

Transcript

Topic 1: What experience exists of programmes and projects which involve care and care work?

Ceri Hayes
4 Nov 2013 03:01 AM

Dear All,

A warm welcome to the Integrating Care into Development Practice online discussion. We're so delighted that you're taking part!

This discussion is the first step in the Gender & Development Journal's Care Learning Project which aims to gather and synthesise learning, experiences and different approaches to integrating care in development practice.

We'd like to begin by spending the next few hours exploring the following question and sub-questions:

What experience exists of programmes and projects, which involve care and care work?

- What sectors have these programmes and projects appeared in?
- Do these experiences mostly use current unequal gender relations to achieve good outcomes for households, communities and wider society?
- To what extent do they adopt a gender analysis and focus on the rights of predominantly female carers?
- Are there examples of development initiatives that focus on or address care from a women's rights perspective? If so, what is different about these initiatives?
- What are the risks of raising the profile of care work in development practice?

The aim of this first part of the debate is really to chart the different ways in which an understanding of care work – its extent and economic and social importance - has been integrated into development projects and practice – both in 'mainstream' development sectors, for example livelihoods, health or education, and in 'stand-alone' work whose primary aim is to support gender justice and women's rights.

We're really keen to hear from as many of you as possible so we can map and learn about the multiple realities and meanings of care in different contexts and start unpacking the implications for our work.

Here's to a rich and engaging debate!

Caroline and Ceri

GiovannaLauro

4 Nov 2013 03:06 AM

Most programmes and projects involving care and care work have been implemented specifically to increase the supply of female workers in the economy on the assumption that a lack of affordable childcare has been a major factor limiting this supply. Often such programmes focus on providing solutions from outside the home (e.g. public or private day-care) or outsourcing the burden of care to poorer women, rather than looking at the role of men (especially fathers). By doing so, the potential increase in women's employment is not accompanied by a more gender equitable division of care work within the household.

Globally women spend two to ten times the amount of their average day caring for children than men do. This inequality continues even as women have entered the out-of-home paid work force in unprecedented numbers in recent years in most of the world. The fact that women do most of the care work is one of the key reasons that women's wages are lower than men even when they work in the same kind.

Deepta Chopra

4 Nov 2013 03:13 AM

One would expect that at least in sectors where the provision of unpaid care is indisputably a factor in determining the uptake and outcomes of programmes and projects, these would be designed such that unpaid care concerns would be taken on board. What is therefore shocking is the extent of invisibility of unpaid care amongst these sectors.

At IDS, we undertook a review of all social protection (SP) and early childhood development (ECD) policies across 144 low-income countries. We found that a very small proportion of policies – 25 out of 107 SP policies, and 41 out of 270 ECD policies – expressed an intent to address unpaid care concerns. See <http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/123456789/2795#.UnbNQvI7KRN> for more details.

We found that all of these (25 SP and 41 ECD) policies recognized care work as a burden that fell inequitably on poor women and girls, with most of them aiming to 'redistribute' this work from the family to the state (most of them because of a recognition that women needed to work outside the home in paid jobs).

Interesting differences emerged when considering how care work could be redistributed from women to men. Amongst ECD policies, support for carers in terms of better parenting was widespread, and quite a few policies (from Latin America) explicitly recognized the role of men as fathers. In contrast, there were no social protection policies that aimed to redistribute care work from women to men.

The other significant absence was that of the intent to reduce the drudgery of care work – only two SP policies alluded to this intent (both in India, the erstwhile Maharashtra

Employment Guarantee Act and the more recent MG National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), while there were no ECD policies that spoke about reducing the drudgery involved in care work.

The other interesting finding from the review was somewhat of a regional spread – Amongst the 23 SP policies, 10 were from Sub Saharan Africa; while amongst the 41 ECD policies, 15 were from Latin America (with quite a few aiming to involve men as active carers) and 13 were from Sub Saharan Africa (mainly aiming for redistribution from the family to the state).

I am wondering if there are an insights amongst the group as to why these differences across sectors and across the different intents of care exist? Is there something specifically sectoral about whether programmes and policies within a particular sector can reduce drudgery or support redistribution of care work from women to men?

Or is there something about how care gets on the policy agenda, and the roles of different actors pushing for certain ways in which care concerns can be addressed – for middle-class champions driving the care agenda, redistribution of unpaid care work from women to men and the state through early childhood centres may be more preferable than reduction of the drudgery of care through constructing drinking water wells, as an example!

There might well be more explanations from the group, which I would be very interested in hearing about. Another question I have relates to the regional patterns we are observing – are there similar gendered ideas/ ideologies in regions that are more amenable to incorporating care work concerns into programmes and policies, or could there be other factors at play that could explain these regional patterns?

A final note – our review considered state-led public policies that operated mainly at a national level. But I would be very interested in hearing about sub-national, non-state led programmes and policies that you may know about within SP and ECD, that may have incorporated care concerns in innovative ways. Many thanks!

Deepta

Mary Goldsmith
4 Nov 2013 03:21 AM

Theme: International organizing of domestic workers.
In 1988, leaders of several Latin American domestic workers' groups founded a regional confederation, la Confederación Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Trabajadoras del Hogar (Conlactraho). Its objectives were, and to a large extent are, the promotion and defense of domestic workers' rights, their organization, legislative reform and implementation, the valuation of domestic work and the elimination of gender, class and racist oppression.

Among its guiding principles: the domestic workers are not workers (not members of the family), domestic workers should be the protagonists of their own struggles and should

speak for themselves. It has addressed the issues of representation, recognition and redistribution.

More recently, domestic workers, with support from WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing) and the IUF (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations), have built a broader, global organization, the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN), that has campaigned for the adoption and ratification of ILO Convention 189 "Decent work for domestic workers" and the creation of new associations (primarily unions) and the strengthening of associations that already exist. In October 2013, the IDWN became the International Federation of Domestic Workers (IDWF) at its founding congress.

The Conlactraho and the IFDW have joined efforts in campaigning for decent conditions for domestic workers, in a globalized world in which migrant women are the backbone of care work. Since its adoption in 2011, ten countries have ratified Convention 189, eight in the global south. Latin America has been a forerunner in the ratification process, with Uruguay, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Paraguay having completed ratification to date, and Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia in the final stages of this process.

I think that there are several questions that still need to be addressed:

1. The relation between care work and house work:

Care work has often supplanted domestic labor, housework and reproductive labor in academic and political discussion. Care work has the notable advantage that it moves away from economicism and makes visible the emotional ties and associated that are involved in paid domestic work, however it also might undermine the claim that domestic workers are just like any other workers.

Paid domestic workers' organizations have emphasized that they should resist being involved in the intimate and domestic lives of their employers and should seek to create a private sphere of their own. In fact, the emotional script of domesticity and worker-employer relations usually has been utilized to their disadvantage.

Care work is a slippery term. Though it supposedly only is used for dependent adults and children who cannot feign for themselves (elderly, the sick, small children), totally able adults, particularly men, often benefit directly from care work.

One suggestion is that care work conceptually be broken down into indirect care work (cleaning, cooking, washing and ironing), necessary that for everyday life and direct care work (bathing, feeding, carrying, etc.) of those unable to do so for themselves.

2. The relation between care work and economic development, particularly women's incorporation into the labor force:

Often in Latin America one hears the statement that if it were not for paid domestic workers, women could not participate in the labor force. This has a clear class bias when one considers that the overwhelming majority of women workers do not hire domestic workers. In some countries domestic workers' demands and rights have been pitted against those of other working women where the sexual division of labor in the home is fairly intact and there is little provision of daycare service (eg Nicaragua)

In Latin America, most paid domestic workers are hired to clean, cook, wash and iron, not to care for children and the elderly. And this is in fact what they do. So, we are still faced with the problem from the 1970s: housework. Is it an issue for struggle within the home or public policy?

3. Whether care workers should be included within legal definitions for domestic workers and organized as such:

In some countries organized domestic workers' have argued against the inclusion of care work (particularly of the elderly) because they do not want to assume this additional responsibility and training that this implies.

This is the case for Uruguay where those who care for the elderly and sick technically are covered by other laws and unions. In this case the domestic workers' union does include nurses for children. In this case they argue for higher wages for this occupational category. The latter has been the tendency in many Latin American countries.

4. Who should pay for care work of the elderly, sick and children and whether housewives or other family members are entitled to payment and benefits:

The members of the domestic workers' union in Uruguay are adamantly opposed to a pension for housewives, they ask why they should have to pay for other women's retirement when they have had to work and pay into their own retirement fund.

Thalia Kidder

4 Nov 2013 03:25 AM

Microfinance! Although microfinance is most well known for its work on credit for enterprise, the most progressive and innovative micro-finance programmes have worked directly on investments in Care. Women are almost universally held responsible for amassing and accessing lump sums of cash for childbirth, care for ill people/health, funerals, and often school fees and weddings, so financial services that facilitate these lump sums are have a much more sophisticated 'gender perspective' than those that simply offer women 'credit for enterprise'.

Some examples are savings products designated for childbirth or school-fees, as pioneered by microfinance programmes such as the Union Regional de Apoyo Campesino (URAC) in Queretaro, Mexico. In other countries, micro-insurance schemes have been promoted for covering health expenses and funerals. Remittances have been used to leverage purchases of home appliances, such as stoves and washing machines.

The brilliance of these programmes, is that they implicitly recognise the full scope of women's work, including unpaid care work, and facilitate investments in these. On the other hand, too many microfinance programmes have considered it 'wrong' to 'divert' credit for enterprise, for example 'non-productive uses' (like household equipment) or 'emergencies' (such as health expenses).

I remember asking a loan manager why he would consider extending a loan for water piping for crop irrigation, but not for water piping for household washing. The response was that the irrigation pipe 'increased the productivity of labour'. We needed to make the

argument that the hours saved from hauling water to wash clothes might well be then invested in market activity.

Thalia Kidder

Helal Uddin

4 Nov 2013 05:31 AM

Laura is alright. But ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) implementing a project which addresses unpaid care work differently. It does not only focus on role of women but also men's. I just give a brief introduction about the project below.

Actionaid Bangladesh is implementing the Strengthening Women's Collectives project in two districts. The uniqueness of the project is that it is taking new areas of advocacy on board like unpaid care work for women and connecting the issue with sustainable agriculture/fishery production and value chains prospects. The project objectives is to increase poor women's equal access to and control over economic resources and public services by strengthening women's only cooperatives.

The project is implementing under Women Rights and Gender Equity Priority of Country Strategic Plan (CSP) IV. In the three year the project aims at the following result areas:

- Well-established and sustainable women-only collectives with effective leadership.
- Increased technical skills for rural women to participate in production, processing and marketing of goods based on sustainable production methods (economic, social and environmental).
- Increased recognition of women's paid work and unpaid care work by the community and government.
- Women's collectives are linked to networks and local CSOs advocate for targeted government support to women's collectives (institutional and technical capacity, financial support, access to markets etc).
- Governments and donors are aware of these innovative collectives that can be used as a starting point to design and implement initiatives and public policies based in a holistic approach to women's collectives, integrating women's unpaid care work and sustainable production processes.

There are four major components of the project and one of them is unpaid care work. The major elements of the components are women rights, participation, advocacy, and documentation and sharing. But our concern about gender. We already initiated time use diary in the community which developed in the participatory way. It would support to identify the time of men and women employ for different productive, non-productive and unpaid care works. We analyse this data every month and shared with the group members and their spouse and other stakeholders. It actually visualize the time of men and women are given for unpaid care work.

We also mainstreamed unpaid care work with other components of the project. For example, we address sustainable agriculture, wealth creation value chain and gender

sensitive market. These all components will also ensure care is addressed not separately as integration.

