

Valuing Unpaid Care and Domestic Work
Country case study – Philippines



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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
ILO	International Labour Organization
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NSCB	National Statistical Coordination Board
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UCDW	Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

All \$ references are United States dollars.

1. Introduction

The Philippines ranks 17th in the world in terms of reducing its gender gap on various economic, political and social measures (WEF, 2021). Despite constraints on fiscal resources and developmental challenges, the Philippines has managed to close its gender gaps in educational attainment, health and survival as well as women's representation in senior managerial, professional and technical roles (WEF, 2021).

This progress, however, is undercut by the female labour force participation rate, which stands at 47.6 per cent, compared with 74.8 per cent for men (ASEAN Secretariat, 2020b). The demands of unpaid care work and home production account for more of women's time – constraining their participation in the paid market economy (ESCAP, 2021a; Abrigo and Francisco-Abrigo, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified the unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) responsibilities of women, caused by the school closures, mobility restrictions and difficulties in food and water provisioning (UN Women, 2020).

UCDW has been an area of particular concern for the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) who have conducted a range of research into the area both independently and in collaboration with the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These efforts dovetailed into the ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy and the commission of country-level case studies on Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines and represents the commitment of both ESCAP and ASEAN to put care at the centre of public policy in recovery from the pandemic efforts (ASEAN, 2021).

This report documents Philippines progress in addressing women's UCDW within the larger legislative, institutional and political economy context. It tracks the evolution of the UCDW agenda within national policies and the actions of women's machineries, such as the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW). Using the conceptual framework promoted in ESCAP's regional and subregional reports on the unpaid care economy (ESCAP, 2021a and 2021b), this case study highlights promising practices and forthcoming initiatives under four care policy categories – care infrastructure, care-related social protections, care services and employment-related care policies. The aim is to strengthen the case for recognizing, valuing and redistributing UCDW in a manner that enables women to participate in public life on more favourable terms.

The advance of women's economic, social and political participation by acknowledging and addressing their care work ties into Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality, especially target 5.4 that seeks to “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 nationally appropriate”.¹ As the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, care is an issue that cuts across all 17 SDGs. Whether it is the goal of no poverty (SDG 1), good health and well-being (SDG 3), access to education (SDG 4), decent work (SDG 8) or reducing inequalities (SDG 10), addressing the gendered and unequal organization of care work is one of the necessary elements in encouraging women's economic participation.

This report begins with a macroeconomic and socio-political overview of the country, outlining legislative frameworks, women's machineries and formal and informal institutional mechanisms that influence the policy agenda of unpaid care. Next, the nature of women's work in the Philippines, its gendered effects and its policies, programmes and initiatives to address women's differentiated care needs are discussed. Finally, challenges and resistances to incorporating care into the policy agenda are addressed to offer recommendations aimed at buttressing ongoing efforts of policymakers and civil society actors in the country. In addition

¹ See [Goal 5: Gender Equality, The Global Goals](#).

to examples of what the national and local government units are doing, promising regional and global practices are showcased suitably.

2. Macro socioeconomic–political context

An archipelagic country, the Philippines is rich in geographical and cultural diversity. It has one of the most dynamic economies within the East Asia and Pacific region, sustaining an average annual growth rate of 6.4 per cent from 2010 to 2019 (World Bank, 2020). This has enabled it to reduce its poverty rate from 26 per cent in 2015 to 16.7 per cent in 2018 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2020a) and offer a high level of human development to its people (UNDP, 2020). At the same time, rising wealth inequalities and high unemployment persist (Nordea, 2020). Around 30 per cent of the country's income resides with the richest 10 per cent, while only 7.5 per cent of the income is with the poorest 20 per cent (ibid.). There are also wide regional disparities in economic development (ibid.).

The Philippine Development Plan (2017–2022) endorses a culture- and gender-sensitive approach in public service. A Ten-Point Socioeconomic Agenda has been adopted to contend with generational poverty by improving living standards and sustaining high economic growth calling for investments in human capital development and social protection programmes (ibid.). Much of this progress is now threatened by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. The Philippines has been particularly hard-hit despite implementing one of the longest and strictest lockdowns in the world. Although the pandemic slowed growth and led to a contraction of the economy, the Philippines seems set to rebound its earlier trajectory of development. Gender equality must be incorporated into these rebuilding efforts.



