

Unpaid Work for Women

Trade union policy papers



All rights reserved to the Arab
Trade Union Confederation,
first edition in Arabic



Introduction:

Despite figures and data released by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on gender equality and non-discrimination, the rate of participation of Arab women in the labour market is 18.4, the lowest in the world compared to the world average of 48. However, men's participation in the labour market exceeds 77 against the world average of 75. The presence of women in managerial positions is also low in the Arab countries, where only 11 of women hold managerial positions compared to the global average of 27. 1. Unpaid child-care work by women consumes almost more five times compared to men. On the other hand, the unemployment rate for women in the Arab countries is 15.6, which is three times the global rate.

In many societies, women's social role includes "childbirth, childcare, taking of the elderly and the disabled, food and clothing preparation, water collection and fireworks..." (20) Women's gender roles are, also, socially built within the economy as well, because their economic contributions can be easily replaced for men through remarriage or through payment for care services. Care work can be bought and sold. However, it is mostly unpaid and not officially considered as work.

Therefore, the socially defined gender roles of men as independent and provider for the family and women as members of the domestic sphere have been reinforced by the economic factors that make gender relations depend on an exchange of support for service. In the area of 'unpaid care work,' men usually hold much less responsibility than women because of the socially created 'gender division of labour.'

Unpaid work is a daily feature of everyone's life. Its role in supporting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities is indisputable. It can take the form of goods and services provided within families or to others through voluntary work or other unpaid activities.

Nevertheless, unpaid work can still be visible in statistics and policies. However, its importance and the need to understand its nature and role is increasingly becoming acknowledge. The latter led to, among other things, the inclusion of the assessment of unpaid care work in Sustainable Development Goals under goal 5 on gender equality. The 2030 Plan aims to address the persistent gender inequality in paid and unpaid work as a necessary basis for inclusive growth and development.

Unpaid care work is an essential factor that contributes to the well-being of individuals, their families, and communities, as is an important aspect of the economic activity. Every day individuals spend a great deal of time cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, the sick, and the elderly.

The value of family care and unpaid domestic work is estimated to be about %10 to %39 of GDP in most countries which deprives other economic sectors from employment such as manufacturing, trade or transport as a result of women's unpaid work.

Policies that aim to provide social services and basic infrastructure to share domestic should be created. These policies help achieve gender equality and create more paid jobs in the care economy to accelerate progress and women's economic empowerment. Women usually do domestic chores because of social norms, lack of public services and infrastructure, and/or lack of family support policies.

The recognition, reduction, and redistribution of unpaid care work is an urgent issue for gender equality in the Arab world. The highest ratio of female to male in terms of time spent in unpaid care work is found in the Arab countries.

Changing demographic trends, including low fertility rates, an ageing population, and the increasing prevalence of nuclear families, are also challenging systems for providing care that depends on women's unpaid work. Addressing unmet needs for the care of young children, the elderly, the sick, and persons with disabilities requires investments in the development of paid care services.

The recognition of the economic value of domestic work does not only do justice to women as a social group, but also to migrants and refugee workers who work in poor conditions, almost slavery, because domestic work is not recognized as work requiring guarantees and rights.

If domestic work becomes economically acknowledged, domestic work as it is now may cease to exist. "Domestic work is considered inferior even among some women who see that it does not allow women to achieve their goals" and "noting recognizing domestic work is double exploitation for women who have to work inside and outside their houses."

Women often spend more time in unpaid care work than men, and because of gender-based social norms that view unpaid care work as exclusive to women, women in different regions, economic and social classes and cultures spend a large part of their day meeting expectations for their reproductive and domestic roles, in addition to their paid activities, creating a double burden for women.

How society and policymakers address care issues have important implications for gender equality. They can either expand the choices and abilities of women and men, or limit women to the traditional roles of femininity and motherhood in Arab countries. According to the United Nations (UN), the unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men violates women's rights and hinders their economic empowerment.

In this regard, the Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) stresses that gender inequality in unpaid care work is one of the most important issues affecting gender gaps in work outcomes and that this gender gap in unpaid care work has significant implications for women's ability to participate actively and effectively in the labour market and the quality of their employment opportunities. Spending their time between their actual work and domestic work limits the opportunities for women to invest in their academic and professional skills.

This paper will define: Unpaid work, the importance of the phenomenon, and the types of unpaid work, legislative frameworks governing unpaid work, means of measuring the value of unpaid work, how to estimate the economic and social contribution of unpaid work, an assessment of the situation and the reality of unpaid work by women in the Arab region (available models), the effects of unpaid work on women, and proposed ways and solutions to decrease the effects of unpaid work.

Definition of unpaid work:

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), unpaid domestic work by women is estimated to be about one third of the world's economic production. In developing countries, it is estimated that women's working hours are 30% higher than men's and are directly the result of a market ideology based on production to serve profits rather than society. While child care must be a shared social responsibility, which becomes the responsibility of women alone in addition to domestic chores, women's hard work and prominence is reflected in the care, preparation, and upbringing of children. There is no doubt that free care for children ensures that capitalism is free of charge by setting low wages, thereby further exploiting and increasing capital, where the cost of the working-class production (i.e. raising future workers) is done free of charge by women and is completely disconnected from the market.

The long hours women spend caring for children and preparing them for society are directly related to increased production outside the family establishment, i.e. in the labour market. While the production of goods on the market is essential for increasing profit, the generation production process, which is the workforce, is crucial today to protect the system and increase its profits.

Unpaid work is defined as work that produces goods or services free of charge and includes domestic and subsistence work, unpaid production of market materials, unpaid agricultural work. Women are the main workers in the unpaid sector. Unpaid work can be defined as work in which the worker receives no material equivalent, which includes domestic work to care for family members, housework from cooking and cleaning, production of agricultural goods from the home garden, and also voluntary work in charities, and unpaid work as an apprentice to get the required work experience. In addition, the definition includes the production of goods and services used for the self-consumption of the family without its passage through the market.

The importance of the phenomenon:

Women bear the burden of unpaid work. They spend more hours on unpaid work per day than men. While women's average hours in unpaid work around the world is around ٤,٤ hours, men spend only ١,٧ hours in such work.

According to ٢٠١٨ United Nations Statistics, women continue to spend more time than men in unpaid work. This gap increases in developing countries, and varies according to cultural and social legacies, where rural women and girls spend most of their time in unpaid activities, where gender norms and roles in rural communities require that women and girls assume a wide range of responsibilities, starting with domestic tasks such as childcare, cooking, and agricultural work. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), poor rural women work at least ١٨-١٦ hours a day and are not recognized in policy-making and service planning.

Gender participation in the labour market does not mean equal participation in home burdens. The term triple burden refers to women's reproductive, productive, and community management roles. The reproductive role of women includes care and support (reproduction, education, and care), but they also bear the burden in unpaid domestic work. The productive role concerns income-generating activities, while the community management role is mostly concerned with functions related to community activities, health care, etc. In most societies today, and in light of customs and traditions, women play all three roles, especially in poor societies. As women entered the labour market, their responsibilities increased. Men are primarily engaged in productive and societal political activities, which usually earn them money, social status, and access to sources of power.



Types of unpaid work:

1. Informal family care:

Informal family care refers to informal and unpaid family care done by a family member to care for children, elderly relatives, sick individuals, or persons with disabilities, without the need to hire workers or to resort to care and assistance provided by individuals to other individuals outside civil or voluntary organizations, often very similar in nature to paid care occupations such as those relating to childcare, nursing, home care.

2. Volunteering:

Voluntary work is a form of unpaid work that extends beyond the individual's household to the families of others and social institutions in general. A work is classified as "voluntary work" if unpaid work activities are performed for beneficiaries who are not direct family members and for whom there is no direct remuneration.

