

Making Care Visible

Women's Unpaid Care Work in Ethiopia



Recognize

Reduce

Redistribute

Unpaid Care Work

Care is around us everywhere - from the mother who takes care of her children, to the wife who cooks her family's meals, the eldest daughter who helps with housework, and the widow who works in the community kitchen.

In order to understand unpaid care work and why it remains invisible we need to question how we currently view and measure the economy and who, aside from women and girls, is responsible for unpaid care work

Defining unpaid care work

“The term ‘unpaid’ differentiates this care from paid care provided by employees in the public and NGO sectors and employees and self-employed persons in the private sector.

The word ‘care’ indicates that the services provided nurture other people.

The word ‘work’ indicates that these activities are costly in time and energy and are undertaken as obligations (contractual or social).”

Unpaid care is more difficult to do in the context of poverty as basic amenities, and access to public services are lacking. Further, the income needed to purchase goods and services to undertake care work may not be available. Women must then rely on their own labour to provide the care that is required. Many women living in poverty carry the dual responsibilities for both unpaid care work and earning an income or subsistence farming. Women’s responsibility for care compromise their access to education, public participation, decent work and leisure. It contributes to persistent gender inequalities

What can we do about it?

We can take three important measures: apply the three Rs as follows

Recognition: recognizing means the work done by (mainly) women is “seen” and acknowledged. It also means that it is recognized as being “work” and “production”.

Reduction: of unpaid care work means that the burden is reduced for individual women. This can happen through the service being provided in a different way. For example, women’s childcare responsibility would be reduced if accessible and affordable child care services and affordable home appliances that take less time and effort are provided.

Redistribution: of unpaid care work means that the overall amount of unpaid care work remains the same, but it is more shared among different people in the household by men.

***It Starts from you;
Play your role!***