schools" supported by Sida in Ukraine and Belarus where men who were about to become fathers were given the opportunity and skills to become active and responsible parents.

BUSINESS INTERRUPTION INSURANCE

Women's World Banking (WWB) is a network of microfinance institutions from 28 countries, receiving core support from Sida. WWB has elaborated an insurance product called the Caregiver Health Insurance Programme. This insurance helps low-income women to better cope with financial burdens associated with medical emergencies.

The first country to provide this insurance is Jordan, where over 100 women now are covered by it. Clients are automatically covered when taking a new loan; they do not need to have a medical exam, and there are no exclusions for pre-existing conditions. Women are also covered if they need to go to hospital when they are pregnant. Clients can use their coverage for anything they choose, from transportation costs or nutritious food to covering financial losses from their business incurred due to their hospital confinement.

CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN KENYA

Primary schools in Kenya are required to have a unit for pre-school education for children from the age of three, known as Baby Classes, where parents can leave their children in the morning and pick them up on the way home from work. The Government has adopted a partnership policy which allows parents' associations, religious and welfare organizations, private firms and individuals to cooperate with local authorities for the creation, financing and management of these units. These partners have also played a key role in training pre-school teachers.¹

¹ Catherine Hein, p. 44

UNION SERVICES TO ALLEVIATE THE HOUSEHOLD BURDEN IN BENIN

In Benin, unions have projects for:

- staff cooperatives which buy household goods (rice, soap) in bulk to enable women members to obtain them at lower prices;
- laundry services for working women in their neighbourhood so as to alleviate their heavy workload at work and in the home while creating employment for other women in the neighbourhood;
- childcare facilities near the main market for children of women vendors to facilitate breastfeeding, while allowing women to continue working.²

² Catherine Hein, p. 44



Women carry firewood, Ribaue, Mocambique. Photographer: Gunilla Åkesson

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

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Quick Guide to What and How: Unpaid Care Work

– Entry Points to Recognise, Reduce and Redistribute

Women's Economic Empowerment Series

THE SERIE'S FOUR COMPONENTS

Background paper
Quick guides to what and how
Tools
Inspiring initiative



A middle-aged father feeds his child at the Langas slums, Kenya. Many fathers are now taking active roles in family issues. © 2003 RUINET, Courtesy of Photoshare

DEFINITIONS

Unpaid care work includes caring for children, elderly and sick people. It also includes washing, cooking, shopping cleaning and helping other families with their chores. **Unpaid work** includes food, fuel and water collection and other energy provision, informal unpaid work, family labour in agriculture, etc.

Note: This quick guide is not intended to cover all aspects of unpaid care work and unpaid work but to highlight some important aspects and quick entry points. Important issues are therefore only briefly touched upon. In order for Sida and other donors to further integrate unpaid care work and unpaid work into their contributions on country or sector level, checklists with entry points could be developed together with an external consultant who is an expert on both gender and the country setting.

This quick guide¹ discusses the concept of unpaid care work as an obstacle to women's economic empowerment. It suggests how women's unpaid care work can be recognised, reduced and redistributed;² and provides Sida with some practical entry points for supporting this.

UNPAID CARE WORK AND OTHER UNPAID WORK

It is commonly understood that households and families (men and women), markets, the state and the non-profit sector all share the responsibility for the prevalence of unpaid care work and other forms of unpaid work. However, in low income countries in particular, girls and women are responsible for a disproportionate amount of unpaid or underpaid care work. Women therefore have less time to engage in paid work, to network, to participate in activities for societal change, or even to rest. This "women's time poverty" undermines well-being, generates insecurities, fosters financial dependence and limits options for decent work, even to the point of restricting women to low-status, part-time jobs in the informal sector. Girls often look after their younger siblings, ageing or sick relatives, or are sent to collect fuel and water instead of going to school. Mothers, sometimes the sole breadwinners in their families, frequently take jobs in the informal sector where they can bring their infants with them. Often these work environments are unsafe and may have ill-effects on the children's health and overall development. The burdens of care work on women and girls have increased greatly with HIV/AIDS; globally, up to 90 per cent of home care due to illness is provided by women and girls.³