Women's voluntary work prevails in institutions and sectors associated with female care work such as schools, hospitals, and voluntary services for the care of the elderly and children.

3. Unpaid work in the workplace:

In some cases, women do unpaid work in their official workplaces by performing additional duties outside the requirements of their official employment and are not related to their official functions, often mistakenly regarded as "voluntary work." These activities include cleaning, informal care, service to other individuals, and for personal relationships, where the latter may include sympathetic work, and sometimes employees are forced to do so.



In this regard, unpaid work may include paid workplaces especially for migrants. When migrants look for work in their area of expertise, they are required to have “work experience” in the form of unpaid work. While officially called “volunteering,” it differs from the standard definitions of work in terms of motivation, experience, and sector.

Migrants may be forced into unpaid work because they are excluded from the labour market. Their unpaid work is not secondary to the workplace, as assistants. Instead, they perform similar jobs as other workers. Migrants who do unpaid work for work experience are not only unpaid in non-profit or community agencies but also in profit companies (such as banks) and the public sector.

4. Unpaid domestic work:

Domestic work dates to the ancient division of labour, prior to the emergence of the market, where men were involved in hunting and physical work, while women were setting fire, bread making, and other household chores.

The concept of domestic work in economic thought is considered to be all services that are produced and consumed free of charge within the family, including home care and equipment, preparation and provision of food, purchase of household items, care and upbringing of children, taking care of family members and the elderly, and other work that mainly falls to women.

Women, whether they have paid jobs or not, have to do housework, cook, clean, etc, which reduces their free time compared to men. Some families may use paid employees to perform these domestic tasks. However, it is usually women who do unpaid domestic work. Despite the significantly increasing tendency to include men in these jobs, the largest share is women’s time and effort, depriving them of additional income or time that can be used for income-generating jobs.

Feminist economic thought coined the concept of unpaid domestic work as a product of excess value, and that women are exploited where men benefit from excess value, since women provide free hygiene, food, and child-care services, limiting, therefore, women’s ability to enter the labour market and obtain independent income. The latter contribute to the poverty of women.

5. **Unpaid domestic farming activities:**

Domestic farming activities (private for self-sufficiency) constitute another type of unpaid work often performed by women. It is undervalued and invisible in the economic calculations of labour. These include vegetable farming, wood and water fetching, and livestock welfare, which are particularly important for the economies of agricultural households. This sector could be much more valuable than other economic sectors, such as industrialization and trade, if added to GDP calculations, thus depriving the economy of the practical contribution of this sector to many countries, particularly developing countries.



6. **Unpaid family work:**

This concept is based on the direct unpaid contributions of family members to household production for sale on the market, a pattern of business officially counted within the income of only one family member. For example, a family member may legally be considered the owner or entrepreneur of a company, but there are many relatives who assist in the company's operations without having an official appearance on official records, often women, employers' wives or children, thus depriving them of their most basic rights to income, social insurance, or government assistance.



7. **Reproductive work:**

While unpaid care work is not fully biological, reproductive work is (partially) so. Debra Satz believes that reproductive work is "a special type of work that should not be treated according to market standards." It includes reproduction and the upbringing/ care of children and other family members. Pregnancy is an act that can only be performed by those with female reproductive organs, making it an irreversible biological act. Married women, single mothers, or other family members (such as older siblings, aunts) are expected to be the main actors in this unpaid reproductive work in their personal lives. Child-care falls under both reproductive work and care. Therefore, after breastfeeding, any family member can do this work.



Legislative frameworks governing unpaid work:

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1995 recognizes the significant contribution of women's unpaid work, especially agricultural and domestic work, to the economy. The Beijing Platform for Action Declaration gave wide-ranging attention to highlighting the global reach all forms of women's work, including non-paid domestic work, to reach accurate findings on the gender gap and women's participation in the national wealth.

After the Declaration, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of this issue. Many recommendations, perhaps most notably in the recommendations of the Committee on Sustainable Development, in the context of the objectives of sustainable development have been adopted.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls upon states to amend discriminatory social norms and provide basic social services to enable both women and men to participate equally in work and public life. CEDAW urges governments to provide support systems and infrastructure, such as childcare facilities, maternity and paternity benefits, and other services, to help reduce and redistribute care work.

Acknowledging unpaid care work is a critical step towards achieving sustainable development goals by 2030, with Goal 5 containing gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls by 2030 to achieve recognition and appreciation of unpaid care work and domestic work. It also includes the provision of public services and infrastructure, the development of social protection policies, and the promotion of responsibility-sharing within the household and the family, as appropriate at the national level.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women demands decreasing the gender gap to redistribute unpaid care and domestic work equally.

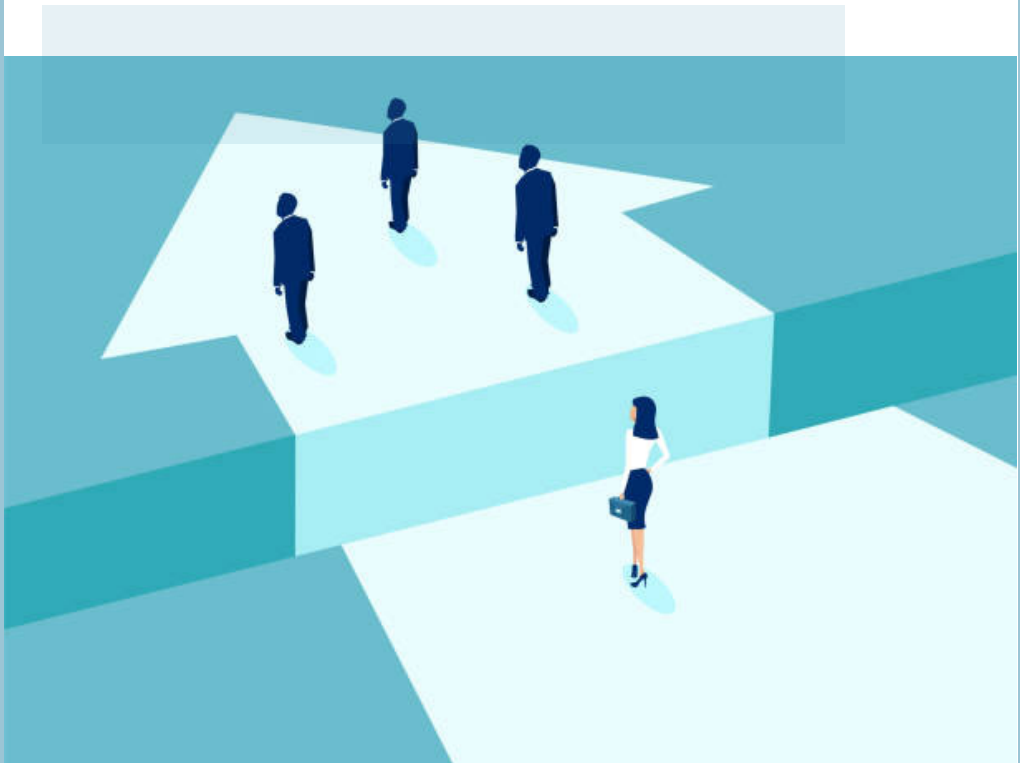
The global women's movement adopted the requirement to include unpaid domestic work in national accounts, and that had been crystallized in the Beijing Declaration of 1995 of the World Women's Conference. The United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSD) recognized the need to prepare supplementary accounts for household work statistics and identified unpaid domestic service work, care work, and community work.

Despite the diversity of unpaid work and its multiple economic effects, there is a growing interest in reducing its impact on women to reach gender equality and protect women from exploitation. Many states have enacted legal legislation to reduce its negative effects by aiding families suffering from it. However, the amount of unpaid work around the world still remains unknown.

