



GOOD PRACTICES, LESSONS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES IN THE CARE ECONOMY IN ETHIOPIA



GOOD PRACTICES, LESSONS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES IN THE CARE ECONOMY IN ETHIOPIA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENT | iii |
|----------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. BACKGROUND | 1 |
|---------------|---|

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 2. CARE ECONOMY FRAMEWORK | 3 |
|---------------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 3. METHODOLOGY | 5 |
|----------------|---|

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 4. GOOD PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN THE CARE ECONOMY | 6 |
| 4.1 Current initiatives and good practices | 6 |
| I. Recognition | 6 |
| II. Reduction | 8 |
| III. Redistribution | 15 |
| IV. Reward | 18 |
| V. Representation | 19 |
| 4.2. Constraints and challenges to transforming the care economy | 20 |

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| 5. LESSONS LEARNED | 22 |
|--------------------|----|

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| 6. OPPORTUNITIES AND THE WAY FORWARD | 23 |
|--------------------------------------|----|

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

UN Women Ethiopia Country Office is grateful to various individuals and institutions for their invaluable contributions to this document on good practices, lessons, opportunities, and challenges in the care economy in Ethiopia. This document is part of the Global Joint Programme by UN Women and ILO “Promoting decent employment for women through inclusive growth strategies and investments in the care economy” implemented in Ethiopia from 2021-2023 with the objective of supporting government organizations, development and social partners in implementing gender-sensitive policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis and increasing investments in the care economy to ensure a job-rich and inclusive recovery.

The document was prepared by a consulting firm, Econ Management Consultants (EMC), a company specializes in producing knowledge products for development sector. We thank Dr. Ziad Hailu, manager of EMC, for his leadership, technical guidance, and

commitment in conducting a documentation task on the care economy that addresses gaps in better understanding the full spectrum of issues on paid and unpaid care work in Ethiopia.

We are also thankful to the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Bureau of Addis Ababa Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Innovation and Technology, Information Network Security Administration (INSA), Organization for Women in Self-Employment (WISE), SOS Sahel Ethiopia, March 8 Pre-primary and Primary School, Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), Enat Bank, and other organizations for sharing information and technical inputs to the document.

We also would like to appreciate Women Economic Empowerment Program team at UN Women Ethiopia, namely Simegn Kuma and Sinidu Fekadu, who diligently guided and contributed to the document starting from its inception up to the end.

1. BACKGROUND

Unpaid care work and gender inequality

The care economy is defined as the production and consumption of goods and services required for the well-being of care-dependent populations such as children, the elderly, the sick, as well as healthy, prime working-age adults.¹ Care work entails both paid and unpaid dimensions. Across the world, care work is overwhelmingly the preserve of women, and this unequal responsibility often restricts women's time and opportunities for education, employment, politics and leisure.²

Ethiopia is no exception, with unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) mostly performed by women and girls, which affects their participation in education, in decent paid work, health, and agriculture productivity. Also, as a result of their unequal responsibility for unpaid care work, women are more likely to work in the informal sector, which can grant a degree of flexibility in balancing paid and unpaid responsibilities, but is often characterized by low pay, poor working conditions and insecurity.

Research shows the gendered differences in unpaid care work. For instance, the Ethiopia Time Use Survey (2013) reveals that an overwhelming majority (93 per cent) of women compared to men (56 per cent) were engaged in unpaid domestic work during 2013, and that women spend nearly twice as much time (49 per cent) as men (25 per cent) collecting fuel wood.³ On average, women spend 6.45 hours each day on care as a primary activity, compared to 0.29 hours by men. Women also spend more time than men on care as a secondary activity (undertaken alongside another activity). The total number of hours that women spend on care as a primary or secondary activity is significantly higher than for men (9.03 hours vs 0.72 hours).⁴

However, women are not restricted to unpaid care work alone. They are also employed in paid care work in care and non-care sectors. The undervalued and gendered nature of the care chain extends to paid care work, where the majority of the work is provided by women around the world, who encounter workplace gender-specific barriers that reduce their earnings and well-being. Among the paid care sectors, education and health care are prominent. The education sector (e.g. Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) programme) in Ethiopia already employs several women in paid care work. Also, women comprise most of the health workforce.⁵ These sectors have great potential for female employment, and investment in paid care work makes good business sense. Globally, women constitute around 70 per cent of the health and social care workforce⁶ and earn 24 per cent less than men.⁷

National policy responses to address inequalities in unpaid care work

In terms of policy response, several policies (past and present) address the care economy agenda in Ethiopia.

The National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2006–2010) identifies six distinct objectives:

- reducing women's workload, e.g. enhancing women's access to labour-saving technology and know-how
- redistributing roles between men and women
- increasing investment in areas that contribute to reducing women's heavy workload (such as water supply, flour mills, energy, food preparation devices and transportation)
- increasing the involvement of women in economic policy development
improving access to resources for urban, rural and pastoral women
- expanding the provision of social protection.

1 Oxfam (2014). Factors and norms influencing unpaid care work. <https://shorturl.at/gADM4>

2 Ibid.

3 CSA (2013). Ethiopia Time Use Survey 2013. https://www.timeuse.org/sites/ctur/files/public/ctur_report/9414/ethiopian_time_use_survey_report_2014.pdf

4 IDRC (2020). Policy mapping: Women's economic empowerment in Ethiopia. <https://shorturl.at/sIX69>

5 Ministry of Health (2013). Ethiopia health sector gender training manual.

6 World Health Organization (2021). Closing the leadership gap: Gender equity and leadership in the global health and care workforce.

7 World Health Organization (2022). The gender pay gap in the health and care sector: A global analysis in the time of COVID-19.

The Ten Years Development Plan (2021–2030) envisions eliminating the pay differential between men and women for similar jobs, which currently, on average, stands at 44 per cent. It also aims to equip all public institutions with child care facilities, and suitable work environments for people with disabilities, by 2030.

The Labor Proclamation No. 1156/2019 extends maternity leave to 120 days and attempts to curb workplace sexual harassment and sexual violence.

The Federal Civil Servants Proclamation No. 1064/2017 guarantees more favourable working conditions for civil servants, particularly women. It asserts equal pay for equal work, providing for day care in office spaces, extending maternity leave from 90 to 120 days and paternity leave from five to 10 days.

The National Employment Policy and Strategy⁸ pays particular attention to people with disabilities and women, adopting practical and supportive strategies that ensure equal participation in labour market and income generation activities. In line with strategy and policy recommendations, several initiatives have been implemented to improve the care economy. These include providing day care services, creating access to pre-primary education and labour and time-saving technologies, as well as advocacy and awareness activities in relation to the care economy. These are some of the major developments that support and strengthen the role of mothers in paid full-time work in Ethiopia.⁹

Purpose of the documentation

Between 2020 and 2023, UN Women and ILO implemented the joint programme “Promoting decent employment for women through inclusive growth policies and investments in the care economy”. One of the outcomes of the programme is to support government and relevant stakeholders to promote investment in the care economy. This paper has been developed in support of that outcome.

