

APEC Human Resources Development Working Group
APEC Embracing Carers Policy Toolkit
to Address the Unpaid Care Gap

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**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

APEC Embracing Carers Policy Toolkit to Address the Unpaid Care Gap

APEC Human Resources Development Working Group

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INTRODUCTION

I. Introduction: Why a Policy Toolkit for Unpaid Care?

Unpaid care work underpins the global economy and well-being of society, but despite being an enabler of all other types of work, its value is often overlooked. The *APEC Embracing Carers Policy Toolkit* ('Toolkit') aims to address this gap by making the case for investment in care, starting with support for carers themselves. While there is a need for cross-sector collaboration to address the needs of unpaid carers, paid carers, and all actors in the care economy, the Toolkit focuses its scope on providing evidence-based solutions to support and empower unpaid carers as a first step to building momentum for the care economy within Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member economies.

Unpaid care work encompasses all of the non-market activities necessary to sustain life in society. Such activities consist of indirect care work, which involves activities like cooking and cleaning, and direct care work, which includes child care, long-term care, and health care. These activities exist outside of the formal economy, are frequently viewed as less important than profit-making activities, and are gendered due to cultural and social norms. Since women disproportionately assume these roles, they often contend with fewer social protections, inadequate infrastructure, and limited recognition for their contributions.^a

In 2022, amidst ongoing efforts to bolster economic resilience, the APEC Policy Support Unit (PSU) took a first step in publishing a policy brief [Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Counting the Costs](#) ('APEC PSU brief') to illuminate the status of unpaid care work in the region. The report found that unpaid care work in APEC economies is consistent with global trends: women globally spend an average of 4 hours and 32 minutes per day on unpaid care activities while men average 1 hour and 24 minutes, and women in APEC spend between 2.6 and 5.5 hours daily on unpaid care, consistently allotting three times the amount of time as men.¹ The policy brief concludes that leveraging international fora could reduce this imbalance.

In May 2022, capturing the momentum behind a global recovery and recognizing the centrality of caregiving, the Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG) launched APEC Embracing Carers, the first APEC project to focus specifically on advancing the economic security and well-being of unpaid carers. APEC Embracing Carers builds upon the PSU's foundational resource through the development of a comprehensive toolkit to enable APEC member economies to better support unpaid carers. Given APEC's strength in providing a multi-stakeholder platform, the aim is for Embracing Carers to present examples of actions from member economies, calling upon all sectors of society, for APEC economies to voluntarily take action – pilot policies, prioritize gender-responsive budgeting, and invest in infrastructure – as appropriate.

^a Derived from Embracing Carers Workshop 1, with input from experts on page 37 and informed by other related research (e.g., from the International Labor Organization (ILO) and others).

II. Policy Toolkit at a Glance

While Embracing Carers is the first APEC project specifically devoted to unpaid caregiving, APEC has supported several projects with the objective to enhance women’s economic empowerment and well-being. In 2015, APEC launched the [Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Policy Toolkit](#) to capture evidence and good practices on how to improve women’s health for greater economic participation.^b The *APEC Embracing Carers Policy Toolkit* builds upon this model, presenting examples that APEC member economies may draw from to pilot policies, prioritize gender-responsive budgeting, and invest in infrastructure, choosing the types of actions appropriate for their economies. The Toolkit further seeks to set the key parameters for unpaid care, so as to inform decision-makers of measurable outcomes and considerations for inclusive solutions.

A. Who Is the Intended Audience?

The immediate intended audience of the Toolkit is those with the ability to affect the levers of change, creating an enabling and care-sensitive environment for unpaid carers. This audience includes health, gender, finance, and labor officials in APEC member economies; members of academia; the private sector; and other stakeholders. While the primary audience is policymakers, the Toolkit was developed with an inclusive lens to ensure that policies recognize the breadth of caregiving experiences. Governments, unions, academia, non-governmental organizations, industry and other stakeholder groups shaped its co-creation.

The APEC PSU brief highlights a gap in data around unpaid caregiving. According to the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) analysis of time-use data based on the latest World Compilation of Time-use Surveys in 2019, just over half of the APEC economies have implemented economy-wide time-use surveys to collect data on time spent on paid and unpaid work.² This Toolkit includes best practices for their development and harmonization, encouraging multi-stakeholder collaboration in this effort.

B. How Was the Policy Toolkit Developed?

The Policy Toolkit is part of an APEC HRDWG project overseen by the U.S. Department of Labor. It was implemented by C&M International on a voluntary basis, with support from Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany as the lead private sector partner. Experts from industry, government, and civil society across the APEC member economies lent their insight and expertise to the drafting of the Policy Toolkit,^c which was informed by the foundational literature and data put forth by international organizations, including but not limited to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), ILO, and UN Women.

C. How Is the Policy Toolkit Organized?

The Policy Toolkit incorporates the “5R framework for decent care”, a model of action-oriented policy objectives developed by the ILO and adopted by other multilateral organizations, to guide the implementation of effective interventions for unpaid care. The ILO’s framework presents a human rights-based and gender responsive approach that promotes universal access to quality care services, policy, and infrastructure. The ILO’s framework recognizes the unique needs of underrepresented carers, such as Indigenous and migrant workers, and addresses the importance of support for carers in all their diversity. A sixth R, “Reframe”, which is focused on shifting away from norms that reinforce rigid gender roles, has been added at the suggestion of the APEC Embracing Carers Expert Advisory Group. The inclusion of “Reframe” grounds the “R” framework with an objective to promote positive gender socialization^d from an early age.

^bThe Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Toolkit provides a model of consensus-based policies as a framework from which economies may pull on a voluntary basis. Additional and more recent resources may be found at the conclusion of the Toolkit.

^cSee page 37 for the APEC Embracing Carers Expert Advisory Group.

^dRecognizing the impact of socialization on gender-discriminatory norms and values, UNICEF has developed a [report](#) on positive gender socialization, which seeks to challenge and change negative gender norms, beliefs, policies and practices that lead to inequitable outcomes.



RECOGNIZE:

Collect and disseminate data on the unpaid care gap^e and its economic and societal value



REDUCE:

Enact policies that help to reduce the overall unpaid care burden



REDISTRIBUTE:

Encourage changes in social norms so women do not bear the brunt of the unpaid care responsibilities



REWARD:

Compensate carers for care work



REPRESENT:

Ensure carers' voices are incorporated



REFRAME:

Shift away from norms that reinforce rigid gender roles

Figure 1: This Toolkit follows the ILO's "5R framework for decent care work".³

^eThe unpaid care gap refers to gender inequality in unpaid care work. The APEC PSU brief finds that on average women's share of time spent on unpaid caregiving is three times the amount of men's in the APEC region.



BACKGROUND

A. The Definition of Unpaid Care and Linkages to Paid Care

Unpaid carers assist dependents with daily living tasks without monetary compensation and operate at the household and community level. At the household level, unpaid carers' identities are driven by intersectional experiences, which depend on characteristics including but not limited to race, sexuality, and income level. As such, there is no single type of unpaid carer. At the community level, grassroots organizations play a critical role in providing care and support, particularly in marginalized communities. Finding effective ways to compensate grassroots organizations underpins the sustainability of this important work.

The all-encompassing term “care work” does not always capture its skill-specific nature and the management, responsibility, and constant availability required to perform such work. Moreover, not all populations across the APEC region share a common understanding of the definition of unpaid care that is widely used today. When studies on the care economy do not account for intersectionality and cultural context, many stakeholders are left behind. For example, a paper investigating an Indigenous perspective on caregiving in Canada notes that research examining the mental and physical toll of caregiving largely ignores the perspectives of Indigenous employed carers.^{4,f} The Asia-Pacific region is home to approximately 70% of the world's Indigenous populations, all with unique social and cultural values, including perspectives on caregiving.⁵ As such, the Toolkit emphasizes the need for culturally responsive and inclusive care measures, which include but are not limited to policies, workplace practices, and community interventions.

Supplementary Definitions from International Organizations:

UN Women: Unpaid care work includes unpaid services provided by individuals within a household or community for the benefit of its members, including care of persons and domestic work.⁶

ILO: Care work consists of two broad kinds of activities: direct, personal, and relational care activities, such as feeding a baby or nursing an ill partner; and indirect care activities, such as cooking and cleaning.⁷

The Asia Foundation: Unpaid care work is all unpaid services provided by individuals within a household for the benefit of its members, including care of persons and domestic work. Common examples include cooking, cleaning, and looking after children, older dependent persons, persons with disabilities, and those who are ill.⁸

Promoting policies that support unpaid carers is impossible without recognizing linkages to paid care and the role of paid caregivers such as domestic workers as critical stakeholders in the care economy. First, in order to address the unpaid care gap, policymakers must work to ensure the existence of quality caregiving jobs. Next, paid carers have unpaid care responsibilities in their own homes, and so protecting their rights both at home and work – in the formal or informal sector – is crucial to ensuring a healthy and safe environment for all.