Social norms and the interpretation of gender inequality in care responsibilities:

Gender inequality in unpaid care work can be explained by the discriminatory social norms. The gender gap in the use of time for instance can be explained by social, demographic, and economic factors, such as education and class. However, half to two thirds of these disparities remain unjustified and discriminatory, and inequalities in care responsibilities persist even among 'wealthier' and more 'educated' households, where women contribute more than %60 of the time allocated to domestic work.

Opportunities for women and men are equally determined by social systems, including traditional gender roles and customs, as well as by the societies and countries in which they live. Social systems (such as formal and informal laws, customs, and social practices) shape and influence the decisions and choices of groups, communities, and individuals, where social regulations affect gender roles by identifying behaviours considered acceptable or unacceptable.



Unpaid care work and women's participation in the labour force:

The amount of time spent on unpaid care work is inversely correlated to female participation in the workforce. In states where women spend an average of five hours in unpaid care activities, 50% of women of working age are active. In states where women spend three hours in unpaid care work, the proportion of active women reaches 76% of the labour force, and the decrease in unpaid care work for women is therefore associated with a 26% increase in women's labour force participation rate for a given level of GDP per capita, fertility rate, female unemployment rate, female education, and urbanization rate.

Gender inequalities in unpaid care work are also linked to gender gaps in labour force participation. The greater the inequality in the distribution of care responsibilities between women and men, the greater the gender gaps in labour force participation is. In countries where women spend almost eight times as much time as men in unpaid care activities, they represent only 30% of the active working population.

When the difference falls below twice the time, women's participation in the labour force increases to 50% of the active population in relation to a certain level of GDP per capita, fertility rate, urbanization rate, maternity leave and gender inequality in unemployment and education. Thus, when gender inequality increases in unpaid care work, the female employment situation for men is worse.

The uneven distribution of care responsibilities shows why reducing gender gaps in education has not reduced gender gaps in employment in some states. Women in countries with more responsibility for unpaid care work are more likely to have lower levels of economic activity. However, countries with family-friendly policies that promote a better balance between work and family life for both parents experience a higher rate of female economic activity, and countries with family policies that aim to better promote a balance between work and family life for both parents experience a higher rate of female economic activity.

Unpaid work is central to human rights:

Unpaid work is part of human rights, as considered by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda, in her statement to the Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee) of the UN in New York, where she called upon countries to recognize unpaid care as a major human rights issue.

The Rapporteur considered unpaid care work to be the foundation of all our societies and crucial for economic growth and social development. However, it is often ignored by policy makers. She stressed that it contributes to women's poverty and limits their rights and in the report submitted to the General Assembly.

In both developed and developing countries, women work longer hours than men when unpaid work is considered. The Special Rapporteur stressed the importance of considering country welfare policies as a social and collective responsibility and ensuring that necessary public services and infrastructure are secured, including childcare, health care, water and energy, especially in disadvantaged areas.

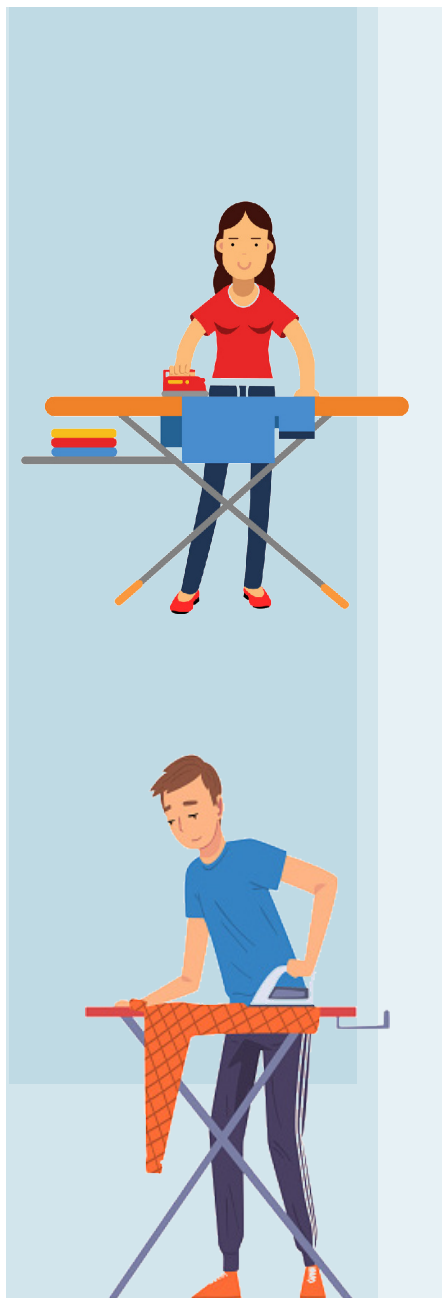


Unpaid work is central to human rights:

Unpaid work is part of human rights, as considered by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda, in her statement to the Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee) of the UN in New York, where she called upon countries to recognize unpaid care as a major human rights issue.

The Rapporteur considered unpaid care work to be the foundation of all our societies and crucial for economic growth and social development. However, it is often ignored by policy makers. She stressed that it contributes to women's poverty and limits their rights and in the report submitted to the General Assembly.

In both developed and developing countries, women work longer hours than men when unpaid work is considered. The Special Rapporteur stressed the importance of considering country welfare policies as a social and collective responsibility and ensuring that necessary public services and infrastructure are secured, including childcare, health care, water and energy, especially in disadvantaged areas.



Methods of measuring the value of unpaid work:

There are three methods to measure the value of unpaid work:

1. **Opportunity cost method:** The opportunity cost method measures the value of unpaid domestic work by calculating the amount of money the unpaid domestic worker can earn if they work in the labour market rather. For instance, if a former lawyer becomes housewife, the value of an unpaid housework hour is the hourly rate she can earn as a lawyer. However, the wage in this regard will be based on the level of education and the previous skill of the workers. It is also unfair to women who have no work experience.
2. **Replacement cost method:** The replacement cost method measures the value of unpaid household work by calculating the cost of purchasing that service instead. For example, to estimate the value of unpaid childcare, one can equate it to the cost of hiring a nurse. However, the added emotional value is not considered by this method.
3. **Input/output cost method:** Input/output cost method measures the value of unpaid household work by calculating the monetary value of economic goods and services produced by unpaid domestic work and the amount of sale of such goods and services on the open market.

Ways to estimate the economic and social contribution of unpaid work:

1. Measure the amount of unpaid work by value:

According to researchers and specialists, unpaid work is devalued because it is conducted without pay in a market-based economy that devotes value only to work that can be traded for salaries. It is often seen as generating no value in the context of the money-based economy, despite its contribution to market production, that is, to social re-production and production outside of exchange relationships.

It is worth noting that it is difficult to determine the amount of unpaid work, such as care-giving. Although some countries have systems for calculating the value of work. Work contributing to social wealth does not have to be paid and market and non-market work intersect.

In order to measure the economic and social contribution of unpaid work, it is necessary to measure the market value of certain tasks, based on the examination of occupational equivalence and occupational equivalents of common unpaid work tasks such as meal preparation and cleaning, clothing care, cleaning, plant and garden care, home maintenance and administrative, and care-giving occupations.

2. Measuring the amount of unpaid work by time:

The amount of unpaid work can be determined by the time it consumes, by calculating what a person can earn in their regular job, and how much time they deserve. For instance, if an average person's hourly salary in paid work is ٢٠\$ per hour and they spend four hours performing unpaid childcare daily, unpaid childcare is considered to be ٨٠\$ per day.

Unpaid work can be measured to calculate the time spent performing it, either over the course of a day or a week, and the census may also use the direct method in that participants are required to determine all the time spent on activities even if they are conducted together.