While initiatives to promote care work and increase investments in the care economy have increased in Ethiopia, there remains a lack of understanding of the full spectrum of issues in relation to paid and unpaid care work. This publication aims to address this lack of understanding and contributes to the documentation of good practices, opportunities, challenges and lessons learned from initiatives that provide care services in Ethiopia’s formal and informal sectors. It offers policy-makers and development practitioners knowledge and evidence that could be replicated and scaled up elsewhere. Insights may also serve as policy options for dialogue on the care economy.



Photo: UN Women/ Fikerte Abebe

⁸ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2016). National Employment Policy and Strategy.

⁹ IDRC (2020). Policy mapping: Women’s economic empowerment in Ethiopia. <https://shorturl.at/slx69>

2. CARE ECONOMY

FRAMEWORK

The 5Rs is a framework used to address care inequalities and promote a caring and gender-equal society. Before the 5Rs approach came into play, there was the 3Rs framework. The United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment highlighted the need to recognize, reduce and redistribute (3Rs) unpaid care work as key drivers of women's economic empowerment. The 3Rs¹⁰ have been widely adopted by women's rights advocates as the framework for policies to address UCDW. The 3Rs are:¹¹

Recognition: Recognition involves making visible the contribution of UCDW to society and the economy, including through government policies, budget allocation and the collection of quantitative and qualitative data to inform policy responses.

Reduction: Reduction efforts include reducing the drudgery of time- and labour-intensive UCDW tasks

to free up women's and girls' time to participate in education and in social, political and economic life.

Redistribution: Redistribution efforts involve ensuring that the responsibility for UCDW is shared more equitably between women and men, and between government, the private sector, communities and households.

The ILO expanded the 3Rs to the 5Rs in 2018, where it was proposed that there was a need to reward paid care work by promoting more and decent work for care workers and guarantee care workers' representation, social dialogue and collective bargaining.¹²

The 5Rs framework illustrates the need to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, as well as to reward care work, and promote the representation of care workers.



Photo: UN Women/ Fikerte Abebe

FIGURE 1:

The 5Rs approach: Five interconnected dimensions to promote the care economy



Source: Authors' illustration



Photo: UN Women/ Fikerte Abebe

3. METHODOLOGY

The present document is informed by a synthesis of an extensive literature review, interviews, case studies and observation. In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from institutional day care centres, community-run Early Child Development

(ECD) centres, school feeding programme centres, organizations that run male engagement programmes, trade unions and so on. Based on the analysis, several good practices, lessons, challenges are documented on the care economy agenda in Ethiopia.



Photo: UN Women/ Fikerte Abebe

4. GOOD PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN THE CARE ECONOMY

4.1 Current initiatives and good practices

In this section, a summary of some key initiatives undertaken to enable women to take part in education, and in social and economic life, is offered using the 5Rs approach.

I. Recognition

A. Time Use Survey



Photo: UN Women/ Fikerte Abebe

2013 marked the first year that Ethiopia carried out a stand-alone Time Use Survey with the support of UN Women and the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs. The main objective of the survey was to measure and analyse the time spent on paid and unpaid work and non-productive/leisure activities over a period of 24 hours for all persons aged 10 years and older. In addition, the survey was designed to make visible the full extent of the work of women and all their contributions to the national economy, including their contribution to the unremunerated domestic sectors.¹³

The survey was able to highlight the significant amounts of unpaid care work that women are responsible for. For example, of those engaged in domestic or personal production, 93 per cent were women compared to 57 per cent of men. Also, women were over more

likely than men to spend time collecting firewood or water (38 per cent compared to 18 per cent) and when they did, spending on average 50 minutes per day on these chores compared to 12 minutes for men. In rural areas, women are often engaged in a high number of unpaid activities, resulting in less time available for farming activities – female farmers spent around 14.4 hours per week on their farm, compared to 23 hours for men.¹⁴

Though the 2013 survey shed light on unpaid care work, it has been almost a decade since the survey was conducted. Discussions within the Gender Directorate of the Ethiopian Statistical Service (ESS) indicate that there is a plan to conduct a partial or full-time use survey for the year 2024. If the project is successful, it will be one step closer to improving the recognition of UCDW through the collection of current evidence.

B. Measuring UCDW and its contribution to GDP



Photo credit: SOS Sahel Ethiopia

13 CSA (2013). Ethiopia Time Use Survey 2013. https://www.timeuse.org/sites/ctur/files/public/ctur_report/9414/ethiopian_time_use_survey_report_2014.pdf

14 IMF (2018). The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. IMF Country Report No. 18/355. www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/CR/2018/cr18355.aspx

There are discussions across the UN system that acknowledge the shortcomings of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a metric, in that it does not measure unpaid or informal labour, and that there is a need to go beyond GDP as the main metric and have complementary measures. Similarly, leaders at the Ministry of Planning and Development who work on the Systems of National Accounts (SNA) stated in interviews that conversations have been held on the issue of including UCDW in GDP, but unpaid care work has not been included in the list of production boundaries (list of eligible goods and services selected for inclusion). In addition, these interviewees pointed out that the inclusion of UCDW will inflate GDP, and that accessing gender-disaggregated data is problematic.

Furthermore, the interviewees argued that since the calculation of GDP is based on international standards, unless modifications are made globally, it is difficult to adjust the estimation process. However, a landmark resolution was made in 2013 by the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians for the inclusion of unpaid work and household production in SNA.

The use of household satellite accounts is an alternate method employed when unpaid care work is not included in GDP. This account aims to capture and measure economic activities performed within households that are not typically accounted for in the SNA. Traditional national accounts focus mainly on market-based production and transactions that contribute to GDP.

Incorporating unpaid caregiving into the household satellite account enables the recognition of its economic worth and social contribution. It helps policy-makers understand the distribution of caregiving responsibilities and measure the impact on individuals and households. This information helps in designing policies related to social protection, labour market participation, gender equality, and work-life balance. The household satellite account enhances understanding of the economy by capturing unpaid care work and other non-market activities. By recognizing and quantifying these contributions, policy-makers can develop more effective measures to address issues related to work-life balance, gender

equality, and social well-being.

Recently, Mexico produced a household satellite account, which shows the contribution of unpaid care work to the economy.¹⁵ Ethiopia can learn from the experience of Mexico to produce its own unpaid household work satellite account to make known the economic value of unpaid work done by household members while carrying out productive activities.

