

MEASURING AND VALUING UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK IN MALI

SUMMARY

This policy brief outlines the results of a study¹ conducted by the National Observatory of the Demographic Dividend in 2022, that assesses time poverty in terms of unpaid care and domestic work for women and men in Mali. On average, women perform almost 4 times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men do. Research has shown that women contribute 80% of the production of domestic labour time, strongly limiting the time at their disposal to contribute to paid work, pursue educational opportunities or for leisure. However, if accounted for, women's unpaid care and domestic work would have represented 17.6% of the country's GDP in 2019. The brief concludes with a set of recommendations to recognise, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work in Mali.

INTRODUCTION

Care and domestic work are essential for the functioning of economies and societies. Without it, individuals, families, societies, and economies would not be able to survive and thrive. Around the world, individuals spend significant amounts of time cooking, cleaning, fetching water and wood, and caring for the children and the elderly within households or communities. Because of the social division of labour, men are more involved in income-generating activities, while women are confined to unpaid domestic tasks, personal care and subsistence food crops. Globally, women spend almost 4 times as much time on unpaid care and domestic work than men². The time women spent on unpaid care and domestic work is no longer available to be spent on income-generating activities.

These unpaid domestic and care activities are not taken into account in conventional national accounts, nor in the calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In Mali, women's economic contribution to welfare is largely underestimated. While women produce only 20% of paid labour income in 2019, they contribute 80% of the production of unpaid care and domestic work labour time.

Including the value of time spent on unpaid care and domestic work in national accounts is a first step towards gender equality and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

especially Goal 5.4 "Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate." Having statistics on which care and domestic tasks women spend their time on helps to understand the constraints that women face in improving their participation in the labour market, but also the factors that limit girls' access to education.

Unpaid care and domestic work and its implications i) for the well-being of household and community members and ii) for public policy have received little research attention in Mali. Through this brief, UN Women is contributing to closing an important knowledge gap on unpaid care and domestic work in Mali by summarizing the findings of a first-of-its-kind study conducted by the National Observatory of the Demographic Dividend. The study measures the time spent on unpaid care and domestic work by household members - men, women, children, and the elderly - and the respective contribution to GDP if the activities were valued as paid work. This brief also provides policy recommendations to promote comprehensive care responsive reforms in the country.

Key definitions

Unpaid care and domestic work³: All unpaid services provided by individuals within a household or community for the benefit of its members, including care of persons and domestic work.

- **Domestic work (indirect care)** includes housework domestic activities such as cooking and food preparation, cleaning, washing clothes, and water and fuel collection.
- **Care of persons (direct care)**⁴ involves hands-on or face-to-face personal and often emotional contact, such as feeding a child, bathing an older person, or taking care of persons with illness or disabilities.
- **Unpaid voluntary work**⁵ such as religious or community activities

Paid care work⁶: Direct care for persons performed within a household or institution for pay or profit. Paid care work spans both public and private spheres and is provided in a variety of settings, in both formal and informal economies. Care work is a significant source of work for women globally.

International commitment to unpaid and paid care work: SDG 5.4

- Sustainable Development Goal 5 - target 5.4: 'recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.'

Regional agreement: African Union Agenda 2063

- Goal 17: full gender equality in all spheres of life "strengthening the role of Africa's women through ensuring gender equality and parity in all spheres of life (political, economic and social); eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls;"

Unpaid care and domestic work in Mali's National Development Plan

- **Mali's Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development (CREDD 2019-2023)** is structured around five axes, including the development of human capital and social inclusion. This axis intends in its Global Objective 5.4. to «create the conditions for the empowerment of women, children and families».
- Specific objective 5.4.1 Strengthen the participation of women and youth in socio-economic activities. «Political will and intensive policy dialogue will be required to design and implement gender-sensitive policies in labour administrations and employment plans at local and national levels, to provide social protection and income security for working women, and to recognise, reduce and better share the burden of unpaid care and domestic work so that women can have the same economic opportunities and achievements as men.»

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in this study is the National Time Transfer Accounts (NTTA⁷). This methodology provides an age and sex-specific analysis of the production, consumption and transfer behaviour of unpaid care and domestic work time. Time spent in carrying out unpaid care and domestic work activities is considered as production. The usage of goods and services produced is consumption. When one or multiple persons consume care labour time produced by another member of the household, this is called time transfer. This is because the time produced cannot be stored and must be fully consumed during the period under consideration.

The data used to construct the profiles are from the database of the «time use» module of the Harmonised Survey on Household Living Conditions (INSTAT; 2018 - 2019)⁸. A total of five categories of unpaid care and domestic work are covered in the study: i) housework, ii) buying groceries, iii) gathering wood, iv) fetching water and v) caring for people (childcare and care of the elderly). In order to value the time spent per category in monetary terms, a wage value (average hourly wages) was imputed on each category. The hourly earnings in CFAF⁹ per category were estimated based on data from household and employment surveys.