Assessment of the situation and the reality of women's unpaid work in the Arab region (case studies):

The situation of unpaid work in the Arab region is described as unequal, with women in the region spending an average of 17 to 34 hours per week in unpaid care work, while men spend no more than 1 to 6 hours per country. The proportion of time spent by women compared to men in Jordan is the most uneven, 19:1, followed by Egypt with 12:1, Palestine with 7:1 and Tunisia with 6:1. Women spend two to three quarters of their time in unpaid care work in indirect care (domestic work), which underscores the importance of access to services, technology and home markets in reducing the burden of this type of work.

Married women spend more time in unpaid direct care work compared to unmarried women, and they spend at least seven times more time in direct care work (personal care of others). However, there were differences among countries, with the lowest number of hours spent by women in unpaid care appearing in Tunisia, which may be partly due to lower fertility rates and higher enrolment rates in early childhood care and education compared to Egypt and Jordan. The bulk of the time spent by Palestinian women in unpaid care, the challenge of direct care, may also reflect higher fertility rates in Palestine compared to other countries.

According to an Egyptian study on the value of unpaid domestic work for women in Egypt, marriage increased the burden of unpaid domestic work for women, noting that it represented a huge qualitative shift for women. The study carried out by the economist Dr. Salwa Al-Antari and published by the New Woman Foundation (NWF) revealed that the average unpaid hours of domestic work for married women were estimated at 37.27 hours per week, compared with 13.80 hours for unmarried women. The study covered 12,000 families in the age group defined by the labour force in 15 to 65 years of age from different provinces, including rural and urban areas.

The results of the research sample showed the significant gap between the number of hours worked by women and men, with the average weekly hours worked by women in Egypt of around 30.25 hours, compared with 4.19 hours worked by men per week. The study found that domestic work accounts for the bulk of women's time spent on unpaid domestic work, taking about 84% of the total time by 14 hours per week, compared with 0.27 hours for men.

The study showed that women bore child care work, the elderly and the sick, at 10. 47 hours per week, compared with one hour for men. Several unpaid jobs were restricted to women in Egypt, namely cooking, cleaning, arranging and taking care of the house, gardening, water, preparing fuel, raising poultry for domestic consumption, preparing butter and cheese for domestic consumption, maintaining and repairing durable goods, and buying household items.

The increase in the number of family members also increases the burden of domestic work for women. With three family members, the average hours of domestic work for women rising from about 13 hours per week to about 40 hours per week, to 48. 23 hours when the number of family members reached four.

The study revealed that the value of domestic work for women was estimated at between 307. 6£ billion, if women's work was valued at what they could spend. According to the study, childcare being a reason to quit work is about %15. 5. after marriage, women alone take the burdens of men, which contributed to the norms of not accepting Egyptian men taking part in domestic work.

The study showed that working women in Egypt suffer from the phenomenon of “double burden,” which is one in the market and the other in the home. As a result, the total working hours for working women are about ٦٨ hours a week, compared with ٥٣ hours for men.

The study called on women movements, civil society organizations, and parties to raise

awareness of the role of unpaid domestic work in the well-being of society and the real contribution of women to economic activity. It also stressed the need to recognize unpaid domestic work as a national product, the need to include gender statistics in data on time paid for such work, and pressure for the necessary legislative amendments to the Labour Code, particularly, legislation on the sharing of wealth between spouses.

It also recommended that pressure be made to amend the Labour Code to ensure a “family-friendly” working environment with regard to maternity leave and childcare, the possibility of part-time work, and the development of a dependent woman's pension from the concept of social assistance to the concept of the right to insurance protection in exchange for women's contribution to the development of human capital.

Tunisia: A study under the auspices of the United Nations for Women (Forum for Economic Research and the United Nations Organization for Women 2014) , revealed that Tunisian women spent more than 6 times more time in unpaid care work than men, and twice as much time in the same jobs as unmarried women. Women with more education spend less time in direct care work than in indirect care work. Most of the paid care sector belongs to the public sector, particularly in education and health, while personal care and early childhood education are dominated by the private sector. Working women are particularly overrepresented in these sectors despite their overall low employment participation rates. The study also showed that the care sector has two main constraints. The first is the quality of services provided (based on the average competencies of men and women workers in the sector). The second is the deteriorating level of employment (based on informal levels) and therefore a coordinated national strategy of care is needed to set priorities in the care economy and to coordinate investment in the sector.

With regard to unpaid care work, despite the political, social and demographic changes that Tunisia has undergone over the past half-century, the tasks traditionally assigned to women, namely childcare and domestic work, continue to be primarily performed by women. As can be seen in figure 1, men spend only 0.3 hours in direct care work, compared with 3 hours a week for women in such work.

The results of the study showed that women spent five times more time in unpaid care work than men (17 hours a week versus only 3 hours a week for men). Marital status is a fundamental factor in the amount of time women spend in care work, with married women spending 23 hours a week in unpaid work, compared to 10 hours among unmarried women. The bulk of this unpaid work has been devoted to indirect care work, which takes 18 hours a week of married women's time, as opposed to 14 hours a week of unmarried women.

Data from the study showed that the time devoted to the care of children and other dependent family members increases with the level of education. Women with university education spend an average of 3.3 hours per week in direct care work, compared to 2.4 hours among uneducated women, and the differences were greater when addressing marital status, 5 hours a week in direct care work, three times more time than was spent by uneducated married women (2.8 hours a week).

According to statistical analyses, despite these challenges and the increasing need to improve and expand education and health services to the entire population, the provision of care services has not been well studied in Tunisia, and the lack of a comprehensive national care strategy has had serious implications for the economy, reflecting the relatively low rate of participation of women in the labour force (%27) due to social norms that impose a gender-based pattern of time use within the family. Unpaid domestic work and family care are primarily the tasks of women, significantly reducing their opportunity to engage in income-generating activity outside the house. Furthermore, improved access to quality early childhood education and health services increases children's opportunities to take advantage of economic opportunities when they become adults. Therefore, investing in these forms of care can have long-term implications for a country's development.

In Tunisia, results based on labour force survey data for 2019–2010 show that the total number of care-related occupations accounted for approximately %9 of total employment in Tunisia. Employment in care sectors remained stable during the period under study. The share of different professions in care work has been stable, i.e. education is the largest - up to about %1 of all jobs, followed by health care, at about %.

Although women, especially married women, perform unpaid care work, different home structures can affect the distribution and amount of time spent in these activities, including care for children in different age groups and care for older and sick or disabled persons, has different effects on women's time, based on the needs of each group.

Palestine: Women perform decent paid work with less unpaid care work and domestic work. On average, women do unpaid care work seven times more often than men. Married working women spend more hours (paid and unpaid) than working married men. When women work for pay, this is mostly in care professions, which account for almost half of all female jobs.

Unlike the government sector and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), employment protection and social security systems are weak or non-existent in the private sector. Half of all women in private care work earn the minimum wage compared to men. Care policies and services in Palestine do not adequately cover childcare needs.

According to analyses of care policies in Palestine, married working women spend more hours at work than working married men. Surveys reveal that the labour force participation gap between married and unmarried women is large, 21 versus %47 respectively. It is partly related to the role of unpaid care expectations from married women. While the time spent in unpaid care varies according to demographic, social, and economic characteristics, social status is the most influential factor.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2018, married women spend 44 hours a week in unpaid care work, 28 hours more than women who have never been married, as shown in figure 1. Although the social status gap is documented for men, men's time is much lower (2 ½ hours).

In the Palestinian case, employment adds to the gender gap over time spent on paid and unpaid work. When considering the time spent by the working group of women and men in unpaid care for non-employees, workers, married, married, and unmarried, figure 2 reveals that married and employed women spend almost 20 hours more in total work (family care and livelihood) than married and working men. This gap applies to those who have never been married, but to a lesser extent (eight-hour difference).

According to the analysis of the policy summary based on a recent study on the welfare economy in the Arab States (through the Economic Research Forum and the United Nations Women's Commission), women do less paid work than unpaid care and domestic work. Women's participation in the labour force in Palestine is low, only at about %20 over the past decade.