Protecting the rights of paid carers is especially important as vulnerable groups such as migrant workers significantly contribute to the care economy, particularly in high-income economies. The ILO estimates that globally, 81% of domestic workers are informal workers without access to social or labor protections and one out six domestic workers is a migrant worker. This percentage is higher in APEC economies, as migrants comprise 71% of domestic workers in North America and approximately 25% of domestic workers in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.⁹ Economies can commensurately value care work and carers themselves by dismantling misconceptions of its unskilled nature and professionalizing care work, by paying carers a fair wage, and by implementing social protections for migrant workers and those operating in the informal economy. Enforcing proper work conditions begins by raising awareness among beneficiaries of the work (i.e. those

^f The paper uses the term Indigenous for “peoples with place-based cosmologies, worldviews, identities, and similar consequential experiences with settler colonialism, while also recognizing diverse identities within that category”.

utilizing care services to care for a dependent). Family and community systems must understand and appreciate domestic workers' wide-ranging responsibilities – from cooking to elder care – and the power imbalance within the household.

These measures will improve the care environment for all. As such, the “Reward” and “Represent” sections of the Policy Toolkit pay particular attention to the unique needs of vulnerable paid carers.

B. Unpaid Caregiving and the Value to the Global Economy

Unpaid care holds up the economy by making all other work possible. Estimates by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), for example, underscore the vital importance of unpaid care for the economy. BEA estimates that the value of unpaid care work in the United States economy was USD5.3 trillion in 2020. The BEA estimates are based on the market price of average housekeepers' hourly wages (USD12.71 in 2020).¹⁰ Based on 2018 estimates by the ILO, the value of unpaid care and domestic work globally is approximately USD11 trillion annually.¹¹ The ILO estimates are calculated assuming that carers would receive the legal minimum hourly wage in compensation.

However, there is a need for more robust, consistently-generated data on unpaid caregiving, particularly in the wake of the pandemic's social and economic effects. At the regional level, the APEC PSU brief emphasizes the dearth of data on unpaid care in many APEC economies.¹² While economists have captured some of the economic costs of unpaid care work, principally foregone wages and absenteeism at work, substantial, quality data on the social or welfare costs of caregiving, which include changes to carers' well-being and lost leisure time, is scarce. For example, a review of the literature on the intersection between caregiving and mental health finds that there is a significant data gap in the Asia Pacific region.¹³

C. Unpaid Care and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Unpaid care has always been a critical social and economic activity, but the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the insufficient investment in care infrastructure and in unpaid carers themselves. Additionally, the pandemic has demonstrated that the experiences of unpaid carers are context-specific and vary based on intersectional identities as well as cultural and social norms. For example, a United States study investigating the well-being of carers responsible for elderly dependents and children found that caregiving's impact on carer health varies by income and race/ethnicity.¹⁴ When it is safe and feasible to do so, collecting data on characteristics including but not limited to race; ethnicity; sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC); migrant status; and income level can ensure that care services, infrastructure, and social protections meet the needs of the most socioeconomically excluded.

The pandemic has also called attention to the gender gap in unpaid care work. As global demand for care contends with inadequate care infrastructure, there is growing awareness that policy measures and interventions to support unpaid carers are imperative. However, while there is robust literature from international organizations and academic journals on unpaid caregiving and its implications for economies, societies, and families alike, there has been limited, albeit growing, recognition or study of this issue within the APEC region.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the unpaid care gap and exacerbated disparities in unpaid care work. Before the start of the pandemic, women globally bore 76.2% of the total daily time spent in housework and family care.¹⁵ Data from the APEC region is in line with this trend; the APEC PSU brief includes available data from 15 member economies revealing that women spend almost three times the time spent by men on daily unpaid work.¹⁶ The pandemic deepened the care crisis, causing women to leave the workforce in greater numbers than men to assume care activities at home. Women, who accounted for 39% of global employment in 2019, made up 54% of employment losses in 2020.¹⁷

While gender parity in labor force participation rates have begun to increase since the end of the pandemic, unmet demand for care services still prevents some female workers, particularly low wage female workers, from returning to work.¹⁸ In order to maximize women's economic potential across the APEC region, stakeholders will need to address this unmet demand through the increased provision of care services and investments in the care economy.

D. Recognizing the Diversity of Experiences among Those Providing Unpaid Care

As stakeholders collect data and adopt policies to support unpaid carers, it is essential to remember that the caregiving landscape varies across APEC economies. Throughout APEC, there is significant disparity in estimates of the monetary value of unpaid caregiving. Furthermore, the magnitude of unpaid care work varies according to characteristics such as socioeconomic status, age, and urban versus rural environments.

On the global level, the ILO finds that unpaid care work is most intensive for girls and women living in middle-income economies. At the economy level, the burden of care principally falls on those who are married and of adult age, reside in rural areas, have lower educational attainment, and who have children under school age. Cultural and community norms also account for variations in the state of care work.¹⁹ In many APEC economies, cultural norms perpetuate an unequal distribution of care. Data from the region indicate that 45% of the population residing in Asia prefers family-provided care, a responsibility overwhelmingly assumed by women.²⁰

Given the range of economic activity and differences in cultural norms across the APEC region, decision-makers should gather relevant data on the nature of care arrangements across the population and then tailor interventions and policy measures to appropriately respond to the state of care. Pursuing an evidence-based rather than a one-size-fits-all approach will ensure that decision-makers can effectively work the levers of change and promote a gender-inclusive and equitable environment for unpaid carers.

E. Conclusion

The *APEC Embracing Carers Policy Toolkit* calls on stakeholders in government, the private sector, and civil society to recognize their role in prioritizing the needs of unpaid carers. No single policy will provide the solution to the demands placed on unpaid carers. To challenge societal norms that devalue caregiving, policies must go beyond financial remuneration for current carers. Policies must work together to address harmful gender norms and gender-based discrimination, they must provide paths to career success for all workers, and they must create conditions that lead everyone to be able to participate in both the labor force and caregiving. Policies that acknowledge the needs of all families, and all workers, will have greater impact on reaching gender equity. The Toolkit provides an overview of existing policies in member economies.



POLICY OPTIONS

N. Policy Options

A. RECOGNIZE



Now more than ever, the economic fallout from the pandemic has exposed the lack of resources, infrastructure, and support for those shouldering the brunt of the work involved in unpaid caregiving. As childcare facilities closed, schools shut their doors, and health systems became overwhelmed, both women and men globally increased time spent on unpaid care activities.²¹ However, studies examining the impact of the global recession and lockdowns on employment rates find that the pandemic caused a global “shecession”, in which women suffered worse economic outcomes.

The experience of working-age women in the Asia-Pacific region is in line with global trends. The ILO estimates that the pandemic led women’s employment to decrease by 3.8%, compared to a decline of 2.9% for men.²² The cause of this disparity is twofold: women are overrepresented in vulnerable employment and disproportionately fill the demand for caregiving.²³

According to UN Women (2022), in an average pre-COVID-19 day, women already spent about three times as many hours on unpaid domestic work and care work as men.²⁴ Yet, the increasing demands for care and domestic work led to women doing an additional 512 billion hours of unpaid care at home during the pandemic.²⁵ These data provide a stark snapshot of the reality of unpaid care, but more granular data at the economy-level is essential for the creation of policies that respond to local and cultural norms.

Additionally, studies report an absence of comparable statistics to measure progress against target four on women’s unpaid care and domestic work under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.²⁶ Measuring all forms of unpaid care work and their costs and benefits to economies is a critical step to mitigating care-related inequalities and improving conditions for all unpaid carers.

“5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as appropriate.”

