



STATE OF THE WORLD'S FATHERS



**TIME FOR ACTION**

MenCare

## STATE OF THE WORLD'S FATHERS: TIME FOR ACTION

A MenCare Advocacy Publication

View the report at: [sowf.men-care.org](http://sowf.men-care.org)

**ABOUT MENCARE:** MenCare is a global campaign to promote men's and boys' involvement as equitable, nonviolent caregivers. With activities in more than 40 countries, MenCare partners carry out advocacy initiatives, research, and programming to engage men in positive parenting, in equitable caregiving, in violence prevention, and in maternal, newborn, and child health. The campaign is co-coordinated by Promundo and Sonke Gender Justice, with Save the Children and MenEngage Alliance serving as Steering Committee members. For more information about the campaign and its partners, visit MenCare at: [men-care.org](http://men-care.org)

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of any of its affiliated organizations.

**ABOUT STATE OF THE WORLD'S FATHERS:** *State of the World's Fathers: Time for Action* is the second *State of the World's Fathers* report, following the first-ever edition published in 2015. The 2017 report was produced by Promundo on behalf of MenCare. It joins a growing set of related country- and region-focused reports on men's involvement as caregivers around the world. The 2015 *State of the World's Fathers* report, available in multiple languages, and regional and country reports in the same series, are available at: [sowf.men-care.org](http://sowf.men-care.org)

**SUGGESTED CITATION:** Heilman B, Levto R, van der Gaag N, Hassink A, and Barker G (2017). *State of the World's Fathers: Time for Action*. Washington, DC: Promundo, Sonke Gender Justice, Save the Children, and MenEngage Alliance.

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STATE OF THE WORLD'S FATHERS  
**TIME FOR ACTION**

2017



# FOREWORD



**Gudlaugur Thor Thordarsson**  
*Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
Iceland*

Nothing can prepare you for meeting your children for the first time: you are overwhelmed by a feeling of responsibility for their happiness and well-being, and you are determined to do your absolute best in this new role. The influence your parents have had on you, both good and bad, dawns on you: their successes, which should be replicated and their mistakes, which should be avoided.

When we in Iceland put in place a paternity leave policy in 2000, through which new fathers are allotted three non-transferable months of leave (alongside three non-transferable months offered to mothers, and a remaining three to split), it was nothing less than a broad-sweeping effort to address gender inequality in Iceland.

This policy, in many ways, served to level the playing field at work and at home: eliminating the penalty women often face at work when they take maternity leave, and getting men to shoulder the responsibility of child-rearing at home.

The effects have been massive. It has changed norms and behavior in a meaningful way, enabling and encouraging men to fully participate in their children's lives. We see the positive impact of this not only for newborns, but also as children grow older.

It has become increasingly clear that positive father-child relationships bring benefits for all involved: for women and children, and we also see that involved fatherhood makes men themselves happier and healthier.

By taking on a larger share of care work and domestic work, involved fathers are promoting gender equality through their actions. That is what *State of the World's Fathers: Time for Action* is all about: how to make gender equality a reality, through actionable, concrete steps.

The generations before us could not be seen pushing a stroller – it wasn't “manly” enough. Those same men were told not to cry, to “man up” and to be strong, but we cannot live our lives following some predefined version of masculinity.

These social norms, the ideas about what it means to be a man, affect boys and men throughout their lifetimes: men are less likely to see a doctor than women are; they are less likely to talk about their feelings, and more likely to commit suicide.

Some ideas of manhood are outright dangerous, leading men to use violence against other men, against women, and against children. Global estimates indicate that one in three women experiences physical or sexual violence in her lifetime, mostly perpetrated by men, and the majority of cases by an intimate partner.

These are some of the reasons that we, as the Government of Iceland, have developed the Barbershop concept: a series of events targeted at getting those individuals in decision-making and leadership positions to reflect personally on their power, privilege, and role in advancing gender equality. It's also why we are champions of HeforShe, UN Women's global campaign to create a bold, visible force for gender equality. And most importantly, it's why as a country, we have taken the gender equality agenda so seriously in policy and practice.

This is why research like you have in your hands today, *State of the World's Fathers: Time for Action*, is so important. It builds the evidence base for what we know to be true in Iceland and in many other countries around the world: that when fathers have the opportunity and the support to do so, they can contribute in a meaningful way to their children's lives and to a more gender-equal world.

# REPORT TEAM

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This report benefitted greatly from the thoughtful feedback and comments provided by MenCare Steering Committee members:

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*The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of any of its affiliated organizations.*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank the following individuals for their contributions to messages included in this report:

- Priya Alvarez, PLENT – International Platform for Equal, Non-Transferable and Fully Paid Parental Leave
- Laxman Belbase, MenEngage Global Alliance
- Valerie Bichelmeir, Make Mothers Matter
- Debbie Budlender
- Adrienne Burgess, Fatherhood Institute
- Diane Elson, University of Essex
- Catherine Githae, MenEngage Kenya Network
- Margaret Greene, GreeneWorks
- Shruthi Jayaram, Dalberg Global Development Advisors
- Harald Kedde, Rutgers
- Jeroen Lorient, Rutgers
- Peter Moss, University College London
- Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed, Institute of Development Studies
- Maria Pazos, PLENT – International Platform for Equal, Non-Transferable and Fully Paid Parental Leave
- Rachel Ploem, Rutgers
- Markus Theunert, [maenner.ch/masculinities.ch](http://maenner.ch/masculinities.ch)
- Vidar Vetterfalk, MÄN (Män för Jämställdhet)

*State of the World's Fathers: Time for Action* was generously supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations.

Finally, special thanks to MenCare and MenEngage partners around the world whose tireless work inspired this report.

**This report draws heavily from the following publications:**

Alexa Hassink, Gary Barker, and Ruti Levtov on behalf of MenCare (2016). *The MenCare Parental Leave Platform: 10 Ways to Leave Gender Inequality Behind and Give Our Children the Care They Need*.

Ruti Levtov on behalf of Promundo (2016). *Background Paper for the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment*.

Nikki van der Gaag along with Promundo staff (unpublished). *The MenCare Unpaid Care Platform: Eight Steps Toward Achieving Equality Between Women and Men in Unpaid Care*.

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# ACRONYMS

<b>CCT</b>	Conditional cash transfer
<b>CSW</b>	Commission on the Status of Women
<b>DAWN</b>	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GEMS</b>	Gender Equity Movement in Schools
<b>HEAL</b>	Health, education, administration, and literacy
<b>HHSA</b>	Household Satellite Account
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental organization
<b>ICRW</b>	International Center for Research on Women
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMAGES</b>	International Men and Gender Equality Survey
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>RWAMREC</b>	Rwanda Men's Resource Center
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>STEM</b>	Science, technology, engineering, and math
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Caregiving and unpaid care work are at the heart of any discussion of the state of the world's fathers, and at the heart of gender inequality.** For all the attention paid to unpaid care work, however, in no country in the world do men's contributions to unpaid care work equal women's.

**At the same time, looking back to the first *State of the World's Fathers* report released in 2015, there are examples from around the world affirming that *change is possible*. Many men want to be more involved in the lives of their children.** Even in countries where men's involvement in care work is limited, recent research found that half or more of the men surveyed said that they spent too little time with their children due to their job.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, one survey found that 46 percent of fathers said they were not spending enough time with their children, compared with 23 percent of mothers.<sup>2</sup> Recent data released in *State of America's Fathers* showed that the majority of men and women alike, across all age categories, disagreed with the outdated notion that "it is best if men work and women take care of the home and children."<sup>3</sup>

**This report affirms that change – from the individual to the policy level – is happening.** Significant obstacles notwithstanding, evidence, experience, and insight affirm that radical, transformational change in the division of unpaid care is achievable at a global level. Social norms, policies, and practices can be changed to encourage men and boys to do more unpaid care. In interviews carried out around the world with dozens of men who had taken on traditionally female-dominated caregiving roles, researchers found that unexpected life circumstances – situations that presented no alternative but to adopt a radical new way of being – had provided the impetus for the men's transformed attitudes and new household or professional roles.<sup>4</sup> These men rose to a tremendous life challenge and emerged thriving in unexpected and more gender-equitable ways. Their experiences

show that men and boys can be influenced to do their share of the care work; their stories do not come from an idealized, impossible world. The *State of the World's Fathers* 2017 report, accordingly, urges mothers and fathers, caregivers of all kinds, communities of all sizes, and countries of all income levels to follow their lead.

**The priority areas for action of *State of the World's Fathers* 2017 include:**

- **All individuals, regardless of gender, must be encouraged to see themselves as both caregivers and financial providers – and be supported in both of these roles.** Achieving equality in unpaid care is not simply a matter of convincing individual men to step up, although this is one important element. The unequal distribution of care work is rooted in history and in how boys and girls are raised, and is perpetuated at the systemic level. Who undertakes the care work, and whether men and boys contribute their share, is determined by multiple overlapping factors. Three major factors continue to impede more equitable caregiving: (1) *social norms* and gender socialization that reinforce the idea that caregiving is “women’s work”; (2) *economic and workplace realities* and norms that drive household decision-making and maintain a traditional division of labor at home and at work; and (3) *laws and policies* that reinforce the idea that caregiving is women’s work.
- **Paid leave, equally shared between mothers and fathers (or in other co-caregiver arrangements), is essential to achieving an equitable distribution of caregiving.** The foremost policy recommendation that this report offers for the realization of gender-equal caregiving is that governments (and failing that, employers, corporations, and others in the private sector) provide paid, non-transferable, job-protected parental leave for mothers and fathers, in accordance with the best standards of such policies. Leave should be guaranteed for all caregivers, of all genders, in equal duration, adequately paid, and non-transferable. Anything less reinforces gender inequality, perpetuates women’s lesser participation in the paid labor force, impedes women’s career advancement relative to men’s, and reduces men’s opportunity to be caregivers. Parental

leave – when it is paid, equal, and non-transferable – is one of the few policies for which data show success in shifting norms around men’s caregiving and promoting equality, particularly when it is embedded within broader strategies to reduce and redistribute care work.

- **The goal of full equality in unpaid care work will be constrained as long as families face extreme economic hardship, or lack access to necessary income supports and subsidized childcare.** High-quality care for children and other family members is fundamental. The drive for more equality in caregiving is directly linked to calls for fair wages, for improved working conditions, for job training, for decent work, and for other effective poverty-alleviation efforts, especially on the part of the state. Economic justice and equality form the essential bedrock of a high-functioning society, and they are integral to the kinds of equal caregiving situations called for in this report. At the same time, even well-meaning poverty-alleviation strategies, such as cash transfers or welfare payments, can perpetuate the idea that caregiving is inherently a female role by offering funds only to single mothers, or only to mothers. Recent studies have affirmed that cash transfer programs can help children equally as well, regardless of the gender of the parent who receives the transfer.
- **Effective parent training that includes men can achieve multiple powerful objectives.** New research demonstrates that engaging men in parent-training initiatives not only reduces multiple forms of violence, but also increases fathers’ involvement in childcare and expands overall gender equality in participating families.<sup>5</sup> Although such parent-training programs targeting or including fathers have been shown to be effective, the reach of these programs is very limited. It is time to think bigger. It is time to move beyond one-off programs engaging a few hundred or a few thousand parents and fathers at a time. Child and family health and well-being demand that best-practice family supports, including parent training that engages fathers, be widely available. Beyond the health sector, adult literacy programs, home visitation programs for new mothers, and refugee and immigrant services may afford further opportunities to reach and engage fathers.