The unpaid care work carried out by women and girls often goes unnoticed and unrecognised in the calculations of a country's economy. It is not included in labour force surveys or in GDP figures. As a result the realities of women's and girls' work burdens are excluded from the data informing policy making.⁴

- ¹ This quick guide is based on the lectures of Professor Diane Elson and ongoing work in UNDP/BDP, Bridge, OEDC, and the EU. The core actions are developed in UNDP/BDP's Brief on Gender Equality and Unpaid Care Work, by Anna Fälth and Mark Blackden. Special thanks to Catharina Schmitz, IPM, IDS and Marzia Fontana who provided valuable input to this guide.
- ² The model, Recognize, Reduce and Redistribute, relating to unpaid care work, was conceived by Professor Diane Elson.
- ³ UNFPA/UNAIDS/UNIFEM, "Women and HIV/AIDS: Confronting the Crisis", Executive Summary, p. 2
- ⁴ UNRISD Research and Policy Brief 9, Why Care Matters for Social Development.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Tanzanian time use data predicts that investments in water-related infrastructure would free up women’s working hours (converted into paid employment) equivalent to a million new full-time jobs for women. This in turn would increase income by about 6% of the total cash earnings for the entire population in a year.

If the value of unpaid work and childcare were included in national accounts, it is estimated that women’s unpaid care work would account for more than half of the GDP in OECD countries.

EXAMPLE OF INDICATORS THAT CAN CAPTURE UNPAID CARE AND UNPAID CARE WORK

- Introducing a system of sex-disaggregated time use surveys is both an indicator in its own right, as well as a good tool for verification of indicators.
- Share of children between 3-6 in affordable childcare arrangements. Source of verification: UNECE Work-life Balance statistics
- Number of weeks of maternity or parental leave. Source of verification: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/tab5g.htm>
- Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and fuel. Source verification: UNECE Work-life Balance statistics and national time use surveys.
- Existence of national action plans for gender and emergencies. Source of verification: Ministries dealing with emergencies
- Existence of national action plans for gender and water. Source of verification: Ministries dealing with water and sanitation

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELATED TO UNPAID CARE WORK

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
ILO – Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156)
ILO – The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No.111)
1959, UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child
ILO- Minimum Age Convention (prohibiting child labour), 1973 (No.138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003. Articles of particular interest:

Article 6: Marriage
States Parties shall ensure that women and men enjoy equal rights and are regarded as equal partners in marriage. They shall enact appropriate national legislative measures to guarantee that:
Art. 6. If a woman and a man shall jointly contribute to safeguarding the interests of the family, protecting and educating their children;

Article 13: Economic and Social Welfare Rights
States Parties shall adopt and enforce legislative and other measures to guarantee women equal opportunities in work and career advancement and other economic opportunities. In this respect, they shall:
a) promote equality of access to employment;

Some care workers – for example, community health workers, domestic workers, and migrant workers performing household work or care work (of children or the elderly and sick) – are remunerated. However, although they receive wages, they often work in the informal sector, are often underpaid and have no legal or social protection as workers. In many countries paid domestic work is performed primarily by women. One explanation is the long history of care work being unpaid, performed by women within their own households, assumed to involve few skills and therefore considered of low value. The result is low wages and low status once it becomes paid work.