Capturing sex- and age-disaggregated time-use data and gender statistics on the magnitude of unpaid care work will require significant investments in data collection and careful thinking on the appropriate valuation of unpaid care work to society. This will call attention to the value of care work and challenge gender norms. When economies can identify the costs, calculate the value of unpaid care, and communicate their findings to decision-makers such as ministries of finance, they are better-positioned to make the case for increased support for unpaid carers.²⁷

Such data are necessary but not sufficient to adequately address the unpaid care gap. While time-use surveys are an important first step, they are often blind to structural inequalities and require qualitative data to unpack barriers to care in a more meaningful way. Solely focusing on the hours spent on tasks ignores the structural realities that families face on a day-to-day basis. For instance, in economies in which the earning power for men is substantially greater than women’s due to wage inequality, men might work multiple jobs and be unable to contribute additional time to care work.²⁸ This inequality results in families making choices about time use that prioritize men’s participation in paid labor and women’s participation in unpaid care at home. When families calculate the opportunity cost of men versus women scaling back paid work, it often makes more financial sense for women to do so because they earn less in paid work.²⁹ Though division of care responsibilities is sometimes based on economic calculations, research shows that women who contribute equally to household income or are the primary breadwinner often continue to perform a majority of unpaid care work.³⁰ Conducting qualitative interviews in conjunction with data collection can reveal the root causes of structural inequalities and the unpaid care gap.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Unpaid care work is invisible and undervalued.</p> <p><i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Implement time-use data surveys at the economy level, either through the provision of government funding and an established task force, or through partnerships with international organizations, the private sector, and civil society.</p> <p><u>Best practices include, but are not limited to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and validate grassroots driven data collection as an official source of information. • Collect time diaries from all household members, including children, in order to understand the intergenerational nature of care work. • Collect the start and end times of secondary and tertiary activities, or tasks undertaken simultaneously, for a more accurate estimation of time spent on caregiving. • Collect demographic, individual, household, and community information (e.g., Do you own your own home? What is the household’s main source of drinking water? What is the distance to the nearest health clinic?). • Conduct complementary household surveys that gather information on the different care arrangements used by households to meet their childcare, eldercare, sick/disabled care needs. This captures the use of paid care services (nannies, domestic workers, daycare centers) and non-household unpaid care support by relatives, neighbors, and friends. The survey can also obtain information on the unmet need for care support (i.e. the preferred amount of caregiving that different household members provide and the actual amount of time spent in care activities).^{31,32} 	<p>Despite the importance and utility of sex- and gender-disaggregated data to understand supply-side constraints preventing women from participating in the labor force, nine APEC economies do not conduct economy-wide time-use surveys. Of the APEC economies that have released such surveys, only the United States has conducted the survey on a yearly basis.^{33,34}</p> <p>Additionally, the majority of APEC economies have not integrated time-use surveys into economy-wide statistical systems. Economies that have launched such accounting systems include Mexico; Peru; and Thailand.³⁵</p> <p><u>How should economies conduct surveys and collect this data?</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Economies can partner with multilaterals and civil society to collect time-use surveys and sex- and gender-disaggregated data. For example, in the Philippines, Oxfam International supported the 2021 Household Care Survey, and found that women participants dominated all care activities, spending more time on primary and secondary care.⁸ The survey also found that for “multi-tasking care” activities, the average time spent by women was 6.62 hours while men logged 3.78 hours daily.³⁶ 2) Government agencies and ministries, such as labor ministries, can use public resources to administer surveys. <p>For example, in Japan, the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry conducted the first economy-wide Young Carers Survey from December 2020-January 2021 and found that nearly 6% of second-year students at public middle schools and 4% of second-year students at public high schools have said they look after family members. The 2022 National Young Carers Survey showed 6.5% of sixth graders in Japan are providing care to family members.^{37,38}</p>

⁸Oxfam defines ‘primary care’ as the number of hours respondents spent on care as a primary activity. Secondary care is hours spent on care as a secondary activity (e.g. leaving food cooking while tending to other household tasks), and its inclusion in time-use surveys more accurately reflects the reality of women’s lives.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<i>(continued from previous page)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation to develop standards and data classification systems for collecting comparable data across APEC. 	<p>In Chile, the first time-use survey at the economy-level was conducted in 2015.^h In 2023, the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) began field work for the Pilot Test of the II National Time Use Survey (II NTUS). Through this fieldwork, around 1,400 homes were surveyed, with the aim of evaluating different logistical and methodological aspects in preparation for the second version of the survey, scheduled for 2023.³⁹</p> <p>The II NTUS Pilot Test is aimed at all people age 12+ within a household and has two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Collect demographic and household information. Conduct individual interviews on how much time is spent doing a series of activities during two specific days, mentioned at the beginning of the survey.
<p>Unpaid care work is invisible and undervalued.</p>	<p>Create a compelling case for policymakers to invest in the provision of care-related infrastructure and social protections by quantifying the cost and return on investment.</p>	<p>Use tools such as the ILO's Care Policy Investment Simulator to calculate the costs and the return on investment, especially in relation to meeting gender equality targets and commitments like the SDG 5.4.⁴⁰</p> <p>The Care Work and the Economy Project has developed policy tools that integrate the care economy – paid and unpaid care sectors – in macroeconomic models used for policy analysis. The policy simulations for Republic of Korea focus on the impact of policies that expand public care, provide subsidies to care provided by households or the private sector and that reduce female wage discrimination. The results indicate that these policies can increase economic growth and improve the welfare of households with care responsibilities by freeing up time for women to take on jobs that are better paid.^{41,42}</p>
	<p>Supplement time-use surveys with qualitative data collected through interviews with household members in order to identify structural inequalities and understand how gendered unpaid care work is made invisible.</p>	<p>Investing in Women (IW), an initiative of the Australian Government that seeks to promote women's economic participation in Southeast Asia, authored a report on gendered social norms affecting women's economic participation in Viet Nam. The report was prepared in close coordination with local civil society who conducted nearly 500 interviews in multiple Vietnamese cities. The majority of participants stated that women should be the primary family carer.⁴³ Such findings are crucial to inform programming and communication approaches to redistribute care and improve gender equality.</p>

^h Based on the data from the first survey, ComunidadMujer published its report "How Much Do We Contribute to GDP. First National Study of Economic Valuation of Unpaid Domestic and Care Work in Chile".

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>There is a double burden of work on women that economy-level data often does not fully capture.</p>	<p>Collect sex- and age-disaggregated data on time spent on unpaid work, paid work, <i>and</i> overall work (the total of paid and unpaid care).</p> <p>If economies do not have government/non-government institutions that have capacity to collect this data, they can leverage the capacity of multilaterals.</p>	<p>The ILO’s 2019 report using the most recent data from world time-use surveys found that women’s burden of total work is greater than men’s by 5.8 percent. Notably, the ILO’s data is not exhaustive. Data collected from 75 economies are representative of different years (the most recent data from some economies is from the early 2000s), and not every economy collects sex-and gender-disaggregated data for paid and unpaid work.⁴⁴</p>
		<p>The OECD collects sex-disaggregated data on time spent on unpaid work, paid work, and total work.⁴⁵</p>
		<p>UN Women conducted a study of economy time-use studies by year and region in 2021.⁴⁶</p>
<p>There is a lack of consistent, frequently generated data related to the social and welfare costs of unpaid caregiving across the APEC region.</p>	<p>Increase collection of data on the mental health and well-being of unpaid carers.</p> <p>For example, sleep deprivation is a long-term issue of unpaid family carers, but it has been neglected by research and policy.⁴⁷</p>	<p>A 2021 report by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that among over 10,000 U.S. adults surveyed during the pandemic, carers had significantly worse mental health than adults without care responsibilities. Moreover, carers that handled both parent/guardian and adult-caregiving roles were 12 times more likely to experience the most adverse mental health symptoms.⁴⁸</p>
<p>Decision-makers lack a complete understanding of who is filling the role of carer and the skill and time requirement involved for different types of care. Such knowledge is necessary to set the platform for policy-making initiatives that seek to reduce the burden of unpaid care work.</p>	<p>Implement a registry of carers that quantifies and identifies carer typologies (e.g., carers providing intermittent care vs intensive care).</p> <p>Registries should include incentives such as the attachment of social protections.</p> <p>Registries should include unpaid care work provided at the community and grassroots level.</p>	<p>In November 2022, the Ministry of Social Development of Chile announced the creation of a platform to identify carers, which will complement the existing Social Registry of Households (RSH). According to data from the Social Welfare Survey of the Ministry of Social Development, in Chile 85% of those who dedicate 8 or more hours a day to unpaid care work are women. The new registry seeks to identify and characterize carers so that the government can account for their experience when designing programs to provide support.⁴⁹</p>
<p>Many APEC economies are donor economies contributing development assistance to essential infrastructure, which includes care. However, without care-focused metrics and methods for tracking foreign investments related to care, a lack of accountability impedes coordination and diminishes impact. <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Donor governments can collaborate to create a methodology for tracking development assistance for care to promote more coordinated and holistic donor financing.</p>	<p>There is an opportunity for donor economies to increase accountability and investment coordination by tracking the amount of official development assistance (ODA) for care. APEC economies can encourage the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to update the DAC Creditor Reporting System and dedicate a code specific to care.⁵⁰</p>

