



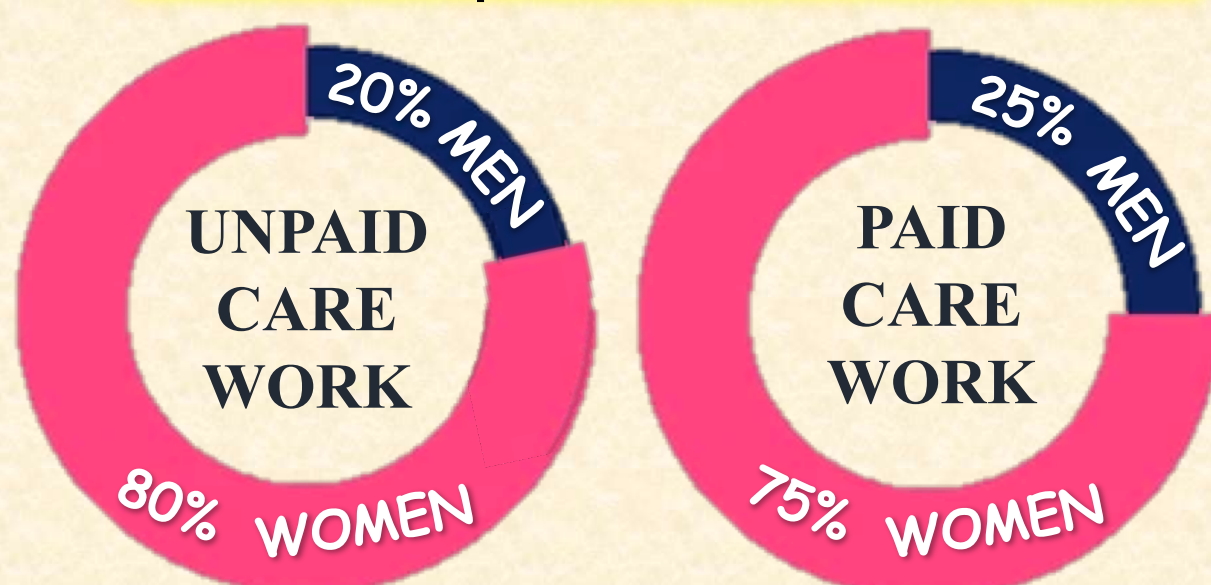
Care Work

An Invisible Form of Labor

CARE WORK is a combination of unpaid and paid activities, ranging from cooking and cleaning to taking care of children and elderly, that is usually performed within the domestic sphere.

This work, often unrecognized and undervalued, falls disproportionally on **WOMEN AND GIRLS**.

World's Unpaid and Paid Care Work



WHY IS CARE WORK IMPORTANT?

Care work is the **'hidden engine'** that keeps the **wheels** of our **economies** and **businesses turning**.

Care work is essential for **human** and **social well-being**.



GENDER, SOCIETY, & CARE WORK

Why CARE WORK = WOMEN'S WORK

In MENA societies, the socially prescribed and entrenched **gender norms** and **stereotypes** reinforce the belief that women and girls possess **"inherent caregiving skills"** and thus should carry out care tasks as they have an **innate ability to excel** in them.

Any woman who chooses to **diverge** from the aforementioned role is often **criticized** and **punished**.

How does the burden of care work affect women?

- It prevents women from having full access to their basic human rights.
- It contributes to time poverty, limited mobility, and poor health and well-being of women.
- It coerces women to work for free and subjects them to various forms of violence.
- It perpetuates gender and economic inequalities, thereby limiting women's opportunities to participate in decent paid employment, education, leisure, and political life.
- It deprives women of social protection services since care work is part of the informal sector which is considered to be ineligible to receive social security.

Challenges of the MENA Region's Care Economy

- Patriarchal and capitalist assumptions that devalue care work and restrict women to subordinate positions.
- Labor laws that fail to recognize care work as a legal form of work and thus divest women of protection under the legal system.
- The invisibility of the private sphere which implies that women's predicaments often go unrecognized.
- The presence of a Kafala system which exploits, oppresses, and discriminates poor women from the Global South.

STEPS TO ADDRESS AND IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF CARE WORKERS

- RECOGNIZE**
Recognize unpaid and poorly paid care work as a "job" that has pivotal value.
- REDUCE**
Reduce the total number of hours spent on care work by providing women with access to affordable public services, care-supporting infrastructure, and social protection policies.
- REDISTRIBUTE**
Redistribute care work fairly among members of the household, the market, the state, and non-state actors (care diamond).
- REPRESENT**
Represent all caregivers by providing them with a voice in the design and delivery of policies, systems, and services that affect their lives.

Resources

- <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621009/bp-care-crisis-time-for-global-reevaluation-care-250620-en.pdf>
- https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf
- https://mena.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf-files/publications/FES-Care_Work.pdf?fbclid=IwAR23LCJxUsL2cc7T4dxdRCKn4TFFpa3uLma7J308jCojzGLOH8bxy3NgKy8
- <https://www.oxfam.org/en/not-all-gaps-are-created-equal-true-value-care-work>
- <https://www.oxfam.org/en/women-and-care-work-poor-time-choice-and-voice>
- <https://asia.fes.de/news/women-and-the-future-of-care-work-in-asia>
- <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=20000&nr=7371&menu=2993>