**Above all, it is time for action.** It is time to think bigger, to commit to bold action, and to set ambitious goals. *State of the World's Fathers: Time for Action* calls on every country to set a national goal of men and boys doing half of the unpaid care work, and for a global goal of men and boys doing fully 50 percent of the unpaid care work. International organizations and commissions, women's rights advocates, and women themselves have spoken out for decades on the harmful effects of the unjust distribution of unpaid care work. It is estimated that at the current rate of global progress, it will take 75 years to achieve equality in this work. It is clear that change is moving too slowly. The time for action is now.

## Action Plan

- ACTION 1.1:** *At the international level, set goals, strategies, indicators, and budget commitments around the achievement of true equality between men and women in unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 1.2:** *Systematically measure men's and women's time use, including time spent on unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 1.3:** *At the national level, create and implement broad action plans to promote men and boys' equal sharing of unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 1.4:** *Build these strategies and action plans into public systems and institutions (such as the health sector) that can enable and promote men and boys' equal participation in caregiving.*
- ACTION 2.1:** *Teach all children to see the value of care work from an early age, and to see that care work is the responsibility of all, regardless of their gender.*
- ACTION 2.2:** *Provide training in which fathers recognize and challenge traditional attitudes, learn about gender-equitable parenting, and build skills involved in unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 2.3:** *Recruit more men into caregiving and other health, education, administration, and literacy (HEAL) professions.*
- ACTION 2.4:** *Train health sector and other social services staff to engage men as equal caregiving partners.*
- ACTION 2.5:** *Use income-support and social-security programs to promote men's greater involvement in unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 2.6:** *Implement policies and practices that support individuals' unpaid care work as well as their paid work.*
- ACTION 3.1:** *Offer equal, paid, non-transferable parental leave for all parents.*

# 01

CHAPTER ONE





# The Case for Equal Care Between Men and Women

**C**aregiving and unpaid care work\* are at the heart of any discussion of the state of the world's fathers, and at the heart of gender inequality. For all the attention paid to unpaid care work, however, in no country in the world do men's contributions to unpaid care work equal women's.

**The evidence is clearer than ever that equal care is key to thriving families and societies – and that it is time for action.** The inaugural *State of the World's Fathers* report made the case for the importance of men's equal participation as parents, highlighting the extensive and growing evidence of the benefits of their involvement. In 2015, the central story of the report was “where we are” and “what we know” in terms of engaging fathers and men in the equitable, nonviolent care of children and other loved ones. In 2017, the story focuses on the actions that are needed to make progress.

\*The UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights defined unpaid care work as including “domestic work (meal preparation, cleaning, washing clothes, water and fuel collection) and direct care of persons (including children, older persons, persons with disabilities, as well as able-bodied adults) carried out in homes and communities.”

Source: Sepúlveda C. M. (2013). *Report of the special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights: Unpaid care work and women's human rights*. New York: United Nations.

## About *State of the World's Fathers*

The first-ever *State of the World's Fathers* report, released in 2015, presented a comprehensive global overview of trends related to equal caregiving, among other linked dynamics. Its synthesis of various global data sources on related topics – unpaid care work, sexual and reproductive health and rights, maternal health, men's violence against women, and child development, among many others – attracted significant media and policy attention and was followed by the release

of multiple national and regional reports. These reports, among other landmark publications on gender, caregiving, and family well-being, have presented overwhelming evidence of the need to *prioritize equal division of care work* among global health and development objectives. In the intervening years, many countries around the world have made policy changes toward these goals – even as others have seen notable setbacks – which this year's report will explore.

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## Updates and New Insights

**Globally, on average, the time women spend daily in caring for the home and children is still about three times what men spend, but varies dramatically across settings.**<sup>6</sup> Women consistently do more unpaid care work – including caring for others and domestic work – than men do, and even where men are contributing more than they used to, the gaps between women's and men's contributions persist.<sup>7</sup>

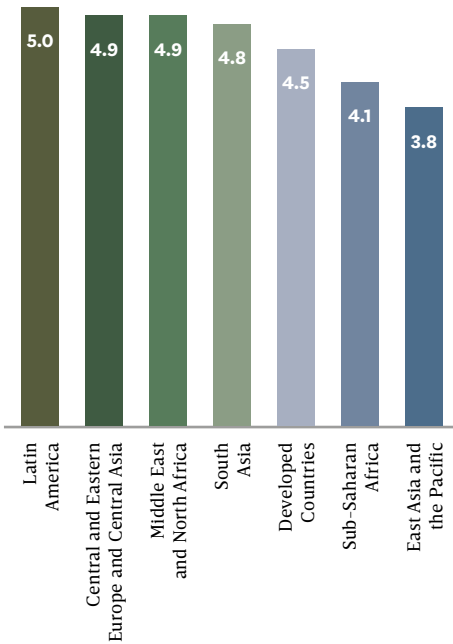
**While inequality in care work exists across the globe, there is evidence, primarily from high-income countries, that gaps in unpaid care work are narrowing with men's increasing participation in childcare.** A study of trends in men's participation over almost 40 years (and across 20 countries) found an average increase of 6 hours per week in employed, married men's contribution to housework and childcare. Still, men's contribution did not exceed 37 percent of women's in any of the included countries.<sup>8</sup>

As seen in Figures 1 and 2, comparisons of women's daily time spent in unpaid work, and the female-to-male ratio of this work, show some commonalities across regions in the number of hours women spend on unpaid work, but vast differences in the gender inequality of unpaid care. South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa show the most disproportionate contributions from women to unpaid work. For example, in South Asia, women do 6.5 times more unpaid work than men do.

**Figure 1:**

### Unpaid Work by Women

Hours of unpaid work performed by women per day in various regions of the world\*

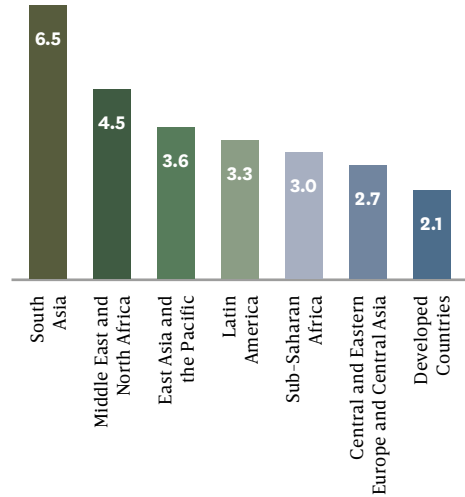


**Figure 2:**

### Female-to-Male Ratio of Time Spent on Unpaid Work

Ratio of women's daily unpaid work to men's daily unpaid work, by region

(How to interpret: In South Asia, for instance, women's daily average time spent on unpaid work is 6.5 times that of men.)



\*Methodological Note: Regional averages are simple averages across the countries, not population weighted. Data for all countries include time spent on unpaid and paid work by all men and women, not just participating men and women (e.g., not just mothers for childcare). UN Women's data is harmonized by country to the extent feasible, but country-level data are not strictly comparable due to factors such as age groups and methodology of data collection (e.g., surveys vs. time diaries).

Notes: 75 countries included: South Asia (3), Middle East and North Africa (7), Sub-Saharan Africa (12), East Asia and the Pacific (5), Latin America (13), Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (16), and Developed Countries (19).

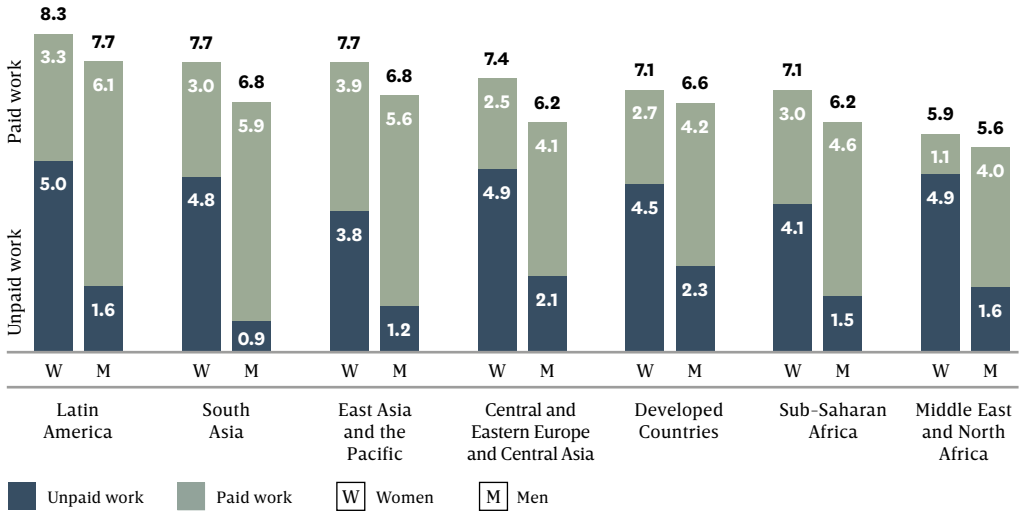
Source: Data analysis by Dalberg Global Development Advisors. Data sources: UN Women's *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016*; national surveys from 1998 to 2013.

**Is the time men spend earning money for their families a form of caregiving? Once the time spent on paid work, which also provides necessary family benefits, is accounted for, is everyone contributing equally?** As shown in Figure 3, the answer is “no”: in all regions, women spend more time than men do on paid and unpaid work *combined*. A separate analysis of time-use data found that on average, globally, women spend 45 minutes more than men on paid and unpaid work per day, resulting in almost 6 extra weeks of work per year, and 5.5 extra years of work over 5 decades, according to data from 65 countries.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 3:**

**Daily Work by Women and Men**

Total hours of work – combining both paid and unpaid work – per day, by region



Notes: 75 countries included: South Asia (3), Middle East and North Africa (7), Sub-Saharan Africa (12), East Asia and the Pacific (5), Latin America (13), Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (16), and Developed Countries (19). Total hours may not add up perfectly due to rounding.

Source: Data analysis by Dalberg Global Development Advisors. Data sources: UN Women’s *Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016*; national surveys from 1998 to 2013.

**Even if men and women did spend an equal sum of time on combined paid and unpaid care work, the unequal distribution of the two types of work would still be deeply problematic.** Society values paid work – this is expressed in literal remuneration as well as in status and respect – and devalues unpaid care, which also restricts women’s and girls’ access to social contact, play, civic and community involvement, education, and financial resources, including employer-based benefits, social security, and pensions.<sup>10,11</sup>

**Women still hold far fewer positions of power and earn less than men do.** Although it is not the only factor, the time and energy women spend on unpaid care holds them back in their paid jobs and professional trajectories. At the current rate of progress, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that it will be 75 years before women and men achieve equal pay for equal work.<sup>12</sup> Reaching equal representation in government, business, and other spheres of power could take even longer. For families, for individuals, and for communities, 75 years is too long to wait for women’s equality.

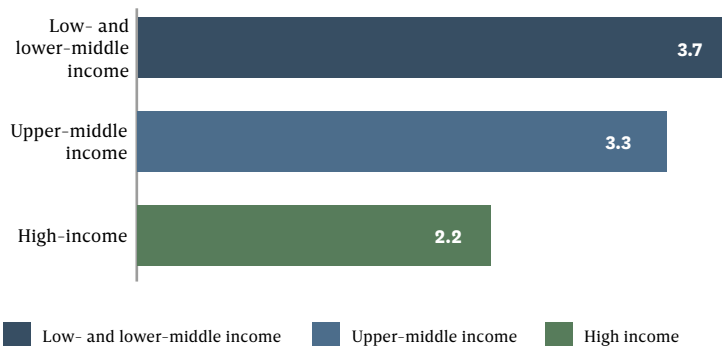
**In addition to shouldering the lion’s share of childcare, women step into caregiving roles for ill or elderly family members far more often than do men.** A recent study in the United States found that daughters spend more than twice the hours caring for elderly parents that sons do.<sup>13</sup> One survey in South Africa found that women make up over two-thirds of primary caregivers for people living with HIV and AIDS.<sup>14</sup> A recent 32-country analysis of women’s unpaid contributions to the health sector estimated the annual value of these contributions between 1.9 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) in high-income countries and 2.9 percent in low-income countries. The authors asserted, “Since these contributions of women are mostly unrecognized and unaccounted for, they can be considered hidden subsidy to health care that has never been paid for through private or public spending and that should be valued.”<sup>15</sup>

**Poverty exacerbates gender inequalities in unpaid care.** A recent analysis of data from around the world found that the ratio of women’s time spent on unpaid work to men’s is much greater in low- and lower-middle-income countries than it is in high-income countries (see Figure 4). Additionally, it is often the poorest women who spend the most time on unpaid care, or whom are most affected by its impact.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 4:**

**Female-to-Male Ratio of Time Spent on Unpaid Work, by National Income Level**

Ratio of women’s daily unpaid work to men’s daily unpaid work, by economic status of country (How to interpret: In high income countries, for instance, women’s daily average time spent on unpaid work is 2.2 times that of men.)