Thank

Helal

Tahmina Huq
4 Nov 2013 05:49 AM

I do agree with points of Lauro regarding care work. It is appreciated that some of projects (globally) have been focused on women's care work and those try to emphasize on women's participation on outside work, increasing day care facilities etc. Needless to say that, care work should be design from feminist point of views. First most it should ensure gender justice in division of labor in family, community and as well at state. If project fails to ensure that women will be triply burden with home management and care work and outside work. Specially, in the third world country like Bangladesh household work and care works are exclusively considered as women's work and there is no compromise with this work. Due to patriarchal mind set few men who are interested to support household work and support women in care work they cannot visibly involve as these works are not appreciated by family and community and affect the so call image of men in terms of masculinity. So community mobilization and awareness is very important to consentize about importance of care work and label out it from women's work. In terms of out sourcing of care work it should take into consideration that again these care works are done by women (ie day care in charge, care giver). So it requires to establish as men and women's work not only women's work. Globally care work project should talk about 'work life balance' at work place too and see the implication in national budget.

I smyth
4 Nov 2013 05:54 AM

Following along the line of 'care' as childcare, a few comments here:

- the absence of affordable child care, and of a more equitable distribution between women and men (and among more household members) is indeed one of the main obstacles to women's participation in the labour force and generally make a decent living. However, at times we forget - in our practice - that we must do more than release women from one set of responsibilities (however important and emotionally rewarding) just to take over another set (productive work and earning). Women have also the right to leisure, to social and political engagment, to developing their potential. Such thinking will also help up extract care from the narrow confines of 'livelihood' considerations, in terms of the sectoral work we do.

- We also need to remember that while childcare responsibilities often concern women at a specific time in their life, direct care work does not end there (when children are older), but continues with women tending sick relatives, ageing parents and often, later in life, their grandchildren. Even in western context, where the nuclear family is more widespread and thus women care responsibilities tend to be more limited to their immediate family, increasing unemployment amog youth and reduction in social provisions are extending women's care duties across time.

Helal Uddin

4 Nov 2013 06:39 AM

Thank you Thalia. You mentioned in the last para of your mail very rightly. It means microcredit programme does not taking account about 'care'. Their perspective is very much link with market and this market focuses only goods, production and profit maximization as mainstream economy. It does not look for environment, social issues, climate, health etc. It does not concentrate about care which have significant contribution to run the market economy.

In this context, ActionAid Bangladesh is implementing a project "Strengthening Women's Collectives" in Bangladesh which focusing 'building economic alternatives'. This economic alternatives defiantly focuses on a integrated approach which includes market, household and infrastructures, nature, social dimension, political dimension etc. The project is also taking care about increasing access of women in activities for their income towards their economic empowerment. For such economic empowerment of women it takes a comprehensive framework that includes seven form of wealth creation;

1. Natural Capital – refers to the stock of environmental assets in a region
2. Built Capital – refers to the stock of fully functioning constructed infrastructure
3. Individual Capital – refers to whether actors in the value chain have improved their skills
4. Intellectual Capital – refers to the stock of knowledge, innovation, and creativity or imagination in a region
5. Social Capital – refers to the stock of trust, relationships, and networks that supports civil society
6. Political Capital – refers to the stock of power and goodwill held by individuals, groups, and organizations that can held, spent or shared to achieve desired ends
7. Financial Capital – refers to the stock of unencumbered monetary assets invested in other forms of capital or financial instruments

Any enterprise of women will create these wealths but will not bear any adverse situation for other. The project works to materialize this approach for alternative livelihood promotion for women living in poverty ultimately for building economic alternatives. The interesting thing is that this economic model will not create any adverse effect for people and environment rather it will reduce burden of care work for women, taking care of environment and health because it is talking about sustainable production practices and business whether it is on farm or off farm.

Regards

Helal

Alice Evans

4 Nov 2013 07:24 AM

In Zambia, gender sensitisation is institutionalised in the school curriculum and has been for well over a decade. As part of 'Civics', all secondary students in Grades 8 and 9 are taught and examined on the social construction of gender roles and responsibilities, including care work. Older students (in Grades 11-12) can opt to further explore these issues in 'Civic Education'.

Does anyone know of other countries that have also institutionalised gender sensitisation in this way?

Unlike the small-scale sensitisation programmes documented in the March 2013 issue of "Gender & Development", these Civics lessons are not always facilitated by champions of gender equality. These teachers tend to treat the subject as unimportant, rush through the syllabus through information-provision rather than participatory reflection, or openly contradict taught content - either in their speech or behaviour, e.g. not ensuring that male and female students share duties for sweeping the classrooms etc.

As a result, students tend to perceive the information as 'not real', 'just something to learn for the exam and then forget'.

A second problem is that because care work is often performed indoors, students often have little exposure to flexibility in this gender division of labour. So even if some families do share care work, others are unaware and continue to think it is 'not normal' for men to do so.

I wonder if a way of overcoming this constraint might be through television programmes (sitcoms or cooking competitions), normalising men sharing reproductive labour. Is anyone aware of donors funding such?

Caroline Sweetman
4 Nov 2013 07:43 AM

Hello all and how wonderful to see as I logged on this morning (breakfast time in the UK here) the start of what promises to be a unique discussion about the practical challenges and lessons of addressing care and care work through community development, advocacy, research and policy.

I'm Editor of Gender & Development. This discussion is the first stage of a three-stage activity for the journal over the next year which will result in a Special Issue on Care in November 2014. You can read more about the whole process and plans at www.genderanddevelopment.org/page/care-learning-event

We hope this Learning Project will enable sharing and dialogue and support genuinely transformative work on care which contributes to - rather than detracting from - our goals of gender justice and women's rights.

We hope to hear about experiences of development work which can be learnt from and shared by a wider audience through being featured here, and (as you can read if you follow the link above), some of them will later - we hope! - be foregrounded and discussed at a face-to-face Learning Event in London UK at ActionAid, 10-11 February

2014. And after that, we'll identify people who'd like to write for the journal next year. A warm welcome to all!

Caroline Sweetman
4 Nov 2013 08:22 AM

A quick response to the fascinating experiences raised by Alice Evans here, about foregrounding care and care work in the minds of children and adolescents so they 'get' the need to challenge the domestic, hidden aspects of rigid gender stereotypes about the gender division of labour. I absolutely agree about the particular problem of highlighting domestic care work as it is done behind the walls of compounds and houses in so many parts of the world. However I think this 'private' reality (as well as stereotype) around care presents as many opportunities for change as challenges, if you think incrementally and long-term.

When I researched in Ethiopia, I found examples of marriages where the husband was doing the washing, but had to wait for his wife to come home from the market (where she was funded by a microfinance project) to get her to hang the washing out - this would have been shameful as it would have exposed the reality of him doing women's work and both would have been ridiculed. So so small-scale de facto changes ARE happening but the meaning and value attributed to care work is so low that it's attitudinal change which is needed - as in Alice's example of lessons with girls and boys to raise awareness in childhood of the issues (we had a great article from Save The Children in the journal on this, read it at <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/whose-turn-to-do-the-dishes-transforming-gender-attitudes-and-behaviours-among-274324>) .

So while this type of work with children and adolescents is really important in achieving change on the status of care and care work and ensuring changes in the division of labour in the next generation, what else can we do as the adults who are trying (not very well, sometimes) to run our societies and make changes now? We all go home at night and get up in the morning in our own 'private sphere' - we are inside those walls and compounds, and we all see care and care work around us every day!

The challenge is the norm of leaving this behind with a clear division between this and office work which is the reality for most development professionals. While the reality for most of those we work with is multi-tasking all day. And if some days we have to sneakily look after our children while working at home at the computer (as in fact I am doing right this moment as I type this, as they're off school today), our offices frown on this.

It's not that care is invisible to us as individuals, but our employers do not like the reality that we have to combine it - they like workers who are maximally productive - people with no work commitments beyond the work they're paid for at the office. Many of us do not see fit to challenge that. This is changing (a little) - if I see a male colleague here in the UK ostentatiously carrying a small child into an office meeting, he is lauded and admired for being progressive (and perhaps we should be a bit kinder - I always think, God, if he were a woman people would be thinking 'why on earth can't she sort out her childcare').

Zahria Muti Mapandi
4 Nov 2013 08:29 AM

Although the issues on Care have always been a huge part of discussions in development programmes here in the Philippines, especially those that focus on gender, women and human rights, very few organizations (both government and non-government) have addressed Care directly in their programmes. Despite the recognition that Care primarily burden the women there are very few policies and programs that address it.

In our own organization, we are now to conduct a series of FGDs on Care Analysis. We hope that the results which we will share with both duty-bearers and moral-bearers will result to more attention to addressing the burden of Care on women, policy and program wise. This proves challenging as religious interpretations and cultural practices present obstacles to ready acceptance of change in recognizing whose responsibility Care is.

For several years we have been conducting community campaign on gender justice via Maswarah (community consultations) on Gender and Family Justice that involves women, their husbands and their children (separately) to discuss rights and responsibilities of all in family management. Gradually we are seeing some shifts in the sharing of Care in the household, especially among younger households.

However, support from the government that directly address Care are badly needed to augment lack of resources that support Care. For example basic services such as water and electricity greatly affect the amount of time and other resources spent on care work. Most rural communities do not have water and electricity in the homes. Also, government programs support installation of Day Care Centers but do not capacitate or organize communities to manage the centers.

Livelihood programs for women provided by both government and non-government organizations mostly add to the burden of care work as they do not support care work. Innovative programs addressing Care and care work are yet to be designed in our context. Experiences from other areas are highly appreciated. We do hope to create our own as we continue our journey exploring experiences on Care and care work.

Alice Evans
4 Nov 2013 08:50 AM

Following on from Caroline Sweetman's Ethiopian example, concerns about cultural expectations also featured in my own research. For example, a 14 year old boy living in a low-income compound told me that he would sweep inside the house but not outside because his friends would laugh at him for doing 'women's work'.

So how do cultural expectations change, such that men become less anxious that others might laugh at them?

Besides Development interventions, another theme that came up in my own research was rural-urban migration. Recent rural-urban Zambian migrants told me that their husbands had started sharing domestic work. Having seen a few other men doing the washing up etc., their husbands had become less anxious about being negatively judged for performing 'women's work'. As a result of exposure to heterogeneous practices - through urban living - some had come to think that it was just 'care work', rather than 'women's work' per se.

On the association between urban places and greater support for gender equality, see also the World Bank's recent study 'On Norms and Agency', <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1164107274725/On-Norms-Agency-Book.pdf> - summarised here by Duncan Green: <http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=13856>

Is there any other research examining the extent (and causes) of rural-urban differences in care work practices and attitudes?

Hope Basiao Abella
4 Nov 2013 08:52 AM

Theme: Domestic labor and Care Work

After several decades of economic liberalization, there is a shift in the balance between labor and capital. Informal employment, which includes domestic services/ labor, has increased/ expanded but with restricted movements/ protection across countries. Capital, is moving freely across countries with increased income, due to favorable local and international policies. For example, we have an increasing number and income for recruitment and employment agencies vis a vis increasing trafficking issues of domestic workers.

A lot of Filipino women are employed in domestic work in the Philippines and abroad and is one of the important sources of income in the country and abroad. The Philippines is the second highest source of overseas migrant workers worldwide and the first in Asia. Annually about one-quarter of overseas Filipino workers deployed overseas are employed in domestic labor.

Last January 2013, Philippines passed the "Batas Kasambahay" or the "Domestic Workers' Law" ensuring in the law, minimum wage, paid leaves, social security and Philhealth. It requires employers to formalize their employment of household help by requiring employment contract, payslips, and certificate of employment. The law is expected to benefit about 2.5 million household workers in the country.

Interestingly international documents protecting workers' protection and rights were ratified mostly by "sending" countries to name: the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (in force since March 2003 with 20 countries ratifying this) and the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers (in force since September 2013 with 2 countries ratifying).

