

RECOGNIZING CARE WORK

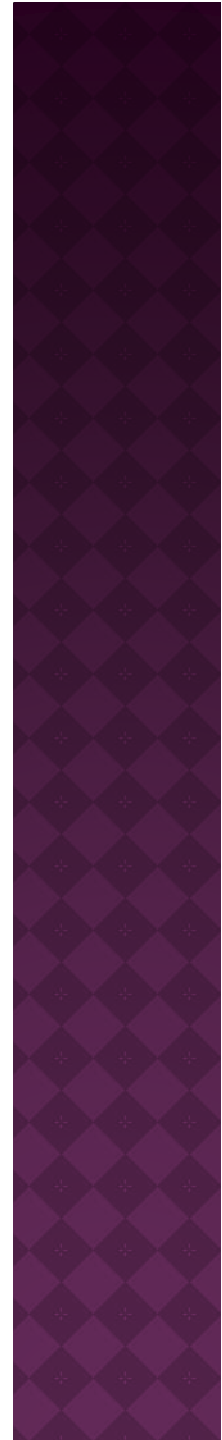
PROFESSOR AMBREENA MANJI

KEY NOTE PRESENTATION AT THE GENDER FORUM

27TH MARCH 2014

WHAT DO WE CALL WORK?

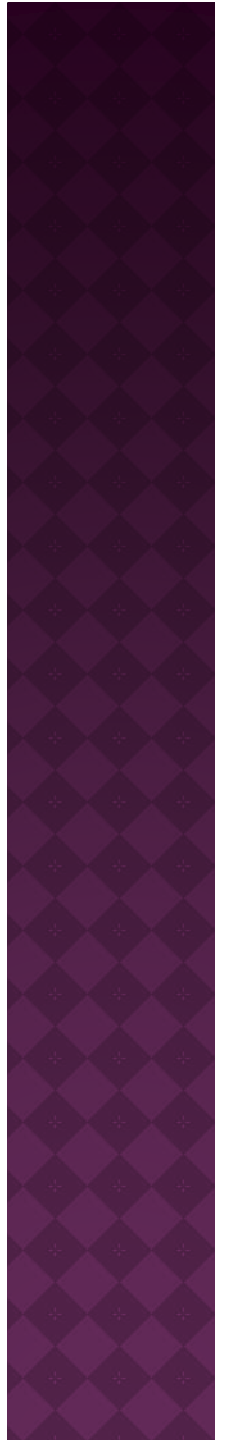
- ❖ Different caring activities are essential to maintaining our societies and economies.
- ❖ They are primarily done by women and girls.
- ❖ Because this work is carried out in the private sphere - a person's own home - and is unpaid - it is not reflected in national statistics or economic analyses.



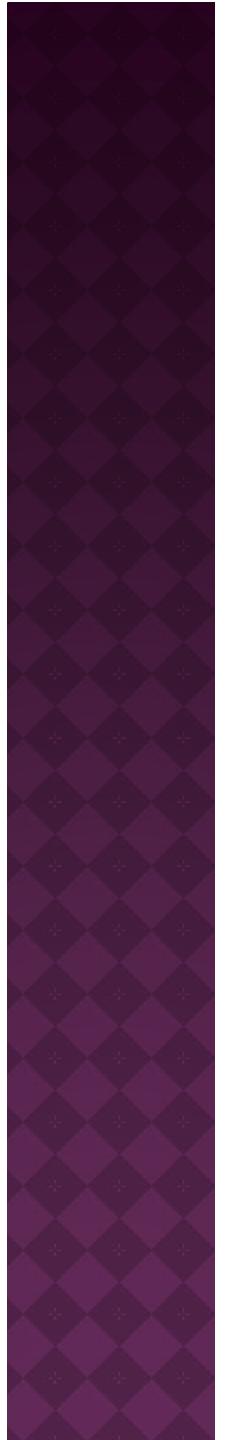


- ❖ Despite this, it is central to our day-to-day wellbeing.
- ❖ Widely perceived to be less valuable than paid work
- ❖ Unpaid work is largely ignored
- ❖ Not considered to be ‘work’ even by the women and men who engage in it and also by those who benefit directly from it

- ❖ Caring activities generally take place within families, and generally tasks are done by women: preparing and cooking food, looking after children, Kidero's socks.



- ❖ In other words, we all combine work and care - 2 minutes to give your neighbor an example of care work you do...