The benefits of reducing women’s unpaid care work

Care in itself is a benefit to society as it contributes to the well-being of both the caregiver and the receiver and fosters close relations between them. Moreover, all care work, paid or unpaid, adds value to the economy and should therefore be included in economic calculations. Even though the gendered division of labour in care work limits such benefits primarily to women, women’s unpaid care work constitutes an important contribution to the economy. It is estimated that if women’s unpaid work were assigned a monetary value it would constitute between 10% and 39% of GDP.⁵ Other studies show that reducing the household time burdens on women could increase agricultural labour productivity by 15% and capital productivity by as much as 44% in some countries.⁶

The need to address the issue of unpaid care is becoming increasingly urgent for other reasons. As a result of girls’ increased school enrolment and labour market participation, there is a decreasing will-igness and availability of women and girls to do unpaid care work.⁷ Simultaneously, the need for care in the world is escalating, not least with the 33.2 million people worldwide who are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, leaving large numbers of children orphaned and vulnerable.

The 3R strategy addressing unpaid care work: Recognition, Reduction and Redistribution

Professor Diane Elson has suggested a model with three interconnected dimensions that seeks to address and incorporate unpaid care work into the development agenda: Recognition, Reduction, and Redistribution (the 3 Rs). The 3 Rs framework provides a way of finding practical entry points for addressing the unevenly shared unpaid care and unpaid work burden. The aim is to strengthen women as economic actors while acknowledging that an adequate level of care and other social reproduction activities are essential for the well-being of society and the sustainability of human development.

Recognition

Recognition draws attention to the role of care in society and involves making the contribution of carers visible. Recognition involves gathering quantitative and qualitative information on the scope of unpaid work and the distribution of its burden among individuals, communities and other

- 5 UNRISD Research and Policy Brief 9, Why Care Matters for Social Development. Calculations based on six countries in the UNRISD study: South Africa, Tanzania, Argentina, Nicaragua, India and the Republic of Korea.
- 6 OECD 2008 “Gender and Sustainable Development: Maximising the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of women” pp.18-19.
- 7 E. Esplen, Gender and Care, Overview report, Bridge development – gender, January 2009.

b) promote the right to equal remuneration for jobs of equal value for women and men;
c) ensure transparency in recruitment, promotion and dismissal of women and combat and punish sexual harassment in the workplace;
d) guarantee women the freedom to choose their occupation, and protect them from exploitation by their employers violating and exploiting their fundamental rights as recognised and guaranteed by conventions, laws and regulations in force;
e) create conditions to promote and support the occupations and economic activities of women, in particular, within the informal sector;
f) establish a system of protection and social insurance for women working in the informal sector and sensitise them to adhere to it;
g) introduce a minimum age for work and prohibit the employment of children below that age, and prohibit, combat and punish all forms of exploitation of children, especially the girl-child;
h) take the necessary measures to recognise the economic value of the work of women in the home;
i) guarantee adequate and paid pre- and post-natal maternity leave in both the private and public sectors;
j) ensure the equal application of taxation laws to women and men;
k) recognise and enforce the right of salaried women to the same allowances and entitlements as those granted to salaried men for their spouses and children;
l) recognise that both parents bear the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of children and that this is a social function for which the State and the private sector have secondary responsibility;
m) take effective legislative and administrative measures to prevent the exploitation and abuse of women in advertising and pornography.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990. Articles of particular interest:

Article 18: Protection of the Family
3. No child shall be deprived of maintenance by reference to the parents’ marital status.

Article 20: Parental Responsibilities
Art. 20. 2. States Parties to the present Charter shall in accordance with their means and national conditions take all appropriate measures;
a) to assist parents and other persons responsible for the child and in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes particularly with regard to nutrition, health, education, clothing and housing;
b) to assist parents and others responsible for the child in the performance of child-rearing and ensure the development of institutions responsible for providing care of children; and(c) to ensure that the children of working parents are provided with care services and facilities.