Notes: Includes 24 low- and lower-middle-income, 20 upper-middle-income, and 30 high-income countries, using World Bank income level classification.

Source: Data analysis by Dalberg Global Development Advisors. Data sources: UN Women’s *Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016*; national surveys from 1998 to 2013.

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# Change Is Possible

**At the same time, looking back to the first *State of the World's Fathers* report, there are examples from around the world affirming that *change is possible*. Many men want to be more involved in the lives of their children.** Even in countries where men's involvement in care work is limited, such as in the Middle East and North Africa, a recent four-country study found that half or more of the men surveyed said that they spent too little time with their children due to their job.<sup>17</sup> In the United States, one survey found that 46 percent of fathers said they were not spending enough time with their children, compared with 23 percent of mothers.<sup>18</sup> Recent data released in *State of America's Fathers* showed that the majority of men and women alike, across all age categories, disagreed with the outdated notion that "it is best if men work and women take care of the home and children."<sup>19</sup>

**Significant obstacles notwithstanding, evidence, experience, and insight affirm that radical, transformational change in the division of unpaid care is achievable at a global level. Social norms, policies, and practices can be changed to encourage men and boys to do more unpaid care.** The two years that have elapsed since the inaugural *State of the World's Fathers* report have seen a global political climate that is experiencing conservative backlash, impeding and reversing recent gender justice and social justice gains.<sup>20,21</sup> (In many other countries around the world, populations are already all too familiar with such political forces.) These political movements seek to restrict sexual and reproductive rights and weaken government supports for society's most disadvantaged. Their rise demands a push beyond talking; it demands bold, radical action for an ethic of care.

**This report affirms that change – from the individual to the policy level – is happening.** As powerful evidence of the former: in interviews carried out around the world with dozens of men who had taken on traditionally female-dominated caregiving roles, researchers found that unexpected life circumstances – situations that presented no alternative but to adopt a radical new way of being – had provided the impetus for the men's transformed attitudes and new household or professional roles.<sup>22</sup> These men rose to a tremendous life challenge and emerged thriving in unexpected and more gender-equitable ways. Their experiences show that

At the current rate of progress, the International Labour Organization estimates that it will be

**75 YEARS**

before women and men achieve  
equal pay for equal work.

**Setting a bold, measurable goal – men and boys doing fully 50% of unpaid care work – is the next step.**

men and boys can be influenced to do their share of the care work; their stories do not come from an idealized, impossible world. The *State of the World's Fathers* 2017 report, accordingly, urges mothers and fathers, caregivers of all kinds, communities of all sizes, and countries of all income levels to follow their lead.

**This report is not alone in its goal of widespread caregiving transformation; in the two years since the release of the inaugural *State of the World's Fathers* report, inequality in unpaid care work has gained significant attention.** This is evident, most notably, in the Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) processes. (See “New International Commitments.”) These international commitments and declarations are encouraging, particularly the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which, in 2016 and 2017, has called specifically for equal sharing of domestic and childcare work. While these international policy milestones are laudable, they are not perfect. For example, early in the SDG development process, members of the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) Executive Committee offered the following critique:

*“There is a reference to women’s ‘unpaid work’ but without recognizing the unequal and unfair burden that women carry in sustaining care and well-being (para 153). This is further exacerbated in times of economic and ecological crisis when women’s unpaid labour acts as a stabilizer and their burden increases. For example, reference to the root causes of excessive food price volatility, including its structural causes, is not linked to the risks and burdens that are disproportionately borne by women (para 116). Development is not sustainable if care and social reproduction are not recognized as intrinsically linked with the productive economy and reflected in macroeconomic policy-making.”<sup>23</sup>*

**Setting a bold, measurable goal – men and boys doing fully 50 percent of unpaid care work – is the next step.** While many development goals and objectives are given specific targets, men’s equitable contribution to caregiving has yet to be approached with such specificity. This target does not mean that, at an individual level, each person needs to contribute identical work. Rather, the goal is equality at the national and global levels, with broad patterns of unpaid care no longer determined by gender. It is time to build on strong new commitments with a bold, specific target: fully gender-equal caregiving.



## New International Commitments

Since 2015, there have been several policy milestones related to unpaid care work at the international level. They include:

### 2015

UN Women's *Progress of the World's Women 2015–2016* report includes a section on unpaid care as a barrier to gender equality, noting that: "Recognizing the economic value of [unpaid care and domestic] work, reducing its drudgery and redistributing it more equally between women and men, and between households and society, is critical for the achievement of substantive equality."<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s *Human Development Report 2015* recognizes the importance of unpaid care work and declares that steps are needed along four policy axes: reducing and sharing the load of unpaid care work, expanding opportunities for women in paid work, improving outcomes in paid work, and changing norms.<sup>25</sup>

The United Nations sets Sustainable Development Goal 5, Target 5.4, on unpaid care: "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."<sup>26</sup>

### 2016

Paragraph 11 of the *Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions* "recognizes that achievement of the 2030 Agenda requires the full integration of women into the formal

economy, including through their effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life, and through changing the current gender-based division of labour to ensure that unpaid care and domestic work is equally shared and recognized, reduced, and redistributed."<sup>27</sup>

### 2017

In 2017, the *CSW Agreed Conclusions* went further still, calling upon states to:

*"Strengthen laws and regulatory frameworks that promote the reconciliation and sharing of work and family responsibilities for women and men, including by designing, implementing, and promoting family responsive legislation, policies, and services, such as parental and other leave schemes, increased flexibility in working arrangements, support for breastfeeding mothers, development of infrastructure and technology, and the provision of services, including affordable, accessible, and quality childcare and care facilities for children and other dependents, and promoting men's equitable responsibilities with respect to household work as fathers and caregivers, which creates an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work."*<sup>28</sup>

The document goes on to call for the fuller engagement of men and boys "as strategic partners and allies in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls."<sup>29</sup>

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# Equality in Unpaid Care Brings Widespread Benefits

**Care is not something that should be completely eliminated or outsourced; it is the daily sustenance of an individual's body, home, and loved ones. However, unpaid care work *does* need to be more evenly distributed.** Encouraging adults and children to embrace equality in unpaid care – and creating an enabling and supportive environment for them to do so – benefits all. Among other abundant evidence of this, it is clear that when men participate more equally in unpaid care...

**...women benefit.** Prior research has shown that equality in care-work distribution is linked with improvements in women's health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, maternal health, and physical and mental health.<sup>30</sup> It also supports the development of relationships that are more grounded in equality.<sup>31</sup> Globally, men taking equal responsibility for unpaid work would enable women to play an equal role in the paid workforce and grant them additional time to pursue their interests. These and other factors would, in turn, boost women's economic, social, and political empowerment and independence. While much attention has been paid to the ways in which economies would grow if women participated in paid work to the extent that men do, it is essential to recognize that unpaid care work is not, itself, the problem. It is the unequal division of unpaid care work that is the problem.

**...children benefit.** Children benefit from having more than one actively involved caregiver. Fathers who are involved in their children's lives from the start are more likely to continue to be involved as their children grow up, enhancing their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. Importantly, seeing men take on chores at home and seeing women participate in paid work contributes to boys' acceptance of gender equality and to girls' sense of autonomy and empowerment, creating a positive cycle of caregiving and equality.<sup>32</sup>

**...men themselves benefit.** Men's participation in unpaid care work enables them to share the pleasures of child-rearing and to build more meaningful relationships with their communities, their friends

and peers, their partners, their children, their own parents, and other caregivers. It also provides an opportunity for men to break free of narrow and restrictive constructs of manhood, and it can have positive effects on their mental and physical health.<sup>33</sup> While not all of this hands-on care work may be immediately enjoyable, gender equality's long-term benefits for men are clear.

**...societies benefit.** Society benefits from having more gender-equitable options, in which women and men share unpaid and paid work based upon their individual and relational preferences, and not on predetermined gender roles. Additionally, when unpaid care work is more equally distributed, women's participation in the labor market can increase. One study estimates that if women worldwide were able to play an equal role in labor markets, it would add as much as \$28 trillion to global GDP by 2025, which could contribute to alleviating poverty and improving people's well-being.<sup>34</sup> Society benefits, as well, when decision-makers represent a wider variety of life experiences, and there is a strong business case for companies to empower women at work and build a more diverse workforce.<sup>35</sup>

**Unpaid care provides an opportunity for men to break free of narrow and restrictive constructs of manhood.**

**To create sustainable change:**

- **All individuals, regardless of gender, must be encouraged to see themselves as both caregivers *and* financial providers – and be supported in both of these roles.** Chapter 2, “Encouraging Equal Care,” calls for specific actions at the social, workplace, and legislative levels that would allow everyone, regardless of gender, to thrive as both caregivers and financial providers.
- **Paid leave, equally shared between mothers and fathers (or in other co-caregiver arrangements), is essential to achieving an equitable distribution of caregiving.** Chapter 3, “The Need for Equal and Paid Leave,” looks at the one specific policy already shown to be effective in making progress toward the goal of equal unpaid care work: paid parental leave.

Two supplementary sections, appearing between the main content chapters, briefly identify specific policy and program areas that are well-suited to the support of caregivers: (1) access to income support, including poverty alleviation and affordable, high-quality childcare; and (2) universally available father-centered parent training.

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# PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

## **ACTION 1.1:**

**At the international level, set goals, strategies, indicators, and budget commitments around the achievement of true equality between men and women in unpaid care work.**<sup>36</sup>

The United Nations SDG targeting unpaid care is the latest in a series of international agreements and conventions that recognize women's shouldering of a disproportionately heavy share of unpaid care work as a key obstacle to achieving gender equality (see "New International Commitments"). However, few of these agreements and conventions call, specifically, for equal distribution of the care work between women and men. New commitments toward the equal sharing of care work are an encouraging step, but they need to be resourced, implemented, and monitored thoroughly.

We need nothing less than a goal – globally and nationally – for men and boys to carry out half of the unpaid care work. Establishing a high-level, global agenda that sets targets for equality in unpaid care work can help transform social norms, define national agendas, and end the gender divide in care work. These goals should be *institutional as well as individual*; paired with indicators and implementation strategies, at the national level, that map out pathways for progress in both policy and practice; and accompanied by sufficient financial and human resources to ensure that these strategies are implemented and that progress is measured.

**New commitments toward the equal sharing of care work need to be resourced, implemented, and monitored thoroughly.**

## **ACTION 1.2:**

**Systematically measure men's and women's time use, including time spent on unpaid care work.**

It is important to gather and analyze data on men's and women's involvement as caregivers – for children, elders, and family members with disabilities or health needs – and to measure the impact of programs and policies that aim to increase men's time spent on childcare, caregiving, and domestic work. Time-use data<sup>37</sup> is vital to understand the ways in which the double burden of unpaid care and paid work plays out across socially, economically, and geographically diverse settings and situations, including who performs which aspects of caregiving and how this is negotiated.