II. Reduction

A. Labour-saving technologies

Background and specific measures

In Ethiopia, rural women of all ages spend much of their day engaged in domestic chores, including collecting water and firewood, processing and preparing food, travelling and transporting, and caregiving. These tasks are unpaid and restrict a woman's time and mobility. Moreover, lack of time and energy due to exhausting household tasks can lead to poor nutrition and health for the entire family, particularly infants and young children.

Labour-saving technologies and practices promote inclusive development by reducing the domestic workload and freeing up time to perform other activities, to participate in decision-making processes and development opportunities, and to enjoy more leisure time. When the domestic workload is reduced, women are the principal beneficiaries, but men also benefit, depending on the extent to which they perform these tasks.¹⁶

The Ministry of Innovation and Technology and the Ministry of Water and Energy, as well as development actors, are involved in creating and disseminating labour-saving technologies targeted at women in Ethiopia. Discussions with representatives from the Gender Directorate at the Ministry of Innovation and Technology indicate that the ministry has been exploring technologies that have the potential to improve women's time, income and health status. Currently, the ministry is commissioning a national

15 UN Statistics Division (2022). Unpaid household work satellite account of Mexico. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/groups/NetEconStat/Meetings/GDPSprintThirdMeeting/Unpaid_Household_Work_Mexico.pdf

16 IFAD (2016). Toolkit: Reducing rural women's domestic workload through labour-saving technologies and practices. <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/-/publication/toolkit-reducing-rural-women-s-domestic-workload-through-labour-saving-technologies-and-practices>

assessment survey that explores women’s workloads and their technological awareness, women’s needs, the affordability of technology, as well as its adoption.

Moreover, the ministry is engaged in supporting selected labour-saving technologies. These include *enset* (*Ensete ventricosum*) processing technology, milk processing technology, energy-saving cook stoves, avocado processing, and a pilot focused on manufacturing mobile houses for women in Afar and Somali. The latter is yet to be rolled out but if it succeeds it has a potential to reduce labour for women in those two regions, as the construction of temporary houses is the responsibility of women.

As part of Ethiopia’s efforts in response to the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) initiative (from 2011), fuel wood-efficient stoves (improved cook stoves, ICSs) were identified as one of the immediate priorities, and the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (now Environment Protection Authority, EPA) set up the national ICS programme, which was

designed to contribute to the implementation of the government’s ICS distribution plan through building a sustainable and vibrant market for ICSs and building institutional capacity at all levels.¹⁷ The target for the GTP I period (2011–2015) was 9.415 million ICSs. The GTP-II target (2015–2020) was even more ambitious, at 11.45 million ICSs, with a vision to scale up to 31 million ICSs in the country by 2030. What happened to this vision is not clear, however interviews with representatives from the Ministry of Water and Energy and the Ministry of Innovation and Technology indicate that investment in labour-saving technologies is ongoing. And yet, discussions with labour-saving technology producers indicate that demand for these items is low and producers face several constraints to promote their products, such as access to finance and transportation.

Nevertheless, in addition to promoting ICSs, the government is expanding a rural electrification project that has the potential to reduce unpaid care work.

Good practice case study 1



Photo credit: SOS Sahel Ethiopia

17 Clean Cooking Alliance. Sector directory. <https://cleancooking.org/sector-directory/ministry-of-water-and-energy-of-ethiopia-national-improved-cookstoves-program-nicsp/>

How improving enset processing technology frees up women's time

This case study shows how *enset* processing technology saves time and labour for women. *Ensete ventricosum*, commonly known as *enset* or Ethiopian banana, is a flowering plant belonging to the banana family.¹⁸ *Enset*'s cultivation and farm practices impose a high burden on women because of its cultural value.¹⁹ Moreover, *enset* processing is a labour-demanding activity and is challenging for women. Researchers say that despite the multiple benefits of *enset*, little effort has been made to advance processing of the crop.

However, new technology – *enset* scrapers, squeezers and fermenting machine – has been introduced with the potential to revolutionize traditional *enset* processing. To this end, *enset* processing tools, developed by Sodo Rural Technology Promotion Research Centre and Melkassa Agriculture Research Institution, have been distributed to farmers by different organizations.²⁰

Using an EU innovation grant, Arba Minch University and its partners (**Christian Aid** and **SOS Sahel**) have tested *enset* processing technology in Wolaita Zone. The technology has shown significant improvements

in processing time and a reduction in food waste. The project leaders emphasize the labour-intensive nature of *enset* processing, taking three to four days for between five and seven women to extract food from one *enset* plant. However, with the new technology, this task can be completed in about an hour. Also, traditional harvesting and post-harvesting methods are both unsanitary and result in high yield loss – up to 45 per cent. The use of the new technology eliminates this yield loss entirely. Additionally, the traditional fermentation process, which involves earthen pits or above-ground storage, poses numerous challenges, such as contamination, infestation and theft. In contrast, an *enset* fermenting box reduces fermentation time, improves quality, and decreases the workload for women.²¹

These and other projects indicate a promising improvement in cutting down on women's time, reduced food loss and fewer health concerns. Researchers also say the uptake of *enset* processing technology has the potential to change the trend of labour division in *enset* processing among household members so that more boys, girls and men become involved.

18 Borrell, J. S., Goodwin, M., Blomme, G. et al. (2020). Enset-based agricultural systems in Ethiopia: A systematic review of production trends, agronomy, processing and the wider food security applications of a neglected banana relative. *Plants, People, Planet* 2(3): 212–228. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppp3.10084>

19 Kudama, G., Tolera, T. and Gebeyehu, L. (2022). Good farm practices and improved processing technology of enset for sustainable hunger solution in Ethiopia. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship* 11(17). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-022-00210-x>

20 Ibid.

21 Tefera, G., Tadesse, A. and Hussein, A. (2019). Development and evaluation of enset fermenting box. *International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology* 8(10): 667–676.

Good practice case study 2



Photo: UN Women/ Geleta Kedir

Ministry of Innovation and Technology supporting improvements in dairy processing

Producing and selling milk-derived products, such as butter or fermented milk, are important sources of income for women in pastoralist communities.²² Women are in charge of the entire transformation process, and very often manage the revenues from the sale of dairy products. Improving milk production directly contributes to the empowerment of women and their families, and aids in providing for the dietary requirements of these agrarian and food-insecure people.