Looking at Domestic Services / Labor in the context of “care economy” the following questions and observations are raised:

1. Does increasing protection for domestic workers, both at the national and international level mean an increase in the recognition of the “care economy”?
2. Does the passage of laws and policies mean a recognition of domestic work? Does it also mean an increase in the recognition of household work and unpaid care? Will these lead to changes in labor and economy, and in what areas and how?
3. What is the relationship between “unpaid care” and “domestic work”.
4. Do the present laws and international conventions on domestic work empower women or do they support the interest of capitalist economies by increasing work, expanding roles and consumption capacities of women without addressing “unpaid care work” and inequality of gender roles and responsibilities in households.
5. Given capitalist economies, market economy, on one hand, and centuries of reproductive role of women , on the other hand, what could be an alternative to reduce women’s burden and increase gender justice and equality.

Ironically, women’s domestic and household services, reproductive work and community volunteer work are seen as maximizing private households’ productivity and community work, building up the economic backbone of the country, but this is an awareness that does not translate into reduction of the burden of work of women.

Christina Kwangwari
4 Nov 2013 09:10 AM

Unpaid care work and development

In most development discourse unpaid care work is not considered an issue which affects the overall development of a country. As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (2013), unpaid care work is a contributor to condemning women to poverty. Due to limited statistics, evidence and limited political will, many governments have not examined nor acknowledged how unpaid care work actually affects a country’s development and women’s enjoyment of their rights.

Indeed as noted by Thaila before a loan manager is likely to consider extending a loan on water for irrigation rather than for water piping for household washing. This also goes for African governments. In my advocacy work with policy makers such as the African Union (AU), the argument for the need to invest in water for irrigation purposes is always well received and easily integrated into AU Declarations. On the other hand, it is usually a struggle to get any accessions to the inclusion of water for domestic purposes as means of improving the lives of women farmers. Similarly, access for energy to support agricultural production activities such as electricity, fuel is much better received than access to the same energy for household use. This access often comes as a by-product rather than a deliberate effort to improve the lives of those involved in food preparation. Establishing woodlots to help agricultural activities such as tobacco curing is more acceptable than establishing the same for firewood to help in cooking food. Investments in labour saving technologies that help reduce the drudgery in food preparation, collecting firewood are not considered real policy issues but issues that households are supposed to take care of privately. At the same time investments in labour saving technologies for agriculture are a priority for research and investment.

In my work with women smallholder farmers, I have noted that the unpaid care work is really exhausting because of lack of technologies that help reduce the drudgery. This work is left primarily to women and girls within the household with little assistance from male members of the household. Further, whatever sector one looks at, there is a tendency to overlook the unequal gendered responsibilities of men and women for unpaid care work. This can be within farming, mining, marketing, fishing, formalised employment, governance, and politics

Further, the state, local authorities and society at large is unable to make a link between the amount of time spent on unpaid care work and its impact on productivity, political participation and enjoyment of other fundamental human rights.

Home based care has been romanticised as an ideal for communities/ families affected by HIV and AIDS and other terminal illnesses but little analysis has been made of the impact this has on home based carers who are mostly women. Once the person leaves the institutional care in hospital, the state provides little if any support for the sick persons and their carers. Resources required for the care of persons such as safe clean water for drinking and washing, support for cooking food are often ignored. Yet the presence of a sick person in the home often means that the time spent on care work increases more water is required and more firewood is required for cooking and heating the room. In some cases, one cannot travel outside the home for marketing or to do other farming activities if there is a sick person in the home. This reduces productivity and can result in food insecurity and other vulnerabilities as one cannot fully participate in other economic and political activities. However, unpaid care work remains largely invisible and unacknowledged.

In many cases the state has to be pushed to include issues of unpaid care work in its policy and budgets

From

Christina Kwangwari

Mona Sherpa

4 Nov 2013 09:50 AM

Namaste and Hello to everyone from Nepal.

Good to go through some interesting thoughts and experiences around UCW. I agree when its said that UCW is not considered as a women's rights agenda and not even as development issue. We have started working on the issue of UCW directly 3 years before and sad to tell that there are very few women's rights organisations or even activists who are aware of the issue and its politics, why it is important to discuss if we are really looking for structural change.

For me UCW is very much related to gender division of labour and politics within it. It has rarely been standalone women's rights agenda or crosscut issue and when we talk about it amongst policy makers, development workers and women's rights activists they have very few to comment and discuss. thus, we are making it a discussion issue in Nepal

and trying to make people understand that this is important aspect, if we want to establish women's rights. We have already done several discussions at grassroots level, district and regional levels and also at national level along with it some media programs and animations to make people understand. Many take it for granted and say that its a ' women's work' and thats how people are socialized as well. Thus, our experience is around generating discussion around the issue.

However, when we discuss it in a mixed group, comments that usually come are 'men also do work for their family and for household',- but our debate is not that only women do work or men do not do any work- our point is the work that women do are not recognised or valued as work and thus, they are not thought of when policies and programs are developed and this aspect is not considered when development works are introduced and even of those which comes for women's empowerment. Unless we tackle this by understanding its burden on women making them marginalised and away from mainstream development, women will remain in where they are and gender equality and women's rights will just remain myth.

Understanding this, we have started incorporating this understanding in all our projects and programs be it a program on livelihood, education, governance and such.

We have several programs where we have tried to understand burden of care work on women and how it stops them to develop themselves not having enough time to learn, go out and participate in community discussions, represent themselves in political parties or government development committees, take care of themselves, listen to radio or watch tv and if not rest for sometime. In our livelihood program, after a discussion with women when we figured out that it was child care which is taking most of their time, we have incorporated community child care center, which allows women to be off from that responsibility and concentrate on their livelihood work.

We have introduced advocacy programs where women shared that its a collection of water, which is taking so much of their time. We have supported them to build reservoir and also demanding for the same from government budget, so that they don't have to walk for 3 to 4 hours to fetch water, and similarly for grinding mill where women shared that they have to walk for 4-6 hours to reach by the riverside to grind grains. this will not change the role that they have taken or role given but until there is structural change, this will support women to redistribute their work with new technologies or with accessible such support and also to some extent reduce their workload and the time that they get can be optimized for their improved representation in community work or even for their self care. So, to incorporate this understanding we discuss with the women and collect their time diary and see what exactly is taking their time and not allowing them to spend time for themselves.

Right now, we are also working on developing 'rural women's policy ' and we want the issue of UCW to be there and working on it along with community women and women lawyers to make policy makers understand it and also by developing above mentioned models. We want government to have budget for these kind of work too which reduces women's workload.

Through REFLECT circles and community discussions, we talk with men and also encourage women to discuss this at household level, so that their work is valued and shared as well- not to girl child but with everyone at household level. To make men and

other family member understand how much work the household work is, we take time diaries of women and men and compare and show the trend too. This is helpful to aware men and community too and also to get their support.

We have just started our work and it has been only 3 years and how it will be fruitful and effective to women is still to examine and see, but when we discuss with women, they find it helpful and they also share how men and other family members are cooperating with them and supporting them in their household chores.

We are also taking it to the policy level by having several discussions with feminist economists and Central Bureau of Statistics to account women's work in household satellite account if not in GDP, so that women's contribution to the national economy is also recognised and thus 'social security schemes' are rigorously planned for women to achieve the 'equality' and 'rights' that we are seeking to establish and achieve.

Helal Uddin
4 Nov 2013 10:23 AM

Dear Alice we are going same kind of experience in Bangladesh. Because dominant gender norms is like that and it is patriarchal. There is an alternatives that ActionAid Bangladesh has been implementing since long time that is Reflection -Action Circle. 20 - 30 women participate in this circle who are living around. They get literacy and discuss their and community issues in the circle regularly. They identify the problems, its cause and effects, and finally identify alternative actions. They develop their understanding on the issue. A facilitators support them in the whole process. She/he supports to develop their conscientisation on that particular issue. In this process, the group members identified that though they could know detail on some issues in the circle but males of their family and society do not do that.

From that experience it was introduced other activities with Reflection-Action Circle are spouse meeting and community meeting. They invite husband of the group members and share with them what they do and want to do. Same thing is shared with community people also. It works very well to make understanding among male members of the family and community. Currently we introduced these activities in the project 'Strengthening Women's Collectives' in Bangladesh. Now it works well.

So this kind of activities can be introduced to building awareness among other males of the community which will support to build an enabling environment for sharing or redistributing of burden of care among family's male members.

Thanks.

Alice Evans
4 Nov 2013 10:50 AM

Thank you Helal. The Bangladesh Reflection Action Circles sound brilliant. A great deal of evidence suggests that such small-scale participatory gender sensitisation can indeed

enable a shift in gender norms. By publicly disavowing widely-shared stereotypes about care work, group discussants publicly signal to each other that men will not be disrespected if they do the washing up.

(See also 'Men and Development: Politicising Masculinities'
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Development-Masculinities-Edited-Andrea-Cornwall/dp/1848139780>)

The challenge seems to be in securing similar results at scale - reaching not just hundreds but 154 million people in Bangladesh, for example. In largely patriarchal contexts, this is likely to require mobilising facilitators (such as school teachers, in the Zambian case) less committed to gender equality. My evidence suggests that this modification significantly impedes the effectiveness of the intervention.

It might be thought that there could be in-service teacher training for Civics and Civic Education, but interviewed Zambian staff from different schools claimed that their head teacher would attend instead so as to profit from 'out of pocket expenses'. Besides, a couple of days training is seldom sufficient to undermine teachers' entrenched gender stereotypes, nor their familiarity with rote learning rather than participatory discussion.

So that's why I wonder if television and radio programmes might be a key route to normalising sharing care work at scale. Parallel research on divorce and fertility, suggests that Brazilian soap operas can have a powerful impact on gender beliefs and practices - ungated papers below.

<http://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/51502/1/591278979.pdf>
<http://storage.globalcitizen.net/data/topic/knowledge/uploads/20120124142812705.pdf>

Alice

Tahmina Huq
4 Nov 2013 11:18 AM

Unpaid care work should be considered as feminist economic alternatives. Recognition of unpaid care work should have an reflection on National GDP. But there are very few examples of such practice in the world. UN agencies and donor can consider the issue as one of priority agenda in programme design .

Regards,

Caroline Sweetman
4 Nov 2013 12:11 PM

Hello again all. Thanks so much to all who have contributed so far to this very focused and practical discussion. I'm hearing particular issues which stand out for me. In no particular order:

1. First the observation from Mona Sherpa: 'I agree when its said that unpaid care work is not considered as a women's rights agenda and not even as development issue. We have started working on the issue of UCW directly 3 years before and sad to tell that there are very few women's rights organisations or even activists who are aware of the issue and its politics, why it is important to discuss if we are really looking for structural change.' I think to that, I'd add that PAID care work is also not recognised widely as a women's rights issue by organisations which are not explicitly working on migration issues.

2. Second is Christine Kangwari's post on the experience of women who are home carers for people living with advanced HIV related illnesses. She says, 'Further, the state, local authorities and society at large is unable to make a link between the amount of time spent on unpaid care work and its impact on productivity, political participation and enjoyment of other fundamental human rights.

Home based care has been romanticised as an ideal for communities/ families affected by HIV and AIDS and other terminal illnesses but little analysis has been made of the impact this has on home based carers who are mostly women.' It's SO important that we are aware of the ways in which idealised images of women as eternally selfless vigilant loving carers can be used by policymakers to help 'sell' public policy which relies on women's unpaid work, and places the women and their dependants at greater risk of extreme poverty since it leaves out the cost of all this time, energy and resources that home-based care takes in the absence of state spending (either because the state has no money or because it is choosing to spend it elsewhere - on weaponry for example - which applies to countries in both the global South and North) or failing to tax elites fairly (as in the UK at the moment where austerity and cutbacks in social spending are 'sold' to us as an inevitability rather than a policy choice)

3. Mary Goldsmith in this discussion says something very important about the divisions between women which come from the role of unpaid care work and low-paid care work in subsidising paid formal work done by women who rely on these women to make their lives possible. This affects solidarity between women because of class issues.

