



Policy Implications of Unpaid Work: Promoting Gender Equality through Decent Work



Naomi Cassirer, International Labour Organization



Linking Unpaid and Paid Work, Part I

Unpaid work determines:

- Whether an individual can participate in paid work at all
- The number of hours in paid work
- The type and location of paid work



- The policy challenge:
 - ❖ How do we reduce the constraints of unpaid work on the employment opportunities of women (and men responsible for unpaid work)?



International Standard on Work and Family (ILO)

Worker's with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)

- *Recommendation on Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981 (No.165)*
- *In conjunction with other ILO Standards on Discrimination, Maternity Protection, Working Time, Wages, etc.*



Objectives

Establish equality of opportunity and treatment

- a) between men and women workers with family responsibilities
- b) between workers with family responsibilities and other workers that do not have such responsibilities
- c) Progressive application



National policy

With a view to creating effective equality of opportunity and treatment

Make it an aim of national policy to enable workers with family responsibilities to engage in employment without discrimination and, to the extent possible, without conflict between their work and family responsibilities.




National policy

Take all measures compatible with national conditions and possibilities to:

- Enable these workers to freely choose their employment
- Take account of their needs in terms and conditions of work and social security
- Take account of their needs in community planning and in the development of public and private community services



All measures shall be taken to develop or promote community services, public or private such as childcare and family services and facilities (Convention 156, Article 5(b)).



Other requirements

- ✓ Organize vocational guidance and training to enable re-entry and stay in the labour force.
- ✓ Promote information and education to generate broader public awareness.
- ✓ Ensure that family responsibilities cannot constitute a valid reason for termination of employment.



Reconciliation to promote equality

- ***Making "normal" work more family compatible (hours, flexibility)***
- ***Adequate regulation and supervision of part-time and home work***
- ***Making family responsibilities more compatible with work (care facilities, school hours etc.)***
- ***Lightening the load***
- ***Recognizing men's caring role and promoting more equal sharing of family responsibilities***



Lightening the load

- *The competent authorities and bodies in each country should promote such public and private action as is possible to lighten the burden deriving from the family responsibilities of workers. (Recommendation 165, paragraph 32)*



Linking Unpaid and Paid Work, Part II

The recognition and value of unpaid work go hand in hand with those of paid care and domestic work:

- Both are associated with women
- Employment for women tends to be in jobs that are extensions of women's unpaid work; care, health, cleaning, textiles
- These occupations are characterized by low earnings, high turnover, poor working conditions, few social protections



The policy challenge:

- ❖ How do we uplift care work and domestic work, paid and unpaid to promote gender equality in the value accorded to women's and men's work?



Promoting Decent Work:

- ❑ Dignity and Rights at Work
- ❑ Employment
- ❑ Social Protection for All
- ❑ Voice and Representation



How do we intervene:

- Resources
- Partnerships
- Developing Relevant Technical Assistance