### ***Actions underway:***

- Switzerland is one of the few countries that have been conducting Time-Use Surveys (TUS) on a regular basis since 1997. These have been used, in Switzerland's Household Satellite Account (HHSA), to estimate the monetary value of the unpaid work produced by households and show its relation to the country's GDP.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) calls for countries to gather two indicators: the female-to-male ratio of average time devoted to household chores (unpaid care); and the female-to-male ratio of total workload (both paid and unpaid work).<sup>38</sup>

### **ACTION 1.3:**

#### **At the national level, create and implement broad action plans to promote men and boys' equal sharing of unpaid care work.**

Governments must work to reduce the burden of unpaid care through the provision of public services, infrastructure (such as childcare centers), and social-protection policies, and at the same time adopt specific strategies to encourage men and boys' equal sharing of unpaid (and paid) care work. Action plans on fatherhood and caregiving should span multiple sectors, including gender equality, children's rights, health, education, economic development, violence prevention and response, and labor rights. At the national level, within new and existing policies and plans across these fields, governments should include concrete actions that promote men's equitable caregiving. These actions must be accompanied by clear indicators to enable measurement of progress and to make visible the need for men and boys to do a fair share of the care work, and they must be supported by adequate funding.

### ***Actions underway:***

- As of 2010, Kenya's constitution sets forth the shared responsibility of both parents to care for their children; this has opened the door for national advocacy to call for more public services that support care provision. The Kenya Women's National Charter, for example, has demanded that government take legislative and policy measures to recognize, quantify, and place equal economic value on women's work at home.<sup>39</sup>

- In 2005, Spain reformed its civil marriage code. Under the new code, partners are viewed as “equal in rights and duties,” and spouses must “share domestic responsibilities and the care and attendance of parents and descendants and other dependents in their charge.”<sup>40</sup>

#### **ACTION 1.4:**

**Build these strategies and action plans into public systems and institutions (such as the health sector) that can enable and promote men and boys’ equal participation in caregiving.**

What does this look like in practice? This means that health systems, for example, must establish clear protocols to involve men in prenatal care visits and collect routine data on men’s participation. It requires working with decision-makers and service providers at all levels to transform their own attitudes and practices – for example, via pre-service training, continuing education, and professional development. This is necessary to ensure that these institutions are able to play a role in challenging, rather than perpetuating, inequitable norms around men’s caregiving.

# POLICY FOCUS

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## Poverty Alleviation and Subsidized Childcare

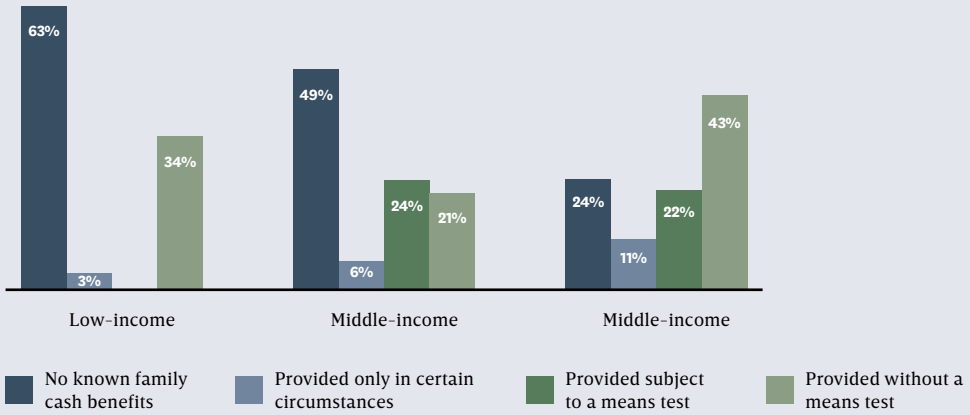
**The goal of getting men to do half the unpaid care work – and supporting women in their care activities – will be constrained as long as families face extreme economic hardship, or lack access to necessary income supports and subsidized childcare.** High-quality care for children and other family members is fundamental. The drive for more equality in caregiving is directly linked to calls for fair wages, for improved working conditions, for job training, for decent work, and for other effective poverty-alleviation efforts, especially on the part of the state. Economic justice and equality form the essential bedrock of a high-functioning society, and they are integral to the kinds of equal caregiving situations called for in this report. At the same time, even well-meaning poverty-alleviation strategies, such as cash transfers or welfare payments, can perpetuate the idea that caregiving is inherently a female role by offering funds only to single mothers, or only to mothers.<sup>41</sup> Recent studies have affirmed that cash transfer programs can help children equally as well, regardless of the gender of the parent who receives the transfer.<sup>42,43</sup>

**Updated data on access to basic family financial support or cash transfers show that, in the poorest countries in the world, 50 to 60 percent of families have no access to income support.** According to recent data from the World Policy Analysis Center, access to a financial safety-net for the poorest families looks very different around the world, particularly based on the overall income level of a country. As Figure 5 demonstrates, in some cases, lower-income countries are more likely than middle-income countries to provide family financial supports. The highest-income countries are the most likely to offer some form of such support to families, even though, at the same time, more than 20 percent of high-income countries fail to do so.

**Figure 5:**

**Availability of Family Cash Benefits, by National Income Level**

Proportion of countries in each income category offering various forms of family cash benefits



Notes: “Cash benefits” refers to direct financial assistance provided to households by the government, not to other types of assistance such as food stamps or tax.\* “Provided only in certain circumstances” includes cases where benefits are available only to specific groups of people, such as single parents or orphans, or as benefits to fund specific aspects of life, such as housing allowances, birth grants, and school allowances. “Provided subject only to a means test” includes benefits that are only available to families with incomes below a certain level. “Provided without a means test” includes benefits that are available to families without considering their income.”<sup>44</sup>

\*The World Policy Analysis Center notes that these data on family benefits include only cash benefits, as there was no reliable global data source for this information.

Source: World Policy Analysis Center<sup>45</sup>

**There are no comprehensive data on the extent to which, around the world, parents have access to high-quality, affordable childcare.** Data from the World Bank’s *Women, Business and the Law 2016* report show that 100 out of the 139 included economies provide some form of public childcare.<sup>46</sup> Of the 39 economies where no public childcare provision is made, 27 are low or middle income.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, recent data from the World Policy Analysis Center demonstrate how uncommon it is for governments to provide cash benefits – whether universally or based on family need – specifically for childcare.<sup>48</sup> According to these data, only around 10 percent of countries in the Americas, in East Asia and the Pacific, and in the Middle East and North Africa provide such benefits; countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are even less likely to offer them. Financial benefits for childcare are offered most commonly in Europe and Central Asia. To be sure, government financial support is not the only avenue for the improvement of access to this care. This

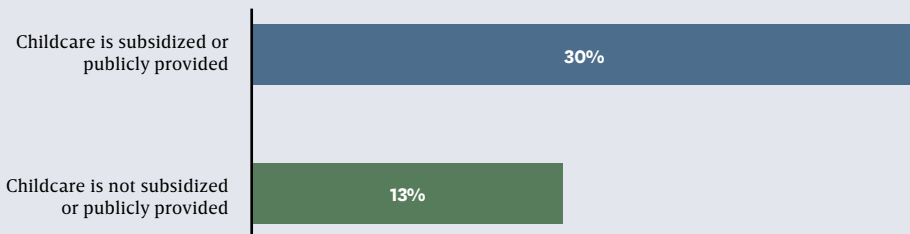


glimpse of data, however, reveals just how little governments worldwide are doing to support childcare as an economic and social priority. Meanwhile, good data on access to high-quality, affordable childcare – whether or not it is provided directly by the state – remain difficult to obtain.

**Public assistance for childcare has a very real impact on women’s labor force participation.** The aforementioned *Women, Business and the Law 2016* report reveals the extent to which mothers’ ability to work outside the home depends on the availability and cost of care for young children. As Figure 6 demonstrates, the percentage of women who earn a wage in countries where the government provides childcare support is more than double the percentage in countries without such support. This finding helps to illuminate the inextricable connection between childcare and families’ economic advancement, and it shows that well-designed government programs to support high-quality childcare can drive labor-force expansion and increase women’s economic empowerment and opportunity – and, in so doing, improve children’s health and well-being.<sup>49</sup>

## Figure 6:

**Proportion of Women Wage-Earners, Based on Government Childcare Support**  
Proportion of women aged 15 and above receiving wages in the last year, based on childcare availability



Source: World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law* (2016)<sup>50</sup>

**Where is the policy support for childcare? Politicians – particularly male politicians – are still reluctant to champion these issues.** Traditionally, policies related to childcare have been seen as the realm or interest of women. However, it may be that as men take on a greater share of the care work, they too will become stronger allies and advocates for government-supported childcare.

CHAPTER TWO



# Encouraging Equal Care

**A**chieving equality in unpaid care is not simply a matter of convincing individual men to step up, although this is one important element. The unequal distribution of care work is rooted in history and in how boys and girls are raised, and is perpetuated at the systemic level. Who undertakes the care work, and whether men and boys contribute their share, is largely determined by policies, structural influences, social barriers, and cultural norms.

**This chapter identifies three major impediments to progress toward more equitable caregiving:** (1) *social norms* and gender socialization that reinforce the idea that caregiving is “women’s work”; (2) *economic and workplace realities* and norms that drive household decision-making and maintain a traditional division of labor at home and at work; and (3) *laws and policies* that reinforce the idea that caregiving is women’s work.

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# BARRIER 1: Rigid Social Norms

**Social and cultural norms around gender roles – expectations of typical and appropriate ways of being – continue to affect care patterns.** In many countries, men are expected to work outside the home and be providers and breadwinners, while women are expected to provide care and run the household. A 20-country World Bank study noted that “income generation for the family was the first and most-likely mentioned definition of a man’s role in the family and of a good husband,” with domestic responsibilities overwhelmingly seen as the proper domain of a “good wife.”<sup>51</sup> At the same time, the 2010–2014 World Values Survey conducted in 59 countries found that, on average, 45 percent of men and 35 percent of women agreed with the statement, “When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job than women.”<sup>52</sup> These attitudes are reflected in practice: in a study of OECD countries, a 10 percent increase in the proportion of people who agree with the above statement is associated with 5 to 9 percent lower rates of women’s employment.<sup>53</sup>

**Children often internalize the idea that caregiving is women’s work.** Too many believe that only women and girls know how to care. However, these ideas and norms can change. International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) data sets show that, in nearly every country where data exist, men who reported that their fathers had participated in conventionally “feminine” domestic work were more likely to carry out this work themselves as adults.<sup>54,55,56</sup> Likewise, when children see their mothers in positions of leadership in the workplace, in their communities, or in politics, they come to see it as equally normal for women to occupy leadership roles as it is for men.

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## BARRIER 2: Economic and Workplace Realities

**Economic and workplace realities maintain and reinforce gender gaps in paid employment and unpaid care work, often encouraging men to prioritize paid work over unpaid caring roles and women to do the opposite.** In many modern workplaces, shorter working hours and perceived career commitment are often incompatible with one another. As a result, when a child comes along, those living in couple relationships often decide that one partner should keep his or her career on track, at the expense of equal care responsibilities. Because of social norms about breadwinning versus caregiving, and because men still tend to earn more for identical work than their female counterparts, in heterosexual couples, this partner tends to be the man.<sup>57</sup>

**In Australia, 49% of mothers and 27% of fathers reported experiencing workplace discrimination.**

**Parents and caregivers of all genders often face discrimination from employers and negative attitudes from colleagues when they want to work fewer hours or more flexibly once a child is born or an elderly parent becomes frail.** In Australia, a survey found that 49 percent of mothers and 27 percent of fathers reported experiencing discrimination, including negative comments and attitudes from colleagues or managers and discrimination related to pay, conditions, duties, or flexible working.<sup>58</sup> A review by the ILO confirms that, on top of a gender pay gap, when they become mothers, women often suffer an additional “motherhood pay gap.”<sup>59</sup> This is to say nothing of the simultaneous arrival of the so-called “gig economy,” where increasing numbers of workers are engaged in informal, ad hoc, and/or unpredictable working arrangements. Informally employed caregivers often have no access to employer-provided health benefits or to paid leave.

