

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH REDUCING UNPAID WORK: A REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



UNECE - UN Women series:
Rethinking Care Economy and
Empowering Women for Building
Back Better

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations. Its major aim is to promote economic integration across its 56 member States located in Europe, North America and Asia. UNECE provides policy-oriented analysis, advice and capacity building to member States and cooperates with partner agencies, civil society and key actors from the private sector.

UNECE supports countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals thanks to its role as a platform for governments to cooperate and engage with all stakeholders on norms, standards and conventions, its unique convening power across the region, its multisectoral approach to tackle the interconnected challenges of sustainable development in an integrated manner and its transboundary focus, which helps devise solutions to shared challenges.

UNECE maintains a long-standing commitment to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in the economic realm. UNECE addresses gender gaps across the region by providing capacity-building workshops for women entrepreneurs and a multinational platform for the exchange of economic and social policies, measures and instruments with a gender perspective.

UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (UN WOMEN)

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

This report is the result of a collaboration between UNECE and UN Women in the frame of the United Nations Development Account tranche 13 project: Strengthening Social Protection for Pandemic Response, in particular its workstream on strengthening care policies with a gender lens, implemented with the participation of UN regional commissions and cooperating partners, including UN Women regional offices.

Lead authors: Sara Cantillon and Nina Teasdale

UNECE and UN Women team: Malinka Koparanova (UNECE), Nargis Azizova, Blerta Cela and Ala Negruta (UN Women)

For a list of any errors or omissions found subsequent to printing please visit our website.

Editor: Jeffrey Stern

Design: Asya Fatma Bagci

Cover photo credit: UN Women/Tayfun Dalkılıç, UN Women/Andi Qarri

© UN Women 2021

© UNECE 2021

All Rights Reserved

UNECE - UN Women series:

Rethinking Care Economy and Empowering Women for
Building back Better

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH **REDUCING UNPAID WORK:** **A REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF** **EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	5	5 The Impact of COVID-19 on Unpaid Work and Labour Market Participation	26
1 INTRODUCTION	8	5.1 Intensification of Unpaid Work	26
2 Unpaid Work: Definitions and Measurements	10	5.2 COVID-19 and Family-friendly Working Arrangements – Leave Policies and Working from Home	27
2.1 Measuring Unpaid Work	10	6 Recommendations	29
2.2 The Gendered Nature of Unpaid Work	11	6.1 Recognising and Representing Unpaid Work at Macroeconomic Policy and Decision-making Level	29
3 OVERVIEW of the Eastern European and Central Asian Regional Context	13	6.2 Women's labour Market Access and Opportunities: Strengthening Employment Rights and Workplace Policies	29
3.1 Demographic Changes	13	6.3 Challenging Social and Cultural Norms: Increase Awareness Raising and Advocacy for Greater Recognition and Redistribution of Unpaid Care Work	29
3.2 Unpaid Work: Women and Men	13	6.4 Social Care Infrastructure – Investment and Prioritisation of Childcare and Social care	29
4 Pathways Intersecting with Unpaid Work that Impact on Women's Social and Economic Empowerment	16	6.5 Legal and Institutional Infrastructure: Improving Social Protection Systems	29
4.1 Labour Force Participation: Unpaid Work and Access to, and Opportunities in, the Labour Market	16	Annex 1: Time Use Survey Data Collection and its Limitations	31
4.1.1 Women with Children and Youth Unemployment	17	Annex 2: Paternity and Parental Leave in the ECA region	32
4.1.2 Gender Segregation in the Labour Market	18	Annex 3: Consequences of the pandemic on gender inequalities in domestic and care work and on economic security in Eastern Europe and Central Asia – what data tell	35
4.1.3 Informal Work	18	References	37
4.1.4 Rural Life, Agriculture and Migration	19		
4.2 Social and Cultural Norms around Gender Roles	19		
4.2.1 Social and Legislative Changes	20		
4.2.2 Violence against Women and Girls	21		
4.3 Social Care Infrastructure	21		
4.3.1 Childcare Infrastructure	21		
4.3.2 Elder care	22		
4.4 Legal and Institutional Context (Social Protection and Employment Rights)	23		
4.4.1 Social Protection Systems	23		
4.4.2 Employment Measures	24		