⁴⁴ The OECD collects data on unpaid care work for the following APEC economies: Australia; Canada; People’s Republic of China; Japan; Republic of Korea; Mexico; the United States.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<i>(continued from previous page)</i>	Governments can add a metric to their development agencies to track the provision of care services and measurable benefits for women, children, and families overall.	In the United States, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) 2X Women’s Initiative recognizes the unique challenges women face globally and invests in the opportunity they represent. The initiative has metrics to measure benefits for women, such as job creation, but there are additional opportunities to add care-related metrics. For example, the Corporation could monitor whether it invests in businesses that provide childcare services to their employees. ⁵¹
<p>Researchers estimate that women’s unpaid contributions to healthcare equal almost USD1.5 trillion. This includes unpaid health promotion and prevention activities, care for people with disabilities and chronic diseases, and assisting older persons.⁵²</p> <p>However, the importance of carers of older dependent people and people with disabilities as an integral part of health and social systems often goes unrecognized.</p>	Increase data collection on the value of family-provided care, particularly for specialized care for dependents with chronic and debilitating diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Multiple Sclerosis (MS).	<p>In Japan, the Framework for Promoting Dementia Care, formulated in June 2019, identifies supporting healthcare, caregiving, and long-term care services and long-term care providers as one of its five pillars.⁵³</p> <p>In 2023, New Zealand’s Ministry of Social Development in partnership with Carers NZ, the Carers Alliance, Alzheimer’s NZ, and IHC commissioned an economics agency Infometrics to measure the economic value of unpaid care in Aotearoa New Zealand based on census and time-use data. The report provides evidence for action and investment in unpaid carers in areas such as employment support, wellbeing, and respite.⁵⁴</p> <p>In Republic of Korea, analysis of special survey data on households with frail elderly member needing long-term care and on eldercare workers, either home-based or in care facilities, reveal the toll on the well-being of carers. Findings of the data analysis also indicate that the quality of care is positively correlated with the working conditions of paid carers.⁵⁵</p>



B. REDUCE

When unpaid carers are forced to abandon economic and educational pursuits to fill the void in care systems, there are negative effects at the individual and society levels. At the individual level, unpaid carers, disproportionately women, often sacrifice their agency, career trajectory, and lifetime earnings.⁵⁶ At the society level, economies lose out on women's valuable contributions to the labor market.

Providing care support measures to empower women to pursue their career and educational goals is more than a social and moral imperative. Gender equality benefits everyone, including men and boys. An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report investigating the economic benefit of bringing more women into the labor force found that closing gaps in participation among economies where the gender gap is largest significantly boosts productivity and economic growth.⁵⁷ In order to strengthen the global economy and empower carers to allocate their time according to their preferences, decision-makers must invest in holistic policies formed through a whole-of-government approach as well as in consultation with civil society and carers.

Moreover, as fertility rates decline and demographics reflect aging populations, there is a care crisis for economies lacking adequate care infrastructure for their elderly populations.⁵⁸ Without formal support, younger adults, overwhelmingly women at the peak of labor force productivity, often sacrifice paid work in order to assume unpaid care responsibilities.⁵⁹ Research indicates that compared to men, women have a higher tendency to withdraw from the labor market due to difficulties managing their paid work and family care responsibility. However, research and policies primarily focus on childcare, and there is a need for more research on paid leave to support aging populations.⁶⁰

APPROACHES IN THIS TOOLKIT TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF UNPAID CARE WORK FALLS INTO THE FOLLOWING POLICY CATEGORIES:

■ Employment-related care policies, ■ Care and care-related infrastructure, ■ Care-related social protections, and ■ Care services.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Work-place hours and expectations often do not accommodate caregiving responsibilities.</p> <p>Additionally, workplace norms often act as barriers to taking adequate parental leave, especially for men.⁶¹</p>	<p>Public investments in childcare help all parents return to work. In addition to public investments in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), economies can also partner with employers to create publicly subsidized family-friendly working conditions.</p>	<p>As part of its 2021 budget, Malaysia provided tax breaks and subsidies to incentivize employers to provide on-site childcare. The government allocated MYR20 million in matching grants for the private sector to provide childcare centers.⁶²</p> <p>In Chinese Taipei, the government provides a maximum of TWD300 million in subsidies for companies to establish childcare centers. Employers who provide childcare subsidies for their employees can also receive government subsidies up to TWD600,000 every year.⁶³</p>
	<p>Economies provide protections and private locations for lactating workers to pump so that they may continue breastfeeding after returning to work.</p>	<p>In Chinese Taipei, the government provides a maximum of TWD20,000 in subsidies for companies to set up breastfeeding rooms.⁶⁴</p> <p>In the United States, under the PUMP Act and Fair Labor Standards Act most nursing employees have the right to receive break time to pump and a private place to pump at work.⁶⁵</p>
	<p>Promote flexible work legislation and provide public subsidies for workplace and teleworking accommodations.</p>	<p>In Malaysia, the government collaborated with telecommunications companies to provide mobile internet subscribers with free internet access from 1 April 2020 until the end of the movement control order (a series of quarantine measures) through December 2021. The government also allocated funding for a 15–50% discount on electricity bills.⁶⁶</p>
	<p>Promote policies that require reasonable accommodations for workers with caregiving responsibilities. Such policies may include but are not limited to reducing daily working hours and overtime; providing more flexible arrangements in working schedules, rest periods and holidays; and allowing employees to request schedules that take family responsibilities into consideration in the assignment of shifts and night work.</p>	<p>In December 2022, the United States enacted the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with temporary limitations on their ability to perform the essential functions of their jobs based on physical or mental conditions, which include pregnancy and childbirth.⁶⁷</p>
		<p>In Viet Nam, according to Article 137 of the Labour Code, female workers nursing children under 12 months old are entitled to a fully paid hour break per day during regular work hours.⁶⁸</p>

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Not all birthing people and parents in the APEC region have access to job-protected leave and cash benefits that sufficiently protect the health and well-being of mother and child.</p> <p>Women in the informal and gig sector and migrant workers are often exempt from parental leave policies or face difficulty in accessing paid leave.</p>	<p>Consider implementing worker protections that at minimum adhere to the requirements of the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), which mandate a minimum paid leave period of 14 weeks with cash benefits at least two-thirds of previous earnings. Where possible, encourage increasing cash benefits to 100%.^{69, k}</p> <p>While the minimum standard is 14 weeks, ILO's Recommendation No. 191 suggests maternity leave be at least 18 weeks.⁷⁰</p>	<p>Within the APEC region, while only Peru has ratified C183, 9 other APEC economies guarantee paid leave that meets the requirements of C183 by law. Additionally, economies whose maternity leave policies align with C183 standards and provide maternity leave cash benefits at 100% of previous earnings, or 100% of previous earnings up to a ceiling, include Brunei Darussalam; Chile; China; Peru; New Zealand; the Philippines; Singapore; and Viet Nam.^{71, 72}</p>
<p>Particularly in low and lower-middle income economies (LMIEs) there is uneven access to care-related infrastructure (e.g., electricity, transportation, and digital connectivity), which increases the time requirement for unpaid, indirect care work.</p> <p>During the pandemic, around 27% of women globally reported an increase in time spent on collecting firewood and fetching water, demonstrating how gaps in care-related infrastructure are magnified in times of crisis and disproportionately impact the most vulnerable.⁷³</p>	<p>Invest in care-related infrastructure and time-saving technology that are designed in a gender-responsive way and through a care lens.</p>	<p>In the Philippines, 28 local governments have partnered with Oxfam Philippines for a three-year project Women's Economic Empowerment and Care (WE-Care). The objective of the project is to use local legislation to advocate for support for unpaid care. The partnership has produced a template ordinance that applies a gender and care lens to public infrastructure and funding.⁷⁴</p>