Palestine has %68 of its population under the age of 30 and an average age of 27 in 2017. The overall dependency ratio is 74, as a result of the high child dependency ratio of 67 compared to 7 for the old age dependency ratio. This helps explain the time spent by the Palestinian people in unpaid care, where little time is devoted to caring for the elderly. This indicates the need to expand care services, such as kindergartens and nurseries, especially for young children.

Jordan: (The United Nations for Women): The fact that unpaid care varies in status, the responsibility for unpaid care is a strong obstacle for women to participate in the labour market, especially after marriage, contributing to the low rate of participation of women in the labour force in Jordan. The paid care sector is an essential component of the Jordanian economy, accounting for more than a quarter of public sector employment and a small but increasing proportion of private sector employment.

Expanding employment in the paid care sector is particularly important for women, who account for almost %60 of total employment. The care economy has great potential for growth and can accommodate new labour force to the labour market, especially if investment is made in this sector parallelly to efforts to encourage young men and women to train in care professions and income.

Care is an essential pillar. It is a public good, in the sense that its benefits directly exceed its recipients. Nursing young children is a crucial investment in the health and education of future generations which helps to ensure the well-being of families and communities. Similarly, temporary, permanent care for the sick, and the disabled is a way of ensuring more health and economic security for all communities.

However, although care is a public good, the current responsibility for providing it lies largely with families. Within families, this responsibility mostly lies with women and girls.

On the other hand, families should also be supported through services and public policies that offer choices in terms of who provides care and how much is provided within the family versus outside the family in times of need. The provision of such services and the implementation of public policies that can reduce or redistribute some of the burden of care on women and families are still under-developed in many countries.

In fact, the regulation of care work itself is necessary for global spending, with estimates that 16.4 billion hours are spent on unpaid care work every day, a time that, if assessed at national minimum wage levels, will reach US 11\$ trillion. Women and girls spend three quarters of this unpaid time.

This survey was a key priority as part of a national effort to highlight the importance of unpaid and paid care economies and to support the policy initiatives discussed below with more data. The existence of such data will also enable monitoring and evaluation so as to ensure the effectiveness of

care policies.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation reforms of parental leave policies, existing evidence suggests that unpaid care work is mostly done by women, especially married women, regardless of their status in the labour market. While women spend 18.8 hours in unpaid care work per week on average in 2016, men spend only 1.1 hours per week (figure 1). Unlike men, marriage seems to be the powerful determinant of the time women spend in care work. In 2016, married women spent 26.7 hours a week in unpaid care work while unmarried women spent only 7.3 hours.

Social norms and practices in Jordan contribute to women's low participation in the labour force and to strong imbalances in the division of unpaid care work. The government should make serious efforts to gradually change the commitment to gender stereotypes through the revision of educational curricula and social development programmes and policies.

Evidence shows that the presence of children in the home has a significant impact on women's time in unpaid care work. It increases the time of married women in unpaid care work by 5.2 hours per week. The presence of a 3-5 or -17-6year-old in the family has had no statistically significant effect on women's use of time.



The expansion of quality early childhood education and care services has the potential to generate multiple benefits, including improved early childhood development outcomes and the redistribution of some unpaid time spent by women. Care is minimal, regardless of marital status. Thus, the responsibility for unpaid care is a general and not a strong inhibitor for women to participate in the labour market, especially after marriage, which contributes to the low rate of participation of women in the labour force in Jordan.

Despite considerable efforts in the welfare policy in recent years, women's participation in the labour force recently declined to %14. 2 in 2019, placing Jordan 182nd out of 185 countries in terms of women's participation in the labour force (World Bank 2019). The high opportunity costs of unpaid care affect the ability of women, especially married women, to balance their time between the labour market and domestic work.

It is not clear whether current policies, in particular maternity leave and childcare provided by employers, have had the intended effects in terms of reducing obstacles to the employment of women and increasing their participation in the workforce. There is a need for a rigorous assessment of recent policy reforms in this area in order to understand their implications for both labour supply (women's choices about the labour market) and demand (employers' employment preferences and practices). This is crucial to determine whether further adjustments are needed, as well as to provide evidence to other countries in the region that may consider moving to a social insurance-based maternity leave funding scheme. The recent adoption of the paternity leave policy was also a very positive development and placed Jordan among the leading countries in the region.

It is worth noting that the expansion of care for older persons and investment in the field is particularly important in view of the high rate of ageing population in Jordan. Given the increase in disability and chronic illness among older persons and the increase in unpaid care work for women associated with the presence of a person with special needs or a chronically ill person, the ageing of the population is expected to further increase unpaid care responsibilities.

At the same time, the study found that the presence of an elderly person (over 65 years of age) in the household effectively reduces the time a married woman spends in unpaid care work constant at 5. 4 hours per week, with other factors such as illness and disability. This indicates that it helps non-sick or disabled grandparents with childcare and domestic chores, a form of support that is lost as nucleus families grow in Jordan.

The presence of an older household member increased the time spent by unmarried women in unpaid care work by two hours a week. However, the presence of a family member with chronic illness or special needs increased the average time spent in care work for both married and unmarried women by 4.1 hours and 1.4 hours per week, respectively. This result is particularly important because the burden of chronic non-communicable diseases in Jordan is high and likely to increase.

The recent policy decision to make kindergartens compulsory for 5-year-olds must be evaluated not only because of its impact on children, but also on women's time in unpaid care and their labour force participation rates.

Efforts are needed to increase the participation of younger children in early childhood education and care, as pre-school/nursery enrolment rates are much lower than those in kindergartens. In 2015-2016, there was a gross enrolment rate in the second year of kindergarten of 79.5% for children aged 5-6, with an increase in the likelihood of boys enrolling girls by 80.6% compared to 78.3% respectively (Ministry of Education 2018).

More public investment is required in education, health, and social welfare services in Jordan, especially in view of recent experience with COVID-19. Greater and more equitable investments in the care economy are needed to serve the population in remote places and to reduce significantly the unpaid care burden of women. The extent and value of unpaid care must be ideally measured by a dedicated time-use scan.

At the same time, parental leave policy reforms should be monitored and evaluated. Programmes could be introduced to address basic social norms. These changes, together with increased efforts to expand the quality and coverage of early childhood education and care and the development of ageing care services, can lead to strengthening Jordan's care economy, rather than increasing employment opportunities for women.

It is important to point that investment in the paid care economy is a potential source of jobs, accounting for more than a quarter of public sector employment and a small but increasing share of private sector employment (10% per 2018-2015). Employment in care sectors, especially women, grew faster than other economic sectors between 2017-2005.

This growth, particularly in the private sector, reflects the increased demand for care services and, in particular, for education services. Policy measures to expand care services may further stimulate employment growth. The expansion of employment in the paid care sector is particularly important for women, who account for almost 60% of total employment. This level of over-participation is remarkable, given the low rate of participation of women in the labour force among women in Jordan in general and in the private sector in particular.

Morocco: The High Commissioner for Human Rights has conducted a study in Morocco on the use of time that revealed a gap between the two sexes. The latter has an impact on differences in the distribution of the time allocated to non-productive activities. While women devote 10 hours and 55 minutes to self-care, including sleep and food, men devote 39 minutes less time to these activities.

Men spend almost 4 hours and 52 minutes on entertainment, while women spend 40 minutes less time on their leisure activities. These differences vary according to age, place of residence, and education that determine the distribution of time and time during the week.

In terms of differences in the workload (both professional and domestic), the results of the research and the level of differences in the role and job distribution of women and men have led to the conclusion that the Moroccan model is still highly volatile. Women's domestic work is seven times more time than men's, and men's professional work takes four times more time than women.