Traditional dairy processing uses very basic equipment, mostly made from locally available materials: animal skin, wood and plant fibres.²³ Similarly, cleaning and disinfection practices are based on traditional methods, such as smoking. These basic handling practices, coupled with animal health challenges and

limited water and sanitation facilities, raise questions about the safety and quality of the products. Not only could they be compromising people's health, but they could also prevent sellers from accessing new markets and new sources of income outside pastoralist areas.²⁴

Hygiene and sanitation are not the only problems in traditional milk processing: a third problem is that it takes up a lot of women's time. With the new technology produced and disseminated by the ministry and its partners in Bishoftu, it is freeing up women's time and energy. The simple machine is operated manually and can also be powered via a solar-charged panel. What used to take two to three hours can now be completed in under 30 minutes. Though the ministry admits more research needs to be done on adoption and affordability, technologies like this are pathways for women's empowerment and from the drudgery of domestic work.

22 CGAIR (2028), Adding value: Supporting pastoralist women's traditional dairy processing in Ethiopia. <https://a4nh.cgiar.org/2018/04/23/adding-value-supporting-pastoralist-womens-traditional-dairy-processing-in-ethiopia/>

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

B. School feeding programme

Background and specific measures

In October 2019, Addis Ababa City Administration launched a school feeding programme that aimed to benefit about 300,000 students by boosting enrolment and reducing absenteeism among school children. Initially, the programme was undertaken in almost 250 pre- and primary schools, with over 10,000 mothers securing a job opportunity in addition to the students benefiting from school meals.²⁵

The school feeding programme plays a crucial role in freeing up mothers' time, allowing them to focus on economic activities and reduce their domestic responsibilities of unpaid care work.²⁶ Officials at Addis Ababa Bureau of Education described how the school feeding programming is empowering women, improving care work. They said that school meal programmes provide children with nutritious meals during school hours. When children receive balanced meals at school, it reduces the need for mothers to spend time preparing meals at home. This allows them to allocate that time towards economic activities or other productive tasks. As mothers no longer have to spend time cooking and preparing meals for their children, they have more hours available in their day. This additional time can be dedicated to pursuing income-generating activities, attending skills training programmes, or engaging in entrepreneurial ventures. By freeing up their time, school feeding programmes create opportunities for women to participate in the workforce and improve their economic status.

Furthermore, the officials claim that the school feeding programme has the potential to break traditional gender roles: by shifting the responsibilities of meals and child care to the school, school feeding programmes challenge traditional gender roles that often burden women with unpaid care work. When women have the freedom to engage in economic

activities, it promotes gender equality and empowers them to contribute to household income. This is also a limited contribution to the care diamond²⁷ model, where the state shares responsibilities of care work.

Overall, the school feeding programme helps alleviate women's unpaid care work responsibilities and enhances their financial independence and overall well-being. This offers qualitative evidence that social protection policies contribute to unpaid care work.

Good practice case study 3

How the school feeding programme is benefiting women's micro-businesses

Tsehay (a single mother aged 45) enrolled her two children in pre-primary and primary school in Bole sub-city, Addis Ababa. The family's livelihood is supported by the modest business that Tsehay manages. She describes how getting her two children in school feeding programme has helped her to concentrate on her business. Prior to the start of the programme, she had little time and attention to devote to her business, which resulted in a poor income. She says that she no longer has to spend time cooking and preparing meals for her children, which gives her more time for income-generating activities and creating social networks.

By freeing up Tsehay's time, the school feeding programmes is creating an opportunity for her to engage in small business and improve her economic status. Tsehay says that the time required for raising children has partially been shared with the state and she is in a better position to generate some income. She also observes how school feeding programmes are not only helping mothers with young children but also can help reduce the time adolescent girls spend on household tasks, allowing them to devote more time to education.

25 Reliefweb (26 October 2019). School feeding program helps to cut dropouts. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/school-feeding-program-helps-cut-dropouts>

26 Global Child Nutrition Foundation (2023). Women and school meals program. <https://gcnf.org/celebrating-international-womens-day-women-and-school-meal-programs/>

27 Razavi's (2007) 'care diamond' framework is useful to highlight that unpaid care work is provided by four groups of actors: families and households, the state, the market and employers, and civil society groups.

C. Community-run Early Child Development (ECD) centres

Background and specific measures

In March 2021, Addis Ababa City Administration, in partnership with the federal government, launched the Children: The Future Hope of Addis Ababa Early Childhood Development Initiative, an integrated plan to reach all children under the age of 7 with an array of comprehensive programmes, including universal pre-school, home visits to especially vulnerable families, the establishment of day care centres, and the expansion of public play spaces.²⁸

The ECD programme envisions that, by 2026, all children in the city will have the best start in life to create a better future for them and for the country. Discussion with city officials indicates that, initially, the initiative was to target 330,000 low-income households. The initiative includes parent coaching programmes through regular house visits by urban health extension professionals and social workers, as well as expanding access to day care centres, pre-schools, outdoor playgrounds, and twice-monthly access to health and social support services.

To improve children's experience of the city environment, Addis Ababa City Administration is supporting the development of 16 day care centres, 14 model pre-schools, 10 outdoor playgrounds, and 30 open roads (with no traffic) on Sundays, which will provide safe spaces for children to play.²⁹

As the programme continues, Ethiopia plans to establish an ECD Centre of Excellence in Addis Ababa with the aim of advancing ECD best practices and policies at the federal and regional levels; improve the capacities, skills and competencies of the early childhood care workforce; influence policy direction; and forge strong links for a sustainable ECD sub-sector within Ethiopia and across the African continent. It also aims to facilitate international partnerships to enable dissemination and replication in other countries. With partners from five federal ministries, multiple city administration bureaus, and multiple international organizations, the initiative takes a multi-sectoral and holistic approach to improving ECD services in

the capital city.

The programme document indicates that the nine key areas of the initiative are:

1. Parent coaching, health and social services.
2. Community-run ECD centres.
3. Day care centres.
4. Expanded access to pre-primary schools.
5. Centre of Excellence for ECD.
6. Learn through play (closed roads, playgrounds and green sites).
7. Cross-sectoral governance.
8. Improved regulatory standards.
9. Measurement, learning, accountability, and data for decision-making.

While the current exercise was not able to fully grasp the effectiveness and impact of the initiatives, visits to some community-run ECD centres revealed good practices to be replicated elsewhere, as shown in the case story below. The freeing of women's time and the role of investment in care work are some of the emerging results from the initiative.

Good practice case study 4

Affordable community-run ECD centres contributing to employment outcomes for women

A community-run ECD centre was established in a condominium housing complex in Lemi Kura sub-city, Addis Ababa. The Integrated Housing Development Programme (IHDP) set up communal buildings for community gathering, and the Ayat Four Condominium House Owners Association was established, with responsibility for improving, renovating and administering these buildings. One of the buildings has been converted into an ECD centre, accommodating around 40 children and employing six assistants. The centre provides day care services and additional play facilities for children, encouraging their social and cognitive development early in life.