## Tasks and Occupations Prohibited to Women

**Some countries prohibit women from pursuing certain jobs, showing the pernicious confluence of restrictive social norms and workplace legislation.** According to the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database, restrictions on women's fields of professional work are very common. The *Women, Business and the Law 2016* report shows that nearly all economies in the Middle East and North Africa impose some

restriction on women's work, as do the majority of Sub-Saharan African economies and eight OECD high-income economies: Chile, Czech Republic, France, Israel, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Poland, and Slovenia. The table below presents a selection of professions prohibited to women in various countries. Unfortunately, a global aggregation of jobs prohibited to men was not available at the time of this report.

**Table 1:**

### Tasks and Occupations Prohibited to Women

Country	Examples of tasks or occupations legally prohibited to women
<b>Argentina</b>	Producing or manipulating explosives, flammable, or corrosive materials, or working in or around such areas; working as a machinist or fire-stoker; selling distilled or fermented alcoholic beverages in any location or space in which they are dispensed; distilling alcohol and producing or mixing liquors; sizing or polishing glass; working in any location or site that regularly contains dust or irritating or toxic vapors; greasing or cleaning machinery in movement; loading or unloading ships, cranes, or derricks; transporting incandescent materials.
<b>France</b>	Carrying loads greater than 25 kilograms or transporting loads of greater than 45 kilograms with a wheelbarrow.
<b>Madagascar</b>	Preparing, handling, and selling printed literature, posters, drawings, engravings, paintings, emblems, images, and other objects whose sale, offer, exposure, display, or distribution is punishable under criminal laws or, that without falling afoul of the law, are contrary to morality.
<b>Pakistan</b>	Working in the same room as a cotton-opener in a factory; working inside any factory to clean, lubricate, or adjust any part of machinery while that part is in motion; or working between moving parts or between fixed and moving parts of any machinery.
<b>Russia</b>	Working as a: truck driver in agriculture; freight train conductor; deckhand (boatswain, skipper, assistant skipper, and sailors of all denominations) on ships of all types of fleets, as well as floating docks and cranes for loading grain, cement, coal, and other dusty cargo; worker in integrated teams and longshoreman engaged in loading and unloading in ports and harbors; woodworker; installer of antennas at high places; mining rig operator; operator of chemical treatment of wells; lift machinist in oil and gas industry; bulldozer machinist; plumber involving the repair of sewer networks; metal and alloy smelter; driver of loading machine; pipe, furnace and flue cleaner; controller of speed of train wagons.
<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	Manufacturing lead monoxide or a number of other lead derivatives and compounds; working in the asphalt industry, tanneries, or in bars; working with fertilizer derived from animal droppings or blood; welding by oxygen, ethylene, or electricity; making mercury mirrors; extracting silver from lead ashes; cleaning the workshops used for the three previous jobs; managing and monitoring mechanical machines; repairing or cleaning mechanical machines; flaying, chopping, and depilating animals and melting their fats; manufacturing charcoal from the bones of animals except the operation of isolating the bones before burning them.

Source: World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law* (2016)<sup>60</sup>

The 2010–2014 World Values Survey  
conducted in 59 countries  
found that, on average,

**45%** & **35%**  
**OF MEN** **OF WOMEN**

agreed that “when jobs are scarce,  
men should have more rights  
to a job than women.”

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## BARRIER 3: Laws and Policies

**The distribution of care work is shaped by the presence (or absence) of laws and policies that promote equal caregiving, or, alternatively, that reinforce harmful restrictions on the roles of men and women.** In most countries, social and economic policies continue to reflect and reinforce the link between men and paid work, and women and unpaid care.<sup>61</sup> Yet policies around equal pay, taxation, and public provision of childcare, parental leave, and social protection could all support a more equal division of labor at home and in paid work.

- A recent review of 33 countries found that, of 263 early childhood development policies, only 40 addressed unpaid care concerns. Of these, only 37 aimed to redistribute unpaid care work either within the family (from women to men) or from the family to the state.<sup>62</sup> Redistribution of unpaid care work is simply not a legislative priority, even in countries focused on early childhood development.
- An additional review of 149 social-protection programs in 59 countries found that only two addressed unpaid care concerns.<sup>63</sup> Particularly in settings with a large informal labor force,<sup>64</sup> social-protection programs that address unpaid care have an important role to play in reducing and redistributing it for all.

**A review of 149 social-protection programs in 59 countries found that only two addressed unpaid care concerns.**

**Income-support or poverty-alleviation policies that aim to help low-income families are often conditional and frequently focus only on women.** This approach arises in part from research findings that showed that women are more likely to spend money on their families than men are.<sup>65</sup> Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs often provide money to the mother or female head of household on the condition that children are kept in school, or that the family's use of health services or nutrition improves. However, this approach can reinforce women's roles as the primary caregivers, and even impose additional caregiving responsibilities (such as taking children to health visits, or traveling to pick up payments). Policies and strategies such as cash transfers and social insurance need to be redesigned so that they not only increase women's income, but also encourage men to share the domestic and childcare responsibilities in their families.



**So how can full equality in caregiving be achieved?** It is clear that changes are needed in all three areas identified above: social norms, workplace policies, and legislation. The following priorities for action will help countries around the world address these persistent social and structural impediments.

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## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

### **ACTION 2.1:**

**Teach all children to see the value of care work from an early age, and to see that care work is the responsibility of all, regardless of their gender.**

In schools, homes, and communities, programs should work with boys and girls, as early as possible, encouraging them to critically reflect on traditional gender norms and expectations, and to focus on the capacity of all individuals for care. Children internalize gender norms about care work from the earliest ages. As previously noted, IMAGES research from more than 30 countries finds that if children see their parents and other adults share care work more equally, they tend to do the same as adults. Boys and girls must be prepared from an early age to be future caregivers *and* future providers. Programs can be embedded within institutions and existing structures, such as schools, early childhood development initiatives, health services and education, parenting programs, and violence prevention and response efforts, to enable their implementation at scale. Programs and policies will be more effective when they are accompanied by large-scale campaigns and community mobilization for equality and social change.

#### ***Actions underway:***

- In India, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) developed a school-based program called Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) for students in grades six and seven. The program encourages relationships based on equality, examines social norms, and questions the use of violence.<sup>66</sup> Students who participated showed increased support for a higher age at marriage for girls, and for greater

male involvement in household work, as well as increased opposition to both gender discrimination and the use of violence.<sup>67</sup>

- Roots of Empathy is a program used in primary schools in Canada, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, in which a local parent and baby visit a classroom every three weeks throughout the school year. The program has been shown to improve social and emotional competence, increase empathy, and familiarize boys and girls with the basic underpinnings of caring for young children.<sup>68</sup>
- Save the Children's CHOICES initiative, implemented in Bolivia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Nepal, engages parents, children, and community members in challenging gender stereotypes related to caregiving. After the initiative was implemented in Egypt, the percentage of children who agreed that a brother can do household chores increased from 59 percent to 86 percent.<sup>69</sup>

## **ACTION 2.2:**

**Provide training in which fathers recognize and challenge traditional attitudes, learn about gender-equitable parenting, and build skills involved in unpaid care work.**

Men must feel capable of and responsible for taking on unpaid care work. Well-designed parent training and educational campaigns that specifically target or include fathers have been shown to lead to greater equality in care and domestic work.

### ***Actions underway:***

- In Rwanda, the Rwanda Men's Resource Center (RWAMREC) and Promundo have implemented the Program P parent-training program with expectant fathers. Preliminary results from a randomized controlled trial found that men in the intervention group shared care work more equally with their partners than did men in the control group (who did not participate in the program).
- The Fatherhood Support Program in Turkey, run by AÇEV, the Mother Child Education Foundation, has helped thousands of fathers gain basic parenting skills. The program

improves fathers' awareness of their roles in their children's development, encourages fathers to spend more time with their children, helps fathers better address their children's needs, and provides alternatives to physical punishment. In evaluations of the program, fathers who participated said they spent more time with their children, shouted less, and used less harsh discipline. According to the mothers, they also became more involved in parenting and housework.<sup>70</sup>

### **ACTION 2.3:**

**Recruit more men into caregiving and other health, education, administration, and literacy (HEAL) professions.**

This effort is an overdue counterpart to ongoing efforts to increase the number of women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) professions. Bringing more men into caregiving professions could accelerate social shifts toward greater acceptance of caregiving qualities in all people.<sup>71</sup> One of the biggest challenges – which is linked to the broader issue of the devaluing of care work – is that many caregiving professions are low-paying. Bringing men into such professions can raise wages but at the same time can push women out. Thus, any efforts to bring men into caregiving professions must take into consideration local realities and push for equal living wages for women and men alike. While, in some places, men in these careers may face a certain degree of stigma, these careers are undeniably rewarding for anyone of any gender interested in basing their livelihood on caregiving.<sup>72</sup>

**Bringing more men into caregiving professions could accelerate social shifts toward greater acceptance of caregiving qualities in all people.**

### **ACTION 2.4:**

**Train health sector and other social services staff to engage men as equal caregiving partners.**

In one approach, governments are engaged to institute or expand training for healthcare providers, enjoining them to reach parents and prospective parents – particularly fathers – with information on the need for men to participate as supportive and equitable partners, from pregnancy onward.

While the choice must always be the mother's, the presence of a supportive male partner throughout pregnancy and during birth can improve a mother's well-being and access to maternal and newborn health services.<sup>73</sup> In addition, when a father is present

during the earliest stages of his children's lives, he is more likely to be involved in caring for them as they grow up.<sup>74</sup> However, there is often resistance to paternal involvement on the part of health institutions and providers. Practical and cultural changes can be made in hospitals, including the creation of private areas for labor and delivery, which allow fathers to participate without disturbing other women. Similarly, changes can be made to the timing and execution of services so that they are more inclusive of men – for example, by expanding clinics' hours to enable after-work appointments, hiring more male staff, and establishing men's and fathers' preparation groups. Early childhood centers can also be spaces in which to engage men and encourage their involvement in the lives of their children.

**When a father is present during the earliest stages of his children's lives, he is more likely to be involved in caring for them as they grow up.**

***Actions underway:***

- In 2009, Brazil developed a Men's Health Policy in its Unified Health System (known as SUS). As part of this policy, some municipalities certified clinics and hospitals as "father-friendly."<sup>75</sup> Brazil also has a policy that states that it is a woman's right to be accompanied by a person of her choice during labor and delivery. Instituto Papai, in collaboration with Promundo and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), implemented a campaign with the slogan "Pai Não É Visita" ("Father Is Not a Visitor," in English) that raised awareness of a woman's right to have the person of her choice with her for the birth, encouraged fathers to be present, and held the health system accountable for enforcement.<sup>76</sup>
- Chile Crece Contigo ("Chile Grows With You," in English) is a comprehensive child protection system that supports early childhood development, especially for children from the poorest families. Training healthcare workers and changing health clinic protocols to promote engaged fatherhood has been a key part of the initiative.
- The Fatherhood Institute in the United Kingdom offers a range of training courses for service providers focused on better outreach with fathers. Courses are aimed at all managers, staff, and volunteers working in children's centers; in maternity services; and in child-protection, school-based, and family-learning services. Courses help service providers in these spaces increase their abilities to work with fathers of very young children, work with young fathers, deliver father-

inclusive parenting services, and create father-inclusive health and social-care services.<sup>77</sup>

### **ACTION 2.5:**

**Use income-support and social-security programs to promote men's greater involvement in unpaid care work.**

Few existing early childhood development programs or social-protection programs address unpaid care (namely, the need to recognize, reduce, and redistribute it), and fewer still specifically consider the inequality between men and women in unpaid care.