Mary says:

'if it were not for paid domestic workers, women could not participate in the labor force. This has a clear class bias when one considers that the overwhelming majority of women workers do not hire domestic workers. In some countries domestic workers' demands and rights have been pitted against those of other working women where the sexual division of labor in the home is fairly intact and there is little provision of daycare service (eg Nicaragua)'

Do these issues stand out for others? Your thoughts?

Goretti Muragijemariya
4 Nov 2013 12:13 PM

Dear all,
Greetings from Rwanda!

thanks to the organizing team! I've already started getting news/skills from your discussions of today! Waow! How interesting it is to see you all working, reflecting and advocating for UCW issues addressed!

Currently we are implementing a Dutch funded project of women's rights to sustainable livelihood (Funding Leadership opportunities for women) which aims at women smallholder farmers to sustainable agriculture and Women's care works.

Many interventions are made and what interesting, women themselves looked at all these household unpaid care as women's works! With project life span, I am sure women are the first to break out the patriarchal system that let society to look at women overburden and men/husbands stand as boss while a redistribution of UCW can lead to the reduction of these daily activities and women/wives have time for self care and rest even time to go for paid work!

Looking at where we are with REFLECT circles, we can assure the success of addressing UCW burden to women. We are planning to organize a meeting of women smallholder farmers from REFLECT circles and government officials for discussion and advocacy. Here we look at advocacy for the Reduction (Child cares, technologies that can support women to reduce time spent on care works)!

Look forward to get more from you.

Thanks
Goretti

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty

Anesu Makina
4 Nov 2013 12:37 PM

Dear All,

Good afternoon and thank you for the lively discussion.

I just wanted to add and support the matter of home based care being invisible, in particular, Christine Kangwari's post. In the context of climate change, home based care especially in resource poor areas will be intensified. For example, fetching water will become a harder task if sources dry up, or supply is erratic. Whats more is that more water will probably be needed in order to take care of any ill people, especially in the context of HIV/AIDS.

Here in South Africa (in the context of HIV/AIDS), there is a growing movement of community based care- training is provided by the state or NGOs. The process works by often using paid volunteers and perhaps alleviates the burden off the shoulders of the female members of the family. Those who are unable to access these carers have to

figure out how to care for the sick family member as well as generate income. For those are are able, they can work closer to home but for some, care work compromises income because it is expected of women.

Wendy Harcourt
4 Nov 2013 12:41 PM

Dear Thamina and every one -

just to flag that UNRISD has done some important work around care from not only an economic but also they see unpaid care work as a major human rights issue for more on the studies and findings of UNRISD's research on Political and Social Economy of Care, visit www.unrisd.org/gd/care

best

Wendy Harcourt
Associate Professor in Critical Development and Feminist Studies
International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University,

Wendy Harcourt
4 Nov 2013 12:52 PM

I agree with Mary and Caroline about the class dimension about care - as well as the issue of carers who leave home to care and become caught in two worlds - caring for their families long distance while looking after others. They are then impacted by policy in two places - and in Europe right now increasing controls and racism and other forms of prejudice. New ways of organizing of migrant groups are important to consider as part of the 'development' debate also given the importance of their remittances but also the changing realities for families in the 'two homes' in relation to citizenship rights.

I also wanted to raise the issue about intimate care - sex work - and then also the issue of men and trans* people's engagement in intimate care. Sex workers' rights are not often spoken about in development contexts as about care work - but recent research is arguing that care needs to be expanded to include intimacy - and research on trans* (migrants living in Europe) show that these workers are being excluded from all forms of social protection policy.

Mona Sherpa
4 Nov 2013 01:14 PM

You are correct Wendy, UCW is definitely not just economic issue however, there is a risk that even in development field, it is understood just linked with economy. the main debate on UCW is that it is not valued/ RECOGNISED and thus no attempt is considered to REDUCE and REDISTRIBUTE it and thus women's REPRESENTATION

is limited. However, even development practitioners understand that by reducing women's workload or redistributing women's workload they can give that time for economic up-liftment but issue of women's body, health, development, security which are also her rights are not considered forget self care.

Let me give you some example from Nepal, when we were conducting a action research in two districts, one of the major components was to fill time diary and we also collected it of women which they filled themselves after introducing literacy circle (action reflection or REFLECT circles) - there were some husbands who used to support their wives thinking she will get time to engage in economic work introduced by NGOs and INGOs but not thinking that their wives will get some free time, which she can use for her development which is essential for her. Probably economic poverty also has to do with it but can we compromise it?

the other example is, 25% of women population in Nepal has a problem of uterus prolapse and one of the major reason is household work that women have to do right after delivery, when she should be taking rest and taking care of her and child's health within her. Due to work during pregnancy also this happens. So the effect of UCW on women's health is maximum but there is no such effective remedial actions towards it except for a program which hasn't much been implemented by government that too with limited body.

And we don't want to reduce women's workload to send them as economic labor to the market which is already exploitative toward her? And this is one of the biggest risk even in development work- limited understanding and lack of politics on it. I remember once a development practitioner asking me, if you are advocating for this, then you should advocate for a UCW policy - it was difficult for me to explain her that its not about UCW policy and there can't be one policy like that as in VAW related law or policy. But this is the challenge we do have even within us. In such situation it is very difficult to get hegemonic action against the burden of UCW on women and build collective demand to recognise, reduce and redistribute it from household to community and state's level. So, it is definitely not just about economy but it is major women's rights agenda and especially if we want structural change, it is must that we understand it and work against it.

Thalia Kidder
4 Nov 2013 01:25 PM

Alice and Helal and others discuss communications to change norms about men (and women) and care work. I have a couple of examples.

First, in Nicaragua, the feminist (mixed) organisation Puntos de Encuentro has developed the serial TV-soap Sexto Sentido (not the thriller film, you can find it here <http://www.sextosentidotv.com/index.>).

This working-class, young-people's TV series has MANY issues portrayed, and also has, from the very beginning, modeled young men doing (and learning to do) housework and caring. Puntos' model for changing norms included having young-people's discussion circles organised in many towns/neighbourhoods around the country, for discussions

after every episode. I haven't asked directly what came up about women/men and care work (probably called housework) but it would be interesting to ask!

A decade ago, I remember hearing that community groups in Brazil and Nicaragua were having classes in cooking and housework for young men... does anyone know about these efforts?

Second, when I was in Tanzania recently with colleagues from around the world, we happened to see on a TV in the dining room Oxfam's 'Female Food Hero' advertisement, which shows how women farmers are leading efforts for agricultural development and food security (among other things). Rabbani, from Bangladesh, commented 'we need to have films of 'Male Household Heroes'! Brilliant idea... who would like to do it?

What are we trying to change in awareness-raising? I am appreciative of Mona's perspective that our efforts are not about saying that women-do-all-the-care-work or men-do-not-do-any-care work, it is about the (types of) work that women do not being recognised and valued as work, nor discussed when considering development initiatives and investments. I think this is important:

- although time-use surveys have shown that women DO work longer hours than men overall, and that women do more care work, there will always be some men who do care work, and some women who do very little. In my experience, getting into debates about the overall time differences or whether men's work tending the backyard animals or fixing the roof is care work... this is not helpful. Many men in rural areas of developing countries also work hours that are too long and unhealthy. The issue is more to make visible the care TASKS that are arduous, inefficient, invisible and under-invested in (and usually these are the care tasks that women do) and advocate for recognition and investment in these.

Valeria Esquivel

4 Nov 2013 01:29 PM

Hi, all, it is only 10am in Buenos Aires and it is hard to catch up with this lively conversation!

Many important points have been raised, and I would like to stress one, and bring one new to the table.

As mentioned by Caroline in her second post, bringing paid care workers into the picture is a relatively new development, but one unavoidable since their status as workers, their pay, and the degree of feminization in these occupations is clearly related to the way care is "organized" in each society --and this goes clearly beyond migration and the issue of global care chains. Bringing paid care workers into the picture illuminates issues about class, but also about labour market regulation, and the role of the State in providing (or not) care services. And also situations in which women become "care workers" on "voluntary" basis, but this is really not "voluntary" work but triggered by public policies, which provide dwellings or subsidies but not wages. And in all cases, as these women are not professionals, the policies resort to mother's supposedly "natural" ability to care, as if care was a feminine trait.

This connects to the new issue I would like to raise, and it is that even if programmes and projects do not explicitly involve care and care work (or the development discourse does not take UCW into account, as a colleague said), unpaid care work IS there, and is taken for granted by policies and programmes and projects alike. [Yes, it is yet another

way to say that gender-blind is not gender-neutral.] When UCW is taken for granted, as if it was a "free service" (without costs and therefore without value), policies, programmes and projects end up stressing gender stereotypes and leaving unchallenged the actual unequal distribution of the UCW --and its consequences over many other spheres. The challenge is SEEING the UCW, and even the paid care work (including housework), not taking it for granted, and envisioning how a just distribution of it would look like.

Cheers,
Valeria

Dra. Valeria Esquivel
Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento - CONICET

Alice Evans
4 Nov 2013 01:39 PM

Thank you so much for the link Thalia. Puntos de Encuentro's work sounds fascinating. I'm now watching an episode with English language subtitles:

http://sextosentidotv.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16

Do you know of any English-language impact evaluations of their mass media campaigns?

So far, I've found this one, which draws upon complexity science:

http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0121-32612008000200001

Thalia Kidder
4 Nov 2013 02:14 PM

[Alice, I'm sure there are evaluations, but would need to contact Puntos/Amy Bank. There's a film about Puntos at the London Feminist Film festival November 29th.]

(Migrant) domestic workers and unpaid care work:

I appreciate that we are including paid care work and unpaid care together, as our efforts can/should be about raising awareness of the extent, significance and value of both. Likewise, as Valeria mentions, many women work in the community space of voluntary care services in communities.

Mary G raised the question earlier about the emotional dimension of care, and that this can be used to the disadvantage of paid domestic workers ('you're part of the family'). I've experienced this problem multiple times and the way it's used to undermine paid care workers' rights.

Yet women - paid and unpaid carers - also emphasise the emotional dimension of care: being supportive, attentive, educational, etc and the work of 'worrying - being concerned' which I believe is actually the activity of 'strategising and problem-solving, trying to identify and anticipate problems and develop solutions', much like the leader of a team 'worries' about how to build/maintain/develop a team. For example, this has come up in several countries where the 'Rapid Care Analysis' has been carried out; when asked about the impact of providing care, women have responded ... 'time overload, lack of mobility, physical strain/illness' and also 'worry, stress, concern'.

So, it appears to me that the journey of 'awareness-raising' about care might look like this....

first - (instrumentalist/economic) 'unpaid care work produces food, clean clothes, healthy kids and workers' . Although this step can be controversial in the materialist view, in my experience, this is how groups and men start to get engaged...

second - (valuing care beyond the economy) ' care takes time, time poverty is real, time-use is unequal, and restricts women's human rights to political participation, leisure etc)

third - (from 'time' to 'responsibility') it's not just the work done, or the time, it's the responsibility, the multi-tasking, the support and attachment that care receivers perceive...

Team leaders in many organisations/businesses are recognised because of their 'responsibility', they get paid more - a 'responsibility allowance'!

So can our programmes and advocacy recognise these skills as well as the 'care tasks', without running the risk of sliding into paid carers as 'part of the family', therefore they have no 'rights'?

I would not emphasise the emotional dimension over the work & hours dimension, in most contexts, because the hours of arduous work (water, cooking, washing, cleaning) are such a major issue of human rights (UNSR report) and inequality. But I wouldn't want the emotional dimension and responsibility to be overlooked.