Woman medical technologist in the Philippines

Photo ©

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/unwomenasiapacific/49826160256/>

The Philippines has narrowed as much as 78.4 per cent of the gender gap in areas of education, health, longevity and representation of women in senior managerial positions. The country has had a woman as Head of State for more than 15 of the past 50 years and women hold 28 per cent of seats in Congress. Moreover, 43.5 per cent of third-level positions in government were occupied by women in 2017. Despite these gains, broader gaps in women's labour force participation, income and wages persist. On average, there is a 22 per cent gap in wages, a 31 per cent gap in income and a 36.2 per cent gap in political empowerment (WEF, 2021; Government of Philippines, 2017).

The pace and effectiveness of change depends on the extent to which the institutional climate supports progressive policy. The next sections outline both the formal and informal institutional contexts for gender mainstreaming efforts in the Philippines.

Occupational segregation of women can be noted from the predominance of women workers (up 76 per cent of workers) in the services sector relative to men (at 45 per cent) and only 10 per cent in manufacturing, relative to 25 per cent for men (ILO, Investing in Women and Australian Aid, 2020).

Women are also overrepresented in care work. Data points to the prevalence of a sociocultural norm that seems to promote a gendered division of labour that naturalizes care as women's work. A recent study which provides sex-disaggregated estimates of National Transfer Accounts and National Time Transfer Accounts for the Philippines found that men spend a larger portion of their time on paid market work while women devote equal or more of their time on unpaid work at home. (Abrigo and Francisco-Abrigo, 2019). The researchers noted that by age 15, girls spend an average of nine hours of their time every week on housework, compared to an average of four hours by boys indicating that these disparities in care work begin early.

However, change in mindsets can be detected. A Social Norms, Attitudes and Practices survey conducted among urban millennials in the Philippines in May 2020 found that 57 per cent of the current generation share childcare, compared with 30 per cent of the previous generation and, promisingly for the future, 92 per cent of the future generation women reported being inclined to share childcare with men. This figure was 82 per cent among future generation men, which bodes well for shifting gender norms around childcare (Investing in Women, 2020). Norms around breadwinning have been slower to change, with 36 per cent sharing the load equally now and 51 per cent of men and 81 per cent of women of the future generation expressing a willingness to share.

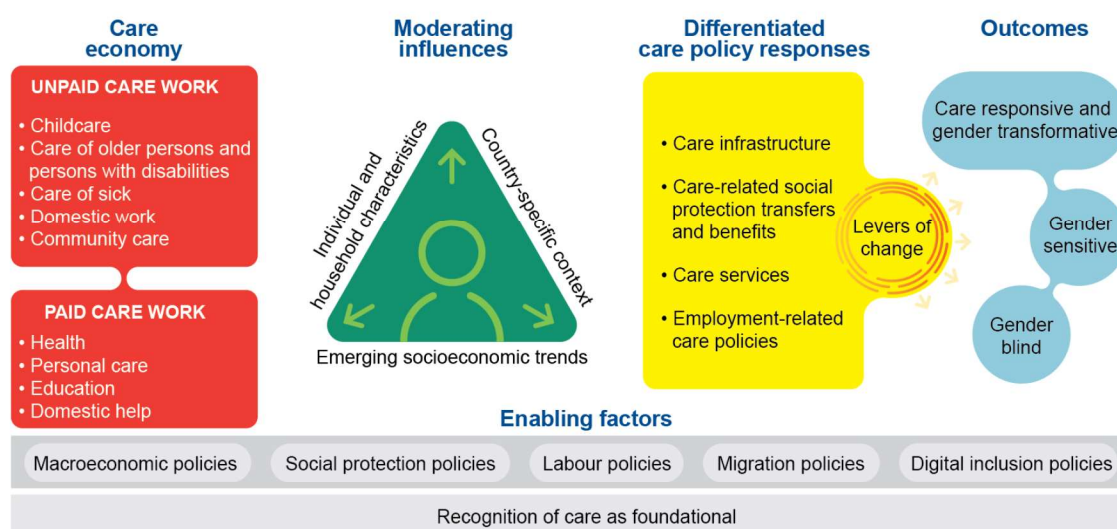
Social media campaigns have been used to shift mindsets, encouraging men to share in housework, thus seeking to normalize women's economic role. Evaluations shows that participation in social norm interventions incentivized men to increase hours spent on care, compared with men who were not involved in the social norms activities (Oxfam, 2021).