The centre has been instrumental in allowing paid workers, mostly teachers and health workers, to focus

28 Big Win Philanthropy. Ethiopia Early Child Development Program. <https://www.bigwin.org/case-study/ethiopia-early-childhood-development-program/>

29 Reliefweb (27 March 2021). Children in Addis Ababa to receive expanded early childhood development services under mayor's pioneering initiative. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/children-addis-ababa-receive-expanded-early-childhood-development-services-under>

on their careers. Benefits of the centre include reduced responsibilities for paid workers, improved children's well-being and nutrition, and reduced costs of hiring maids at home. Most users of the centre are teachers, who claim that the centre has improved their careers and enabled them to pursue more income-generating initiatives.

Sustainability is ensured through income-generating activities conducted by the association, with most communal buildings rented out and the income from renting used to operate the ECD centre and sanitation activities. With proper attention and programming, ECD centres have the potential to support family care and community life within housing associations, contributing to women's empowerment and gender equality.

D. Day care in government institutions

Background and specific measures

Article 36 (3) of the Ethiopian Constitution states that every child has the right to be cared for by parents or legal guardians. Furthermore, Ethiopia promulgated the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policy framework in 2010. The framework summarizes initiatives outlining services for children and their parents or caregivers from infancy to 7 years of age, and also includes a developmental stimulation component. The policy framework was revised in 2022/2023. The current national and global early childhood development guidance and socio-economic development in the country are said to have motivated the revision of the framework.

Ethiopia accepted and implemented National Human Rights Action Plans that permit the availability of day care service in governmental organizations. In 2018, the government passed a regulation stating that all public service organizations should provide a day care service for their women workers. The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) admits that initially many of the public institutions did not provide the service due to several bottlenecks, such as budget allocation from the Ministry of Finance, lack of knowledge on how to build day care settings, and access to a supply of day care materials. As a result, women workers in these organizations were unable to benefit from day care services.

However, a conversation with MoWSA reveals that a number of government organizations have begun offering day care services. The services are a relief for most women, as the children stay in the compound and mothers have the opportunity to breastfeed their infants and visit them.

Good practice case study 5

Creating access to day care at government institutions helps women to balance their careers and household activities

The FDRE's Information Network Security Administration (INSA) is one of the federal government institutions that set up day care for its employees early in 2018. The initiation of the centre was mainly motivated by the lack of day care for one of its leading scientists, who was about to give up work in order to focus on child care.

The centre currently houses 173 children, with other children on a waiting list. While the directive gives preference to mothers to benefit from the centres, what sets the day care centre apart from others is that it welcomes children brought by their fathers as well.

The facility provides child care for infants (4 months) through to 4-year-olds, and services are categorized as follows: a) 4 months to 1 year (toilet training); b) 1 year to 2 years (play, storytelling); c) 2 years to 4 years (life skills, as well as reading and writing).

The centre's manager lists a number of advantages that mostly female staff members are able to derive from using the facility. For instance, several women had quit work in order to focus on raising their children at the expense of their careers. Now, employee turnover has reduced, children are being cared for, and most women are getting job promotions and performing better at work.

Despite the success of the day care at INSA, the leaders indicate that recruiting trained child care professionals remains a challenge and, most importantly, employees without access to private transportation have to suffer commuting with children on public transport. The public transport system is less accommodating to mothers with young children, and reserving seats for them has not yet been established.

III. Redistribution

A. The practice of maternity and paternity leave

Background and specific measures

Even for women who work for pay at formal institutions, ingrained gender stereotypes still have an impact. The introduction of paternity leave in Ethiopian law is an important step toward gender equality. In principle, paternity leave attempts to tackle inequalities between working men and women and to redistribute unpaid work, including caregiving responsibilities.

The Labor Proclamation No. 1156/2019 increased the duration of paid maternity leave from 90 to 120 days and introduced three days of paid paternity leave for the private sector. Similarly, the Federal Civil Servants Proclamation No. 1064/2017 improved paternity leave from 5 days to 10 days for civil service employees. Researchers agree policies that ensure fathers have the support they need to prioritize their family responsibilities, while also meeting work demands, can significantly increase the personal and economic well-being of their families. Paternity leave can promote parent–child bonding, improve outcomes for children, and even increase gender equity at home and at the workplace.³⁰

Development partners complement the leave reform and argue that it is the critical role of political momentum and tripartite negotiations among the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), Ethiopian Employers’ Federation, and the government, coupled with persistence by the country’s trade unions, that led to the adoption of the reform.³¹

Though the reform is taken as a good practice to be emulated to those seeking to enhance their own leave policies for parents, some have criticized the significant difference in the duration of maternity and paternity leave, which may lead to the unintended

consequence of further deepening gender stereotypes. In addition, gender advocacy groups argue that with an increasing number of women entering the workforce, continuing a policy that disproportionately places the responsibility on mothers will not only hinder women’s careers but will also encourage employers to view motherhood as a negative factor in their hiring and promotion decisions³² and also prevent men from spending time caring for their children.

In addition, some fear that policies that put more pressure on private employers might discourage women’s employment. To address the private sector concern, the use of an insurance scheme where the private sector receives support from social protection systems rather than being forced to bear the full cost was a novel suggestion made to improve the employment of women and the policies surrounding leave in the private sector. However, the insurance programme proposition to improve women’s employment is yet to be fully articulated and attract the attention of policy-makers and development partners.

Furthermore, in addition to improvements in legal provisions, the extent to which maternity and paternity leave have been taken up is largely unknown, particularly for men. While some men report making use of the leave and supporting their wives, others claim they utilize the leave for reasons other than performing household tasks, while others still claim they are unsure of how to use it. One respondent at a government office said: “I returned to the office after taking four days off because I had no idea what to do with the leave.”

In order to assess the effectiveness of leave policies, there is a need to understand what affects leave uptake by men, including social norms. To solve the problem of uptake, the practice in Sweden may be instructive, where the minimum share of available parental leave is reserved for fathers on a “use it or lose it” basis, encouraging an equal sharing of caring responsibilities.³³

30 U.S. Department of Labor (2012). Paternity leave. <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/Paternity-Leave.pdf>

31 World Bank (2023). The road to reforming Ethiopia’s policies on maternity and paternity leave. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099318205292329927/pdf/IDU059d92bf30a959042a90beaf0e2e4952e8aa1.pdf>

32 Includovate (23 May 2021). Paternity leave in Ethiopia: Underlying assumptions and the need for its reform. <https://includovate.medium.com/paternity-leave-in-ethiopia-underlying-assumptions-and-the-need-for-its-reform-d13d97109109>

33 OECD (2014). Unpaid care work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes. https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf

B. Engaging men in unpaid care work



Photo: UN Women/ Fikerte Abebe

Background and specific measures

The evidence from the TUS shows that women spend significantly more time in UCDW than men. Sharing domestic responsibilities between the husband and wife promotes gender equality by challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes. It helps break down the notion that caring and household duties are solely women's responsibilities. In addition, when men actively participate in UCDW tasks, it reduces the domestic responsibilities of women, who have traditionally shouldered the majority of these responsibilities. It allows for a more balanced distribution of work within the household. Redistributing domestic work and care responsibilities ensures that both partners have more time available

for personal pursuits, career development and leisure activities.