Patience Ekeoba

4 Nov 2013 02:21 PM

I am delighted to be able to join this very important discussion and reflection meeting geared toward correcting an age long injustice on women and girls. It is interesting and heartwarming seeing what started as almost an experiment in 2011 by ActionAid International Secretariat and some four countries including Nigeria gaining the desired global attention.

Our experience in programming on women's unpaid care could be better described as progressive. When we started the UCW in ActionAid Nigeria, the responses we received ranged from hesitation, cynicism, doubt, amusement, bewilderment, anger and even indignation. A lot of people wondered why, we will venture into such a project when there were supposedly more important issues of national emergencies; others felt, we have come with some of our imported agenda.

As we progress in the implementation, we saw our worst sceptics become 'believers' and our greatest critics became allies and advocates. Looking back now and the successes recorded within the space of less than 2 years of the project, we believe transforming social norms around Unpaid Care is possible especially when there is evidence, strategic partnership and policy oversights.

Specifically, for us what the collection and analysis of Time Dairies from women and a comparative analysis of time dairy from men gave us evidence required to drive the project. We found out that on the average, women spend 12 to 13 hours collecting water, fire wood (fuel) housework, child and adult care including subsistence farming as against the less than an hour spent by men.

These activities had serious negative implication for women's general wellbeing, because it limited their opportunities to be involved in productive ventures that attract income, their participation in socio- political activities e.g. Learning, leadership roles and their health.

Rest and recreational activities also suffers greatly as women do these different and burdensome works. We also found out that because of the huge burden of care work, women spend less than an hour for income generating activities further explaining why women's were socially and economically disempowered and their inability to rise above poverty.

Armed with information from the dairy collected coupled with the policy mapping exercise that we conducted, we commenced a community and nationwide sensitization and advocacy targeting men, community leaders, religious, policy makers, budget holders and some many relevant stakeholders.

The result was overwhelming, not only did the target groups decry the lack of recognition and burden of work on women but several groups have started a process of cultural and structural change to addressing the inequality. Some of the men in the target communities have started to support their wives and partners in housework and child care while also ensuring that their children also take part of the responsibilities.

During one of our sensitization meeting one of the men said "I use to carry my child only for pleasure not because I see it as my responsibility to do so, but having participated in this discussion, I now see that I have been unfair to my wife and I now make a commitment to take more active part in caring for our children and doing other housework"

Part of the success, we have achieves also is that several institutions in the state and federal level have also commenced a process of policy change to ensure that the burden of work on women is reduced. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in particular, has entered into partnership with ActionAid Nigeria to develop a National Framework of Action to address the rights and needs of women's unpaid work. We are very hopeful that the framework will become a national road map for addressing age long cultural and structural system that promotes inequality

Regarding the second question on the characteristics and outcomes of transformative, women's rights-focused programmes that address Care, Programme aimed at changing social norms and policy around Unpaid Care Work must be participatory, take on board

the voices and aspirations of women, must accommodate and target men, traditional and religious rulers and policy makers from government and non-governmental organisations

To turn this vision into a reality, we need this kind of robust conversation and alliances connecting/cascading from local, national, regional and global alliances. We need to name and frame the issue in a way that will attract popular attention and support. We also need to continuously engage the policy space to mainstream the issues into existing policies and programme. We also need to connect and explain how the inequality and impact of Unpaid Care Work on women negatively impact on other rights issues and achievement of MDG and other development goals we may get the desired attention

Patience Ekeoba | Women's Rights Programme Manager | Nigeria

Marzia Fontana

4 Nov 2013 02:52 PM

Hello, and many thanks to all for the lively and insightful contributions! I have tried to read most messages so far, with lots of interest. However, I may have overlooked a few points (there is so much to digest), so apologies if my remark repeats others.

I wonder whether any of you is aware of, or participating in, any initiative aiming to address the issue of care at the level of macroeconomic policies. For example whether there is any evidence of success within gender responsive budget initiatives, for instance from any Women's Budget Group.

Over time, and through my own personal experience, I have come to the conclusion that a greater emphasis on redistribution between families and the State, and not just between genders within families or communities, is required. My concern is that redistribution from women to men within households or even within the confines of a specific development project (however successful) will lead only to small progress, and will still leave carers exhausted and vulnerable, unless care is fully recognised as a public good. Consideration of unpaid care work must inform the formulation of economic policies (from fiscal policies to trade policies, labour market policies etc) at the national level. Only in this way one can hope adequate resources will be redistributed towards it.

With kind regards, marzia

Marzia Fontana

Research Associate, SOAS, University of London

Guest Teacher, Gender Institute, London School of Economics

Thalia Kidder

4 Nov 2013 03:04 PM

Care and influencing private sector companies.

Ceri's question asked in what types of programmes and sectors has 'care' been integrated. For me, the most challenging area of 'integrating care' has been with influencing private sector companies. Without getting into the debate about whether or not (and how) INGOs should engage with companies, I/we have worked to make clear that the policies/practices of companies/employers have inequality outcomes in part because of the unequal division of labour/responsibility that women have for unpaid care work. Two 'Briefings for Business' - the first on gender equality, where on page 4 there's a connection made between business and UCW and recommendations about policies on overtime and working hours. In the second, Better Jobs, it's proposed that precarious (part-time, piece rate) employment contributes to gender inequality precisely because employers are only paying for hours-worked and not contributing/paying for the costs of unpaid work reproducing the labour force (see page 7).

Although this was not used with companies, in 2004, Kate Raworth and I proposed to women workers' organisations a way of documenting the impact/costs of precarious employment, written up in Gender and Development 12:2 - "Good jobs and hidden costs"

I'd appreciate hearing of other examples?

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/gender-equality-its-your-business-213389>
and <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/b4b-better-jobs-better-supply-chains.pdf>

I'd also like to hear about integrating care into climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, resilience programmes. Any examples?

I smyth

4 Nov 2013 03:10 PM

I wanted to thank Patience for the comprehensive and exciting account of the research and follow up in her organization.

The information she shared about the sheer number of hours women spend in activities, many simultaneously, through which they take care of the immediate needs, and of the physical and emotional wellbeing of household members always amaze me.

And of course we know the consequences of that on women's ability to pursue productive activities but also, as I have stressed in another post, on their ability to be politically and socially active and, dare I say, to rest, study and look after themselves.

However, we are less conscious (and thus think less of practical solutions for) of the consequences of just the expectations on women shouldering such responsibilities. Girls are taken away from education and marry, at times unacceptably early, because they are seen as intended for such roles. When in school they are encouraged to focus on subjects like domestic science. Women in paid work often receive lower wages in the understanding that their work is only secondary to their primary caring responsibilities and that any specific skills they may have (for example for careful and precise work in manufacturing) come natural to them as part of their caring nature and thus merit no higher remuneration. In spheres other than that of the household women are expected

to 'care' for others (make coffee at meetings, etc.) . So the power of the expectations that women are naturally intended to care for others extend to all aspects of their personal and public lives.

I have in mind a PHD research of an Indonesian friend - Paramita - who looked into the gender differences in a government bureaucracy. She concluded that the differences in remuneration, posting and career path between men and women were heavily influenced by the notion that the latter were also caring for their families. She noticed that this applied even when women were able to employ domestic help that freed them of some (though not all) the relevant work.

The influence of such expectation is particularly powerful when women want to engage in political life, because such 'public' arenas are seen inappropriate for women, who essentially belong to the 'private' sphere of the home where care responsibilities are carried out.

Zahrah Nesbitt Ahmed
4 Nov 2013 03:28 PM

Dear All,

I am going through the fascinating and insightful conversation that has been happening so far.

Following on from Alice's point about cultural expectations around men doing 'women's work'. In my research on male domestic workers in Nigeria, I did find that the men who were employed to clean and cook did not associate what they were doing as women's work, or feel embarrassed by what they were doing. Instead they saw it as a way to make a living. There is some shift in thinking regarding 'women's work' that occurred with these men, as a result of not only migrating to Lagos from rural parts of Nigeria, but also by making a living from 'care' work. However, I did also find instances where men who were doing 'feminised' jobs said they did not cook or clean when at home.

One thing I look at in my research on domestic work in Nigeria is the impact being a domestic worker, particular for those who care for children or the elderly, has on their ability to undertake their own unpaid caring responsibilities. For many of the middle- and upper-class families I interviewed, hiring a domestic worker was a common solution for them in trying to cope with their 'work-life balance'. Yet, the evidence from my study suggests that domestic workers are facing great difficulties making a living and meeting their care responsibilities, particularly as paid childcare is unavailable and/or unaffordable for them. With no other supports for childcare, I found that many women who worked as domestic workers (but did not live with their employers) coped by leaving children home alone or by enlisting the help of an older sibling or neighbour. Taking children to work with them was not an option available to them.

I wonder if anyone can provide examples of low-income women (and men) trying to manage their paid work and caring responsibilities?

Zahrah

Julia Wartenburg
4 Nov 2013 03:52 PM

Dear All,

A note to add on home-based care continuing to be invisible and awareness-raising. In my work (both research and organizationally), we maintain that one dialogue which persists in both developed and developing countries is the notion that care and care work is a personal problem, one for the family to deal with. There is very little discussion, if any, around the political repercussions current (inadequate) care policies have for the country as a whole - not just economic, but social as well.

One can look at a number of "developed" countries to see the damage inadequate care policies, discourse and cultures can have. That is not to say that projects should not focus on young children; indeed they should and must in order for patriarchy and its accompanying structures to begin to be challenged, but focus must also be put on the national level. One's own care dilemmas influence one's whole family, but also one's whole community and country. Paid and unpaid care is most certainly a women's rights issue, but it is also a human rights issue in the sense that each human person has the right to adequate and quality care.

Lorena Nunez Carrasco
4 Nov 2013 04:55 PM

Hi all this dialogue is very exciting! I am only now able to join the conversation, after having concluded my remunerated and caring work for the day!

I will need some time to read about your experiences and views. Let me just introduce my research experience on the topic. I have conducted research on networks of care as a driver of return migration in Southern Africa. This angle continues to be my interest. My interest is on establishing the role played by women and the caring work they do in influencing return migration. This is relevant in contexts of high levels HIV prevalence and migration. In my research have found that the availability of care provided by women is a decisive factor for those migrants who are sick and unable to work, to return home to be cared for or simply to die.

Rachel Moussie
4 Nov 2013 05:18 PM

Hi everyone,

Thanks for such a stimulating and engaging discussion so far. I wanted to respond to Marzia's important question about making care visible in macroeconomic policy. So many people have already mentioned how targeted participatory work in specific communities can go a long way in terms of changing perceptions about care work and sharing this work more equally between women and men. I really believe in this way of working and have seen how effective it can be in our programmes in ActionAid.

However, I also firmly believe that more structural changes are needed for states to not only see care, but seriously consider, plan and budget to address unpaid care work. It is not enough for care work to be shared more equally between a man and a woman in a low-income household because it does not challenge the fact that poorer households still have the most unpaid care work to do and the least resources or time to do it. To stop this vicious cycle we need to think big – time use surveys are a great source of data but they are rarely used to inform policy. How can we as civil society use this data to inform national campaigns for instance on unpaid care work breathing new life to these telling yet often ignored statistics? Colleagues at ActionAid and other organisations have also considered using a twin-track approach where we use data to raise the visibility of women's unpaid care work more broadly, while also asking for specific policy and budgetary reform to make a policy more 'care' sensitive. For instance, this could be calling for policy reform and more financing for a social protection policy or early childcare services as is happening in Nepal and Nigeria.

Another possible advocacy campaign could be looking at how foreign direct investment policies and industrial policies are premised not only on women's cheap labour, but on another woman or girl picking up the unpaid care work at home. Low wages, poor working conditions and long working hours make it impossible for women to provide care. Some of the contributions from Hope and others on domestic workers are so telling in this respect. Can we think of supporting national campaigns that show how women's work – both paid and unpaid – are deliberately exploited by state labour and investment policies? These are just some of the ideas we are exploring but I would be keen to hear from others what advocacy opportunities they can see in their own countries.