Growth in the productive market economy has been made possible by the unpaid and underpaid work of caregivers, who are largely women and girls (Enríquez, 2018). Such unequal distribution is found to lead to time and income poverty for women (Zacharias, 2017) and negatively impacts on their health and well-being (Chopra and Zambelli, 2017). Women's participation in paid work can serve to intensify workloads rather than increase autonomy or empowerment (Pearson, 2004). Underinvestment in the public provision of care infrastructure leads to an overemphasis on households filling the gap to care for dependants.. This has been noted in the literature as "gendered familialism" (Palriwala and Neetha, 2009). Therefore, in addition to creating decent work opportunities in paid work, women require structural investments in childcare and infrastructures (Chopra, Nazneen and Krishnan, 2019).

To assess the effectiveness of policy responses to women's differentiated care needs, the recent ESCAP research promotes a conceptual framework represented in Figure 1. The time, extent, quality and outcomes of care provision are mediated by many factors, such as individual household characteristics, country-specific contexts and emerging socioeconomic trends.

Intersectional identities across multiple axes, such as geographical location, social class, ethnicity and disabilities, can exacerbate women's marginalization in policy responses. The extent to which policy responses consider women's differentiated care needs influences a country's ability to create care-responsive and gender-transformative outcomes.

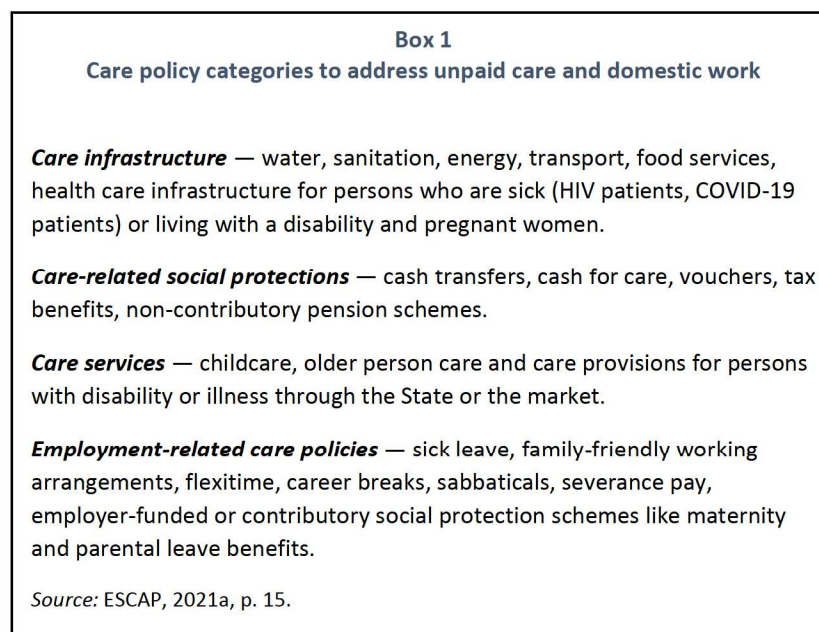
Figure 1: Conceptual framework for care-sensitive and gender-differentiated policies



Source: Adapted from ESCAP, 2021a, p. 14.

The framework identifies four care policy categories (Box 1) as well as six levers of change (Figure 2) that enable policy implementation and real-world transformation. The recognition that care is foundational to human life forms the bedrock, along with an enabling legislative and policy environment in the labour market, social protection, migration, digital inclusion and the macroeconomy.

The care policy framework proposed here gives policymakers the foundations for valuing and supporting the unpaid care economy.



The rest of this section highlights positive steps taken by the Philippines in recognizing, valuing and redistributing women's UCDW. These policy measures signal the Philippine Government's commitment to the care economy, but also underscores policy gaps that still need addressed. Shifting from discourse to action requires putting care firmly on the policy implementation agenda.

3.1 Women's time use in unpaid care and domestic work

Keeping in line with the Beijing Platform for Action mandates on recognizing the UCDW performed by women, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) of the Philippines (now the Philippine Statistics Authority) conducted studies which endeavoured to put a monetary value on women's unpaid work. They concluded that UCDW contributes up to 37 per cent of GDP. This early work by the NSCB led to the design of a pilot time-use survey conducted in 1999–2000.