Research also shows that the active involvement of men in child care fosters stronger relationships between fathers and their children. Increased interaction with children enhances emotional bonding, positive role modelling, and creates a nurturing environment.

There have been several initiatives by national and international NGOs to promote male engagement in domestic responsibilities in Ethiopia, such as WISE, SOS Sahel and others. Engagement in these interventions shows a great imbalance of workload between family members using different tools and methodologies, such as social analysis action and transformative household methodology (THM).

Good practice case study 6



Photo credit: Organization for Women in Self-Employment (WISE)

How WISE is using a transformative household methodology (THM) approach to raise awareness about household inequalities

THM is a tool developed by Send a Cow Ethiopia (now known as Ripple Effect) to improve intra-household gender relations by improving relations between women and men, girls and boys.³⁴ WISE, an Ethiopian civil society organization, supports low-income self-employed women and girls in their efforts to achieve self-reliance and improve their quality of life. Currently, WISE is engaging in a project that creates awareness of household inequalities. TMH facilitators engage family members in gender-related conversations, focusing on domestic work and the share of responsibilities using a house-to-house awareness-raising model. During a TMH session, members list the type of domestic work that takes place in the household. Each member is encouraged to keep stones or beans based on listed activities and its performer. Family members count the number of stones or beans in their hands for each activity and then correlate the result with the sex of the respective family members.

WISE facilitators monitor improvements in sharing domestic responsibilities among household members and submit a performance report to the project office. Based on the performance report, witness from neighbouring communities, and an independent evaluation, families are awarded for contributing to changes in entrenched social norms and gender stereotypes.

For example, Tuba Nesro and her family participated in TMH dialogues facilitated by WISE facilitators in Yeka sub-city in Addis Ababa. Nesro's husband, initially reluctant to participate, eventually understood the disproportionate share of domestic work and felt guilty after engaging in the exercise. Today, Nesro's husband claims to be a changed person. He cleans the house, makes coffee when his wife is not feeling well, and participates in children's affairs. He attributes this change to the TMH dialogues and encourages other men to try. Tuba's family has won honours, and their neighbours regard them as role models.

³⁴ Ripple Effect (03 April 2020). A tool that's helping us take a closer look at gender equality. <https://rippleeffect.org/blog/a-tool-thats-helping-us-take-a-closer-look-at-gender-equality/>

IV. Reward

Background and specific measures

Policy measures within the “reward” component of the 5Rs approach deal with regulating and implementing decent terms and conditions of employment and achieving equal pay for work of equal value for all care workers. Such policy measures are also related to ensuring a safe, attractive and stimulating work environment for both women and men care workers. Furthermore, rewarding is about enacting laws and implementing measures to protect migrant care workers. In this section, we concentrate on the state of domestic workers in Ethiopia in terms of both policy and practice,³⁵ and limited rewarding practices for care workers from private banks.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has adopted the convention No. 189 for special legal protection of domestic workers. Ethiopia has signed the convention but is yet to ratify it and the domestic workers agenda is excluded from labour law protection. This means domestic workers are exposed to abuse because there are no specific laws governing the subject of domestic workers and employer–employee interactions.

Discussions with representatives from a domestic worker union and a review of the literature³⁶ reveal several challenges that domestic workers encounter. For example, there is a limited practice of entering a clear contractual agreement with employers. Because of the asymmetry in bargaining power, the employer typically has the authority to either continue or terminate the employment contract.

In addition, domestic workers are more often subjected to unlimited work time and sexual abuse. The challenges are not only on the demand side, as domestic workers suffer from several socio-economic constraints, such as weak bargaining power, illiteracy, and lack of awareness about rights. Similarly, domestic workers and their employers have limited awareness regarding the types and scope of their rights and duties. Furthermore, despite some efforts at the regional and federal level, domestic workers are not fully organized for the protection of their rights.

Moreover, the present exercise found limited practices of rewarding care providers for their contributions. There is a need for rewards for care service providers in care and non-care sectors. Most of the care service providers are women, who earn less and work in non-conducive environments, and sometimes without protective equipment.

A practice of rewarding care was reported from a private bank that offers financial support for street sweepers and other domestic workers, as shown in the case study below.

Good practice case study 7

Enat Bank’s domestic worker financing initiative

Enat Bank, one of the local private banks in the country, is supporting financially vulnerable women working in cleaning jobs.³⁷ The project is part of a five-year programme funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Mercy Corps. In 2021, Enat Bank signed an agreement with Mercy Corps and Eziti (technology company) to connect users with home service providers through a digital platform, Taskmoby. The digital platform connects service providers, such as cleaners, plumbers and electricians, with clients.

The financing scheme provides ETB 3,000 credit each to 300 women. Enat Bank covers half of the collateral put under a closed account and the SIDA programme covers the balance.³⁸ Fortune Newspaper spoke to Demoz Tilahun, 32, one of the beneficiaries. She is a mother of two who found work with four clients working as a cleaner, following a 15-day training under the programme. Also, another small civil society organization, Endezege, is working with street sweepers facilitating support from the same fund.

Initiatives like this are some of the good practices that reward and recognize care work through finance and education. It helps women advance their careers and, as they are mostly shift workers, supports them to engage in income-generating activities outside of their shifts.

35 UN Women (Undated). The 5Rs: Advancing the care agenda. <https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/The%205Rs.pdf>

36 Demarso, Y. K. and Abba, B. A. (2020). Legal protection for domestic workers: The case of Wolaita Sodo Town, Ethiopia. *Beijing Law Review* 11: 770–781.

37 Fortune (14 May 2022). Enat Bank sees credit boost to women powered by partners. <https://addisfortune.news/enat-bank-sees-credit-boost-to-women-powered-by-partners/>

38 Ibid.

V. Representation

Background and specific measures

Representation, in the 5Rs approach, among other things, deals with ensuring freedom of association for care workers (unpaid and paid) as well as care receivers, promoting social dialogue, and strengthening the right to collective bargaining in care sectors. The aim is to ensure that those with care needs, priorities and responsibilities are considered and have a say in the budgets, policies and decisions that affect their daily lives. The current document conceptualizes representation as pertaining to paid care workers.