Thanks for the discussion and look forward to catching up with you all tomorrow.

Rachel Moussie

Women's Economic Rights Coordinator, ActionAid International

Ceri Hayes
4 Nov 2013 05:56 PM

Thank you very much for all your fascinating contributions under this post. It's not easy to condense such a rich and wide-ranging debate into a few lines, but we thought it might be useful to summarise some of the main points emerging (see below), before shifting the focus of the discussion onto a slightly different but related question.

You are welcome to continue posting on the first thread (especially late-comers) until the end of the event, but we hope to move onto the next one now (questions to follow this post).

Key messages include:

- If we want to shift care work from a limited number of (mostly economic) sectors we have to go beyond addressing the role of men and increasing access to affordable child care and frame care work as a human rights and women's rights issue – very few development interventions seem to recognise this, with some notable exceptions, even in sectors where this clearly has a bearing on the uptake of programmes and projects. The flip-side is that as women's rights activists, are we always focusing on care work as we should?
- It's essential to transform social and cultural norms, but a lot of development projects and programmes are still not fully addressing the role of men and families in shifting the care burden from women. Some positive examples include e.g. Action Aid's unpaid care work project (through use of reflection action circles and time diaries), shifting roles of men as a result of rural-urban migration in Zambia, and work with adolescents on gender norms in Nepal, but how can we scale-up this work to ensure more development projects do this?
- Redistribution needs to happen both at the level of the family/household, but also at the level of the state. Other actors such as the private sector have a role to play in addressing the unequal division of labour/responsibility women have for unpaid care work. Care is manifested differently within and across the contexts in participants are working due to migration, the availability of domestic service and the extent of the informal economy. We need to make the links between unpaid, low paid and paid care work - and the way these connect the private world of households with the public world of markets and the state.

Marilyn Thomson
4 Nov 2013 10:48 PM

Dear All,

What a rich and interesting discussion! I'm coming in a bit late in the day, so it's difficult to know what new thoughts I can add to what has already been said. This has been a marginal issue in the development discourse, so I'm glad it is finally being given centre stage. I'd like to focus my contribution on the social value of care work.

I think it is important to recognise and separate out the roles and tasks involved in "Caring" work as distinct from "housework", they are interlinked but there is a difference between caring for children or the elderly and the daily tasks of cleaning, washing and ironing, shopping etc. Although women in their role as mothers and housewives often do all of these tasks, if we are looking at paid employment they are often different jobs. It is possible for a daily/weekly cleaner to come in and clean the house, do the ironing etc. but not take any direct responsibility for looking after people. Other workers might be employed as nannies, carers etc. and often get a better wage than a cleaner, they might have training and they are only expected to do a minimum of "housework". There are also domestic workers who are expected to do all of these tasks with no training. So a

definition of the nature of the "work" would be helpful when attempting to determine the social and market value of caring work.

Because housework is seen as "women's work" it is generally not socially valued, and there is little recognition that it is skilled work, it is a learnt skill and doesn't come naturally. When I have carried out exercises on the gender division of labour with men, they are generally surprised at the amount of time housework and caring related activities take and also how women have much less time for leisure and rest than men in the course of a day. Very often NGOs when organising activities with communities do not take this into account and do not provide child care nor do they persuade men to do the caring to enable women to participate in project activities.

I found a similar view to that mentioned of the male domestic workers in Nigeria, in a rural area of Mozambique, where doing paid housework for INGO staff was one of the few employment options in the area and was largely carried out by men. When I asked the man cleaning my kitchen if his wife was pleased that he could do housework, he replied that at home he didn't do any because this was the women's role. It is also important to recognise that there are many women who consider being a housewife and mother as their identity as a woman and they want this work to be appreciated and valued in itself.

Another angle that was mentioned is that in some countries the intersection of gender and class/caste is critical in relation to the lack of social value given to "care" work. The fact that middle class/ professional women are able to participate in the labour market and/or in political and community activities is because another woman is employed to carry out domestic and caring responsibilities, yet this is not valued: because the workers are poor women of a different social class/caste. One thing that struck me when I was doing research with domestic workers in Mexico was the importance they attached to their relationship with their female employer and they often felt they were looked-down and not appreciated by their employer because they were "domestics", not only was it a class but also a race issue. This is also clear with regard to migrant domestic workers, who find this kind of work one of the few options open to poor women to support their families. Remittances from domestic workers but, as was pointed out earlier, it is a critical contribution to the GDP of the Philippines (and many other developing countries). These women sacrifice their own family life in order to work for another family, where they may be well treated, but there are also many documented extreme cases of exploitation and abuse.

We finally have international social recognition of housework as "work" with the ILO convention recognising domestic work as gainful employment and which has rights like other sectors, which is a massive achievement by organisations of domestic (or household) workers who have been advocating this for many years. However, the fact that in the past year since it was agreed it has only been ratified by two governments is worrying. Having an international convention is really important to protect these workers' rights but much more needs to be done to raise awareness of these rights and implement the provisions.

Marilyn

Helal Uddin

5 Nov 2013 03:22 AM

Unpaid care work and care economy-

The care economy is one of integrated ingredients of building economic alternatives. The mainstream economy is about production and distribution of goods and services. Though 'work' entails expenditures of time and energy and when someone is paid for this work then it is termed as production in economics. Thus:

- Eating, sleeping and learning are not work because someone cannot pay someone else to do them for her/him.
- Growing vegetables is work; these are unpaid work, if produce in individual's own consumption.
- Collecting water and firewood, care of children and adult, household chores are work; these are UCW if done in individual's own home.

Some of discussants already mentioned that usually women perform all of these unpaid work and UCW which undervalues in mainstream economics and economy. The existing male biased gender norms and gender division of labour re-enforce and reproduce women's such roles and also reflected in economic policies.

GDP, for example, is the key economic measure using to take all sorts of decision. Counting gross domestic product (GDP) the mainstream economics uses System of National Accounts (SNA) that counts only products and services which include production of goods and services for market, subsistence production and paid domestic work. In case of latter one, when these works are for individual own home then SNA cut of them from counting GDP. Feminist economists criticized that the government officials and economists support the SNA exclude UCW because it is problematic to understand the inflation and unemployment, household production is relatively independent of market activities and the necessary data is not available.

This statement of government officials and economist is not aware about tools like Square Analysis Matrix (SAM). Because UCW can be measured using Square Analysis Matrix and included in the national accounts". Many countries such as India, South Africa, and Tanzania have completed a national time use survey. He finds that an analysis of India's time use survey estimates that women's UCW is equivalent to 63 percent of GDP (Budlender, Debbie. 2008). It shows that women's UCW is essential to the functioning of the overall economy and makes a significant contribution to household incomes and wellbeing".

Recently Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) conducted a time use survey nationally but it is yet to be published. ActionAid Bangladesh gets technical support from BBS for introducing time diaries in the community. We will analyse the data of the time diaries sixth monthly first and then analyse trends in every six month. ActionAid Bangladesh is actually gathering evidence for advocacy to the local and national government to formulate policy to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. Our initial target is to work with local government for recognition, reduction and redistribution of UCW locally with small scale initiatives of the local government and beside we will sensitise the national government and development partners. We actually want to show alternatives to the local and national government so that they will agree on to take steps for structural changes which devalued contribution of unpaid care work in GDP and economy.

But why does it important to incorporate UCW in the NSA and GDP? We must think about it. Because SNA and GDP are used as guideline for micro and macro-economic planning and allocation. Since SNA and GDP do not account UCW, there is no fund allocation for the development of this sector and caregivers do not get attention for any development intervention. This caregivers are mainly women. So they remain out of focus and their development too. it limits their access to education, health facilities, social participation, recreation, leisure, human resources development, social protection, etc. that means their rights are violated. From this perspective AAB designed intervention on unpaid care work following Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA). Women rights is the key in the intervention and other components are participation, policy advocacy and monitoring and sharing. Al together we want to increase women access to and control over resources and public services.

Helal Uddin
5 Nov 2013 03:49 AM

I think Harcourt said about recent UN report on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and it was shared in the sixty -eight session of the UN Assembly as an optional agenda. This report covered the situation of unpaid care work across the world. In the report some recommendations were made for the state parties.

Since we cannot open the website, I attached the report here for all.

regards

Unpaid care report A.68.293_EN.pdf (276 KB) (6 Downloads)
Unpaid care report A.68.293_FR.pdf (315 KB) (0 Downloads)
Unpaid care report A.68.293_SP.pdf (410 KB) (0 Downloads)
[see: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>]

Kate Donald
5 Nov 2013 04:54 AM

Thank you Helal for posting the Special Rapporteur's report. It is also available from this website:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>

I was out today, and on Pacific Time, so I'm only just catching up with this great discussion. The Special Rapporteur and I are working to promote the report and lobbying for better recognition of unpaid care work as a human rights issue. We are also working with partners to try and ensure that unpaid care work is at least recognised as a women's rights and gender equality issue in the post-2015 development agenda. Some of these positive and promising examples are really useful as we move forward!

Hope Basiao Abella
5 Nov 2013 05:16 AM

Thank you for your question, a concern which we at Social Watch Philippines echo. We have been involved in presenting Alternative Budget Initiatives (ABI) since 2006 both at the national and local level in the area of social protection, health, agriculture, education and climate change, with gender responsive concerns as cutting across all these areas. Our ABI book referred to as the “Orange Book” has been institutionalized as part of the budget hearing in congress.

On Gender Responsive Budgets: The Philippines has successfully institutionalized GAD budget and planning with priority for mainstreaming gender perspectives in as priority. However, this year, Social Watch is looking at Budgets as a whole and its gender responsiveness. Alternatives are constantly explored given limitations encountered such as the lack of gender disaggregated data, chart of accounts for budgets is gender blind.

On UCW: We are only starting to explore the area of unpaid care work as part of our partnership with OXFAM, with the goal of integrating UCW at the level of our macroeconomic analysis. Discussions are going on about how we can quantify results of Oxfam’s Rapid Care Analysis, and or build up on a research or data base on UCW in the Philippines.

This October 2014, Social Watch Philippines, recommended to National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), the recognition and integration of UCW as a policy agenda during a meeting on the “Philippine Development Plan Mid-term Update and Revalidated Result Matrix and Public Investment Program”. Social Watch also echoed the call of the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights for a “Stand-alone goal on gender equality which includes UCW.” NEDA is the lead agency for Fiscal and Development Planning in the Philippines.

The response of NEDA was: UCW is not yet part of the UN system value of accounts, although they are aware of the ongoing discussions at the international level.

Perhaps worth mentioning are some of the limitations we have discussed:

1. There is a dearth of economists who are feminists.
2. How to integrate UCW into macroeconomics considering issues and concerns on economic liberalization policies that increase income and consumption capacities of women without addressing UCW.
3. Exploring whether we can buildup quantitative results from workshops to be held with local partners for households on Rapid Care Analysis and Action Aid’s modules on alternative economics.
4. Social Watch partners lack the experience of working on macroeconomics.

Thank you for your concern and insight: “... that redistribution from women to men within households or even within the confines of a specific development project (however successful) will lead only to small progress, and will still leave carers exhausted and vulnerable, unless care is fully recognised as a public good.” It is a thought that we will come back to in time, as we work on UCW.

Hope Basiao Abella
5 Nov 2013 07:10 AM

Thalia, i do find initiatives on UCW in relation to Rapid Care Analysis developed by and Rachel, the modules on alternative economics of Actionaid as powerful. This is so because the initiatives work with households towards recognition, reduction and redistribution of UCW. This has an immediate impact and delivers immediate results. When i think of centuries old of of reproductive roles of women, these initiatives are powerful. It will take a long time and a lot of resources to reach all households but on the other hand, also, policy work on macroeconomics and development on UCW will find that a decade or two may not be enough to institutionalize UCW. I also wonder how the global economic and political situation will affect UCW and how it will increase the burden of UCW and women already burdened with the existing forms of UCW should not be made to wait any longer. This to me makes UCW work urgent and a response from different levels, households, communities, developing research and evidence based work, national and international policy is a welcome respite.