^k Not every APEC economy has a leave scheme that can be commensurately valued under C183. For example, some APEC economies have parental leave schemes in lieu of separate maternity and paternity leave policies.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>The impacts of climate change exacerbate time poverty by increasing the labor burden of life-sustaining tasks. This burden is overwhelmingly assumed by women and girls.⁷⁵</p>	<p>Prioritize climate resilience strategies that incorporate a care lens.</p>	<p>The WE-Care Partnership led a project in the Philippines to construct and repair public water points. Project metrics reported that time spent on unpaid care was reduced by 1 to 4 hours per day.⁷⁶</p>
<p>Without properly training and mobilizing carers in disaster responses, natural disasters, which are often climate-driven, increase the vulnerability of care recipients.⁷⁷</p>		<p>A study on caregiving’s impact on disaster preparation found that carers often struggle to balance disaster response and caregiving responsibilities. The study suggested that training and support programs should consider the special needs of care recipients in disaster contexts and the specific resources and support for carers to get prepared. Relevant government agencies can provide caregivers with time-flexible virtual trainings.⁷⁸</p>
<p>Policies meant to support unpaid carers often do not reach the informal market or those who are self-employed. For example, migrants often do not benefit from existing social protections.</p>	<p>Launch regulated social protection programs and systems including cash transfers that reach families working in non-formal employment and formalized self-employment.</p>	<p>During the pandemic, the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB) provided income support of up to CAD500 per week to employed and self-employed individuals who were unable to work because they had to care for a child under 12 years old or a family member in need of supervised care.⁷⁹</p> <p>In the Philippines, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) manages the TUPAD program (Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers), which provides opportunities to displaced, underemployed or seasonal workers. The TUPAD #BKBK program was part of the Philippines’ COVID-19 response and provided the minimum wage to unemployed informal sector workers to perform disinfection and sanitation work of their dwellings and the surrounding areas after receiving orientation on safety and health.⁸⁰</p> <p>This program supplements government cash transfers. The Emergency Subsidy Program reached 18 million low-income families, including those who work in informal sector jobs, and provided between PHP5,000 and PHP8,000 for two months.⁸¹</p>

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>During the pandemic, women disproportionately left the workforce to assume unpaid care responsibilities as childcare facilities and schools closed their doors.</p>	<p>Implement regulated cash transfers with a care component.</p>	<p>Australia provided a Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment: a lump sum payment to those who were unable to work and earn income because they had to self-isolate or quarantine and to those providing care for someone in self-isolation or quarantine (as required by state or territory government).⁸² The government paid eligible recipients a flat rate of AUD200, AUD450, or AUD750 per week, depending on work hours lost.</p> <p>Many of these transfers and social protections in the region are <i>temporary</i>. There is a need for complementary long-term investment in infrastructure to support unpaid carers.⁸³</p>
	<p>Provide integrated care policy packages, which include universal or subsidized childcare and long-term care programs.</p>	<p>In 2006, Mexico’s Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL) launched a program Estancias Infantiles para Apoyar a Madres Trabajadoras (Early Childcare Facilities for the Support of Working Mothers), which supports mothers, single parents, guardians or main carers below the welfare line who work, seek employment, or study and do not have access to care services. For this population, the federal government, through SEDESOL, will cover the cost of child care.⁸⁴</p>
		<p>In Chile, the government funds free after-school childcare provision at public schools for children aged 6 to 13. The program resulted in a 7% increase in mother’s labor force participation and 5% increase in employment.⁸⁵</p>
		<p>Public or subsidized provision of long-term care, present in APEC economies such as Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada (varies by region); Japan; Republic of Korea; New Zealand; Singapore; and the United States (varies by state), is a way of redistributing unpaid care responsibilities from unpaid carers to paid carers.⁸⁶</p>
	<p>Invest in government measures to support non-family childcare (e.g., public provision of childcare, pre-schools, subsidies, tax incentives).</p>	<p>The Republic of Korea launched vouchers for daycare in spring 2020. The government vouchers covered some of the cost of emergency daycare, closing the resource gap for families unable to take advantage of emergency leave. The vouchers provided 2 million families with KRW400,000.⁸⁷</p>
<p>The Australian Government provides assistance to families in the form of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). CCS is paid directly to care providers, and this is passed on to families as a reduction in fees payable. Families are then required to pay the remaining gap fee. From July 2023, the maximum amount of subsidy available will increase from 85% to 90%, with families earning AUD80,000 or less eligible for a CCS rate of 90%. Families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in care will be eligible for a base entitlement of 36 hours of subsidized care per fortnight.⁸⁸</p>		

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Policy measures and service provisions at the economy-level do not always reach vulnerable populations.</p>	<p>Invest in civil society organizations that have deep expertise in the care economy and a foundation of community trust.</p>	<p>In Indonesia, the Indonesia Street Children Organization (ISCO) operates daycare centers and provides educational programs for the children of domestic workers and informal sector workers. Community-based care providers such as ISCO meet a critical care need.⁸⁹</p>
	<p>Encourage local governments to implement social programs that recognize care work as a public and social responsibility.</p>	<p>Chinese Taipei has established a “non-profit preschools” system to provide affordable and high-quality care services. The model combines non-profit expertise from organizations such as the Peng Wan-Ru Foundation with government funding and subsidized facilities.⁹⁰</p>
		<p>The Iztapalapa care system in Mexico offers an economic transfer of MXN1,000 per month for beneficiary carers. This transfer is accompanied by other services such as training courses in gerontology, health, and nutrition as part of a comprehensive care program.⁹¹</p>
<p>By 2030, the number of care recipients is predicted to reach 2.3 billion, in part driven by an additional 0.1 billion older persons.</p>	<p>Adopt policies and financing initiatives that create alternatives to family-provided care, while allowing older persons to age with dignity.</p> <p>These policies should follow a life-cycle approach to address the differentiated population groups’ demographic trends and specific care needs.¹</p>	<p>In China, the government allocated an estimated CNY1 billion for the construction of nursing homes in rural areas, which will be operated by community providers. Also, in China, non-profit institutions providing care for older persons are exempt from income tax and nursing homes are further exempted from paying business tax.⁹²</p>

¹ UNFPA defines a life-cycle approach as an evidence-based approach to population ageing that emphasizes the sequential events and developmental steps throughout a person’s life.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>By 2030, the number of care recipients is predicted to reach 2.3 billion, in part driven by an additional 0.1 billion older persons.</p>	<p>Consider developing universal paid long-term care leave and alternative long-term care funding or tax credits to family carers who prefer to stay in their job part-time or full time and enlist help from a professional caregiver.</p>	<p>Universal paid long-term care leave, present in APEC economies such as Chile; Japan; Mexico; and Viet Nam, allows carers to take necessary leave while maintaining a portion of their earnings.⁹³</p>
	<p>Offer respite care to primary carers providing care for a family member or dependent. Respite care provides short-term relief and temporary breaks to family and unpaid carers.</p>	<p>The Chinese Taipei government introduced a significant care reform, The Ten-year Long-Term Care Plan 2.0, in 2017. It expands on the previous tax-based financing scheme to allow more comprehensive and accessible subsidies for long-term care services. It focuses on providing home- and community-based care services, including respite care.⁹⁴</p> <p>In the United States, Access to Respite Care and Help (ARCH) is an advocacy organization dedicated solely to promoting the development of quality respite programs. The organization provides a respite care locator service to help parents, family carers, and professionals find respite services in their local area to match their specific needs.⁹⁵</p>

C. REDISTRIBUTE



While adopting a gender lens is critical for the development of policies that support and empower unpaid carers, it is equally important that decision-makers enact policies that avoid perpetuating the gender gap in unpaid care. Policies that make it easier for women to assume caregiving responsibilities without encouraging uptake of care responsibilities by men risk perpetuating norms that place the onus of caregiving on women. For example, when employers or laws do not provide fully paid, non-transferrable leave, women are more likely than men to leave the workforce to assume caregiving responsibilities.⁹⁶

Enacting and implementing policies that redistribute unpaid care work between women and men within households, as well as between households and the state or employers, can free up time for women to more fully participate in the workforce should they so choose. The flexibility to make this choice can yield significant economic and social returns.