Care workers often face challenges, such as low wages, long working hours, lack of benefits, and difficult working conditions. There are several employee rights organizations, such as the CETU, Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA), domestic worker unions and several civil society organizations advocating for the care sector. Representation by trade unions allows workers to collectively negotiate for better working conditions, fair wages and adequate benefits.

Care workers occasionally face workplace disputes or issues with their employers. Representation by trade unions ensures that these concerns are properly addressed and resolved through negotiation or arbitration processes, protecting the rights and interests of the care workers. By joining together in trade unions, care workers can amplify their voices and actively participate in policy-making processes. This allows them to advocate for policies that benefit both the workers themselves and the communities they serve.

In this context, the roles of the ETA and other trade unions become crucial in representing the interests of education-related care workers for collective action, such as access to housing and pay issues. In addition, discussions with ETA leaders indicate that the union, in collaboration with partners, organizes training and professional development programmes that enhance teachers' skills and knowledge.

Also, reviews³⁹ indicate that CETU played a strong role in developing the new leave policies for parents. The labour organization initially provided the first draft of the new labour law to the Council of Ministers in 2016. The draft included provisions on the extension

of the duration of maternity leave to six months and the introduction of five days of paternity leave. However, the proposal was rejected because the draft law was considered overly ambitious and seen as heavily favouring employees.

The case study below is an example of a trade union playing an active role in influencing policies and reforms that align with the needs of domestic care workers.

Good practice case study 8

How one union is advocating for the rights of domestic workers

It is commonly acknowledged that domestic worker exploitation prevails in Ethiopia, as a significant number of workers are subjected to unfair treatment and labour rights violations. Amidst this challenging situation, there exist organizations dedicated to advocating for the rights of domestic workers. One prominent organization, Andinet Ethiopian Domestic Workers Union (AEDWU), plays a crucial role by raising awareness, fighting for improved working conditions, and empowering domestic workers in the country. AEDWU works closely with CETU and other civil society organizations.

AEDWU was established with the aim of addressing the plight of domestic workers who were facing systemic exploitation and discrimination across six regions in Ethiopia. Recognizing the critical need for a unified and influential platform, the founders of AEDWU strive to create an organization that uplifts the voices of domestic workers and protects their rights, such as the right to fair wages and the right to reasonable working hours.

One of AEDWU's objectives is to ensure fair treatment, improved working conditions, and dignified lives for domestic workers. A discussion with the leader of the organization indicates that through various advocacy initiatives, the union actively campaigns for the following:

a. Raising awareness: AEDWU strives to raise awareness about the rights and challenges encountered by workers. AEDWU highlights the importance of this workforce to society, bringing attention to their

39 World Bank (2023). The road to reforming Ethiopia's policies on maternity and paternity leave. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099318205292329927/pdf/IDU059d92bf30a959042a90beaf0e2e4952e8aa1.pdf>

struggles with the aim of rallying support and gaining recognition from local and global communities.

b. Legislative changes: One of AEDWU's core activities involves pushing for legal reforms that protect domestic workers. Particularly, AEDWU demands that the Ethiopian government ratify and effectively implement ILO's Domestic Workers Convention No. 189.

c. Unionization: AEDWU strongly supports the inclusion of workers in unions, understanding the strength that comes from representation. By implementing outreach initiatives, the organization actively encourages workers to become union members. This helps create networks and platforms, across six regions, enabling workers to collectively advocate for their rights.

Through increasing knowledge and advocating for changes in laws and supporting workers through education and the formation of unions, the organization aims to create positive change. As the union continues to stand up for the rights and respect of workers, it actively fights against exploitation while promoting fairness and equitable labour practices.

4.2. Constraints and challenges to transforming the care economy

The current section illustrates the constraints and challenges that each of the 5Rs faces to transform the care economy.

1. Recognize: Unpaid care work is a substantial contributor to the economy and growth, but it is rarely acknowledged as such. There is limited interest and awareness about considering the contribution of UCDW to the macro economy by policy-makers. Also, while there are some efforts being made by rights organizations, there is still limited advocacy work to push policy-makers for the inclusion of unpaid care work in the estimation of GDP. Also, developing separate household satellite accounts, which aims to capture and measure the economic activities performed within households that are not typically accounted for in the SNA, does not appear to be part of the policy conversation.

Further, while budget allocation plays an important role in recognizing, reducing and redistributing, UCDW is absent from government budgets. Budgets that do not consider UCDW are not gender-responsive and exacerbate gender inequalities inside and outside the home.⁴⁰ Furthermore, while the TUS of 2013 was a landmark study, the lack of up-to-date and reliable data on UCDW remains a constraint in Ethiopia.

2. Reduce: The sheer volume and intensity of care work can be overwhelming, leading to physical and mental exhaustion for caregivers. While the government and stakeholders are contributing to reduce the burden on unpaid care work, there is still limited access to basic infrastructure. This exacerbates the burden on individuals, particularly women, who predominantly perform care work.

And yet, access is not the only problem, particularly with labour-saving technologies such as efficient cook stoves. For instance, there are several technologies in the market, but suppliers claim that demand is low and as a result the suppliers make limited scaling efforts with proper patent rights secured.

In addition to the demand problems that suppliers encounter, access to finance remains a challenge for full commercialization efforts. Overall, despite efforts, much remains to be done to reduce the amount and complexity of care work through the provision of public services and social infrastructure.

3. Redistribute: The unequal distribution of care responsibilities poses a significant constraint. Due to deep-rooted gender norms and societal expectations, women are disproportionately burdened with unpaid care work, limiting their opportunities for education, employment and economic empowerment. Some good practices have been reported regarding the redistribution of care responsibilities more equitably within households, contributing to reducing gender inequalities, as well as good practices in changing attitudes among some men, who are increasingly engaging in domestic responsibilities. However, the majority of these activities are carried out by NGOs, contrary to the care diamond framework's recommendation that households, the market, voluntary sector and the government all share responsibility for providing care.

40 Oxfam (2020). Unlocking sustainable development In Africa by addressing unpaid care and domestic work. <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620939/bp-sustainable-development-africa-ucdw-030220-en.pdf>

Similarly, despite some progressive attitudes of men who have gone through the awareness-raising events, traditional gender roles and stereotypes surrounding care work remain a challenge so that more equal division of responsibilities within households prevails.