#### ***Actions underway:***

- CCT programs, such as Bolsa Família in Brazil, offer monthly financial payments via a debit card to more than 11 million households. As in nearly every country with similar programs, the payment is given to mothers. The Bolsa Família Companion Program, a partnership between Brazil's Social Development Ministry and Promundo,<sup>78</sup> uses staff training, community campaigns, and group education to encourage shared decision-making between couples and more equitable sharing of household tasks. Part of the program involves work with men, particularly fathers, encouraging them to become more engaged in caregiving.
- Gardens of Mothers and Children early childhood development centers in Albania have added Fathers' Boards (a place for men to gather and talk about issues related to their roles as fathers) to encourage fathers to become more involved in parenting.<sup>79</sup>

### **ACTION 2.6:**

**Implement policies and practices that support individuals' unpaid care work as well as their paid work.**

Sharing unpaid care work more equally between women and men is not merely a question of individual choice. An equitable distribution of unpaid care work must also be supported by state and workplace policies and institutional practices, including tax, benefit, and pension arrangements for those in the formal labor sector, and alternative social-protection strategies for those who are not.<sup>80,81</sup> Flexible leave policies should be part of a package of

workers' rights, including paid leave for all types of domestic care responsibilities, adequate sick leave, advance scheduling in the case of shift workers, flexible work arrangements, subsidized quality childcare, adequate pensions, shorter working hours when appropriate, and livable wages.

***Actions underway:***

- The Australian Human Rights Commission designates “carers” as a protected group, and Australia’s Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act protect individuals from discrimination based on their caring responsibilities. In New South Wales and Victoria, laws specify that employers have to accommodate reasonable requests from carers for alternative work arrangements.<sup>82</sup>
- Denmark and Sweden have used tax and benefit policies, combined with extensive childcare provisions, to encourage mothers’ return to full-time work. In Sweden, these policies have been accompanied by paid paternity leave, encouraging men to do their fair share of the care work.<sup>83</sup> Also in Sweden, employees have the right to take 100 days (240 in certain cases) of leave from work to care for a close relative who is seriously ill, while still receiving nearly 80 percent of their salary.<sup>84</sup>
- In Turkey, a long-standing program to support the care of disabled and elderly family members was expanded in 2012. The program, managed by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy, provides remuneration for time and effort spent caring for disabled children, spouses, grandchildren, parents, and extended family members. In 2012, the program reached almost 400,000 individuals, with a budget of \$1.6 billion, and additional scale-up was planned.<sup>85</sup>

# POLICY FOCUS

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## Father-Inclusive Parent Training

**Parent training is an essential support that parents and caregivers around the world demand.** Yet “parent training,” in much of the world, still too often means “mother training,” since mothers still do the majority of the care work and, unless special efforts are made to include fathers, are more likely to participate in parent training. Numerous studies have found that well-designed parent training can improve child development outcomes, reduce violence against children, and – when both parents are involved – reduce couple conflict.<sup>86</sup> It can help prepare new parents for all of the rigors and responsibilities of parenthood, and in particular, boost fathers’ skills and engagement as parents. Comprehensive parent training that extends beyond infancy, particularly that which emphasizes paternal engagement, offers benefits throughout a child’s life cycle, with new insights and guidance for every stage of the child’s development.

**Effective parent training that includes men can achieve multiple powerful objectives.**

A new report by the Institute of Reproductive Health at Georgetown University analyzes 20 father-inclusive parenting interventions, specifically assessing whether these interventions reduce child maltreatment and intimate partner violence. The authors conclude that engaging men as parents not only reduces these forms of violence, but also increases fathers’ involvement in childcare and expands overall gender equality in participating families.<sup>87</sup>

**The best father-inclusive parent-training programs are available to young men when they are new fathers and involve hands-on practice in alternative parenting approaches.** Working with young men when they are new fathers encourages them to embrace new attitudes about care and discipline before any practices become entrenched. The report also finds that programs that use reflective discussion techniques and provide opportunities to practice new skills are effective for increasing fathers’ participation in childcare and domestic work responsibilities, as well as for mitigating family conflict.<sup>88</sup>

## Promising father-centered parent-training programs include:

### Program P

Program P takes its name from *padre* and *pai*, the words for father in Spanish and Portuguese. A key tool of the MenCare campaign, Program P is a response to the need for concrete strategies to engage men in active fatherhood from prenatal care through delivery, childbirth, and their children's early years.

Developed in partnership between Promundo, Puntos de Encuentro in Nicaragua, CulturaSalud in Chile, and the Brazilian Ministry of Health, the program has three components: (1) offering information and tools for healthcare providers; (2) developing and implementing group activities for fathers and couples; and (3) providing guidance for the design of community campaigns. By targeting men, primarily through the health sector, Program P engages fathers and their partners at a critical moment – during their partners' pregnancies or when their children are young – when they are open to adopting new caregiving behaviors.

More specifically, the Program P manual contains: (1) background research and the latest data on the vital importance to maternal health and gender equality of engaging men as caregivers; (2) a guide for health professionals on how to engage men at prenatal consultations and in primary health clinics; (3) a series of interactive modules for gender-transformative group education with men, and in some instances their female partners; and (4) a step-by-step guide to creating and launching a MenCare community campaign. Program P has been adapted and implemented in at least 10 countries.

A randomized controlled trial of Program P in Rwanda found positive impact of the intervention across multiple outcomes, including reduced physical or sexual intimate partner violence; less physical punishment of children; greater use of modern contraceptive methods; more men attending antenatal care visits with their partner; greater partner support during pregnancy; and more participation of men in care work.

Results from Program P's implementation have shown other positive changes in the lives of men and their families, as well. For example, young fathers in Nicaragua, one of the locations where Program P was originally tested, reported improved relationships with their children and partners, as well as greater participation in household work and childcare. In addition, when World Vision partnered with Promundo to adapt Program P for implementation in Sri Lanka, men who participated learned to manage difficult emotions and reported a decrease in substance abuse among themselves and their partners. Furthermore, many of the men and staff who were involved have continued to spread the program's messages throughout their communities and have recruited other men to participate.



### **REAL Fathers Initiative**

The REAL Fathers Initiative aims to reduce the incidence of intimate partner violence and physical punishment of children through a 12-session mentoring program and community awareness campaign that targets young fathers (aged 16 to 25) who are parenting toddlers (aged one to three) in Northern Uganda. The initiative seeks to challenge the gender norms and sexual scripts that often trigger coercion and violence in relationships and to teach effective parenting, communication, and conflict-resolution skills. The intervention includes the identification and training of mentors from within communities to provide individual support to each member of a small group of young fathers around ways to reduce intimate partner violence and harsh punishment of children; mentors meet one-on-one for monthly mentoring sessions and hold small group discussions with participating fathers for six months. The mentors are trained by program staff, once at the beginning of the program to cover the first half of the sessions, and again in the middle of the program to cover the second half. The program also uses a sequence of posters, displayed in the community, to reinforce themes raised during mentor sessions and to spark community dialogue.

Evaluation of the REAL Fathers Initiative included a quasi-experimental design using mixed methods. The results of a comparison between the survey data from men who were exposed to the intervention and from those who were not show significant reductions in intimate partner violence at end-line, at three months after the intervention ended, and over the longer-term (12 month) follow-up. A significant reduction in physical punishment of children was also evident at long-term follow-up. In addition, attitudes regarding the use of physical punishment and intimate partner violence, at end-line and at long term follow-up, showed significant improvement.<sup>89</sup>

**Although these and other parent-training programs targeting or including fathers have been shown to be effective, the reach of these programs is very limited. It is time to think bigger.** It is time to move beyond one-off programs engaging a few hundred or a few thousand parents and fathers at a time. Child and family health and well-being demand that best-practice family supports, including parent training that engages fathers, be widely available. Beyond the health sector, adult literacy programs, home visitation programs for new mothers, and refugee and immigrant services may afford further opportunities to reach and engage fathers.

# CHAPTER THREE



# The Need for Paid, Equal, Non- Transferable Leave

**T**he foremost policy recommendation that this report offers for the realization of gender-equal caregiving is that governments (and failing that, employers, corporations, and others in the private sector) provide equal, paid, non-transferable, job-protected parental leave for all caregivers, in accordance with the best standards of such policies. Leave should be guaranteed for all parents in equal duration, adequately paid, and non-transferable. Anything less reinforces gender inequality, perpetuates women's lesser participation in the paid labor force, impedes women's career advancement relative to men's, and reduces men's opportunity to be caregivers.<sup>90</sup> Parental leave – when it is paid, equal, and non-transferable – is one of the few policies for which data show success in shifting norms around men's caregiving and promoting equality, particularly when it is embedded within broader strategies to reduce and redistribute care work.

**Leave policies must also embody equality and respect for families and caregivers of all kinds.** As marriage and family demographics rapidly transform around the world, and as a diversity of sexualities and gender identities continue to enter the mainstream, leave policies must be explicit in their inclusion. This means inclusion of adoptive parents, of single parents, of parents who have commissioned a surrogacy, and of parents and caregivers of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

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# New Insights Into the Benefits of Leave Policies

**Recent evidence underscores the effectiveness of well-designed leave policies in leveling the balance of unpaid care work between men and women.** Leave for fathers – in conjunction with leave for mothers and additional structural solutions, and when enshrined in national policies – has the power to contribute significantly to the recognition and redistribution of care work and to transform deeply rooted inequalities between men and women. These policies can change the gendered dynamics of caregiving at home and elevate the status of caregiving more broadly. As Figure 7 demonstrates, there is a strong correlation between greater maternity and paternity leave and more equitable sharing of unpaid care work between men and women. It is worth noting that the European Union recommends 16 weeks as the minimum length of leave necessary to adequately support parents in their roles as caregivers and in developing lifelong patterns of equality in caregiving.

**Leave for fathers leads to better pay as well as greater advancement for women in the workforce, even as it boosts men’s connectedness at home.** Recent evidence shows direct benefits to women’s economic empowerment when countries mandate paternity leave. Analyzing data from 53 lower-income countries, World Bank researchers found in a 2016 report that women’s employment is significantly higher in countries that mandate paternity leave than it is in countries that do not. The authors estimate a 6.8 percentage point boost, on average, in the proportion of paid women workers when a country mandates paternity leave.<sup>91</sup>

Responding to critics who argue that providing paid leave to fathers will have negative economic consequences (and to some who also argue against leave for mothers), a recent analysis by the World Policy Analysis Center shows that countries can maintain low unemployment and remain highly economically competitive even when ample leave policies are offered. As

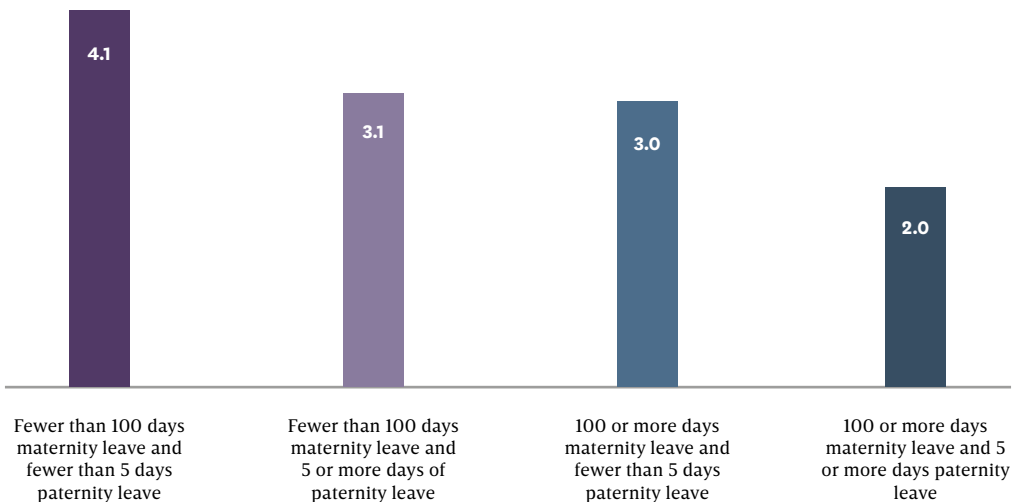
shown in Table 2, 12 of the top 15 highly competitive countries (where data are available) guarantee paid leave for fathers, many with at least 26 weeks of paid paternal leave, and nearly half with 70 percent or better wage replacement. Countries classified as “low-unemployment” universally offer leave for new fathers, with 10 of 12 countries guaranteeing replacement of at least 70 percent of fathers’ wages.