In Morocco, men devote 4 times more time to professional activities than women, that is 5 hours and 25 minutes for 1 hour and 21 minutes for women. This gap is widening further depending on the area of residence.

The presence of children in the family is an important factor in challenging differences between women and men. Thus, the professional working time of women with children in the family is reduced, in contrast to that of men, and the number of children in families is increased.

Differences between men and women in the allocation of time for domestic activities are quite different than in professional activities. Women devote approximately 20% of their time to these activities, which is seven times as much as men's.

Syria: A Syrian field study on the empowerment of women conducted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) on women's unpaid work in Damascus and its rural areas showed that women spend 8 to 12 hours a day cleaning, washing, ironing, cooking, caring for children, and teaching, thus outperforming workers in public and private institutions.

The study showed that women work hours that are undervalued, with domestic tasks and in providing all conditions of care and care for the family. This includes care for the elderly in the family.

Many women were abandoning their aspirations to take full-time care of the family and the elderly, as well as the conditions and pressures faced by working women, the challenges of combining work outside the house with the burdens of family and child care, and being forced to drop out of work that would reduce their possibilities for professional and material development. In the countryside, women work at an average of 8 hours a day, especially during fruit-cutter seasons and vegetable crop collection, where women in livestock-breeding households work up to 10 hours a day, in addition to their work they continue to take responsibility for domestic work.

The impacts of unpaid work on women:

Gender inequality in unpaid care work affects the gender gap professionally. The gender gap in unpaid care work has significant implications for women's ability to participate actively in the labour market and the type/quality of employment opportunities available to them. Time is a limited resource, divided between work and leisure, productive and reproductive activities, and paid and unpaid work. Every minute women spend in unpaid care work represents one minute less than they can spend on market-related activities or invest in their educational and vocational skills.

Gender inequality is exacerbated. Because of the traditional belief that women earn less than men, women are not encouraged to invest in their education and skills. This leads to women accept unpaid domestic work, creating a cycle of difficult social norms to break.

From the perspective of gender inequality, unpaid work has fuelled the dynamic of “social risk.” Increasing poverty is more likely to affect women than men. Even if women enter the labour market, they usually remain responsible for the majority of unpaid domestic work at home.

Unpaid work is a double burden: The disproportionate division of unpaid domestic work that women bear negatively affects their ability to move around in life outside their homes. Their commitment to unpaid work is an obstacle to entering the paid work sector or, in the case of those women who enter paid work, they face a “double burden” of work.

The double burden negatively affects women because it gives them less time to spend in the labour force, resulting in men allocating more time to the labour force. The double burden also negatively affects women's personal well-being because it means that women have less time to take care of themselves and sleep. This can also adversely affect their job performance in the workforce.

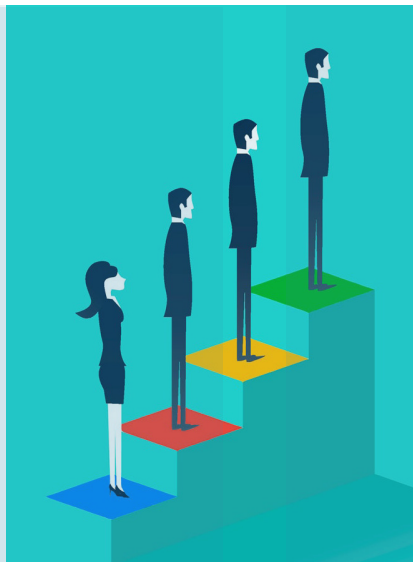
Impact of unpaid domestic work on children: Statistics indicate that many children, especially in poor countries and families, are forced to contribute to unpaid domestic work for the family. Since unpaid domestic work is traditionally the role of women in many societies, the burden of unpaid domestic work falls particularly on young girls who are forced to leave school to help with unpaid work.

Effects of unpaid work on the economy: As long as the economic value of women's unpaid work is not included in GDP or national income accounting indicators, concealing women's work makes it difficult to analyse the relationship between family and labour markets. In addition, economic output measures are largely inaccurate. Unpaid work may contribute to the economy by producing important goods and services such as meals and home hygiene. Unpaid work also affects the volume of employment in the economy because fewer women enter the labour force because of their unpaid homework.

In this regard, it should be noted that the lack of full participation of women in the labour force leads the economy to misallocate its resources, making women perform low-productivity tasks in their homes rather than taking advantage of their full potential in the market. The economy also loses the opportunity to benefit from the integration relationship between men and women in the workplace and thus low productivity and economic growth. This gender gap in unpaid work is not only unfair but clearly inefficient.

Effects of unpaid domestic work on the state: Unpaid domestic work has a positive impact on the budgetary State, where the state does not need to spend resources to provide its citizens with home-care services, for example. This means that unpaid domestic work reduces the amount of money that the government must spend to provide these services.

Economists also believe that unpaid care work is necessary to maintain order in the global market economy. Care work preserves well-being, thereby enhancing the productivity of those who perform paid work.



How to decrease the impacts of unpaid work: (Solutions)

1. General-based solutions to enhance women's participation in the labour market

- A preliminary issue related to the promotion of women's participation in the labour market, the change in the public perception of the distribution of roles and the division of labour between males and females, and the adoption of gender-responsive policies.
- To transform and change attitudes towards the social roles of both sexes by educating both women and men about their equal rights and the role that women play in meeting the basic needs of human survival and well-being.
- Reform of traditional systems and sexist methods of education, as well as awareness campaigns through social media and TV shows to enhance the importance of women's roles outside the domestic sphere.
- Support women in seeking jobs appropriate to their skills while improving employment options that take on their family obligations through reform of childcare leave and childcare benefit policies, provision of affordable childcare services, paid paternity leave, part-time work, and flexible working conditions.
- Promote women's entrepreneurial opportunities and resources by encouraging and facilitating their access to entrepreneurial financing opportunities, and support training and capacity development programmes targeting financial institutions.
- Strict enforcement of existing and new legal provisions that promote women's rights through gender-sensitive economic, social, cultural, and legal policies.

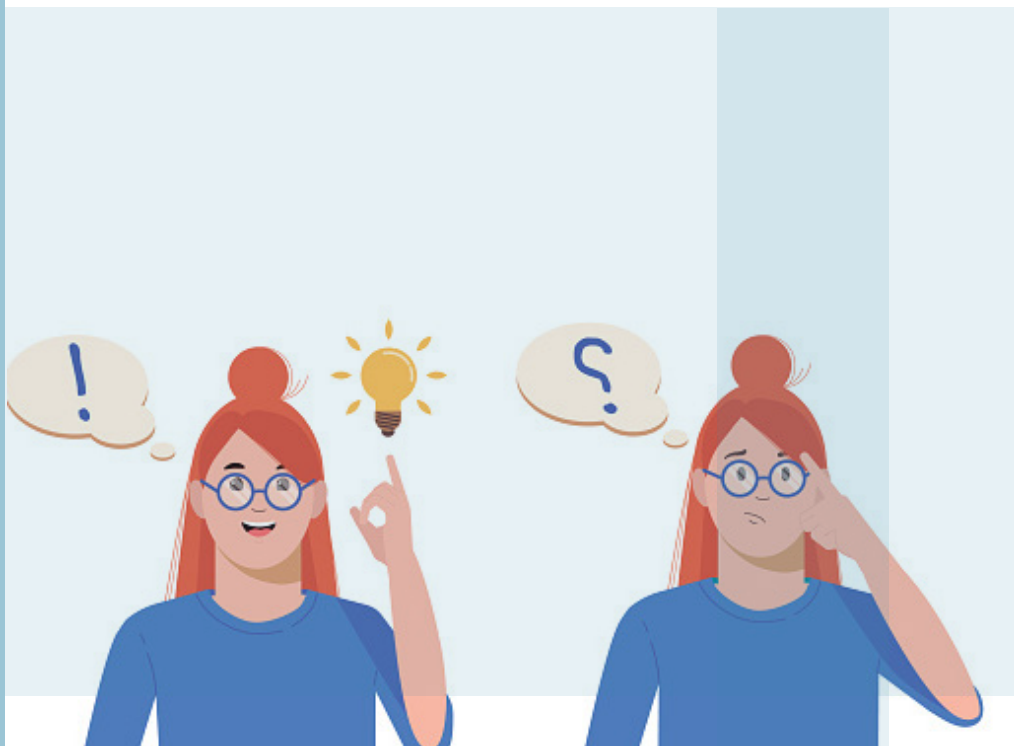
2. Solutions based on dynamic policies provided by organizations:

United Nations organizations and bodies such as the United Nations Statistics Division provided quantitative data on the number of hours spent by men and women in paid, unpaid, and total working hours. These data showed a range of solutions:

—● Solutions for investing in public infrastructure policies aimed at directing public funds towards investment projects that create more efficient access to resources necessary to reduce the burden of unpaid work, particularly in developing countries. Women in rural and developing countries spend a great deal of time collecting water. According to the United Nations Statistics Division, in countries in the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia, the case study found that as access to water increased as a result of investment in infrastructure, women did not enter paid jobs, but their overall time decreased for unpaid work.

—● Solutions related to not forgetting that support services for children, the elderly, and care should not overlook the role of the state in providing quality and affordable care. Since free childcare will not be effective in generating income for workers, services must be supported to ensure that workers are compensated for their work and that families are able to use their services. The United Nations calls for Goal 5 to provide public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies in recognition of unpaid work.

—● Family-friendly workplace policies, short working weeks, flexible paid leave and the ability to work from home are possible solutions that facilitate the redistribution of unpaid employment within families.



Suggestions and recommendations of the Arab Trade Union

Confederation:

The Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) believes in positive practices and appropriate recommendations on unpaid work:

- ➡ In terms of reducing time and easing restrictions
- ➡ Investment in time-saving infrastructure and technology, including: Electricity delivery and improved access to water reduce women's time constraints.
- ➡ Increase in public and welfare services, including improved access to public services, childcare and elder care that will allow for better work-life balance. Such support is essential for working mothers. Long school days or extended pre-school hours are alternatives to general day care, as extending preschool education to young children leads to greater participation of women in work.

Employment policies appropriate for women and the family:

General maternity leave benefits of 14 weeks (ILO standard) improves women's likelihood of taking leave rather than leaving work in full, with an increase in maternity leave in Morocco (from 12 to 14 weeks) associated with an increase in the proportion of working mothers. Equal numbers of both maternity and paternity leave would increase women's employment by increasing the employer's incentives to employ women, thus promoting equal sharing of care responsibilities, whereby family-friendly working conditions enable parents to balance working hours and care responsibilities. Flexible work schedule and remote work schedule allow women and men to choose working hours that are better suited to care responsibilities.

Confronting discriminatory social institutions:

Addressing social norms and gender stereotypes can lead men to sharing equal care responsibilities by changing behavioural attitudes and challenging existing gender norms to increase male participation in home-based care services.

Pursuing a care perspective in all policy areas:

Design appropriate fiscal policies to avoid taxing second-income couples (women are usually second-income earners) more than unmarried ones, as this hampers women's participation in the labour force, as their participation will increase if there are high tax incentives to share work in the market between spouses.

In terms of policies and strategies of states:

The Arab states should adopt coordinated national strategies for the care economy, which should seek to bring maternity leave policies into line with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and provide parental leave policies. National care strategies must aim to expand early childhood care and education and begin developing a plan for a range of long-term care options. Such strategies should also address professionalization and quality of work in particularly vulnerable care sectors, investment in national time-use surveys and action to change gender norms.

In terms of care systems:

- ➡ Increase access to paid family leave and sick leave as part of support for working parents in conjunction with their childcare responsibilities.
- ➡ Develop gender-based services through the provision of care services involving children, persons with disabilities and older persons.
- ➡ Expand family and child assistance and provide additional assistance in the form of subsidies and vouchers to provide child services to working parents to increase financial support.
- ➡ Prioritize investments in physical infrastructure to ensure adequate access to sanitation, water, digital services and energy, as well as social infrastructure such as childcare facilities and nursing homes for the elderly.

In terms of labour market policies:

- Promote active employment measures that support the integration (and reintegration) of unpaid caregivers into the labour force, through training programmes (and retraining programmes) and the development of new skills that will prepare them for new labour market demands.
- Improve flexible working arrangements for both men and women workers with care responsibilities, including home/remote work option, paid working time cuts, and flexible working hours.
- Enact legislation to protect the rights of all workers, including caregivers, in both the formal and informal sectors, and to secure living wages for paid care workers.
- Improve institutional culture with greater attention to workers' well-being and self-care, and promote policies on discrimination and harassment based on gender identity, race, age and other factors.



Issues about unpaid care to be included in trade union agendas:

ATUC recommends that the following topics and issues should be included in trade union agendas:

- Unpaid care as a global issue affecting women regardless of their levels of education, income, or development worldwide. Although some states have made significant progress in recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work, the burden remains heavy on women.
- Provision of tools to measure unpaid care work: Tools and research are necessary to help implement public policies that improve women's lives and to measure unpaid care, yet context-specific measurements must be made to identify the multiple conditions behind women's unpaid care work. Also, cross-state comparability of data is necessary.
- Acknowledging unpaid care work at the national policy level: States have a role to play in promoting a more equitable distribution of unpaid care work at the family level, since parental leave and joint flexible work schedules are necessary to promote more equal distribution of unpaid care work at the family level and to help women find a better balance between work and life, while breaking established perceptions and initiating a qualitative shift in the organizational structure.
- Strategies and policies that address unpaid care work at the community level to promote effective change in attitudes towards unpaid care work, and include visual and audio strategies that emphasize the role of media and programmes as possible ways to change.



The impacts of COVID-19- on unpaid care work:

COVID - 19 made the impacts of unpaid care work worse. Parents working from home struggled to balance their work and care responsibilities, owing to a decline in care assistance, both formal and informal, through grandparents and family care facilities. A large part of this additional workload has occurred for women.

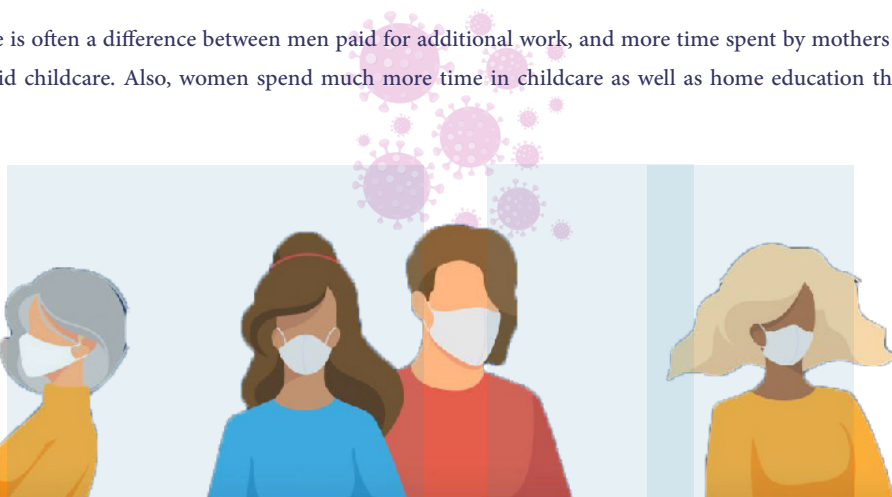
At the same time, since COVID - 19 has had a significant impact on sectors with a high proportion of working women, many women have been left without jobs and income, leading them to stay at home and assume more domestic responsibilities, noting that this can widen the gaps between men and women in participation in unpaid care work, wages, and the labour force.