4. Reward: The lack of financial compensation or social recognition for unpaid care work further perpetuates its devaluation. Care professionals receive limited recognition by organizations and institutions. The absence of formal recognition prevents caregivers, predominantly women, from accessing social protection mechanisms and entitlements. In some sectors, not only is reward not offered but it also remains unregulated. Despite strong advocacy for legal inclusion and respect, the issues of domestic workers are yet to fully be addressed. Limited investment in care work and struggles to access decent work are some of the challenges in the care sub-sector.

Furthermore, implementing policies that recognize and reward care workers, such as through social

security benefits or tax incentives, remains a gap, which if filled would enhance the economic well-being of caregivers.

5. Representation of care workers: While there is promising advocacy work by CETU, ATE and other civil society organizations, the voices and perspectives of caregivers, especially women, are often excluded from decision-making processes in the country. Lack of representation in policy-making and planning inhibits the formulation of comprehensive strategies to address the constraints faced by care economy actors.

In addition, care workers are yet to have meaningful participation and representation in relevant forums to shape policies and interventions that consider their needs and concerns. Also, trade unions representing care workers, in alliance with civil society organizations, conduct limited advocacy efforts for more investment in care work and recognition.

5. Lessons learned

The following insights and lessons emerged from the consultation with policy-makers and caregivers during the current exercise.

1. Generating evidence is the first step to value care work. Many case studies address the need for governments to recognize and remunerate unpaid care as a fundamental step to addressing inequality and empowering women. While there are some efforts in Ethiopia to measure unpaid care work, its integration into GDP or a separate account is yet to be actualized, leaving gaps in understanding the full extent of its contribution.

2. Investment in time- and labour-saving equipment and infrastructure reduces time spent on care work. Adequate investment in infrastructure, such as clean cooking stoves, clean water supply, sanitation facilities and electricity, can significantly reduce the time spent on domestic chores. This reduces the burden on caregivers, particularly women and girls, allowing them more time to engage in other productive activities. However, in the case of labour-saving technology, evidence shows that availability may not always lead to adoption. Affordability and uptake are quite separate from availability.

3. Promoting social protection policies. Implementing and expanding social protection policies, such as maternity and paternity leave, can help redistribute care responsibilities and provide economic support to caregivers. These policies can help create a more balanced division of care work by encouraging fathers and other family members to share responsibilities.

However, there is a need to monitor and understand how those policies are being used to reduce the burden of care work, and introduce innovative methods, such as a maternity leave insurance scheme, to promote women's employment in the private sector.

4. Access to child care services is linked with women's economic participation. The case studies in this document demonstrate the difference that affordable and reliable child care can make to freeing up women's time for paid employment. Child care services can help working spouses to balance their caregiving responsibilities with their economic pursuits. This can contribute to increased labour force participation and economic growth.

5. Entrenched social norms and gender stereotypes can be reduced through continuous male engagement initiatives. Successful initiatives have been observed that seek to change behavioural trends and challenge existing gender norms by increasing male involvement in home-based care work. However, male engagement initiatives are yet to be mainstreamed in government programmes and transformative efforts across society as a whole, and largely remain the preserve of civil society initiatives with sustainability concerns.

6. Scaling good practices and promoting the care economy requires collaboration and coordination between government, civil society organizations, communities and international partners. The creation of decent work opportunities and regularization of the informal sector (e.g. domestic workers) is a challenge; however, it is a requirement for empowering women and advancing the care economy.

6. Opportunities AND THE way forward

Raising awareness and acknowledging the value of unpaid care work is crucial. The activities being conducted by several civil society organizations and trade unions have laid bases for future work. In addition, the government's statistical service has emphasized the need to collect more evidence on unpaid care work. A progressive policy and legal environment that sets an enabling environment to push for promoting the care economy indicates commitment by the government to address the challenges of care work. Interventions by human rights organizations who demand budget and favourable policies for care work are some of the opportunities for policy uptake. However, there is a need to push for more recognition of UCDW by generating reliable TUSs and developing stand-alone household satellite accounts.

In addition, there are several strategies to decrease the amount of time and effort required for unpaid care work, which can provide opportunities for women to engage in other productive activities. Government entities such as the Ministry of Innovation and Technology and Ministry of Water and Energy are investing in infrastructure. More and more women are accessing electricity and time- and labour-saving technologies. Improved access to labour-saving devices and technologies can help automate or simplify care tasks, freeing up time for other activities. Improved access to water, sanitation and electricity can reduce the time spent on domestic chores, particularly for women and girls. But there is a need to create access to financial services for business entities that are attempting to bring their final product to the market and commercialize technologies at scale.

Similarly, social protection measures that support women and men with substantial UCDW responsibilities are in place in some cities. For example, the school feeding programme in the capital city is believed to have contributed to freeing time for most women to engage in productive work. In addition, access to community-run day care centres and institutional day care are revolutionizing the prospects for working women. However, in the case of institutional child care at government offices, there is a need for

vertical integration, as public transport services are not responsive to mothers with children. Also, coverage needs to be expanded and sustainability sources identified.

Furthermore, policy and programmatic initiatives are in place to share the responsibility of unpaid care work more equitably. This includes the civil service and employee leave policies that support paid family leave, and affordable child care facilities that can help redistribute care responsibilities between family members. However, there is significant concern over policies that promote extremely long maternity leave for women and very short paternity leave for men. In general, these policies can be considered "care responsive", as they support children's rights to receive good-quality care and for a person to provide that care, but they are not "gender responsive" in that they reinforce gendered norms about the responsibility for care. There is a need to advocate for policies that are both care responsive and gender responsive. Also, there is a need for campaigns that promote the value of spending time with young children and that support male managers to be role models in taking parental leave provisions.

As yet, there is little data on the uptake of paternity leave and whether leave is used by husbands to reduce domestic responsibilities; there is a need, therefore, to generate such evidence. Also, the proposal to introduce an insurance scheme within the leave policy appears to be a good practice to promote women's employment in the private sector, but it has received little attention as a care-related social protection mechanism. More concerted effort is needed to promote its popularity and achieve its uptake.

In addition, not all measures and good practices presented in this document have been formally evaluated for their impact on 5R outcomes. There is a need to launch impact evaluation studies, preferably using randomized control trial designs, to understand the real impact of those interventions. Likewise, more evidence and advocacy are required to make a business case for public investment in care work. Properly trained and paid workers in early childhood care and education need to be framed as investment in the care economy, which in turn can create opportunities for women to access decent work opportunities.

**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



UN Women Ethiopia Country Office
UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa
Fiesta Bldg, 8th Floor, Kirkos Sub-city, Woreda 02
House No. 220, Gabon St. Meskel Flower
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Email: Ethiopia.comms.unwomen.org

Website: [UN Women Ethiopia](http://UNWomenEthiopia.org)

[unwomenethiopia](#)

[unwomenethiopia](#)

[UNWomenAfrica](#)