



Global
Disability
Fund

UN Joint programme on Unpaid Care, Disability, and Gender Transformative Approaches

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Why care work matters

Care and support systems are essential to the wellbeing and maintenance of our economies, societies and humanity as a whole. However, unpaid care work is both highly gendered and often overlooked in the mainstream economic discourse. It is still widely perceived as a private issue rather than a matter of public policy and social good that should be valued, invested in, and more equitably shared.

The current social organization of care also has implications for the human rights and wellbeing of care receivers, especially for women and men with disabilities. Without adequate formal state support, they rely on the availability of informal (unpaid) care and support from family and community, which limits an adequate and independent standard of living. Women with disabilities are three times more likely to have unmet healthcare needs than men.

Today, we stand at a strategic crossroads regarding care and support systems. There is a crucial need to understand and dismantle the multiple barriers faced by both care recipients and care providers in accessing necessary services and achieve economic justice for everyone.

Advancing gender equality

The way that care is valued and organized in our societies is the structural foundation of many gender inequalities. The uneven distribution of care responsibilities in society, taking for granted the free and low-paid work of women, is behind women's time poverty, women's monetary poverty, the gender gap in labor force participation, the gender pay gap, women's limited access to social protection, and much more. We will never achieve gender equality, unless there is a profound reconfiguration of how we value care work and how we organize it in our economies and societies in a truly gender transformative and inclusive way.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities

The global care agenda has had a primary focus on childcare, and more recently on elderly care as the ageing of population expands in many regions, particularly, in Europe and Central Asia, Asia Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. It is estimated that 2.3 billion people will need care by 2030.

As the global care agenda progresses, it is essential to include the unique requirements of persons with disabilities to ensure no one is left behind. Without comprehensive care and support systems, persons with disabilities risk human rights violations, unwilling and unnecessary institutionalization, and obstacles in meaningful participation in social and public life. Currently, persons with disabilities often lack the ability to choose services, make decisions, and access the support necessary for independent living.

Care work and intersectional inequalities: a call for action

This programme, funded through the GDF, aims to transform perceptions of care as not valuable, as unskilled, and not 'work', and by breaking the cycle of subordination and structural dependency of women and addressing the stigma around care workers and recipients of care and support. It also includes ensuring that care systems guarantee the autonomy, dignity and agency of persons with disabilities as receivers of care and support systems, and that outcomes are gender-equitable and disability-inclusive.

This programme aims to unite two previously disconnected agendas: transforming and expanding care systems to achieve gender equality, and ensuring persons with disabilities can exercise their rights to live independently with community support.

Participating
UN Organizations:



Goals

At country level, we will focus on:

- Identifying and addressing gaps in national and local care and support systems that hinder independent living for persons with disabilities.
- Enhancing public policies that help recognize, reduce and redistribute care, responding to the needs, rights, and well-being of women and paid care workers, including those with disabilities.
- Help expand local care services to help reduce women's time and income poverty, redistribute care responsibilities and redefine gender social norms
- Improving the provision of disability-inclusive and gender-transformative services to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, the quality of care provided and the wellbeing and recognition of caregivers.
- Fostering the right of persons with disabilities to choose and control the support and care they receive, enabling them to live independently and participate in society.
- Enhancing decent work conditions and equal opportunities for women caregivers, including those with disabilities.

At global level, we will focus on:

- Disseminating and promoting the utilization of all new knowledge, data, and tools generated by the program.
- Fostering cross-country learning, peer emulation, and the exchange of good practices and resources among the participating countries.
- Contributing to the drafting of additional guidance, guidelines, and publications related to care work and support systems.
- Advocating for further action by participating in conferences, seminars, and workshops on care and support systems that are gender transformative and disability inclusive.

Looking forward

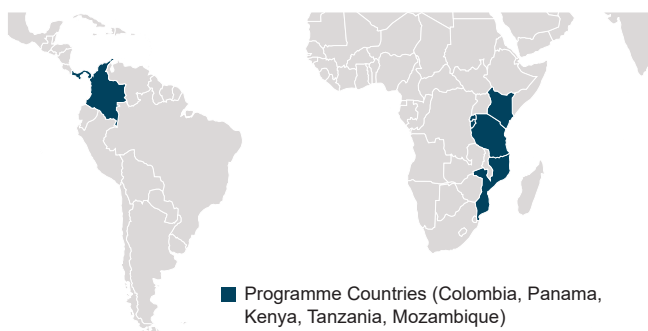
While care and support systems remain a strategic priority for GDF and its implementing partners, both nationally and globally, we recognize that not all challenges can be solved by a single programme. This initiative aims to both complement existing and catalyze new initiatives addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender, disability and other forms of discrimination. We welcome further partnerships and collaboration with government officials, civil society organizations, academics, and experts for long-term cooperation, working towards a more inclusive future for all.

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How we will do this

- **Diagnosing current care systems:** Assessments and mappings from both providers and recipients to generate evidence, fill significant knowledge gaps, and identify priorities for action.
- **Building capacities:** Capacity development for organizations of persons with disabilities, women's organizations, care providers, and public authorities to build a common language and approach to care and support systems.
- **Testing innovative practices:** Service piloting to test new or amended services, capture good practices, and issue joint recommendations for endorsement and scale-up.
- **Facilitating policy dialogue and agenda setting:** Policy dialogue to promote lessons learned and meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders in the determination of policy reforms.
- **Accompanying policy and legislative reforms:** Provide support to the drafting of policies, laws, norms and regulations at the national and local levels to transform and expand care systems.

Programme Countries



Other Partners:

- National and local public authorities
- International Disability Alliance
- Organizations of Persons with Disabilities at regional and national levels
- Women's Rights Organizations at regional and national levels

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