The Maputo Declaration on Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other Related Infectious Diseases. Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development. Relevant articles:
Part 2 – constitutional and legal rights, articles 4 to 11
Part 3 – Governance, articles 12-13
Part 4 – Education and Training, article 14
Part 5 – Productive Resources and Employment, articles 15 to 19
Part 7 – Health and HIV/AIDS, articles 26-27
Part 8 – Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, article 28 (mentions UN Resolution 1325)
Part 9 – Media Information and Communication, articles 29 to 31

African Youth Charter, 2006
Preamble:
BEARING IN MIND the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights relating to the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) and the progress achieved in eliminating gender discrimination, but ever cognisant of the obstacles that still prevent girls and women from fully participating in African society,

Article 23: Girls and Young Women
States Parties acknowledge the need to eliminate discrimination against girls and young women according to obligations stipulated in various international, regional and national human rights conventions and instruments designed to protect and promote women’s rights. In this regard, they shall:
a) Introduce legislative measures that eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls and young women and ensure their human rights and fundamental freedoms;

institutions. This should inform and be used by policy makers, the donor community and civil society organisations in designing projects and programmes. Recognition therefore provides a basis for monitoring and measuring the effects of planned governmental policies, donor support and civil society initiatives that strive to end the prevalence of women as unpaid caregivers and unpaid workers. Recognition also involves making public the results of previous initiatives to tackle problems such as discrimination and other barriers to women’s entry into wage employment. The media’s role in this regard is clearly very important.

Sida can support the recognition of unpaid care and unpaid work by:

- Supporting national statistics bureaus in developing statistics that measure changes in unpaid care work over time, such as time-use surveys (TUS) disaggregated by sex, age and socio-economic characteristics. Such surveys can constitute the starting point for assigning monetary value to unpaid care work and is a good basis for dialogue on the issue of unpaid care. Sida has supported such surveys in Armenia. Other relevant statistics or indicators which can be used to describe the problem and monitor changes are:
 - The number of girls dropping out of school because of burdens in the household;
 - Food and water provision for all household members (especially important when care of the sick is involved);
 - Access to key economic and social services such as care provision for children, the elderly and the sick, and health facilities.
- Advocating for inclusion of indicators on reduction of unpaid care work such as time-use surveys in PRS indicators. Changes in time use can be used as an impact indicator of a number of interventions such as infrastructure investments in water and energy, efforts to bring about attitude change, and expansion of health care services.
- Supporting efforts to calculate or estimate the value of the total unpaid care work relative to conventional GDP as a basis of dialogue on care work.
- Evaluating the potential benefits of investments to reduce unpaid care work by carrying out pilot investments and performing cost-benefit analysis of such investments. Such analysis can provide more in-depth knowledge and incentives for future, larger-scale investments as well as a basis for dialogue. Examples include: cost-benefit analysis of child care provision or provision of meals in schools, investments that make time-consuming chores more effective (cereal mills, water pumps) or investments with synergies that have special advantages on time savings or efficiency (community refrigerators – enabling cooking to be done for days in a row and goods to be sold in the market can be stored).
- Promoting the systematic use of Gender Responsive Budgeting as a method to analyse the unpaid care burden and care needs, identify policy responses and ensure that there is a budget line for implementing such policies.
- Making unpaid care work and unpaid work generally a dialogue issue in relevant donor groups and bringing in an expert to build the capacity of such groups.
- Holding the partner government accountable for international commitments made and for better enforcement of international conventions and agreements relevant to unpaid work and unpaid care work.

Sida can advocate for ratification of conventions and assist in identifying contradictory national legislation.

- Supporting or commissioning analysis at country level of how care provision and people involved in care work are affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the food, fuel, economic and financial crises, and changes in government-provided services.
- Ensuring that any new labour legislation, labour market or social security programmes and labour force surveys include unpaid care work and domestic workers.

Reduction

Once the nature and consequences of unpaid work are understood, it is important to take measures to reduce and to redistribute it.

