

Unpaid Care Work – Learnings from the World

Investment in time-saving technology and infrastructure

Electrification and improved access to water ease the constraints on women's time. In Pakistan water sources closer to home were associated with decreased time devoted to housework and increased female employment (Ilahi and Grimard, 2000)¹⁰. When rural electrification was introduced in South Africa, the time women spent on housework decreased, leading to a 9 per cent increase in female labour participation (Dinkelman, 2011)¹¹.

Increasing public and care services

Better access to public services, childcare and care for the elderly allows for better work-life balance. Therefore, there is a need to enhance the coverage and improve the quality of childcare services for women in India to ensure greater uptake.

Longer school days or expand pre-school hours are alternatives for public day-care: The Kenyan government, expanded its preschool education to four-to-five-years-olds children, increasing female labour participation (Cassirer and Addati, 2007)¹².

Family-friendly working policies

Maternity leaves public subsidies of 14 weeks (ILO standard) improve women's likelihood of taking leave instead of leaving the labour force entirely. Morocco's increased maternity leave (from 12 to 14 weeks) was associated with an increased share of working mothers. Equal amounts of maternity and paternity leave increase women's employment by increasing employer incentives to hire a woman. In Sweden, for example, a minimum share of available parental leave is reserved to fathers on a 'use it or lose it' basis, encouraging an equal sharing of caring responsibilities. Family-friendly working conditions enable parents to balance their working hours and caring responsibilities. A flexible work schedule or teleworking allows women and men to choose working hours that better accommodate their caring responsibilities

Tackling discriminatory social institutions

Tackling entrenched social norms and gender stereotypes can 'de-feminise' caregiving and shape gender norms that prevent men from assuming equal caring responsibilities. In Zimbabwe, for example, the "Africare's Male Empowerment Project" seeks to change behavioural trends and challenge existing gender norms by increasing male involvement in home-based care services given to rural people living with AIDS.

Adopting a care lens across all areas of public policy

Design suitable fiscal policies to avoid second earners in married couples, typically women, being taxed more heavily than single individuals, discouraging female labour force participation. For instance, in Japan, female labour force participation of women would

¹⁰ Ilahi, N. and F. Grimard (2000), "Public Infrastructure and Private Costs: Water Supply and Time Allocation of Women in Rural Pakistan", *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 49 (1), pp. 45–75.

¹¹ Dinkelman, T. (2011), "The Effect of Rural Electrification on Employment: New Evidence from South Africa", *American Economic Review* 101 (7), pp. 3078-3108.

¹² Cassirer, N. and L. Addati (2007), *Expanding Women's Employment Opportunities: Informal Economy Workers and the Need for Childcare*, International Labour Organisation, Geneva.

increase by almost 13 per cent if there were high tax incentives to share market work (which ultimately reflects unpaid care work) between spouses.