## Figure 7:

### Female-to-Male Ratio of Time Spent on Unpaid Work, by Country’s Length of Paid Maternity and Paternity Leave

Ratio of women’s daily unpaid work to men’s daily unpaid work, by country’s length of paid maternity and paternity leave

(How to interpret: In countries that offer 100 or more days of maternity leave and 5 or more days of paternity leave, women’s daily average time spent on unpaid work is 2.0 times that of men.)



Notes: The countries analyzed that offer maternity leave were divided into two groups: those that offer maternity leave of 100 or more days and those that offer maternity leave of fewer than 100 days. The countries analyzed that offer paternity leave were similarly divided into two groups: those that offer 5 or more days and those that offer fewer than 5 days. The female-to-male ratio was then calculated in each of the four combinations.

Source: Data analysis by Dalberg Global Development Advisors. Data sources: Ratio and unpaid work data from UN Women’s *Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016*, national time use surveys across 1998 to 2013; parental benefits data from the World Bank’s *Parental Benefits from “Getting a Job”* (2013), *State of the World’s Fathers* (2015), and Dalberg interviews.

**Table 2:****Parental Leave and Paternity Leave Summary for Top 12 Low-Unemployment and Top 15 Highly Competitive OECD Countries**

	Country	Paid leave for fathers	Duration of paid leave, in weeks	Wage replacement rate
<b>Low-unemployment countries</b>	Australia	Yes	20	flat rate
	Austria	Yes	52–104	80%, flat
	Czech Republic	Yes	156	70%
	Denmark	Yes	34–48	70–100%
	Iceland	Yes	26	80%
	Japan	Yes	52	50–67%
	South Korea	Yes	52	40–100%
	Luxembourg	Yes	26.4	100%, flat
	Mexico	Yes	0.9	100%
	Netherlands	Yes	0.4	100%
	New Zealand	Yes	16	100%
	Norway	Yes	36–46	80–100%
<b>Highly competitive countries</b>	Australia	Yes	20	flat rate
	Austria	Yes	52–104	80%, flat
	Belgium	Yes	19.3	82–100%, flat
	Canada	Yes	35	55%
	Denmark	Yes	34–48	70–100%
	Finland	Yes	149.8	70–75%, flat rate
	Germany	Yes	44–96	34–67%
	Japan	Yes	52	50–67%
	Netherlands	Yes	0.4	100%
	Norway	Yes	36–46	80–100%
	Singapore	Yes	2	100%
	Sweden	Yes	61.8	78%, flat
	Switzerland	No	N/A	N/A
	United Kingdom	Yes	39	Lesser of flat rate or 90%
	United States	No	N/A	N/A

Notes: “Low-unemployment countries” were those that had below the median OECD unemployment rate in at least 8 of the 10 years from 2005 to 2014. “Highly competitive countries” were those that ranked among the world’s top 20 competitors in at least 8 of the 10 from 2005 to 2014, according to World Economic Forum rankings. “Paid leave for fathers” includes paid leave for men only (paternity leave) and parental leave that is available to men. Leave duration does not include bonuses that some countries provide when both parents take leave or when a father takes all his allowed leave. Policies allowing for part-time leave are not considered. Varying wage replacement rates within countries reflect variation in reimbursement rates by duration or type of leave. For example, some countries provide a higher reimbursement rate for the first part of the leave period and a lower rate for the remainder. In addition, in some countries, paternity leave is paid at a higher rate than parental leave, so the amount paid to fathers will vary by leave type. Some countries have a ceiling on the wage replacement that high earners can earn and some provide higher wage replacement rates to low earners; such variation is not shown in this table. Luxembourg and Sweden’s parental leave policies also allow parents to take part-time leave with partial benefits for a longer duration.<sup>92</sup> Singapore information updated by report authors.

Source: World Policy Analysis Center<sup>93</sup>

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# The Current State of Leave for Fathers

The 2015 *State of the World's Fathers* report showed that, while maternity leave is offered in nearly all countries, only 92 countries offer leave that can be taken by new fathers. Although some countries have since introduced new or expanded leave policies for fathers (see “New Paid Leave Legislation”), the global state of paid paternity and parental leave has changed little. At the same time, new data and newly published analyses of these trends add to the body of knowledge of the current state of leave for fathers around the world.

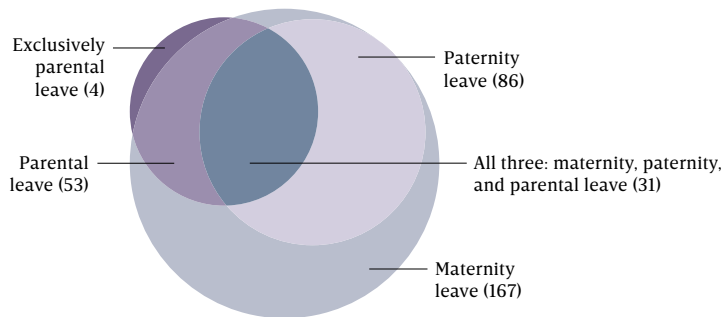
As of 2016, *paternity leave* – usually a short leave period specifically allocated for fathers after the birth of a child – is still offered in only about half of economies in the world, while *parental leave* – which is typically longer and can be taken by either parent – is offered in far fewer.<sup>94</sup> Figure 8 shows the numbers of such policies offered around the world, as well as their overlap. As the figure shows, out of 173 included economies, only 31 offer all three leave policies: those available only to mothers (maternity leave), those available only to fathers (paternity leave), and those shareable by all parents (parental leave).

**Figure 8:**

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## Leave Policies Offered Around the World

Number of countries offering various combinations of maternity leave, paternity leave, and parental leave



Source: World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law* (2016)<sup>95</sup>

## New Paid Leave Legislation

Since the first *State of the World's Fathers* report in 2015, several countries around the world have introduced new or expanded paid paternity leave or parental leave policies. This box presents a selection of updates.

### BRAZIL

In 2016, a new “Legal Framework for Early Childhood” was signed into law in Brazil, including relevant measures to protect children’s rights as well as an expansion of paternity leave from 5 to 20 days for employees of many Brazilian companies, including in cases of adoption.<sup>96</sup> The framework applies immediately to all Brazilian companies who participate in the government’s Programa Empresa Cidadã (“Corporate Citizen Program,” in English). This program, created by the government in 2010, already allowed employees of participating companies in the private sector to take up to six months of maternity leave, and now, provides for 20 days of paternity leave. Participation in the program is voluntary for private corporations, but the program grants tax benefits to participants.<sup>97</sup>

### IRAN

In January 2017, the Iranian parliament passed new legislation allowing two weeks of paid leave for new fathers working for both state-run and private companies.<sup>98</sup>

### ISRAEL

In July 2016, Israeli fathers gained the legal right to six days of paternity leave, including the day of the child’s birth.<sup>99</sup> The six days draw from pre-existing leave entitlements, however: three days from a father’s annual sick leave and three from his vacation days. If the father has no remaining vacation days, those days are granted as unpaid leave.<sup>100</sup> Said one parliament member, “We have an interest as a state and a society to make the father a more integral partner in family life.”<sup>101</sup>

### SINGAPORE

Starting on January 1, 2017, eligible working fathers in Singapore, including those who are self-employed, are entitled to two weeks of paid paternity leave funded by the government, an increase from the previous offering of one week.<sup>105</sup> In announcing this new policy, a senior Minister of State said, “Nothing quite compares to the joy of holding your own child [...] Fathers feel these emotions as strongly as mothers do.”<sup>106</sup> This new policy includes some restrictions: fathers must be married to the child’s mother, and the child must be a Singaporean citizen. In the new policy, adoptive mothers – though not adoptive fathers – are offered 12 weeks of paid leave, up from four weeks.<sup>107</sup>

### SPAIN

As of 2017, paid paternity leave provisions in Spain have increased from 13 calendar days to four weeks, covered at 100 percent pay and provided by social security.<sup>102</sup> Leave can be taken either full or part time, and fathers are also granted two days of birth leave, separate from the paternity leave and paid for by the employer.<sup>103,104</sup>

### UNITED KINGDOM

Starting in 2015, parents in the United Kingdom have access to up to 50 weeks of parental leave – 37 of which are paid – in addition to previously existing maternity and paternity leave policies.<sup>108</sup> This additional time is available to mothers or fathers. The new policy includes adoptive parents, same-sex couples, cohabitating couples, and couples raising a child together even if the baby is from a previous relationship of one of the partners.<sup>109</sup>

### URUGUAY

In 2016, Uruguay expanded its leave offerings for both fathers and mothers, now allowing up to seven days of leave for fathers (up from three days).<sup>110</sup> The legislation also allows for both mothers and fathers to work part time, with job protection, until their child is six months old.<sup>111</sup>



**In the vast majority of countries offering paternity leave, it is paid – typically at 100 percent of salary.** Employers in most countries that provide such leave are required to cover wages and benefits during this time; less commonly, coverage is a social-security benefit for which companies may be partially reimbursed by the state. A combination of employer and social-security funding for paternity leave, while common for maternity leave benefits, was only found in three developed countries: Belgium, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. Social-security or collective funding is much more common in developed economies, particularly in Europe, than in any other region.<sup>112</sup> Parental leave is typically paid at a lower rate and funded by social-security systems. In some countries, local or municipal governments pay for or supplement coverage of leave as well. In Brazil, the municipality of Niterói recently expanded paid paternity leave to 30 days for municipal employees from the five days provided by the national government.<sup>113</sup>

**While the law guarantees maternity leave policies in the vast majority of countries, only in 51% does the government pay for them.**

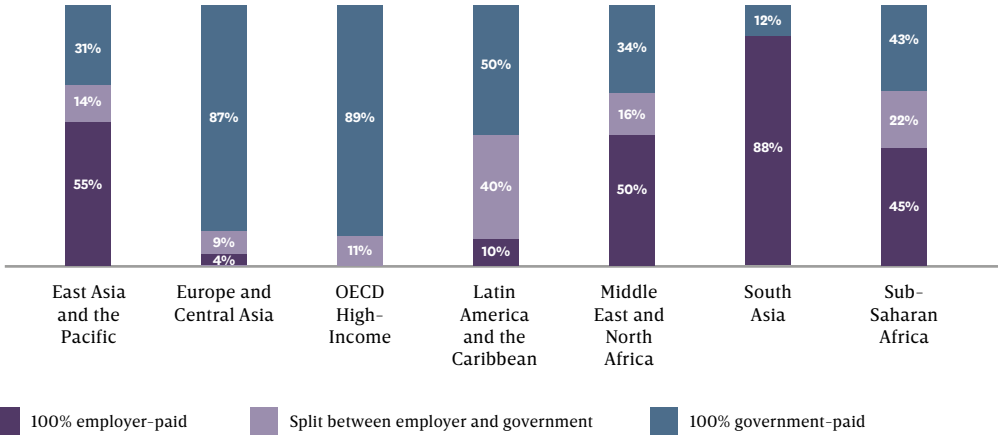
**Where not provided by the state, some employers provide paid paternity or parental leave.** In the United States, for example, a 2013 survey of employee benefits in 500 organizations found that 15 percent of the employers surveyed offered paid paternity leave.<sup>114</sup> Another study in the United States examined policies at 30 corporations across a broad range of industries and found that 60 percent offered paid leave for fathers, ranging from three days to 12 weeks.<sup>115</sup> However, these benefits tend to be much more available (and accessible) to highly skilled and well-compensated full-time workers.<sup>116</sup>