The purpose of reducing unpaid work, including unpaid care work (and also of redistributing it – see below) is to free time for women and girls to engage in formal jobs and/or social and political activities. To this end it is crucial to track changes in time use and to make sure that freed-up time is not simply consumed by other kinds of unpaid work or care work. An example from rural China shows that when electricity was introduced to a village, women worked at home at night and longer hours in the fields, rather than reducing their time poverty.

Sida can contribute to the reduction of women’s unpaid care work and unpaid work by:

- Contributing to investments in time and labour-saving infrastructure, technologies and/or practices that reduce time-consuming unpaid tasks. Long-term infrastructure investments could be made in mills, wells, piped water, and alternative fuels such as biogas, solar, wind energy Short-term solutions may include fuel-saving stoves.
- Supporting analysis of the kinds of infrastructure investments that would contribute most effectively to reducing unpaid care work and other unpaid work. Multiplier effects, such as creating jobs for women and men (long-term investments like road-building), or cross-sector synergies where time, manpower or effort spent on more than one chore is reduced (electricity in houses can reduce fuel collection and cooking times). Other examples are school food programmes.
- Supporting country-level research on care-related obstacles to women’s entry into paid labour. Tax laws, working hours, working options and minimum wage legislation may have negative effects (but not always) on women’s access to the labour market. For example, external care arrangements may cost more than a woman would earn if she were formally employed, making paid labour a less likely option.
- Through dialogue, highlighting the consequences of cutbacks in essential government services and infrastructure investments, which are an important means of relieving households of unpaid care burdens, creating employment and raising labour productivity. Especially cutbacks caused by natural disasters, armed conflict, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the economic crisis/recession.

Redistribution

In parallel with initiatives designed to reduce unpaid care work and other unpaid work it is necessary to establish a framework for a redistribution of responsibilities, time and resources. The aim is to ensure that the burden of care services and unpaid work tasks are shared more equitably between women and men, government, the private sector, communities and households.

b) Ensure that girls and young women are able to participate actively, equally and effectively with boys at all levels of social, educational, economic, political, cultural, civic life and leadership as well as scientific endeavours;
c) Institute programmes to make girls and young women aware of their rights and of opportunities to participate as equal members of society;
d) Guarantee universal and equal access to and completion of a minimum of nine years of formal education;
e) Guarantee equal access to and completion of vocational, secondary and higher education in order to effectively address the existing imbalance between young men and women in certain professions;
f) Ensure that education material and teaching practices are gender sensitive and encourage girls and young women to undertake studies in the sciences;
g) Provide educational systems that do not impede girls and young women, including married and/or pregnant young women, from attending;
h) Take steps to provide equal access to health care services and nutrition for girls and young women;
i) Protect girls and young women from economic exploitation and from performing work that is hazardous, takes them away from education or that is harmful to their mental or physical health;
j) Offer equal access to young women to employment and promote their participation in all sectors of employment;
k) Introduce special legislation and programmes of action that make available opportunities to girls and young women including access to education as a prerequisite and a priority for rapid social and economic development;
l) Enact and enforce legislation that protect girls and young women from all forms of violence, genital mutilation, incest, rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking, prostitution and pornography;
m) Develop programmes of action that provide legal, physical and psychological support to girls and young women who have been subjected to violence and abuse such that they can fully re-integrate into social and economic life;
n) Secure the right for young women to maternity leave.

Other relevant articles:

Article 9: Property
Article 10: Development
Article 11: Youth Participation
Article 13: Education and Skills Development
Article 14: Poverty Eradication and Socio-Economic Integration of Youth
Article 15: Sustainable Livelihoods and Youth Employment
Article 16: Health
Article 17: Peace and Security
Article 23: Girls and Young Women

EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES FOR REDISTRIBUTION OF UNPAID CARE WORK

Turkey’s labour laws and regulations oblige firms employing between 100–150 women workers (married or single) to provide a nursing room for the essential needs of their children under the age of 1. They also oblige employers employing more than 150 female workers to assist their employees by establishing or subcontracting a child care unit to care for children under 6 years of age.