Lorena Nunez Carrasco
5 Nov 2013 07:51 AM

I believe in the importance and need to make UCW visible in order to value women's work and contribution. I think that in order to do so, the time spent in care work needs to be visible. There is a hierarchy in terms of the value of time particularly in the capitalist system, from highly paid jobs (where time counts per hour) to the free unpaid care work of hours done at any time day and night. Such hierarchy of the time invested in reproduction and production runs along gender, race, and class. It has also a geographic component, time values differently for those in the north and for those in the south.

I also think that the outcome of that unpaid work needs to be made visible, the care that allows the sick to recover, the child to grow and develops.

Luisa Emilia Reyes
5 Nov 2013 07:51 AM

Hello all. The server in my office broke down since last week and it has been difficult to catch up, but I am happy with this exchange.

I work in Mexico in a feminist NGO (Equidad de Genero, Gender Equity) promoting gender budgets and advocating for gender equality. So I would like to share some reflections derived from our practice:

1. The structural inequality between women and men derive from the sexual division of labour, and every other gender inequality derives from this one. Thus, it is evidently an economic agenda (and in the level of public policies, we should strive to change macro economics and not only micro or mezzo), but also is the main obstacle for the exercise of every right in women's lives. For instance, we have an initiative for the political empowerment of women and we have seen that even powerful women are making decisions on their careers (in the starting, but especially in their permanence in politics) as a result of their unpaid domestic and care work. Part of the success of our initiative

has been to link the unpaid domestic and care work in our training for women leaders. We have delivered a written statement to CSW in this regard.

2. As part of the Latin American region, we, in my NGO, have noticed that there is a different notion on the agenda even amongst those who address the issue of "care". Not pretending to over-generalize, but in the mood of highlighting the way in which the topic has been addressed as trends in policies, it is understood differently in the North and in the South. In the North the "care" concept has led to analyze mostly the agenda of the caring of people (mainly because that is a big and noticeable challenge for women in those societies), highlighting the agenda of social protection. In the South, we want to emphasize the importance of unpaid domestic and care work (and thus we try to explicitly use the entire formula, rather than only use "care"), because public policies addressing domestic work lead to other trend of measures. The domestic paid work agenda is one example, but I will mention other examples further down. I would even say that in those regions in which what is called "basic services" (such as water and sanitation or access to energy) is scarce, the agenda widens to include electricity and water provision as part of the unpaid domestic and care work. I have to say that the three lines of entry have a risky zone on their own if they are not linked to the sexual division of labour, because some policies are evidently conceived to diminish the burden on women's shoulders, but only addressing the "work", but not the "subjects", and thus women indeed have more "spare" time when they have access to day-care facilities, hiring a domestic formal worker or are provided with electricity, but only to devote this "gained" time to other unpaid domestic and care work. Unless sexual division of labour is addressed, the structural agenda of inequality will remain untouched.

3. In this point, I should say that we are clear that Co-responsibility is a fundamental notion. Because this agenda is not about a war between the sexes, but a shared responsibility between the State, the private sector, the community, families, women and men. Our experience in our NGO is with the field of government (especially in the Executive and Legislative branches), and we have seen that the State is largely responsible for reproducing the sexual division of labour. I will just mention one policy in Mexico regarding dengue fever: men in Latin America store old tires and empty cans in the backyards "just in case they are needed". So, when the rain season comes, these recipients hold the still water that will be the means in which the vector (the mosquito) will lay its eggs. The "gender campaign" for this problem was to ask women to clean the tires and cans, so that they do not collect unwanted water. This is an example of a policy involving domestic unpaid work, and its origins derive from the sexual division of labour. Of course it is linked to "care", because women will have to care the sick persons in case anyone contracts dengue fever at home. But the domestic work involved in "care" should not be comprised in one exclusive agenda, since it has many implications on its own.

4. To integrate the feminist economy or the rupture economy, with its full implications regarding the sexual division of labour is a difficult matter. However, not doing it as such may lead to unwanted impacts, because then we will be promoting measures that might be bearing in mind the "care" work, but not the burden on women. For instance, care facilities that do not include men have a hidden implication: that women are still the unique responsible for children's care. Evidently we have a long way to go. Working in gender budgets has allowed me to see that these measures are highly expensive for governments and it will take years to be able to make the full investment this macroeconomic proposal aims to. At least we should be aware the degree in which we

are integrating this agenda, so as to not end up promoting policies like those of the "WID" tradition, without bearing in mind gender roles, and now under a different name. I know this sounds harsh, but I want to highlight that working with the rupture economy means that we have to go through a rigorous analysis of our methodologies. In Mexico we recently had an international forum in which we discussed the different impact gender budgets can have with or without the considerations of the domestic and care unpaid work. Indeed, they are huge.

5. To me, without highlighting the sexual division of labour the "care" agenda may lead to strengthen the burden on women, because the "loving" part of the meaning is emphasized. For instance, in the climate change negotiations I have heard advocates saying that climate change "compromises" women's care work, so women are no longer able to perform the tasks they are meant to do (which in part is true); but the thing is, these advocates are implying that climate change should end so that women can keep on performing their role as (unpaid) carers. Another example derived from climate change is the promotion of "clean stoves" as mitigation measures with a gender perspective. Of course, clean stoves are important for mitigation, but the fact that the projects address women as the focus of the measure without considering piloting some new proposals with the community and the men (as if men ate raw meat and food), is precisely the point: we are considering the care time, but not the sexual division of labour. This means women in the community will have more time to wash. I am not saying it is easy, but we have to begin to propose comprehensive solutions, at least in a phase of piloting. I am worried that the women's movement is at times reproducing the inequalities that we claim to fight.

6. Migrants. There have been several studies referred to the "dream of the return" phenomena. It refers to the moment when migrants are willing to do anything that a hostile environment needs them to do (such as cleaning and washing, for instance, in the case of men). So, they do learn and they do perform the tasks. But they are always dreaming with a return to their places or origin and, more so, to their former social order. The situation may last for years, but if they ever return, the sexual division of labour is installed again intact, as if nothing happened in between. This process has been studied in first and second generations of mexican migrants in the US, but it has been acknowledged as a world wide phenomenon.

7. I will just add in this post that the Post 2015 agenda is crucial, because a new global configuration for financing for development will be decided, and if we do not manage to highlight the structural agenda, we will witness for another 15 or 30 years the instrumentation of paliative measures that in the end are granting women more time to... perform other unpaid tasks.

Thalia Kidder

5 Nov 2013 09:20 AM

A couple specific responses:
For Luisa Emilia,

Could you explain the 'rupture economy' to make sure that others understand the term?

I'll add my agreement to your point that it's important that when we are advocating for investments, services and infrastructure to REDUCE care work, that we say 'care work', not 'women's care work', which would reinforce the idea that fundamentally women are responsible for care. Only when we are REDISTRIBUTING care from women & girls to men & boys... in that case, we refer to 'women's care work'.

Helal - could you explain or send a link about the Square Analysis Matrix?

Marilyn, Zahrah and others - I'm thinking about popular communications which might play on the discrepancy between men doing paid houseWORK (or chefs or cleaners) but then going home to wives who 'don't work'.

Does anyone have the link to the email cartoons on domestic workers' rights from Chile/feminist network in South America?

Thalia

Anesu Makina

5 Nov 2013 12:57 PM

Dear All

I finally got time to catch up on the discussion today. Its all good. I plan to get to topic 2 a bit later.

I wanted to add as an addition to Lorena Nunez Carrasco

Re: HIV/AIDs and returning home. There is an element of state policy in there as well. The patent is unable to work, the state facilities are already overburdened and there is nothing that can be done so its matter of 'going home to be cared for' resulting in homebased neglect because of lack of facilities. Its also impacts the work of the women as they have a patient at home (sometimes you cannot expect a domestic worker to care for your relatives, especially those with AIDS- it's a stigma issue). The Female children also suffer the burden as they are expected to be co-care givers under the guise of training to be a woman. Worse is the impact of changing environmental patterns on water meaning that already one has to search further for water now with a patient you need more water (bathing, cleaning utensils etc). Environmental issues also impact woodfuel which is already being reported as scarce but with a patient, sterilisation is essential thus increasing the burden.

On another note, an Indian lady mentioned the notion of 'gender energy' which she said is the energy women utilise when having to fetch wood, water etc, work that could be 1)outsourced or 2) more money deployed to that. What she meant essentially was that because women earn less, are uneducated or have problems finding work, it is cheaper to keep the females in domestic duties. Where a family can afford to supplement woodfuel with electricity, they choose not to because it is cheaper for the female to fetch wood because it's part of their female duties.

This opens a very important issue in Sub Sahara Africa where electricity penetration is low, energy policies are gender friendly. South Africa has some good examples of the impact of energy policies that do not factor in 'women's work' thus making their 'duties'

much harder. After all as one article points out, it's the woman's job to keep the lights on. A summary of the information from South Africa is that, the free allocation of electricity aimed as a subsidy for those who cannot afford, is insufficient to meet household chores such as boiling water, and cooking so women still need to supplement the subsidy. Moreover, in households with both men and women, power relations determine that the 'free electricity' be reserved for television, radio and recreation rather than domestic duties.

On a side note, i recall being told that female children sometimes have it easy in times of unemployment compared to males because females can 'care' for the elderly and receive bits and 'pieces' of money and food whereas males cannot. I found quite telling of the type of society that we have.

Lauren Ravon
5 Nov 2013 06:07 PM

Greetings from Canada, and apologies for joining the discussion so late!

I have read through the posts and have found the conversation fascinating. Here are some thoughts that have come to mind while reading through others' comments, in no particular order...

- Some participants commented on the fact that care is the forgotten or hidden issue in the development sector. But I have been very excited and hopeful to see that care issues are now being raised in many different spaces. For example, care issues featured quite prominently at the AWID Forum in Istanbul last year, and there seemed to be renewed energy to work on this within feminist circles (after some years of fatigue perhaps). Also, with the economic crisis hitting countries in the North (the impacts of cuts to social programs + aging population on women's care responsibilities are increasingly documented) there is perhaps more awareness than ever among Northern donors of how critical the issue of care actually is. In any case, there seems to be a window of opportunity for us to get this message across.

- Also, in the area in which I work (food security) there is definitely increasing attention to the intersection between women's disproportionate care burden, smallholder farming, and the failings of the food system more generally. For example, it was interesting to see that the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food focused a large part of his latest report on care (see http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20130304_gender_en.pdf) Also, in an online discussion that Oxfam organized last year on "Making the food system work for women", care came up repeatedly as one of the main obstacles to women's food security and equitable participation in agricultural production (see <http://www.oxfam.org/en/grow/ten-experts-ten-essays-one-topic-making-food-system-work-women>) In consultations about food security, I have seen that both women's organizations and mixed organizations recognize the challenge posed by care. But most of the time, mixed organizations that work on agriculture or food security perceive the issue of care to be outside their mandate – i.e. an externality that affects food production and food security , but not something that they themselves should be working to

address. It is still definitely perceived as an issue or a problem to be solved by women's organizations.

- My experience is that many development organizations are willing to work on the policy dimensions of care REDUCTION (advocating for increased investments in essential services and social protection) but much less willing to address REDISTRIBUTION between men and women. There still seems to be a lot of unease with addressing attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes about gender roles in the development sector. In these conversations, I still hear many development practitioners say they are willing to work on the policy dimensions, but not want to meddle with deep rooted culture.... (sound familiar? this issue comes up with most women's rights work...)