The COVID - 19 crisis and its health and economic impact changed social norms about the distribution of unpaid care and domestic work. The widespread closure of childcare facilities and schools has shifted the responsibility to the parents. It has increased the amount of time parents spend in childcare.

Grandparents could not help because they are more vulnerable to the virus. Mostly women had to do unpaid children care, especially for women in families with limited income.

In these circumstances, it is almost difficult to observe a sufficient distance of safety between individuals, which increases vulnerability to the virus when infected people live in small spaces. Among those most affected, single parents face triple challenges that combine work, care and home education responsibilities, with limited financial and family support, especially for women. However, with the lockdown, it becomes more frequent for men, with remote work, to help.

There is often a difference between men paid for additional work, and more time spent by mothers in unpaid childcare. Also, women spend much more time in childcare as well as home education than men.



Welfare Policy Responses to the COVID - 19:

Family support policies show a number of measures based on four main components: time, services, resources, and infrastructure. Hence, care work policies are divided to four main groups:

- Leave and flexible (time) work arrangements include parental leave policies (i.e. maternity, paternity or child care, depending on the context). Flexible working arrangements such as telecommuting and flexible time that guarantee time for paternity and help parents reconcile work and family obligations.
- Care services that includes early childhood care and education policies that provide child development support services, care services for children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, and other services such as psycho-social support.
- Resources and benefits include family allowances and assistance to children that contribute to the cost of childcare, compensation to parents for care due to the closure of schools and nurseries, or subsidies to employers who grant workers paid leave.
- Infrastructure: This includes social infrastructure such as care, health and education facilities (such as childcare centres and nursing homes), and physical infrastructure such as water supply and energy that can contribute to reducing time and labour intensity associated with unpaid care and domestic work.

Care policy measures classified as a response to the COVID - 19 are adapted as follows:

- Parental leave (in respect of time)
- Care services (in relation to services)
- Financial support (for resources)
- Facilities support (for infrastructure)

These policy responses are promising and more relevant as they have the capacity to handle unpaid care work directly.

Parental leave:

States have provided paid leave to support working parental care responsibilities during school closures and childcare facilities, mainly providing social insurance. Many states have also expanded flexible work options specifically to help parents combine work and care, offering a range of flexible work opportunities for workers that include remote work, flexible work workshops, longer hours and weekend work, and provision of after-work arrangements.

Care services:

Despite the widespread closure of facilities, care institutions in many states have remained open to provide care support to children working in basic services. These care services include the following:

- Measures to maintain childcare facilities for health-care workers.
- Establishment of childcare centres for basic service workers in several regions.
- Grant the Early Childhood Education and Family Care Relief Package free of charge, support childcare service institutions to keep their doors open, and provide free childcare services to those working in basic jobs.
- Opening of new nursing homes for the elderly.

Financial support:

Many states supported parental income during the pandemic through monetary compensation for job losses or reduced working hours, family benefits, and child allowances. In addition to social assistance to families and individuals, many states provided financial support to companies offering paid leave or to employees with caring responsibilities



Facilities support:

During the pandemic, many states provided water and electricity free of charge or with support, and deferred or fully exempt payment of household utility bills. These actions are aimed at supporting family members with the cost of facilities during the crisis and can reduce the burden of care indirectly:

- Support for household electricity, gas and water bills.
- Free water services for low-income families
- Exemption from payment of bills to utilities, which include electricity, water, telephone, and Internet.
- Subsidies for water and electricity bills and elimination of fines for such bills
- The deadlines for the payment of electricity and water bills to all participants have been postponed and covered for disadvantaged families.

Important conclusions:

- The effects of COVID19- on unpaid care work, as well as the unprecedented post-crisis effects, which are likely to have far-reaching implications for gender equality, economic development and labour productivity.
- The overall closure of schools and childcare facilities has led to an increase in unpaid care work, often still performed by women. In this context, home-schooling has emerged as a new task that women seem to have in the first place.
- Because older persons are more vulnerable to COVID19-, their informal care support is severely limited and they must move away from their family members, while also relying on support from their families or social workers, thus increasing the unpaid workload of women, especially those who continue to work during the pandemic.
- The negative impact of COVID19- on sectors with high women employment rates, resulting in fewer women's paid labour in the labour market and more unpaid work in the home. There may be further implications for the unequal division of labour between the sexes, women's participation in the labour force and the gender pay gap in the post-pandemic period.

The sanitary crisis could also change the distribution of unpaid care work towards more equal actions and measures, at least in the short term and under certain circumstances. This can happen when:

- Men have more flexible working procedures (implemented on such a large scale for the first time)
- During the pandemic, women work in health care or other basic services
- Men lose their jobs.
- In such situations, they may become informal primary caregivers in some cases, leading to greater participation of men in domestic chores.

The effects of the pandemic provide an important opportunity to build more flexible, inclusive and effective systems, where care must be considered a universal right and must be placed at the centre of the agenda of governments and trade unions and, to that end, we must:

- Develop gender-inclusive care systems to promote shared responsibility between men and women. The State must develop itself.
- Such care systems must also include policies that provide services, resources, and infrastructure to meet different care needs so that they are general, comprehensive, and of high quality.

- To achieve better results in reducing and redistributing unpaid care work, care policy measures must be in place alongside labour market policies that improve work-life balance for gender equality to enable women and men to better reconcile their job responsibilities with care, reducing gender pay gaps, and the protection of workers rights in both the formal and informal sectors.

Conclusion:

This study has found that unpaid work by women is a fundamental factor contributing to the well-being of individuals, their families, and communities, as well as an important aspect of economic activity. The study identified the types of such work, examined the legal frameworks that introduced women's rights in unpaid work, treated it as a human rights issue, and did not dismiss the discussion on the importance of the issues that were addressed by society and policy makers, which had important implications for achieving gender equality.

In this regard, the Arab Trade Union Confederation has not failed to emphasize that gender inequality in unpaid care work is one of the most important issues affecting the gender gap in labour outcomes, and that the gender gap in unpaid care work has significant implications for women's ability to participate actively and effectively in the labour market and the quality of their employment opportunities.

Other dimensions related to how to estimate the economic and social contribution of unpaid work, an assessment of the situation and reality of women's unpaid work in the Arab region (available models), the effects of unpaid work on women, and proposed technologies and solutions to mitigate the effects of unpaid work were carefully studied.

This study did not dismiss the impact of COVID - 19 on women's unpaid work and revealed that it had a significant impact on women. The pandemic worsened the effects of unpaid care work, as parents working from home struggled to reconcile their work and care responsibilities, owing to a decrease in care assistance, both formal through care facilities and informal through grandparents and family, and a large part of this additional workload fell on women.

As a result, COVID - 19 negatively affected sectors with high rates of women employment, resulting in a decrease in women's paid labour in the labour market and more unpaid work in the home. Given the negative outlook for the economy and employment, there may be further implications for the unequal division of labour between the sexes, women's participation in the labour force and the gender pay gap in the post-pandemic period.

To this end, response plans have been developed. Family support policies have demonstrated a number of measures based on four main components: time, services, financial resources, support, and infrastructure, which contribute to addressing unpaid care work.

In addition to the recommendations that ATUC believes to be effective in the area of unpaid work for women, the study concluded that there are many topics and issues that it also considers important to include in the trade union agenda, including unpaid care, as a global issue affecting women regardless of their levels of education, income, or development worldwide, and to provide tools to measure unpaid care work as tools.

The above is added to the recognition of unpaid care work at the national policy level, the enactment of legislation to protect the rights of all workers, including caregivers in both the formal and informal sectors, the provision of living wages for paid care workers, the improvement of the institutional culture, and the adoption of coordinated national strategies for the care economy.

This project is in cooperation with the International Labor Organization