Time-use surveys are an established methodology for capturing data on women's unpaid work, especially care work. This was the objective of the pilot time-use survey carried out by the NSCB in collaboration with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and the National Statistics Office. A small-scale survey, covering 240 households in Batangas Province and Quezon City it aimed to: (i) generate information on the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of household members aged 10 years and older; (ii) provide information on their activity patterns and generate qualitative and quantitative data needed in the estimation of the value of unpaid work; and (iii) identify factors that influence a person's choice of time use among population subgroups.

The pilot was intended to trial the survey and to develop a database to use to guide future time-use surveys for national use. The study, however, revealed several issues; the questionnaire was deemed to be lengthy and tedious, difficult and time-consuming, and an additional increase in workload, all of which contributed to the survey's prohibitively high cost. Cabegin and Gaddi (2019) reported that the 2000 time-use survey cost 700,000 pesos for 240 households. If expanded to a national survey sample, the estimated cost would be 1.1 billion pesos for four rounds in a year. As a result, the national use time-survey remained in the proposal stage.

In April 2019, the Philippine Statistics Authority added a section to the Labour Force Survey to collect time-use data using stylized questions for own-use production work and unpaid housework. It collected information from household members aged 5 years and older for time spent doing such activities over the previous week (Cabegin and Gaddi, 2019). Without accurate measurement of the full range of activities and time spent on UCDW, it is often made "invisible", resulting in policy focus shifting to economic growth and market work without considering UCDW's significance in the economy.

Using the 2000 time-use survey data, Abrigo and Francisco-Abrigo (2019) estimated that women in their mid-30s spend on average 24 hours per week on housework alone, compared to men who spend just 8 hours per week. Additionally, women were found to spend more time on childcare and elder care than men. Adding in their market work means women end up working more hours than men (Abrigo and Francisco-Abrigo, 2019, pp. 7–8). Yet, despite having greater workloads and longer workdays, women continue to have less financial resources, as measured by income and asset ownership.

To address the growing need for evidence on UCDW, Oxfam Philippines partnered with the PCW, UN Women, WeEmpowerAsia and others to undertake a **National Household Care Survey** as part of their WE-Care programme. A baseline survey was first conducted in 2016 and expanded in 2017 (Rost and Koissy-Kpein, 2018). Then a more in-depth survey conducted across more locations was completed in early 2021 (see box 5). The studies found that women continued to spend about the same amount of time providing care throughout the years, with data revealing that in 2021, they provided care for 13 hours per day as opposed to 12 hours per day in 2017. What had shifted is the number of hours worked by men, which has increased, from 5.4 in 2017 to 8 hours in 2021. This is a significant change, perhaps brought on by the lockdowns and other containment measures during the pandemic. Even if temporary, this inspires hope for change.

The larger sample size and wider coverage in the 2021 survey make the findings more robust and generalizable for the Philippines.

By inquiring about the use of labour-saving equipment and care infrastructure, the 2021 survey draws conclusions on the drudgery and difficulty of household work, especially during the pandemic. An important focus of the survey is on social norms change. It attempts to capture positive deviance, for example, more men engaging in household work including water collection and cooking.

The pandemic has demonstrated an opportunity to increase women's economic participation as a result of greater availability of home-based work options. Women have become providers for some families, while men who lost their employment have taken on more household chores and care work. Thus, flexible work arrangements that allow for the combination of paid work with care responsibilities present an area of opportunity for policymakers.

The data from the 2021 National Household Care Survey do not supplant but rather underscore the need for an official national time-use survey to continue the work piloted in 2000.

The next section examines the nature of policy responses adopted across the four care policy categories presented in this report.

3.2 Care policy responses

While the previous section established the need for data and evidence on the nature and extent of women's UCDW, this section elucidates the various policy responses undertaken by the Government..

3.2.1 Care infrastructure

The provision of care infrastructure spans micro infrastructure that addresses household care tasks as well as social care infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, transport and food provisioning.

Installation of water pumps, solar energy, bridges that enable safe access to schools, water and sanitation facilities to support health and well-being of communities, “market on wheels” for easy access to goods and investment in public parks for children and reproductive health care services are some of the care-related infrastructure initiatives taken by the Government. The Rice Research Institute has developed labour- and energy-saving devices for cleaning rice, and the Philippine Centre for Postharvest Development and Mechanization has developed care-sensitive equipment that is easier for use by women.. As many as nine projects launched by the Centre since onset of the pandemic meet the Harmonized Gender and Development guidelines.² These are examples of care-sensitive and gender-responsive care policy measures.