ACRONYMS

AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMD	Armenian Dram
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Georgian Lari
KGS	Kyrgyzstani Som
KZT	Kazakhstani Tenge
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SORS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
TJS	Tajikistani Somoni
UAH	Ukrainian Hryvnia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States dollars
UZS	Uzbekistani Som
WBG	World Bank Group
WHO	World Health Organization

SUMMARY

This report is part of a series of knowledge products developed to strengthen social protection for the pandemic response.¹ It is focused on rethinking the care economy and empowering women.

This report presents a thematic regional analysis of unpaid work in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) and the resulting empowerment women gain when their responsibility for such work is reduced. The report focuses on Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo,² Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Apart from three country case studies (on Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Serbia) the other reports in the series cover the 56 UNECE member States, including the countries of Europe and countries in North America (Canada and United States), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and Western Asia (Israel).

A key feature of the EECA region is its demographic transition from population growth to population ageing. In the 20 years between 1995-2000 and 2015-2020, the total fertility rate remained below replacement level, increasing marginally from 1.7 to 1.8 live births per woman aged 15 to 49. Over the same time period, the share of persons aged 65 years or older increased from 13 to 17 per cent. These demographic changes have significant implications for care work.

Countries in the region are very diverse, ranging from energy-exporting economies to landlocked countries. The region's variety of social welfare systems tend to have weak universal social protection systems and social benefit schemes. Notwithstanding significant commonalities, women's experiences also vary significantly among and within these countries and across age, class, ethnicity and other dimensions of inequality. Historically, some countries have had high rates of

female labour force participation and investment in universal, public childcare. However, these shrunk in the late 1980s and early 1990s during the transition to market economies and the dismantling of public services and public employment. Further, even in the context of full female labour market participation, women remained responsible for unpaid work, with housework and childcare seen as 'women's work'.

Unpaid work is recognized as a critical barrier to gender equality and women's economic and social empowerment. Formally categorized as non-market work, unpaid work is not included in gross domestic product (GDP) calculations and remains invisible to decision- and policymakers. Social and cultural gendered norms related to unpaid care work remain stubbornly entrenched.

While the 'men as breadwinners' and 'women as caregivers' model may not be universal, it is still the normative construct for gender relations in the EECA region. Similar to other regions across the world, women in the EECA region undertake the majority of unpaid work; in no country is unpaid work equally shared by women and men.

Nine countries in the EECA region have conducted at least one time use survey between 2008 and 2015.³

The surveys have shown that, on average across the region, women devote five hours per day to unpaid work. In contrast, men devote an average of two hours per day on unpaid work. This gender gap in unpaid work varies widely among countries; depending on the country, women spend from 1.5 to 4 times as much time as men do on unpaid work. Moreover, while men work longer hours in paid employment, women continue to work longer total hours than men do overall, bearing a 'double burden' or 'second shift'.

1 The UNECE - UN Women series: Rethinking Care Economy and Empowering Women for Building back Better forms part of a collaboration by wider UN Development Account tranche 13 project: Strengthening Social Protection for Pandemic Response. The project aims at strengthening national capacities to design and implement social policies for rapid recovery from COVID-19 and for increased resilience to future exogenous shocks. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia collaborated to implement the project for the region.

2 All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

3 A time use survey is a specialized type of household survey that collects information on how people allocate their time to different tasks and activities.

This report examines four pathways that influence and shape women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work and that affect women's empowerment. These pathways are: **access to, and opportunities in, the labour market; social and cultural norms; social care infrastructure; and the legal and institutional environment (including social protection and employment rights)**. These pathways intersect with the social, political and economic context of the EECA, which shapes — and is shaped by — country-specific characteristics of countries within the region. Such characteristics include the importance of urban-rural differences, the extent of migration, the informal economy, youth unemployment, the heterogeneity of women's experiences, ethnicity and socioeconomic group.