WOMEN'S UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

In Mali, women contribute nearly 80% of the total production of this unpaid care and domestic work time: through their lifetime, women spend on average almost 4 times as much time on unpaid care and domestic work than men do (women produce 21.6 hours of care work time per week compared to 5.7 hours for men). Throughout their lifetime, women can spend up to 24.7 hours per week (around the age of 26), while men can spend up to 6 hours per week (around the age of 16).

Across types of unpaid care and domestic work, women spend more time in caring for people and doing household tasks, while men spend more time shopping and gathering wood (figure 1). However, even in these two categories, women have a significantly larger contribution.

Intergenerational distribution of unpaid care and domestic work: the pattern of a high contribution by women to unpaid domestic and personal care activities continues throughout

their life and starting already at an early age. When looking at youth specifically, girls produce almost three (3) times more care work time than boys. The time allocated by women to the production of personal care varies between 0.6 hours (just over half an hour) per week for the 5-year-old girl and 5.7 hours per week for the 33-year-old woman. From the age of 34 onwards, women's participation in unpaid care and domestic work falls rapidly, indicating a transfer of responsibilities to younger members (especially girls) of the household. This has important implications for girls' access to school and the overall accumulation of human capital over their life course. Data from UNESCO shows that in 2018, only 37 % of girls enrolled in secondary school, compared to 44 % of boys. This has lifelong effects: less than a third of women can read a simple sentence, compared to nearly 80 % of men.¹⁰

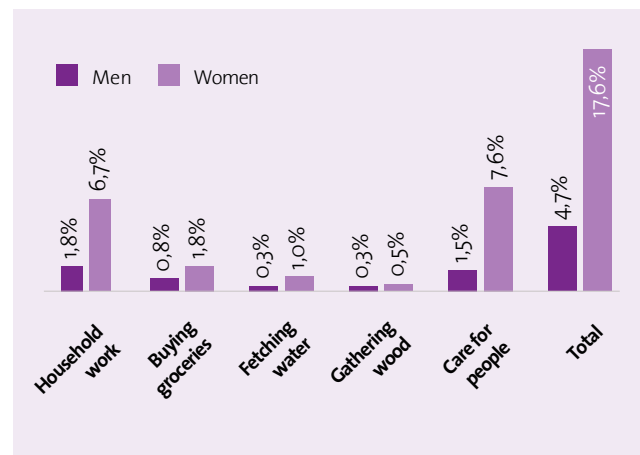
FIGURE 1
Contribution by sex per category, in % of total



Source : *Observatoire National du Dividende Démographique Mali, 2022*

Unpaid care and domestic work could contribute significantly to GDP: To provide insight into how unpaid care and domestic work contributes to welfare and GDP, in the study, an hourly wage was imputed on each of the categories. The results show that in 2019, the unpaid care and domestic work time produced by a man reaches an average of 55,958 FCFA (95,51 USD) compared to 168,846 FCFA (288,18 USD) for women per week. **If accounted for, unpaid care and domestic work produced would represent 22.3% of GDP in 2019**, with women’s contribution being 17.6% of GDP. In monetary value, this is estimated at CFAF 2,110.4 billion (3.6 billion USD) for 2019.¹¹ By category of unpaid care work, direct care to people (childcare, elderly care, care to sick family members and members living with disability) performed by women is estimated to account for about 7.6% of GDP and housework for 6.7% (figure 2). These sectors constitute important niches for job creation and therefore income generation and economic empowerment.



FIGURE 2
Contribution in % of GDP per category



Source : Observatoire National du Dividende Démographique Mali, 2022

BOX 1
UNPAID CARE WORK IN MALI: A TALE OF TWO PEOPLE

What does a week of unpaid care and domestic work look like for a woman and a man in Mali in their daily life? Meet 32-year-old Mariama and Amadou.

Time spent in unpaid care & domestic work		
	Mariama	Amadou
Housework	12 h 45 min 	2 h 34 min 
Buying grocery	2 h 40 min	1 h 9 min
Fetching water	2 h 14 min	24 min
Gathering wood	1 h 10 min	33 min
Care for people (childcare and elderly care)	5 h 37 min	58 min
TOTAL	24 h 26 min	5 h 38 min

The table shows that Mariama spends significantly more time on unpaid care and domestic work (housework and care for people) activities than Amadou. The time spent on unpaid care work may decrease in a couple of years for Mariama when she transfers tasks to younger members (especially young girls) of the household, but throughout her lifetime, until the age of 65, her production level will stay far above her consumption level.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In Mali, women and girls spend long hours engaged in unpaid domestic and care work. This may constrain their participation in the labour market and can be a factor constraining their access and performance at school. Women's economic empowerment is at the heart of national policies in Mali (e.g., Mali's national development Plan (CREDD), the Plan décennal de développement pour l'autonomisation de la femme, de l'enfant et de la famille (Ten-Year Development Plan for the Empowerment of Women, Children and children and the family, 2020-2029). Measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, like the ones presented next, would contribute to improving government's actions to promote women's economic empowerment in the country.