3.2.2 Care-related social protections

Noteworthy features of the social protection system in the Philippines are the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps), a flagship national social assistance programme; the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction; and the more recent Social Security Act of 2018 (Republic Act No. 11199).

The national 4Ps is a conditional cash transfer programme that provides financial assistance to families in poverty in exchange for compliance with certain health, education and family welfare expectations, especially those with children aged up to 18 years.³ It represents the Government's national poverty reduction strategy. One of the conditionalities include a Family

² See [PHilMech Gender and Development](#).

³ See [Pantawid Pamilya](#), [dswd.gov.ph](#).

Development session that discusses relationships between husbands and wives, women's rights and home management, among others. The programme now requires both fathers and mothers to attend these sessions and has established a target of a minimum 40 per cent involvement of fathers. This is an example of how care-related social protections can bring about a norm change as well as redistribute the responsibility of care.

The Social Security System helps family members who have retired, are elderly, or are reliant on others due to a disability or physical infirmity to live with dignity. Contributory schemes for social benefits include the Government Service Insurance System for public sector employees and the Social Security System for private sector workers. The Social Security Act of 2018 replaces the previous Act of 1997 and makes provision for unemployment or involuntary separation benefits for the first time. It endeavours to be a law that truly ensures universal, equitable and viable social security for Filipino workers in all sectors.⁴

3.2.3 Care services

Given the Philippines' youthful composition, the care of children can be the biggest constraint on women's time. As early as 1990, Republic Act No. 6972 made provision for the establishment of day-care centres in every *barangay*, or village, to ensure the holistic development of children.⁵ One of the provisions of this law under section 3b is the "care of children of working mothers during the day and, where feasible, care for children up to 6 years of age when the mother is working at night". Executive Order No. 340, issued in 1997, directed all national government agencies and corporations to have day-care services on their premises for children (younger than 5 years) of their employees. Onsite workplace creches for families who lack familial or paid care support are crucial in supporting women's continuity of employment.

The Early Childhood Care and Development Act mandates comprehensive, integrative and sustainable childcare services via a day-care programme, parent effectiveness services, child-minding centres, family day-care or home-based care and parent-child development programmes. These are supported by the local government units through the construction of basic infrastructure, provision of facilities, materials and equipment and compensation for the service providers.

Despite this, families continue to rely on relatives to look after their children. Rich and middle-class families often hire domestic helpers or nannies to assist in childcare, while poor households do not have the same level of accessible or quality childcare. This deficit has been further heightened by the shutting of the centres due to COVID-19 restrictions. An added challenge in the implementation of childcare services is the conflation of education outcomes with care outcomes which has led to greater emphasis being placed on high-quality education resulting in the neglect of care which is so crucial for young children.

Apart from childcare, the Department of Social Welfare Development is also responsible for the care of the elderly and other vulnerable populations. The Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens (2011–2016) promoted active ageing and gender-responsive community-based approaches to enhance senior engagement in family and community decision-making. The plan also promoted the financial independence and community-based health care services for senior citizens (HelpAge Asia, 2021). The Philippines fastest growing demographic is older persons, who, currently make up 8.5 per cent of the total population. This is predicted to nearly double, to 16.5 per cent, by 2050 (HelpAge Asia, 2021). More older people are expected to live in poverty, and with women's longevity exceeding that of men, the welfare of older women is a growing policy priority.

⁴ See www.sss.gov.ph/sss/DownloadContent?fileName=Booklet_SS-ACT-OF-2018_05172019.pdf.

⁵ See www.dilg.gov.ph/PDF_File/issuances/republic_acts/RA_6972.PDF.

3.2.4 Employment-related care policies

The Labour Code sets out the general framework within which employment conditions of workers are regulated. The Philippines offers 105 days of maternity leave, and the Paternity Law (Republic Act No. 8187) of 1996 provides 7 days of paternity leave for male employees in private and government-owned enterprises.

Additionally, the **Expanded Exclusive Breastfeeding in the Workplace Law** (Republic Act No. 10028),⁶ exhorts employers to make a physical safe space for women to breastfeed their children, and workplace day-care provisions are also required, especially in government offices. Another care-related policy under the Magna Carta of Women is the provision of gynaecological leave time for female employees of up to two months with full pay following gynaecological related surgery

What is important to assess among employment-related care policies is the extent to which caring responsibilities of workers are addressed, for example, through flexible work arrangements and payment for sick leave and other extended caregiver leave time.