- Surprisingly, many projects that are intended to encourage women's active citizenship, raise awareness about women's rights and support their collective action are divorced from a reflection on women's care responsibilities and time burden. It is as though development practitioners who are designing projects still assume that women have more than 24 hours in one day...

- On the issue of time use surveys and other initiatives to document time spent on care activities: Some experience shows that these initiatives need to go hand in hand with awareness raising on a wider range of gender inequality issues. Documentation of time spent on care cannot be conducted in a vacuum, it is essential to include discussion and reflections about sexist stereotypes and beliefs about men and women's work and roles. In a very small-scale experience Oxfam has had in Central America to capture information about care responsibilities at the community level, we have that these community discussions can actually run the risk of being counterproductive and reinforcing popular beliefs and gender stereotypes. It is really critical that these initiatives to document and give visibility to care work be integrated into broader initiative to raise awareness about women's rights, and long-term efforts to shift attitudes and beliefs about gender roles.

Lauren Ravon

5 Nov 2013 06:27 PM

In response to Thalia's earlier question on resilience...

This year Oxfam Canada has been running a research project on how women's organization approach resilience, and there are some really interesting findings so far. One interesting point to note is that many women's organizations speak of resilience in what could be considered 'negative' terms, i.e. women are resilient because they have to other choice, they are ultimately the ones who will keep their families alive and healthy, no matter how much personal sacrifice (and long hours of care work) this entails. This is very different from Oxfam's aspirational definition of resilience, that speaks of resilience in terms of thriving despite shocks and stresses.

Within this research project, we are looking at the extent to which humanitarian interventions (un)intentionally build on and benefit from women's willingness to take on more and more responsibilities to ensure the wellbeing of their families in times of crisis. Rather than challenge gender roles, many humanitarian interventions actually add

additional care burden on women and entrench sexist division of labor. When humanitarian interventions actually address gender issues, they generally focus on protection and VAW, but don't get into an assessment of care and gender roles.

Part of the research focused on what women's organizations views as key risks and threats to resilience. Repeatedly, the issue of sexist division of labor (both care and paid work) was mentioned as something that undermines community resilience – precisely because women are so overburdened by care responsibilities, that they aren't able to contribute their full potential and skills to initiatives that would build resilience (anything from inputting into local food security policies to designing disaster risk reduction strategies).

One last point on the research... While many of the women's organizations we interviewed spoke of resilience in negative terms ("women have no other choice"), they also expressed great pride in the fact that women's invisible care work actually keeps families afloat despite recurring shocks, stresses and crises. Many women spoke of wanting these care roles recognized and valued as contributing to community resilience. In the interviews so far, the emphasis was much more on RECOGNITION than REDISTRIBUTION.

I'd be happy to provide more information on this research to anyone who is interested. Am anticipating that the research publication will be available in January/February, but am happy to share preliminary findings beforehand.

Marilyn Thomson
5 Nov 2013 06:46 PM

I'm not sure which cartoons Thalia was referring to, this report has a number by a Dutch artist. The report (although a bit dated) is relevant to this discussion in that it has the demands from organisations of domestic workers.

[Respect domestic workers.pdf \(517 KB\) \(1 Download\)](#)

Kasia Staszewska
6 Nov 2013 12:02 AM

Dear All,

Unfortunately joining this discussion very late but super inspired with your insightful exchange!

I read all the post (really all of them :)) with great interest and just wanted to very shortly follow up on the issue of putting care into macro-economic policy agenda, as well as redistribution between the household-state-private sector.

As a women's rights activist challenging 'development' practices of the Northern countries & institutions I am particularly keen to explore the role the development partners- if you wish- can play in supporting reduction and redistribution of UCW.

When it comes to services (water, sanitation, access to energy, health care..) there is no secret that donors and multilateral banks increasingly engage with and support private sector investments (including huge and big businesses) to deliver services. While quite some work has been done to expose companies' HR violations and questionable 'development additionality' of so called PPPs (public private partnerships) I came across very little gender analysis within this context, not to mention unpaid care work which remains entirely invisible and unrecognized.

It just struck me that the donors' 'favorite' modality nowadays which is attracting trillions of dollars every year and is of crucial importance for delivery of services to reduce and redistribute care work has not been (enough) subjected to WR and 'care scrutiny'.

Would be great to get your thoughts if this sound like one of the possible entry points for macro-advocacy-on care.

Helal Uddin
6 Nov 2013 03:38 AM

Dear Thalia,

Rania Antonopoulos produced a report for ILO on "The unpaid care work - paid work connection" in 2009. In that report she describes that "A SAM is a square matrix that represents transactions among various sectors and actors in an economy and usually consists of six accounts: activities (the productive sectors of the economy), commodities (intermediate, domestic, and imported goods used in production), factors of production (such as capital and labour, usually disaggregated by skill or other characteristics), institutions (such as households, firms, and government), capital account (which incorporates the financial side of the macro-economy), and rest of the world. SAMs are of value in and of themselves and allow for short-term evaluations, but they also provide the informational basis for constructing Computable General Equilibrium (CGI) models, the most promising of which are the structural variety".

You can find Debbie Budlender's write up 'The Statistical Analysis of Care and Non-Care Work across Six Countries.' UNRISD: Gender Programme Paper No. 4, December 2008. I think this a wright document for getting understanding about SAM.

Regards

Helal

Luisa Emilia Reyes
6 Nov 2013 04:48 AM

Dear Thalia

I will happily continue this exchange of ideas, and say in rough terms that the 'rupture economy' or the feminist economy derives from a profound questioning of the orthodox neo-liberal Economy (the discipline). Since Bretton Woods agreements, when it was stated that the "value" of the goods circulating through markets would be the one acknowledged as the common axis for global economy, the value of the goods produced outside the markets (those considered "reproductive") were left aside in the equation. Orthodox neo-liberal Economy has attempted to declare "rules" and "natural" mechanisms for economic processes, and it has presumed of being "objective", without questioning its gender bias.

Classic Economists (Marx, but also Ricardo) pointed out the link between value and work, link that neo-liberals chose to leave aside to prefer a more convenient (but incomplete) approach: value-market. The great critique that feminist economy (also called the rupture economy precisely because it questions the foundation of the neo-liberal approach that is also the mainstream approach), to this position is that it leaves aside almost the 60% of the human work (that is, the work that does not go through the markets). It is a radical new approach to Economy that questions the "discipline" as it has been conceived for the last century at least.

I am finishing this participation by telling Lauren Ravon that I am interested in having access to the preliminary findings of the research on resilience. Now that the climate change negotiations are approaching (next week), it could be a useful material for drafting new proposals for advocacy. Thanks in advance for the kind offer!

Sophia R
6 Nov 2013 09:38 AM

Apologies for joining late. I would like to respond to some things that Lauren brought up. I am a fundraiser and project developer for a grassroots development network that works with women in rural communities in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The first is in response to her third point (first post) regarding reduction and redistribution. Regarding development organizations who want to work on policy but not challenge "deep rooted culture" – are you mostly referring to large international development organizations? I wonder what the role is of grassroots organizations that are based in the communities and willing to engage in issues of redistribution and to challenge local assumptions about gender and roles– perhaps they will have an easier time addressing this topic, especially if they take a more community organizing approach to their work (and can provide 'local examples' i.e. a woman who can speak about how her husband and her share home duties)? If so, how can large International NGOs and grassroots organizations work together to address this issue?

Her fourth point is also very relevant and something that needs to be actively talked about. When we organize projects we take into consideration that all women have many duties and that the project should be adequately paced to reflect that, but not all organizations do this. For many of the women we work with (if they are working with other organizations on a project) this can lead to burn out, frustration and extra stress,

not a sense of empowerment. It is important to consider things like child care, esp. are provided.

Her second post is also very relevant, particularly to Palestine. For many women care of the family and thus, care work, is a huge source of pride, but is also essential to building a resilient community, a community which is frequently under constant stress and attack. Also, as 'home' may be under attack (ie in the case of demolition of Palestinian homes by Israel), 'care' of the home and the family, may also be a direct form of "resistance" or steadfastness in the midst of very difficult circumstances. I think that when we plan interventions, it is important to keep in mind this pride and recognize their important contributions., and also the broader symbolism it may hold for women. Because in trying to change things, care work should not be seen as a source of shame, but as a source of strength.

Rachma

6 Nov 2013 09:49 AM

Here in Indonesia we found challenges from two sides of development practitioners. From the government side, we found the government is very skeptical about the issue. Unpaid care perceived as household domestic matter that do not need to be intervened. Yet, introducing care into development agenda meaning we have to convince them with evidence and data to show why care is important "to be drawn into public sphere" and to be get into development agenda.

There are a bunch of evidence about unpaid care work, but there are still limited statistical quantitative data available on it. Unpaid care is "unrecognized subject" in national statistics since its nature of not giving any monetary return. But data could be a big issue in here, since our government has a very rigid development planning document that everything in the document has to have a measurable outcome.

The alternative is to introduce care from aspect of approaches that have a more measurable indicators, among others: addressing "quality of care" (that can grasp the issue of health, nutrition, and children education outcome), women labor policy (since there are more women participating in labor market that impacts the provision of unpaid care in their household), changing demographics profile (the trend on increasing dependency ratio, urbanization, that related to the changing intra household care arrangement), and the issue of social protection related to care provision.

Another challenge is coming from gender activist. Most of are actually really understand about unpaid care and its importance to societal wellbeing. However, unpaid care is not on their "priority list". What I've seen is some of them are still struggling with their own sustainability that they have to raise catchy issues to keep their existent. Trafficking, violence against women, women's rights, are some of the sexy issue that could get more attention from everyone that will giving them space to sustain their work. Instead of unpaid care that seems likely "will draw back women into domestic sphere".

However, there are still the way to get care into the discourse. We are really enthusiast especially with the UN rapporteur that can be our ammunition to introduce care from human right approach.

What we have learn is that the important thing in "introducing care" are: to find the right issue to be entry point, and to find the right influential person to get it into agenda.

Rachma Indah Nurbani
Researcher
The SMERU Research Institute

Rizki Fillaili
6 Nov 2013 10:38 AM

Dear all,

Greetings from Indonesia. I am apologize for my late comment to the discussion. It is very interesting and insightful discussion indeed. Here, I just want to add two things into the discussion.

First, is related to 'sectoral' issue of carework. There is a need to have systematic ways to measure impacts of any sectoral interventions that directly or indirectly targeted to women, as to be able to see the outcome of those interventions to the advancement of women's right and equality in doing care work. Here, what we found from Indonesia's case is that – even in the most sensitive project to women's need that is water and sanitation, - it is still lack of systematic measure on how the project/intervention have benefited the women; not just ease the care work burden – so that women can participate more in labor force, but how the project have been helped to redistribute the care work burden in the family. Sometimes the reality is, when women's burden in fetching water (for example) have been reduced – thanks to project intervention in providing water tap or pipe water in the house), but still their 'additional free time' is used to do another 'care work' in the family.

Second, we also have to be careful of the possibility of adverse impact of sectoral intervention or program or initiatives that aim to empower community, particularly women. Taking example from recent local initiative to build community's awareness to maintain environment and health condition in the neighborhood – by trying to manage household's waste properly. This initiative does not intentionally target women as the main actor. However, as the program runs, it assumes that women will be the main participants of the program – depart from the assumption that 'managing household waste is women's responsibility'. Further, this program used community health center – as the locus of the activity - again on the assumption that the health center is the place where women gathers regularly. This program turns out to be successful, in terms of maintaining clean and healthy environment (as numbers of waste reduced), creating job opportunity and providing additional income for those who participated (mostly women) – as they turned waste into usable goods to sell. However, the impact of this program in terms of re-distributing care work burden seems to be still minimal. Participating in this kind of activity could actually add more burden to women, if it is not followed by conscious effort to redistribute the care work burden.

I think in this regard, having proper design of the project/sectoral intervention with awareness of care issue can be an entry point to bring the issue back into development agenda.