Recognise

- Strengthen the institutional capacity of actors (state institutions, development partners, civil society associations, women's associations, private sector, etc.) to recognise and value unpaid domestic work through training sessions.
- Develop evidence-based national and local research on the impact of unpaid care and domestic work on development outcomes in Mali.
- Invest in building data capabilities of the "Observatoire National du Dividende Démographique (ONDD)" and the "Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT)" to conduct regular surveys, time use surveys in particular, to gain insight on the use of disaggregated time at urban and rural levels, also over a longer period,
- Integrate measures to address women's and girl's unpaid care needs in the implementation of the « Plan décennal de développement pour l'autonomisation de la femme, de l'enfant et de la famille (PDDAFEF 2020-2029) »

Redistribute

To achieve long-lasting change, a balanced distribution of unpaid domestic work should be achieved between women and men, and between the family and the state. It is therefore recommended to:

- Work with men and boys, including religious, cultural, local and political leaders to engage in dialogue to change social norms and discriminatory stereotypes that perpetuate the unequal division of labour in the home and to promote positive masculinity.
- Improve the existing paternity leave policies (currently at 3 days).

Reduce

- Expand water and energy infrastructure to reduce the time spent on domestic work and free up time for educational, leisure or income-generating activities,
- Expand access to (quality) and affordable childcare facilities for children under 3 years of age.
- Expand social protection mechanisms to make them more inclusive and recognise gender-related risks throughout the life cycle, including women's risks associated with unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities.
- Support the transition from unpaid to paid care services by developing employment in the care sector (child and elderly care, housework) including through entrepreneurship and women-led businesses, particularly in urban areas.



BOX 2

Examples of comprehensive care systems that follow the 3R approach (recognise, reduce and redistribute)

Cabo Verde's National Care Plan

According to Cabo Verde's last Time Use Survey (2012), women spend 1.7 times more time on unpaid work than men do (63 versus 38 hours per week), with the frequency and intensity of women's participation in unpaid work increasing steadily from adolescence onwards and throughout their life cycle.

In 2017, Cabo Verde approved its first National Care Plan. The Care Plan includes childcare and long-term care, the creation of a national care service network, and the promotion of policies to encourage the redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work. Actions implemented under the Plan include capacity-building for family caregivers of children and dependent older persons, the creation of a municipal network of day-care centres, with a view of achieving universal coverage, and expanding the current network of services and day centres for older persons and persons with disabilities. The Care Plan has led to the institutionalization of a National Care System in Cabo Verde, a pioneering experience in the region. The System represents a major step and an achievement in terms of social policies with a gender focus and translates into a significant contribution to the protection and promotion of the rights of care-dependent persons and their caregivers, the large majority of whom are women.

Employer-supported childcare in agribusiness in Rwanda

The tea sector is one of Rwanda's largest employers, with tea grown in 11 out of 30 districts. Women aged between 18 and 35 make up 50% to 70% of the typical tea plantation plucking workforce. These female employees are or will most likely become mothers, assume primary responsibility for childcaring and must craft arrangements that reconcile their childcare duties with those of the workplace. Therefore, childcare has become a business concern where its absence inhibits mothers from dedicating their hours to work in a full, consistent, and reliable way. As a response to this, businesses started to set up employer-supported childcare facilities. Most of these are day care or crèche facilities on company premises or the work site, registered by local authorities and operated by either trained workers or external providers. Parents only pay a few dollars a month to cover food costs. Where the childcare centres initially started as a corporate social responsibility initiative, it became clear that providing childcare is making a tremendous difference to the companies' bottom line via increased productivity. Lower absenteeism of workers increases productivity and this offsets the cost of the investment of setting up a childcare facility and paying for its operating costs.



Photo : UN Women Mali

Endnote

- 1 L'Observatoire National du Dividende Démographique au Mali, 'La mesure et la valorisation du travail domestique non rémunéré au Mali', published in 2022.
- 2 UN DESA, The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics.
- 3 Note: the policy brief follows the definition of unpaid care and domestic work used in the ONDD study
- 4 Sources: UN Women, A toolkit on paid and unpaid care work, from 3Rs to 5Rs, 2022. UN Women, Covid-19 and the care economy: immediate action and structural transformation for a gender-responsive recovery, Policy brief, 2020.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 See the initiative Counting Women's Work. <https://www.countingwomenswork.org/>.
- 8 Enquête harmonisée sur les conditions de vie des ménages 2018-2019 (EHCVM), Institut National de la Statistique du Mali (INSTAT).
- 9 The CFAF (XOF) is the currency of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo).
- 10 UNESCO, 2021, 'Mali: Gender equality is an investment for the future', <https://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/mali-gender-equality-investment-future-13688>.
- 11 The exchange rate used is 1 USD = 585,91. This was the official exchange rate for the period average in 2019 in Mali by the International Monetary Fund, International Financial Statistics. Data accessed from the World Bank: [Official exchange rate \(LCU per US\\$, period average\) - Mali | Data \(worldbank.org\)](https://data.worldbank.org/SH.UV.XD)