3. Challenges to furthering the care agenda

Section 3 demonstrates the formal and informal institutional context within which the agenda of UCDW is housed. However, as highlighted, implementation of these laws, the extent of coverage and the quality, affordability and accessibility of care-related provisions and services remains low. Despite a good legislative environment, weak implementation or absence of

provisions due to insufficient budgetary allocations, inadequate infrastructure, lack of human resources, etc. can negate the effects of a strong legal framework.

Implementation gaps and accountability for service provision remains a challenge in the Philippines. Mechanisms are needed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of laws and how they have improved the well-being and rights enjoyment of women. While the Magna Carta allows laws to be reviewed and revamped as per the evolving needs of Filipino women, it is necessary to determine the extent to which these laws have been successfully utilized by citizens.

This points to the second barrier to incorporating the UCDW agenda into policymaking: lack of data. Early efforts in the Philippines to develop a pilot time-use survey point to the recognition of the importance of data-backed policies. In the absence of “hard facts”, it becomes more difficult to get the attention and support of policymakers on the need to invest in UCDW. Policymakers also hold gendered assumptions and beliefs and if not challenged by evidence, gendered notions of care work being natural for women may impede the space for challenging the status quo.

Time-use surveys reveal the number of hours spent on various care activities and when, where and how this work is carried out and in combination with what other activities. Findings can give deeper insights for the design of social protection programmes and the provision of care services. Such findings are also vital for developing holistic work-life balance and labour market interventions. The **underestimation of women’s work** and labour force participation in statistical data (Cabegin and Gaddi, 2019) can be illustrated as follows: housewives and mothers who are not engaged in paid employment or who work intermittently, from home or who work for an association or cooperative are likely to report themselves as full-time housewives. This results in their exclusion from the active labour force.

Moreover, the **particularities of women’s location across intersections** of rural and urban areas or informal and formal economy or having disabilities, makes the measurement of care work and capturing its extent and impacts more challenging.

Another difficulty in gaining the attention of policymakers is the paucity of **champions within the government**. As previously highlighted, women’s political representation in senior ministerial berths remains low in the Philippines. This means women’s limited voices need to be amplified by male colleagues within the establishment. While the Department for Social Welfare and Development is the most responsive on the Gender and Development agenda, the PCW must build liaisons and **partnerships with different government departments and agencies, especially at the local levels**. Care is a cross-cutting theme, so identifying strategic line ministries is key to whole-of-government policymaking. **Resource barriers** pose another significant challenge, especially given the tightening of fiscal space in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the Mandanas Ruling offers a ray of hope, there is an urgent need to equip local officials with the right tools and funds and also progressive and gender-transformative ideas and policy suggestions.

The biggest challenge to recognizing and redistributing women’s UCDW comes from **entrenched socio-cultural norms**. Filipinos are raised to care for their families and those who fail to do so are likely to be termed lazy or irresponsible, especially the wife not fulfilling the traditional duties. An inequitable distribution of maternity leave and paternity leave reinforces the female caregiver stereotype and women’s motherhood roles and identity. Care infrastructure projects are insufficient to bring about real change until the underlying mindsets and attitudes towards housework as women’s work are challenged and altered. Not only is the larger community or the family complicit in perpetuating these stereotypes, often women themselves resist the redistribution of what they see as their care work.

The **archipelagic nation’s geographical makeup** results in a diversity of cultural norms and practices with different levels of male domination and patriarchal values imposed on women’s

roles. This presents difficulties in crafting tailor-made strategies for each region or *barangay* to address the unequal distribution of care work. These complexities must be borne in mind by policymakers when addressing the issue of women's work.

4. Recommendations for action planning

The previous sections of this report trace the evolution of the UCDW agenda and provide a historical and contextual background for the issue in the Philippines. The discussion now turns to the crucial question of what needs to be done to ensure that gains of the past do not stall. This section focuses on policy recommendations specifically for the Philippines to address UCDW.

The conceptual framework outlined in Figure 1 depicts levers of change that must be present to successfully implement a care-sensitive and gender-differentiated policy agenda. The recent ESCAP report (2021b), *Addressing Unpaid Care Work in ASEAN*, fleshes out these levers of change: care- and gender-disaggregated data, adequate financing, gender-responsive budgeting, suitable legal and regulatory frameworks, inclusion of women's voices in decision-making, focus on norm change and an overall whole-of-government approach (Figure 2). These levers are built on a commitment to core normative principles: that care is recognized as foundational; that the State is the main guarantor of rights; that care is a public good benefiting all in society instead of a cost; that collaborations at the local, national, regional and international levels must be promoted; and that each pillar of the “care diamond” (Razavi, 2007) has a role in redistributing care work.

