

Knowledge-Sharing Webinar

Measuring SDG 5.4.1 (Unpaid Domestic and Care Work) in the Labour Force Survey

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Ambassador Manorma Soeknandan, Deputy Secretary General

CARICOM Secretariat

- **In a publication in 2007 Stiglitz mentioned “unpaid care work is both an important aspect of economic activity and an indispensable factor contributing to the well-being of individuals , their families and societies”. We all know that Unpaid care is not included in the policy nor in the development agendas of States. Women’s unpaid labour is globally worth 10.9 trillion USD.** The overall perception and evidence is that the unequal distribution of unpaid care work is preventing women from exercising the full range of their rights, including the right to paid decent work. It is also preventing men, due to gender stereotypes that promote care work as women’s work, from the benefits of caregiving. I can recall vividly when I went to visit my grandmother in the hospital , this was early seventies last century, one thing that struck me was that most of the nurses were males. And in those days the teaching profession was also dominated by males. This has definitely changed.

- To track data in this area, we need statistics and we have to, on a regular basis conduct surveys. One of the largest data gaps the region faces is in unpaid care work and SDG 5.4.1. We recognise and commend Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Jamaica and Grenada for past and ongoing efforts to collect data on unpaid care work. Jamaica had even conducted a survey in 1993 and gathered data around “Time Use”.

Under “ Stimulation in Households” , data was gathered on engagements of adults with children in several activities. Another very interesting one, talking about SDG 5.4.1 , was the amount of time young age group persons and retirees are spending on Community work “voluntary work”. While these efforts are commendable, there is a need not only for a coordinated approach , but also the need to use the data to inform policy and measures, so that individuals can make their own choice whether or not they want to join the “quantifiable workforce”.

- There also gaps in policy and legislation pertaining to care. While almost all countries in CARICOM have maternity leave policies, few have adopted paternity or parental leave. I must mention here that a few years ago (2018) , we at the CCS adopted the paternity leave policy. But I am not aware that any one has applied for paternal leave.

Pathway to Solutions:

- **CARICOM is working to overcome challenges with recognising, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work. However, it is also an issue of choice of the individuals. Each individual has a choice to take a well informed**

decision between e.g. joining the workforce (which will include paid care work) and being part of the western consumerism society or opt for well-being based on different solid grounds. I again want to refer to Stiglits “one size does not fit all approach”.

The Gender Pillar of the CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics notes the need to fill the most pressing gender data gaps, including on unpaid care and domestic work or SDG 5.4.1. In the 44th Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians in 2019, it was agreed that 5 countries (Grenada, Guyana, Suriname, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago) would include a question in the upcoming round of censuses, in order to pilot the measurement of SDG 5.4.1. CARICOM is pleased to collaborate with UN Women, the OECS Commission, and other development partners in this effort. Other member states are encouraged to pilot these questions in their censuses and labour force surveys. In my concept it would also augur well to look at how much time individuals spent at work and at home conducting work /office related activities vs. how much time is spent on family care / interaction (unpaid care)??

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed significant challenges to parents as they are now faced with balancing their domestic and care responsibilities with tutoring their children at home, and caring for other dependants all at the same time. Parents/ grand parents have become supervisors and teachers at the same time. Unpaid care work / including family care has increased as a result. Despite the unfortunate circumstances, the pandemic

provides a unique opportunity to adopt gender-equitable policies on universal access to affordable, safe and secure day care services and other services to bring relief to parents and caregivers.

The negative impact of unpaid care work can be redirected through policies promoting flexible work arrangements, care leave, parental leave and it also requires a mind shift. It will take time. The World Economic Forum 2019 in its Report stated that “non of us will see gender parity in our lifetimes”. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the region to explore flexible, safe and remote working arrangements. With regard to parental leave, Barbados recently adopted paternity leave legislation and is commended for this effort. Other CARICOM countries are encouraged to provide comprehensive parental leave, which would signal an important shift towards childcare as a responsibility to be equitably shared between both parents.

How do we get ownership or the buy-in from the stakeholders? The CARICOM region has a long and recognised history of tripartite decision making with government, the private sector, labour unions and other stakeholders, coming together to collectively discuss and develop solutions to grand challenges on issues such as workers’ rights, the socioeconomic impact of fiscal reforms and other measures. Such forums are currently being used in the ongoing pandemic and countries struggles to ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard. An all inclusive – integrated approach with representatives of the care sectors such as day care and eldercare service providers and stakeholder groups representing parents, domestic workers and gender-quality advocates in these decision-making platforms is also encouraged.

CARICOM's Draft Regional Gender Strategy: As CARICOM develops its regional gender strategy, consideration will be given to the centrality of recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work. However, if we want to put the whole issue of “unpaid care work” in a proper structure and achieve the SDG 5.4.1. the environment surrounding it must be tackled, and that is much more than has been mentioned, it also includes creating / developing the right environment , physical, emotional and mental security and certainty for those stakeholders who will become the consumers of the care services, but also to the care providers and to those who will become the recipients. Gender norms are complex and complicated, changing them will take considerable time and risks. We need improvements in infrastructure , we need role models, we have to actively engage all the stakeholders, but above all we need active participation /involvement of the men in achieving the positive changes towards a balanced social fabric of our societies and to make progress in achieving the SDG 5.4.1.

I thank You.