Participation in the labour market is a key source of economic empowerment. Male labour force participation rates in the EECA region are similar to global rates. In contrast, there is considerable variation for women, even though historically their participation in paid employment has been high in some EECA countries. Central Asia had a subregional average women's labour force participation rate of 70 per cent. Eastern Europe had an average of 84 per cent, with the lowest level in the Republic of Moldova at 54 percent.

Industrial and occupational segregation by gender is a typical feature of labour markets, and the EECA labour markets are no exception. Despite increases in women's workforce participation, women are more likely to be employed in casual, poorly paid/undervalued and insecure work. Part-time employment among women in the EECA region remains low (with the exception of Azerbaijan and Armenia), which leads to many women turning to the informal sector to seek shorter employment hours.

Since the mid-1990s, all EECA countries have made progress in adopting gender equality mechanisms, including legislation and policies aimed at advancing women's empowerment and achieving greater gender equality in different spheres of social life. Particular attention has been paid to legislation and the elimination of discriminatory practices to address specific problems, such as gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. **Despite this progress, some women in the EECA region continue to face high levels of discrimination in social norms, and there remains a substantial gap between changing attitudes and gender roles in practice.** In 2018, survey research

from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia found that a majority of participants agreed that it "is a mother's responsibility to change diapers, feed and bathe children."

The gendered impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is clear both in terms of women's employment as well as in the intensification of unpaid care. Women have been affected more than men by pandemic-related unemployment, reduced working hours and the loss of wages. These effects have been more pronounced among women living in Southern and Eastern Europe than among their Western European counterparts. Similarly, the incomes of women working in the informal sector having declined dramatically. Analysis by UN Women on COVID-19 and informal workers' lost income estimates that they lost an average of 70 per cent of their income in Europe and Central Asia. Further, as the crisis unfolded in the EECA region, millions of people left cities and returned to rural areas. This had two consequences: it intensified rural women's unpaid care and domestic work burden and it exposed the reliance of wealthier countries and families on migrant women workers for social and care services.

In relation to the intensification of unpaid care work, much greater numbers of women than men have reported doing more household chores and spending more time on unpaid care work since the start of the pandemic. In the EECA region, 70 per cent of women spent more time on at least one unpaid domestic work activity, compared to 59 per cent of men, although this varies across subregions. The increase in time spent on domestic work for women has been particularly high in Kyrgyzstan and North Macedonia.

The report concludes with policy recommendations that prioritize the importance of unpaid work as a barrier to women's economic empowerment. **Removing or ameliorating this barrier will require specific interventions in three key areas: the labour market, the social care infrastructure and gender-specific social norms.** While significant progress is required across all these fronts, the most effective policy intervention to empower women through reducing unpaid work is the provision of institutionalized, high-quality, affordable childcare, especially for young children. This reduction in women's unpaid care work responsibilities will facilitate their labour force participation and will help create job opportunities.

In the labour market, greater flexibility in work patterns (e.g. part-time/reduced hours, flexible scheduling, shorter work weeks) is necessary to encourage a more equal distribution of unpaid work at the family level and to help women and men find a better work-life balance. This can be supported with paid parental leave for both women and men accompanied by non-transferable paternity leave.

There also needs to be wider investment to address labour-intensive aspects of unpaid work that thwart women's empowerment and impact on their time. For example, investing in sustainable agriculture and rural development will reduce rural-urban inequalities, rural poverty, food insecurity and will reduce the ongoing depopulation of rural areas.

Although deep-seated social and cultural norms related to gender roles are slow to change, they are not intractable. **Progress towards gender equality through the redistribution of unpaid work would allow men to benefit from new employment and family responsibility arrangements. Essential to this is revaluing and destigmatizing unpaid work, which will disrupt the current gender, racialized and class underpinnings of household and care work. Achieving these long-overdue changes will unlock the potential of women's economic empowerment.**

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_552