Figure 2: Levers of change to mainstream care policies



Source: ESCAP, 2021b, p. 57.

5.1 Recommendations for levers of change

Using these levers of change as a reference point, the following actionable measures are suggested for deliberation by policymakers in the Philippines.

1. The most pressing need is for sex-, age-, disability- and care-disaggregated data.

Feminists have called the invisibility of women's work in national statistics a political act of knowledge production that devalues both care work and its providers. The Philippines has been successful in integrating some data measurement into the distribution and composition of unpaid care work, however there is still a pressing need for the development of nationally representative survey data to be published to make care visible and valued.

2. Evaluating the effectiveness of laws is especially significant in the context of the Philippines.

This requires a set of review mechanisms to be embedded into the legislative framework, where government departments are held accountable for collecting data on implementation. The Women's Economic Empowerment and Care Ordinances adopted by eight local government units in collaboration with Oxfam signals a positive move in this direction by collecting gender-responsive data in several policy areas (Hall and Aranas, 2020). As the key oversight body for gender and development programmes and laws, the PCW must be supported by all government departments and line agencies in mainstreaming gender into their respective sectors and reporting on the use or uptake of legal and policy measures. Laws must be strengthened through a network of incentives or complaints and grievance redressal mechanisms that reinforce positive behaviour and make an example out of non-compliance. Finally, the PCW should also collaborate with the Philippine Statistics Authority to review definitions of work and methods for data collection and statistical assessment.

The concept of "work" seems to be commonly associated with economic activity that is paid or on a full-time and regular basis, meaning many housewives may not report a diverse range of productive activities they engage in.

3. Policies need financing as much as they need to incorporate a gender and care perspective in their design.

The Philippine Government's commitment to increasing budgets for gender and development is noted in section 3.2. However, unpaid care and domestic work requires a cross-sectional approach across the four care policy categories (figure 1). This may require a dedicated budgetary allocation to care within the Gender and Development framework. Budget plans by all line agencies and ministries can allocate a certain portion to address the UCDW agenda within their sphere of operations.

4. Increased advocacy on unpaid care and domestic work is needed to shift behavioural norms.

Active efforts to build new norms which value care work and normalize its equitable distribution need to be undertaken. Challenging entrenched ideas and beliefs around the gendered division of labour is an essential component of any behaviour-change programme. This is necessary because care infrastructure or care services alone do not automatically reconfigure lopsided gender relations. Women themselves often have internalized gendered assumptions and beliefs. For example, women may resist the use of day-care centres for childcare, deeming this the mother's role. Campaigns targeting both men and women are therefore advisable, along with incorporating this into the educational curriculum at an early age when gender roles are truly socialized. Local government units can be impactful in the implementation of such campaigns by customizing the message to target the unique cultural practices within their regions.

5. The design of targeted policies under each of the four care policy categories must incorporate the voices, perspectives and needs of women.

Women are best placed to articulate their needs and therefore incorporating women's voices through quantitative and qualitative research; through partnerships with development agencies, donors and civil society actors; and by taking an intersectional lens across identities of class, ethnicity, location, religion, disability, etc. on which women are located are some of the concrete ways the State can develop a wholistic approach to unpaid care and domestic work.

Policies under each of the four categories are a must for a comprehensive approach to the care issue. A gender-differentiated perspective layered onto a care-responsive perspective **together** are required to create gender-transformative outcomes (see Figure 1).

6. The State needs to adopt a whole-of-government as well as a whole-of-society approach.

Utilizing the current momentum created by the Covid-19 on shedding light on UCDW requires continuous advocacy, education and knowledge dissemination, both within government and within society at large. Many countries have seen shifts whereby men have begun to do more work within the home, albeit temporarily under lockdown conditions (İlkkaracan and Memiş, 2021; Deshpande, 2020). This has raised awareness among the general public on the importance of care work its need for skilful management.