SPHERES OF CARE WORK

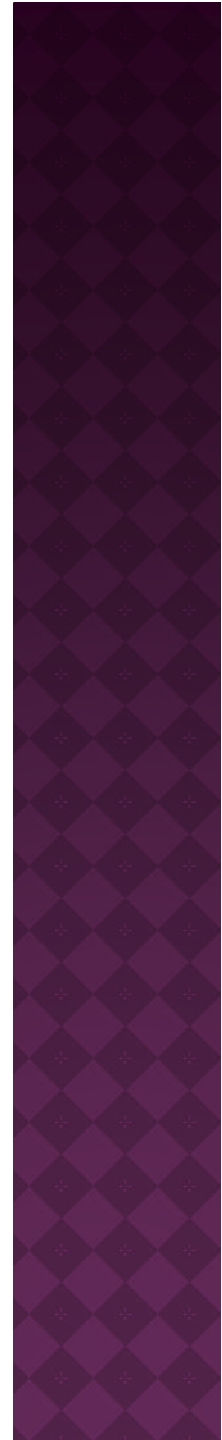
❖ Production:

- ✓ where paid work takes place
- ✓ attracts economic value



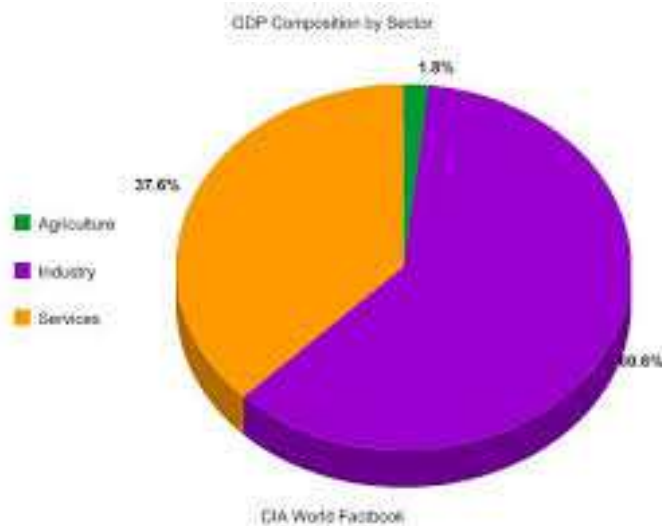
❖ Reproduction:

- ✓ where biological reproduction, unpaid social reproduction, social provision e.g. community work, and reproduction of culture takes place.
- ✓ does not attract economic value and hence referred to as gendered division of labor

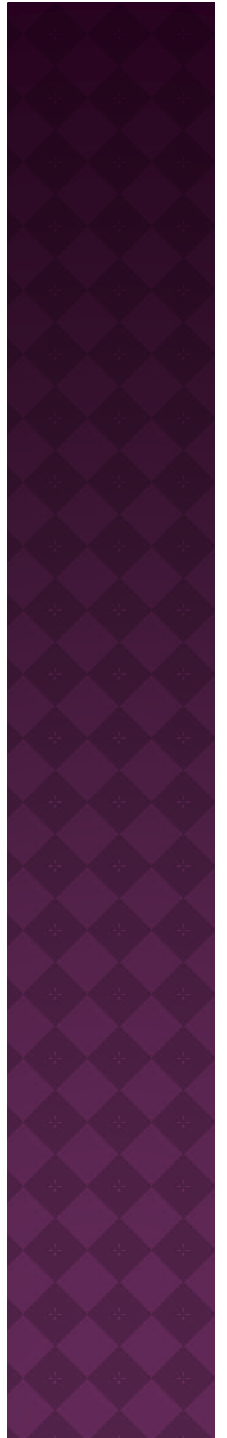


HOW IS CARE WORK REFLECTED?

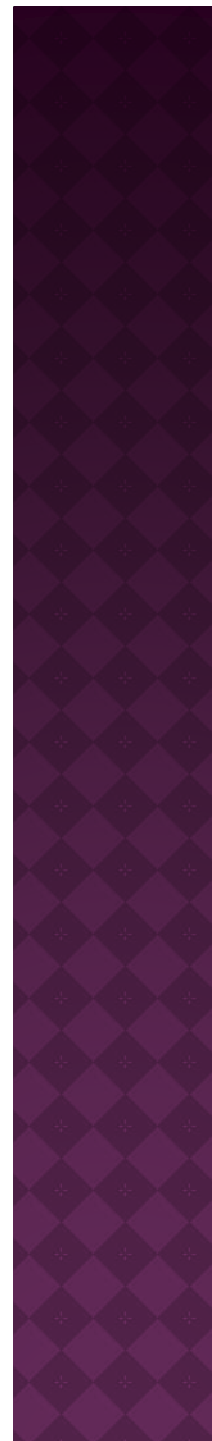
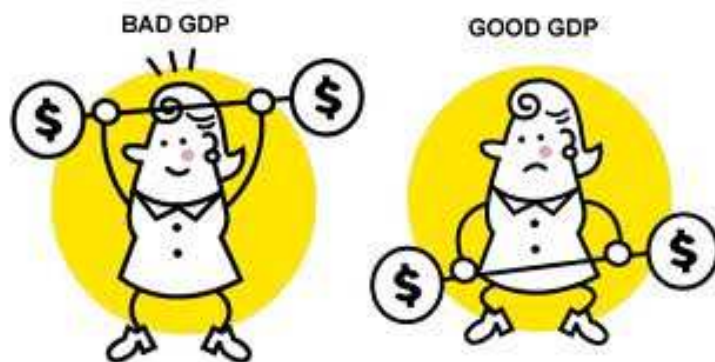
- ❖ Orthodox economics does not value reproductive labor, recognize it, quantify it.
- ❖ The unpaid care economy does not appear in national accounting systems