Women's reduced labor force participation has an opportunity cost at the societal, family, and individual levels. On a societal level, reduced labor force participation of women limits opportunity for GDP growth and reduces the overall size of the labor force. Families also face an opportunity cost of reduced participation in the form of reduced income and purchasing power. Women specifically face opportunity costs with their career trajectories, lifetime earnings, and ease of re-entering the labor force in the future.⁹⁷

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Many APEC economies provide very short or no paid paternity leave.</p> <p>Globally, in economies that have implemented statutory paternity leave, the average duration of paternity leave is 9.0 days.⁹⁸</p>	<p>Implement publicly funded paternity leave.⁹⁹</p>	<p>Since 2011, Singapore has increased the statutory duration of paternity leave from 7 to 14 days covered at 100% of previous earnings. The leave is funded by social protection.¹⁰⁰</p> <p>In February 2023, Singapore announced that the government will double paid paternity leave from the current two weeks to four weeks starting in January 2024.¹⁰¹</p>

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Maternity and paternity leave policies last for a fixed amount of time contiguous with the birth of a child. While returning to the labor market early on has a positive influence on the labor force participation rate of women, care leave across the life-course is essential for balancing family and job responsibilities.</p>	<p>Governments can enact legislation providing non-transferable, paid parental leave to parents in all their diversity as an individual entitlement. Non-transferable leave incentivizes men to take the full leave offered to them, which can positively shift gender stereotypes on leave in the workplace and redistribute care in the home.</p> <p><i>Parental leave is employment-protected leave of absence that is often supplementary to specific maternity and paternity leave periods, and frequently, but not in all economies, follows the period of maternity and paternity leave available to parents.</i>¹⁰²</p>	<p>In APEC, a number of economies do not provide the right to statutory parental leave with cash benefits.</p> <p>Only 6 APEC economies call for a period of paid parental leave determined by economy-wide laws.¹⁰³</p> <p>In the United States, under the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA) paid parental leave may be granted to civilian federal employees in connection with a qualifying birth or placement (for adoption or foster care).¹⁰⁴</p> <p>In Australia, the Paid Parental Leave Amendment Bill (2022) seeks to increase access to and flexibility of paid parental leave, increase weeks for sole parents, and encourage more equal sharing of care responsibilities among parents.¹⁰⁵</p> <p>In Republic of Korea, the average rate of earning replacement for the 52 weeks of parental leave is at 58%, up from 40% in 2011.¹⁰⁶</p>
<p>Unpaid parental leave further devalues unpaid care work and promotes an unequal distribution of care work within the household.¹⁰⁷</p>		<p>In 2021, Japan revised the Act on Child Care Leave, Family Care Leave to increase uptake of paid parental leave among men. Starting in August 2022, the law mandates that companies inform employers about the leave system and follow up with their employees after they report that they or their partner are expecting.¹⁰⁸</p>
<p>Paid leave for unpaid carers is sometimes tied to an employee's sick leave and determined by criteria such as employer size and employment history.¹¹⁰</p>		<p>While Japan has generous leave for fathers, the uptake of paternity leave was only 14% in 2021. Male workers cite concerns of reduced potential for promotion and growth within the company as reasons to refrain from taking paternity leave. While discriminating against workers who take leave is illegal, workers at smaller companies and on fixed contracts remain vulnerable.¹⁰⁹ This case study demonstrates that without shifting cultural and gender norms, the impact of policies promoting a redistribution of care work is diminished.</p>
<p>Parental leave protected by law is most likely to be available to two-parent families employed in the formal economy. Same-sex parents, or parents that are self-employed or work in the informal market are less likely to have the right to parental leave.</p>		<p>In 2017, Chile introduced Law No. 21,063, also known as the SANNA law, which created an insurance system for working mothers and fathers of children and young people affected by a serious health condition. The policy provides a subsidy that replaces all or part of the parent's monthly remuneration or income while on leave. The benefit is also available to persons other than the father and the mother, who are legally responsible for the personal care of a child or young person.¹¹¹</p>

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Social and gender norms reinforce deeply entrenched ideas that care work is “women’s work”.</p> <p>UN Women conducted a perception-based study Gender Equality Attitudes Study 2022: The levers for change in 20 economies including Japan; the Philippines; and Viet Nam and found that gender stereotypes are deeply embedded in societies. Across the surveyed economies, 49% of respondents agreed that women should work less and spend more time on care work. 35% indicated that a man’s job is to earn money, while a woman’s job is domestic work.¹¹²</p>	<p>Launch culturally-relevant media messaging and advocacy campaigns that challenge gender norms designating care work as “women’s work”.</p>	<p>According to the 2021 Household Care Survey, in the Philippines women spent 13 hours a day on unpaid care work compared to only 8 hours for men. Oxfam Pilipinas is recognizing and encouraging the men who step up and respond to the call for equality in doing unpaid care work with their partners, via the launch of the #FlexYourHouseband Challenge.¹¹³</p>
		<p>There are opportunities for governments to conduct surveys to measure gender norms and biases. Japan’s Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office conducted a survey on unconscious gender bias in 2022. The survey also evaluated the engagement of men at home in the community and found that while 82% of women took childcare leave in the private sector in 2020, only 13% of men took leave.¹¹⁴</p>
		<p>Promote men’s caregiving campaigns such as the MenCare Global Fatherhood Campaign and encourage governments and private employers to sign onto commitments such as the 50/50, which seeks to increase men’s participation in caregiving by 50% starting with 50 minutes of additional care per day.¹¹⁵</p>

D. REWARD



The 4th R “Reward” is typically associated with paid caregiving, as it covers interventions that improve current care jobs and create new, decent care jobs that reflect the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. It also advocates for the provision of comprehensive social protections, worker trainings, and professionalization of care work.¹¹⁶ However, there is a clear connection between rewarding paid carers and supporting unpaid carers. Increasing the quantity and quality of paid positions redistributes the unpaid care burden. Moreover, professional trainings and certifications to family carers can provide a pathway and career opportunity, integrating unpaid carers into formal healthcare systems and enhancing the image of caregiving.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Care jobs or employment in the care sector has historically been underpaid and undervalued, which decreases the uptake of care jobs.</p>	<p>Implement public works programs to train and compensate paid carers.</p> <p>Invest in the non-family care workforce, and their working conditions and compensation, to encourage uptake of quality care positions.</p>	<p>There is a strong employment generation case for investing in integrated care policy packages. Global estimates suggest that investing in the care policy package would generate 299 million jobs by 2035: 96 million direct jobs in childcare, 136 million direct jobs in long-term care, and 67 million indirect jobs in non-care sectors. There is also a strong gender equality case for investment. Integrated care policies would boost the employment rate of women, as 234 million jobs will go to women.¹¹⁷</p>
		<p>In 2022, the United States made an investment in the community health workforce in awarding USD225 million in American Rescue Plan funds to train over 13,000 Community Health Workers.¹¹⁸</p>
		<p>Human rights and employment cases won by disabled people and families in Aotearoa New Zealand over several decades have led to policies to pay family carers on the same basis as other care workers for home and community support hours allocated by the state. Such policies are in nascent stages, but a growing number of family carers in New Zealand are being paid for their work ranging from a few hours to 40+ hours a week.¹¹⁹</p>

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>There is a persistent and significant gender pay gap in the health and care sector, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Once age, education, occupational category, and other such factors are considered, globally women face a 24 percentage point pay gap compared to men across the health and care sector.¹²⁰</p>	<p>Consider adopting or implementing equal pay laws and regulations in compliance with ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100).¹²¹</p>	<p>In 2020, New Zealand passed the Equal Pay Amendment Bill that mandates that women and men are paid equally for work that’s different but has equal value, including in chronically underpaid female-dominated industries.¹²²</p>
		<p>In Japan, the Act on the Promotion of Women’s Active Engagement in Professional Life requires more companies to formulate action plans aimed at promoting women’s participation and advancement in the workplace. In April 2022, small and medium-sized companies were included.¹²³</p>
		<p>Economies can follow the ILO, UN Women, and OECD’s Vision for the Equal Pay International Coalition (Epic) to Contribute to the Achievement of SDG Target 8.5 Focusing on Equal Pay Between Women and Men for Work of Equal Value.¹²⁴</p>
	<p>Consider implementing intrinsic rewards that hold governments and the private sector accountable. Such measures can be pursued by non-profit and for-profit organizations.</p>	<p>In Australia, the Workplace Gender Equality Act requires employers outside of the public sector with 100+ employees to disclose their “Gender Equality Indicators.”¹²⁵</p>
<p>In the United States, JUST Capital ranks companies on the basis of fair and equitable wages among many other indicators.</p>		
<p>Professional and educational pathways for health care and long-term care are not always compatible with family caregiving.</p>	<p>Subsidize carers’ education and training in the health as well as childcare and long-term care sectors.</p>	<p>In Chinese Taipei, to encourage more people to be nursing aides, the Ministry of Labor subsidizes local governments to organize training courses for carers providing long-term care (including nursing aides, resident care attendants, etc.), and people who attend the training can receive a subsidy of 80%-100% of the training fee.¹²⁶</p>
<p>Poor working conditions decrease uptake and retention of health and long-term care jobs.</p>	<p>Address poor working conditions and implement workplace protections.</p>	<p>In Australia, a nursing home developed a new management model, which aims to provide long-term workers with an opportunity to control their work-life balance, thereby reducing burn-out. The Adards management model includes principles such as weekly schedules shorter than 40 hours and shifts no longer than 8 hours has reduced turnover rates among workers.¹²⁷</p>