Various governmental departments must join hands with the PCW to promote regional and national cross-cutting initiatives that address both UCDW as well as the SDGs. A public-private partnership model or working with civil society organizations locally and development aid agencies internationally are ways in which the Philippines could adopt a consultative and collaborative approach. This can help in research, information-sharing, capacity-building and the ground level implementation of activities and programmes.

6.2 Recommendations for care policies

Enacting a comprehensive law to recognize, value, measure and redistribute the UCDW performed by women and girls is key in helping the Philippines work towards building a caring economy and a caring democracy (Women's Budget Group, 2020; Tronto, 2013). In addition to the previous recommendations, the following are some policy suggestions under each of the four care policy categories.

- a. **Care infrastructure** – Ensure that the most deprived and far-flung communities have access to care infrastructure. Cater to conflict-torn areas, to ensure essential services remain available in moments of crisis. Second, distribution of time- and energy-saving technologies in rural communities can help to free up some of women's time. Lastly, investments in research on ways to ease the drudgery and intensity of domestic chores and physical care tasks can be made.
- b. **Care-related social protections** – Expand the targeting of poor women beneficiaries not only for social assistance as mothers but also to support food provisioning needs, employment needs old age needs. Social protection programmes should aim to remove conditionalities that intensify women's care tasks or take up more time limiting their participating in the labour market. While most programmes address women as mothers or carers of children, women with disabilities or as carers of persons with disabilities must also be addressed through carer or disability allowances and health insurance coverage.

- c. **Care services** – Prioritize the care of children by ensuring that day-care laws are implemented at the level of *barangays* and within government offices. The affordability and accessibility of these day-care centres must cater to the needs of working women and men, especially solo parents. The early childhood care and education emphasis must also be expanded to include children aged 6 months to 3 years, which is when most working mothers tend to face challenges with childcare. Once out of the labour force, women find it harder to re-enter. Hence, the availability of care-related services that can address the need for childcare, care for older persons and persons with a disability must be planned for through state and market mechanisms.
- d. **Employment-related care policies** – Address the needs of workers with family and care responsibilities. This can include addressing inequitable policies and improving the workplace environment for workers with family responsibilities, for example by introducing equitable maternity and paternity leave policies. In the public sector, strengthen the implementation of Executive Order No. 340 concerning the provision of day-care services to children (younger than 5 years) of their employees. For the private sector, laws are needed to mandate employers to provide quality day-care facilities for employees with children aged 5 years and younger. Monitoring and implementation of the Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act must be strengthened via establishment of lactation stations in workplaces and granting lactating mothers reasonable nursing breaks. Furthermore, enforcement of the Telecommuting Act must focus on developing telecommunications infrastructure, particularly outside of Metro Manila, to facilitate access to high-speed and quality internet connection and increase capacity-building for telecommuting work for youth and mothers with young children. Finally, any discrimination of women arising in the workplace on account of their care responsibilities must be actively discouraged.

7. Conclusion

What the pandemic has shown is just how much work caring for others entails. It is a moment of reckoning in which we recognize and value UCDW and women's role in performing it, and harness the moment to reorder how economies and societies are structured. Care is no longer an externality of economic growth but rather the foundation on which the productive economy is built.

In addition to achieving the goal of gender equality, investing in care policies helps countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs – by freeing half the population to participate more actively in the economic sphere, thereby reducing poverty, improving health and education outcomes, enabling a voice and decent work conditions in the labour market and ultimately making communities more resilient and inclusive. There are clear economic advantages of investing in the social care sectors (De Henau and Himmelweit, 2021; Women's Budget Group, 2020; Ilkkaracan and Kim, 2019). Countries that heed this call to action will be serving not only women as a constituency but building a more peaceful and prosperous society.

Investing and incorporating a care-sensitive and gender-responsive lens in policymaking requires a change in the legislative, institutional and political economy factors in a country. The inequalities that plague societies are built on gendered power relations that have subordinated women and women's work. It is imperative to correct these imbalances.

Governments have a dominant role in bringing about societal change through the provision of policies and services. Research and scholarship has brought care to the centre of development discourse and conceptualized the 3R, 4R and 5R frameworks of recognition of care, reduction in time and drudgery, redistribution of care work, reward and representation of carers. Now we need to go beyond these conceptual frameworks by taking specific policy

actions, as outlined in this report. A national law recognizing the value and importance of care work could be a critical first step, followed by concrete actions supporting its implementation.

Sustainable recovery and building better forward needs a gender-inclusive and greener world, which will be possible only when adequate attention to care is given.

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