**World Bank data illustrate the downstream consequences, for division of care responsibilities, of *who pays for leave benefits* – in this case, *maternity leave*.** The provision of generous leave, in itself, is not enough to remove the barriers to equal care. What matters more is who pays for leave. If employers themselves must pay for maternity leave, then the cost of hiring women of reproductive age exceeds the cost of hiring men. However, when the government pays for it, this discrepancy is reduced. While the law guarantees maternity leave policies in the vast majority of countries, only in 51 percent does the government pay for them. In fully 30 percent of countries, employers must bear these costs, building into the law a disincentive to hire women.<sup>117</sup>

**Figure 9:**

### Who Pays for Maternity Leave?

Proportion of funding for maternity leave paid by employers, governments, or split between them, by region



Source: World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law* (2016)<sup>118</sup>

**Why would – and should – employers provide these non-statutory benefits? There is increasing evidence that providing paid family leave is good for business: it improves employee retention and reduces turnover, increases productivity and morale, and reduces absenteeism and training costs.**<sup>119,120,121,122</sup>

When leave policies encourage and allow men to take on more caregiving at home, employers benefit from women’s shorter leaves and increased participation in the workplace. California employers reported, for example, that the state’s Paid Family Leave program, while not paid for by employers, had a “positive” or “no noticeable” effect on productivity (89 percent of employers), profitability/performance (91 percent of employers), turnover (96 percent of employers), and employee morale (99 percent of employers).<sup>123</sup>

**Leave benefits can be more common in sectors that require highly skilled workers, as a way to recruit and retain them.** Most of the organizations surveyed by the Boston College Center for Work and Family in its 2014 report *The New Dad: Take Your Leave* had not developed a “business case” for leave, but rather recognized the need for these policies in order to retain talent, to establish consistent treatment of men and women (and birth and adoptive parents), and to respond to the national trend in fathers actually taking leave.<sup>124</sup>

## Progress on Parental Leave for Fathers in South Africa

In 2017, the parliament of South Africa is expected to approve the final draft of a bill that will introduce new parental leave provisions, under which fathers will qualify for 10 days of paid leave. The bill is a landmark achievement: it establishes important principles in the South African labor-law framework, including non-gendered parental-leave language, dedicated leave for adoptive parents and commissioning parents in a surrogacy agreement, and the inclusion of same-sex couples among those who qualify.

The bill, and the fact that it is now awaiting approval, is the result of consistent advocacy work by various groups and individuals from civil society. Due in part to pressure from Sonke Gender Justice, in 2012 the *White Paper on Families in South Africa* called for the government to investigate the feasibility of paternity leave in South Africa. In 2014, Hendri Terblanche, a father of two, submitted a petition to parliament that sought to provide new fathers with 10 days of paternity leave and directed media exposure to his petition, which Sonke supported. In 2015, Sonke, MOSAIC, and other women's rights organizations researched and developed a position paper on parental leave via the MenCare+ program in South Africa. The global launch of the first *State of the World's Fathers* report and the *MenCare*

*Parental Leave Platform* added momentum for Terblanche to develop the content for a draft bill, which was tabled and deliberated in 2016. The Sonke-MOSAIC team used the position paper and the *MenCare Parental Leave Platform* as advocacy tools, and facilitated parents who had participated in the MenCare+ program in lobbying members of parliament for better parental leave.

The bill's language has now been approved, and, as it stands, increases the amount paid for the existing maternity leave provision to 66 percent. It also introduces paid parental leave of 10 days for parents that do not qualify for maternity leave. With fathers making up the majority of parents who fall into this category, in effect, paternity leave will be available, although because the bill now includes all genders and sexual orientations, it is not referred to as such. The bill also introduces leave of 10 weeks for surrogacy commissioning and for adoptive parents, in the latter case, from the day of placement. Two fathers who are married to each other and adopt a child will therefore qualify for 10 weeks and 10 days of paid leave each. The responsible committee has approved the bill; what remains is for the National Assembly in parliament and the president to approve the legislation. This is due to happen in 2017.

*For more information, see: <http://www.genderjustice.org.za/card/new-parental-leave-provisions-south-africa-explained/>*

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# PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

## **ACTION 3.1:**

### **Offer equal, paid, non-transferable parental leave for all parents.**

Equal, non-transferable, and adequately paid leave for all parents, in line with the recommendations of the *MenCare Parental Leave Platform*, sends a powerful message that the care of children is equally the responsibility of all genders, and has the power to set a new norm around shared caregiving.<sup>125</sup>

**After Iceland instituted a “use it or lose it” fathers’ leave policy, average uptake increased from 39 days to 103 days.**

#### ***Actions underway:***

- In Estonia, after paternity leave coverage was increased to 100 percent of previous earnings (financed by general taxation), uptake of leave increased from 14 percent of eligible fathers in 2007 to 50 percent in 2008.<sup>126</sup>
- In Iceland, fathers took an average of 39 days of leave in 2001. After a “use it or lose it” fathers’ leave policy was instituted, this rose to 103 days by 2008.<sup>127</sup> Similar patterns were found in Norway and Sweden.
- In Norway, mothers’ sickness-related absences from work were reduced by 5 to 10 percent in families where fathers took longer leave.<sup>128</sup>
- In the United Kingdom, fathers who took leave after a child’s birth were 19 percent more likely, 8 to 12 months later, to participate in feedings and get up with the baby during the night, compared with fathers who did not take leave.<sup>129</sup>

# The MenCare Parental Leave Platform

Based on existing evidence and the advice of leading experts on the effects of parental leave, such leave should be:

- 1. EQUAL FOR WOMEN AND MEN:** Leave of equal duration should be guaranteed for both women and men. Anything less reinforces gender inequality, perpetuates women's lower pay, inhibits their career advancement relative to men's, and deprives men of the opportunity to be caregivers.
- 2. NON-TRANSFERABLE BETWEEN PARENTS:** Leave policies should be allotted as individual entitlements – designated for each parent – and offered as “use it or lose it.” This encourages both men's and women's caregiving and supports a diversity of family structures.
- 3. PAID ACCORDING TO EACH PARENT'S SALARY:** To support new parents and families, and in particular, to increase men's uptake of leave, it must be adequately paid, and, ideally, paid in full through social-security benefits. When leave is not paid (whether for mothers or fathers), many individuals simply cannot afford to take it. There is strong evidence that uptake of leave is higher when the wage replacement rate is higher.<sup>130</sup> In countries that do not have social-security systems in place, other public financing options should be proposed and supported.
- 4. ADEQUATE IN LENGTH FOR EACH PARENT, WITH A MINIMUM OF 16 WEEKS FOR EACH:** The European Union's recommendation of 16 weeks should be adopted as the minimum length of leave necessary to adequately support parents in their roles as caregivers and in developing lifelong patterns of equality in caregiving.
- 5. OFFERED WITH JOB PROTECTION:** No one should be forced out of his/her job, or suffer discrimination in pay or promotion, for taking leave to care for a child.
- 6. ENCOURAGED AND INCENTIVIZED:** Even if a leave policy exists, if employers, peers, and society in general discourage its use, men (and many women) will not take it. Employers and governments should ensure that both women and men feel supported to take existing leave provisions.
- 7. INCLUSIVE FOR WORKERS OF ALL KINDS:** Leave is often designed for and extended to members of the full-time, formal work force. Leave and other supportive policies must also be available for other types of workers, including those who work part time, seasonally, short term, or under contract.
- 8. COMBINED WITH SUBSIDIZED, HIGH-QUALITY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE, AND OTHER POLICIES TO ENSURE EQUITY IN ALL CAREGIVING, PARTICULARLY IN LOW-INCOME SETTINGS:** Paid, equitable parental leave must be combined with access to high-quality early childhood education and care for all children, as well as with other measures like income-support and social-security programs to alleviate the burden of care and to change norms around caregiving.
- 9. SUPPORTIVE OF DIVERSE CAREGIVERS AND CAREGIVING:** Leave should be offered to all caregivers, including same-sex, opposite-sex, adoptive, and single parents, as well as parents of children with disabilities.
- 10. ENSHRINED AND ENFORCED IN NATIONAL LAW AND IN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS:** Leave should not just be left to employers and individuals; it should be government-mandated, included within existing or new employment benefits or social insurance, and internationally backed.

# CONCLUSIONS

**Achieving equality in unpaid care work is an urgent priority for the well-being of children, families, and communities around the world – and it is time all of us take action to contribute to this goal.** Calling on individual fathers alone to do more or do better is necessary but vastly insufficient. As various countries around the world see greater participation by fathers in family life, it is crucial that laws, social norms, and workplace policies support, reinforce, and accelerate these changes.

**Global evidence provides a clear pathway for the actions needed to achieve equality in caregiving.** From the earliest ages, everyone, regardless of gender, must be encouraged to see themselves as both caregivers *and* financial providers – and be supported in both of these roles. Recognizing that economic justice, social justice, and gender justice are all intertwined, it is crucial to ensure that all caregivers – particularly the most economically disadvantaged and marginalized – have access to income support and affordable or subsidized high-quality childcare. Specific actions at the social, workplace, and legislative levels are needed to allow everyone, regardless of gender, to thrive as both caregivers and financial providers. Fully reimagined and universally available parent-training initiatives are needed to engage fathers in meaningful ways. Equal, paid, non-transferable parental leave for all parents is needed in order to achieve an equitable distribution of caregiving.

**It is time to think bigger, to commit to bold action, and to set ambitious goals.** *State of the World's Fathers: Time for Action* calls on every country to set a national goal of men and boys doing half of the unpaid care work, and for a global goal of men and boys doing fully 50 percent of the unpaid care work. International organizations and commissions, women's rights advocates, and women themselves have spoken out for decades on the harmful effects of the unjust distribution of unpaid care work. It is estimated that at the current rate of global progress, it will take 75 years to achieve equality in this work. It is clear that change is moving too slowly. The time for action is now.

## Action Plan

- ACTION 1.1:** *At the international level, set goals, strategies, indicators, and budget commitments around the achievement of true equality between men and women in unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 1.2:** *Systematically measure men's and women's time use, including time spent on unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 1.3:** *At the national level, create and implement broad action plans to promote men and boys' equal sharing of unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 1.4:** *Build these strategies and action plans into public systems and institutions (such as the health sector) that can enable and promote men and boys' equal participation in caregiving.*
- ACTION 2.1:** *Teach all children to see the value of care work from an early age, and to see that care work is the responsibility of all, regardless of their gender.*
- ACTION 2.2:** *Provide training in which fathers recognize and challenge traditional attitudes, learn about gender-equitable parenting, and build skills involved in unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 2.3:** *Recruit more men into caregiving and other health, education, administration, and literacy (HEAL) professions.*
- ACTION 2.4:** *Train health sector and other social services staff to engage men as equal caregiving partners.*
- ACTION 2.5:** *Use income-support and social-security programs to promote men's greater involvement in unpaid care work.*
- ACTION 2.6:** *Implement policies and practices that support individuals' unpaid care work as well as their paid work.*
- ACTION 3.1:** *Offer equal, paid, non-transferable parental leave for all parents.*

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