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Although care work underpins the global economy, most workers employed in the care sector do not earn a living wage. Below-average wages in the care sector discourage uptake of care work, thereby increasing the burden on unpaid carers.</p>	<p>Include care workers in labor laws and ensure that workers earn a living wage.</p>	<p>Chinese Taipei stipulates a specific minimum wage for home aides (TWD32,000/month or TWD200/hr), which is higher than the minimum wage (TWD26,400/month or TWD176/hr). Time spent on traveling between different households is counted for wages.¹²⁸</p>
		<p>In New Zealand, the long-term care sector achieved a new wage structure through a pay equity settlement when unions lodged a claim with the Employment Relations Authority, maintaining that there was systemic undervaluation of care and support work because it was mainly carried out by women. The Ministry of Health started to implement new wage rates, which increased the pay scale in the sector in 2017, leading to a rise of between 15% and 50% in hourly wages.¹²⁹</p>
		<p>In Republic of Korea, the Policy Rule for Long Term Care Insurance Reimbursement Schedule legally requires care facilities to meet the minimum ratio of labor costs.¹³⁰</p>
		<p>The United States extended the scope of federal minimum wage coverage to domestic workers in 2013.¹³¹</p>

E. REPRESENT



The global community has accelerated efforts to raise awareness of the intersections between care and gender, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. In 2022, the Group of Seven (G7) launched the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII).¹³² Advancing gender equality and equity is a priority pillar of the PGII, and G7 leaders have announced projects that invest in care infrastructure to advance women’s economic participation.

Similarly, at the economy level, governments have released gender strategies that recognize care as fundamental to economic security. For example, in 2023 the United States Government launched the United States Strategy on Global Women’s Economic Security, of which advancing care infrastructure and valuing domestic work is a key priority.¹³³

International pledges and commitments to care are a step in the right direction, but without creating platforms and mechanisms for carers to voice their needs and speak to the current reality of caregiving, the impact of such partnerships and investments will be diminished.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>There is a history of undervaluing care work.</p>	<p>Protect collective bargaining rights for care workers and generate social dialogue on gender and labor rights.^m</p>	<p>In Australia, unions won a 15% pay raise for aged care workers after the Fair Work Commission (FWC)ⁿ accepted evidence that the sector’s employees have been historically underpaid. The FWC acknowledged a history of undervaluing feminized sectors, which includes aged care work, and have signaled that the 15% is only a first step.</p> <p>In order to fund the 15% raise over four years, the Australian Government is investing AUD11.3 billion. It is projected that this investment will impact around 250,000 frontline workers across the economy.¹³⁴</p>

^m Social dialogue is defined by the ILO to include all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.

ⁿ The Australian Government’s recent Secure Jobs, Better Pay reforms established new FWC Expert Panels for Pay Equity and the Care and Community Sector. This will help ensure the FWC has the expertise to appropriately address gender-based undervaluation and help improve pay and conditions in low paid, feminized workforce.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>Migrant workers constitute a large percentage of care workers, but they are often excluded from social protections and face discrimination in their work environments.</p>	<p>Promote bilateral agreements between economies that incorporate ILO standards for migrant workers and promote fair recruitment. Encourage efforts to increase migrants' awareness of, and ability to advocate for, their rights.</p>	<p>In order to enhance the protection of migrant domestic workers, some economies, including Hong Kong, China and Malaysia, have adopted standard employment contracts and entered into bilateral agreements with economies of origin that align with Domestic Workers Recommendation.¹³⁵</p>
		<p>In 2004, the United States Department of Labor established partnerships between foreign consulates in the United States and Department of Labor (DOL) enforcement agencies through its Consular Partnership Program (CPP). The CPP enables migrant workers to know their rights and receive assistance in exercising them through confidential complaint processes. The partners collaborate to ensure workers are protected from retaliation and receive back wages owed to them, even after workers have returned to their home economy. The CPP also promotes awareness campaigns for employers on their obligations under U.S. labor laws. Consulates offer a safe, trusted place for workers to go for help, and can locate migrants living and working in the United States more easily than DOL.¹³⁶</p>

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>When public authorities fail to consult unpaid carers when developing care-relevant policies, the likelihood of these policies to have negligible, or adverse effects increases.</p>	<p>Collect quantitative and qualitative data on the effects of policies related to caregiving.</p>	<p>The ILO documents how many benefit from policy measures on care. For example, the ILO has found that only 1 in 10 potential mothers worldwide are employed in places where there is a statutory right to a safe and healthy work environment, and only 2 in 10 potential parents globally live in economies where statutory entitlements to publicly organized childcare services exist.¹³⁷</p>
	<p>Consult with organizations that represent carers and use an intersectional approach when developing comprehensive care systems.</p>	<p>The comprehensive economy-wide care system in Mexico incorporated recommendations from civil society and from carers themselves.¹³⁸</p>
	<p>Ensure that measures to support carers and care recipients (e.g., hospital visitation rules, leave policies, etc.) take into account the existence of chosen families.^{o,139}</p>	<p>LGBTQI+ older adults are four times less likely to have children and twice as likely to be single as their non-LGBTQI+ peers.¹⁴⁰ As such, legal recognition of families of choice is critical to ensuring that a dependent receives care from the carer of their choice. In the United States, the CARE Act requires that hospitals ask patients to designate a carer at the time of their admission. The chosen carer does not need to be a biological relation.¹⁴¹</p>

^o Chosen families are defined as self-fostered social support bonds that provide interpersonal stability, particularly when relationships with families of origin are strained or absent.

F. REFRAME



The concept of reframing^P caregiving is twofold. First, it involves educating decision-makers on the value of all care work and the benefits of financing holistic care policies, services, and infrastructure for both well-being and as strategic economic investments. It also involves changing the public’s mindset regarding gender roles, the constraints and impacts they pose related to caregiving, and the possibilities for alternative care arrangements.

There is also a need for education around specific needs and rights of the most vulnerable care workers, particularly migrant and domestic workers, and LGBTQI+ specific care needs and rights. These efforts must ensure that care policy design aligns with carers’ lived realities.

Efforts to value caregiving, pay living wages to people working in the care field, address the gender wage gap, launch educational campaigns about the value of caregiving, and provide labor protections for caregivers, all help change the public’s mindset about the value of caregiving. A combination of policy levers must be implemented to increase support for unpaid caregiving, shift cultural norms about the value of caregiving, and ensure everyone benefits from a more equitable society.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>There is minimal data on the intergenerational transmission of care work as well as the unpaid care gap.</p>	<p>Build on existing data and put forth new data and studies, such as the International Men & Gender Equality Survey, while deploying social messaging that promotes an understanding of patterns of care work at home.</p>	<p>In Japan, the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry conducts the Young Carers Survey to quantify the number of school-aged children responsible for family caregiving.¹⁴²</p>
	<p>Reframe care such that it is not strictly valued in economic terms. Quantifying the economic value of care is necessary but not sufficient to demonstrate caregiving’s impact on quality of life.¹⁴³</p>	<p>Metrics such as the UN Human Development Index emphasize the value of care beyond monetary estimates of a nonmarket activity. For example, the UN Human Development report argues that caregiving has an integral role in human development, including but not limited to strengthening family bonds and improving the mental well-being of care recipients.¹⁴⁴</p>

^P The Expert Advisory Group put forward a sixth “R” during the first APEC Embracing Carers Workshop in November 2022. The policy suggestions included in this section are only a starting point, and Section V recognizes opportunities for future reports and projects to further expound on the needs to consider a more inclusive definition of carer, as well as their unique needs.

Issue	Approaches	Examples
<p>There is an opportunity to use school settings as an entry point to shift gender norms from an early age, but without concrete actions and pathways, school systems often do not change norms to the extent possible.</p>	<p>Mainstream gender-transformative content into curriculum and make it age-appropriate starting from primary school all the way to secondary school.</p>	<p>UNICEF has developed a gender-equitable early childhood education curriculum and policy framework that aim to shift gender norms.¹⁴⁵</p>
	<p>It is critical that children from different socioeconomic backgrounds, migrant families, conflict-affected families and more should have content that is reflective of their realities. This means investing in data collection prior to integrating content into the curriculum so needs of the communities can be better understood.</p>	<p>In Chinese Taipei, the Ministry of Education integrated the ideas of equal distribution and co-responsibility of unpaid care and domestic work between men and women into the curriculum and textbook for elementary school and junior high students. The central government also encourages local governments to include the equal distribution of domestic work into their campaigns by setting this item as a criterion in local government evaluation.¹⁴⁶</p>
<p>Women do not hold equal positions of power in public and private sectors, which decreases the prioritizing of caregiving in policymaking.</p>	<p>Enhance women’s leadership in the public and private sectors, while promoting gender equity and caregiving among all leaders.</p>	<p>Former President of Chile Michelle Bachelet campaigned on a platform of women’s empowerment and successfully increased access to services and social protections during her two terms. For example, President Bachelet established <i>Chile Crece Contigo</i>, a universal platform supporting the development of children aged five and under through incorporation of education, health, and social services.¹⁴⁷</p>
	<p>At the same time, encourage all leaders to support policies that promote the economic participation and well-being of women, and all vulnerable populations who are all too often left behind.</p>	<p>In the United States in April 2023, an Executive Order was signed that includes more than 50 directives to nearly every cabinet-level agency to expand access to affordable, high-quality care, and provide support for care workers and family caregivers.¹⁴⁸</p>
<p>Caregiving is viewed as women’s work.</p>	<p>Promote job protection for caregiving and publicly fund paid family and medical leave that provides paid time for personal medical leave, caregiving for a loved one, and parental leave for all workers.</p>	<p>In the United States, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. Additionally, 13 states and the District of Columbia have laws that create paid family and medical leave programs for eligible workers.^{149, 150}</p>

V. Recognizing All Forms of Care and the Needs and Rights of the Most Vulnerable Carers

The APEC Embracing Carers Policy Toolkit seeks to provide a foundational framework for policymakers to choose policies for supporting unpaid carers that respond to economy-specific context. Moreover, in addition to economy-specific considerations, it is important for policymakers to prioritize overlooked forms of care and reach the most vulnerable carers.

It is the hope of APEC Embracing Carers that this Toolkit will serve as a critical first step to recognizing and supporting the care economy in its entirety. Recognizing the multitude of intersectional carer identities – including but not limited to Indigenous carers, migrant and domestic workers, and LGBTQI+ carers – this section highlights the additional work required to lift up all carers by focusing on one care experience that is traditionally overlooked: disability care.

Disability care is a critical component of the care economy. As many as one in six persons have a disability in the Asia-Pacific region, and yet disability care is consistently underprioritized relative to other types of care such as childcare across all APEC member economies.^{151, 152} As a result, at any given time 10-15% of the population experiences systematic discrimination and bias.¹⁵³

Underrepresentation and discrimination of persons with disabilities is compounded by intersectional identities including but not limited to gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, and migration status. As such, older women with disabilities are particularly susceptible to neglect, and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbate their social and economic exclusion. According to UN Women's Regional Gender Assessments, which aim to identify the pandemic's socioeconomic effects, 79% of women aged 25–59 with disabilities reported lost earnings compared to 68% of working-aged women without disabilities.¹⁵⁴

Addressing the intersection of gender, age, and disability is critical to ensuring full and equal social and economic participation for all. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its principle of Leave No One Behind (LNOB) emphasizes the importance of promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of older women with disabilities, but the impact of such international commitments will be diminished without substantial work at the economy level.



APPENDIX

VI. APPENDIX

A. Acronyms

APEC: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARCH: Access to Respite Care and Help
AUD: Australian dollar
BEA: United States Bureau of Economic Analysis
CAD: Canadian dollar
CCS: Child Care Subsidy
CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CNY: Chinese yuan renminbi
CPP: Consular Partnership Program
CRCB: Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit
DAC: OECD Development Assistance Committee
DFC: U.S. International Development Finance Corporation
DOLE: Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippines
ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education
EPIC: Equal Pay International Coalition
FEPLA: Federal Employee Paid Leave Act
FMLA: Family and Medical Leave Act
FWC: Australian Fair Work Commission
G7: Group of Seven
HRDWG: APEC Human Resources Development Working Group
ILO: International Labour Organization
IMAGES: International Men and Gender Equality Survey
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ISCO: Indonesia Street Children Organization
KRW: Korean won
LGBTQI+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex
LMIE: Lower-middle income economy
LNOB: Leave No One Behind Initiative
MS: Multiple sclerosis
MXN: Mexican peso
MYR: Malaysian ringgit
NIS: National Institute of Statistics
NTUS: National Time Use Survey
ODA: Official Development Assistance

(Acronyms continued)

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PGII: Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Impact

PHP: Philippine peso

PSU: APEC Policy Support Unit

PWFA: Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

RSH: Social Registry of Households

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

SEDESOL: Ministry of Social Development

SOGIESC: Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics

TUPAD: Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers

TWD: New Taiwan dollar

UN: United Nations

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

USD: United States dollar

WE-Care: Women's Economic Empowerment and Care

WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

B. Resources

Time-Use Data

- [Measuring Time Use: An Assessment of Issues and Challenges in Conducting Time-Use Surveys with Special Emphasis on Developing Countries](#) – UN Women
- [OECD Time spent in paid and unpaid work](#) – OECD
- [Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Counting the Costs](#) – APEC

Gender Equality and the Care Gender Gap

- [Closing the Gender Gap](#) – IMF
- [Global Gender Gap Report 2022](#) – World Economic Forum
- [How to assess fiscal stimulus packages from a gender equality perspective](#) – ILO, UN Women
- [International Men & Gender Equality Survey](#) – Equipundo, UNFPA
- [Long-Term Care for Older People. A New Global Gender Priority](#) – UN Women
- [The Levers of Change Gender Equality Attitudes Study 2022](#) – UN Women
- [Vision for the Equal Pay International Coalition \(Epic\) to Contribute to the Achievement of SDG Target 8.5 Focusing on Equal Pay Between Women and Men for Work of Equal Value](#) – ILO, UN Women and OECD

Care and Climate Change

- [Caring in a changing climate: Centering care work in climate action](#) – Oxfam
- [Why climate change matters for women](#) – UN Women

Care and COVID-19

- [Assessing the gendered employment impacts of COVID-19 and supporting a gender-responsive recovery](#) – UN Women, ILO 2021
- [COVID-19 and the unpaid care economy in Asia and the Pacific](#) – UNESCAP
- [Family-Friendly Policies and Other Good Workplace Practices in the Context of COVID-19: Key Steps Employers Can Take](#) – ILO, UNICEF, UN Women
- [Family-Friendly Policies for Workers in the Informal Economy](#) – ILO, UNICEF, WIEGO
- [Gender and COVID-19](#) – UN Women
- [Surveys show that COVID-19 has gendered effects in Asia and the Pacific](#) – UN Women
- [The gender pay gap in the health and care sector: a global analysis in the time of COVID-19](#) – ILO, WHO
- [Whose time to care: Unpaid care and domestic work during COVID-19](#) – UN Women

Caregiving and Paid Leave

- [C183- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 \(No. 183\) \(ilo.org\)](#) – ILO
- [Care at work: Investing in care leave and services for a more gender equal world of work](#) – ILO
- [Maternity, Paternity at Work](#) – ILO

Investing in Care Services and Workers

- [Are Governments investing in caring and just economies?](#) – ILO, UN Women
- [A guide to public investments in the care economy: Policy support tool for estimating care deficits, investment costs, and economic returns](#) – ILO, UN Women
- [Childcare Incentive Fund](#) – World Bank
- [ILO Global Care Policy Portal](#) – ILO
- [New care entrepreneurship programme to boost women's economic empowerment in the Asia-Pacific](#) – UN Women
- [Promoting decent employment for women through inclusive growth policies and investments in care](#) – ILO, UN Women
- [Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work](#) – ILO
- [Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) – UN
- [Who Cares? Attracting and Retaining Care Workers for the Elderly](#) – OECD

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