- ❖ This has led scholars and policy makers to ask: What is women's work counted?
- ❖ How can we redistribute social reproductive labor more justly?
- ❖ Redistribute tasks more fairly?
- ❖ Pay for housework? Living wage debates.



- ❖ Invisible in national statistics and less valued so local and national authorities generally fail to design social and economic policies that can reduce women's primary responsibility for unpaid care work.
- ❖ Recent efforts of some national governments to measure time use and make visible women's overall workload including their work in their own households.
- ❖ National time use surveys are used to measure unpaid care work that is currently not included in the national accounts which underlie calculations of gross domestic product.



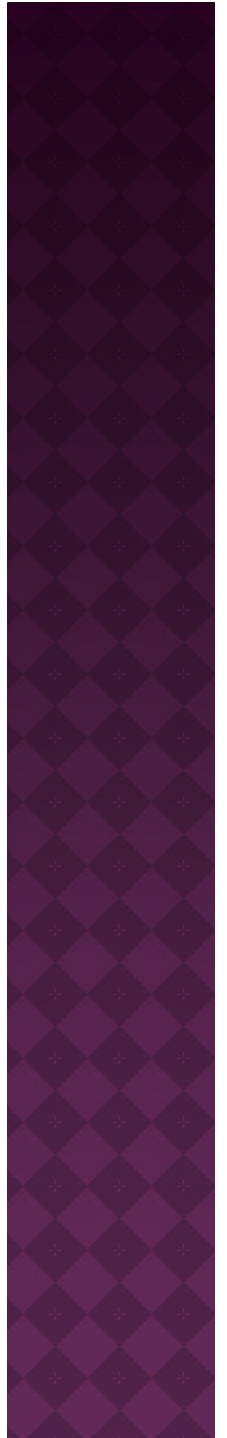
A USEFUL STATISTICAL TOOL

- ❖ Action Aid created a participatory time diary tool that could be completed by the women and men
- ❖ The data collected shows that in poor rural and urban areas women work longer hours than men, spend more time on unpaid care work and subsistence agriculture, and have less time to engage in paid work and social and cultural activities.

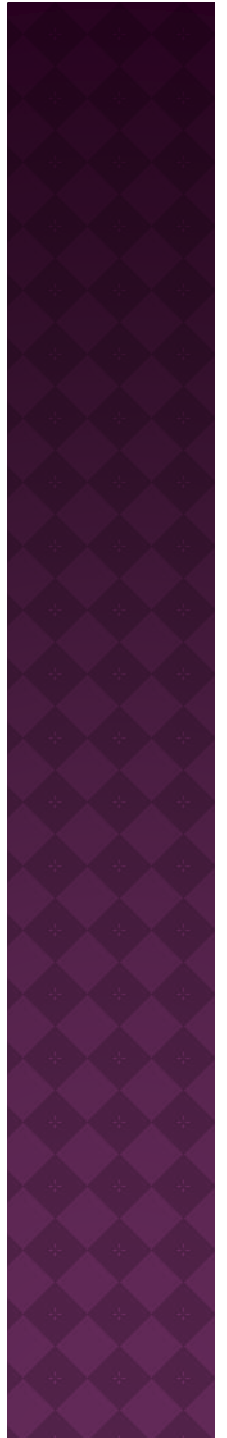
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- ❖ We do not actually have an accurate picture of the economy and how it works.
- ❖ Because orthodox economics does not count care labor, we only capture half of what happens in the economy, e.g. it is estimated that the value of unpaid work can actually amount to up to half a country's GDP.
- ❖ Without this information we cannot work out what is the relationship and trade-offs between paid and unpaid work, including unpaid care work

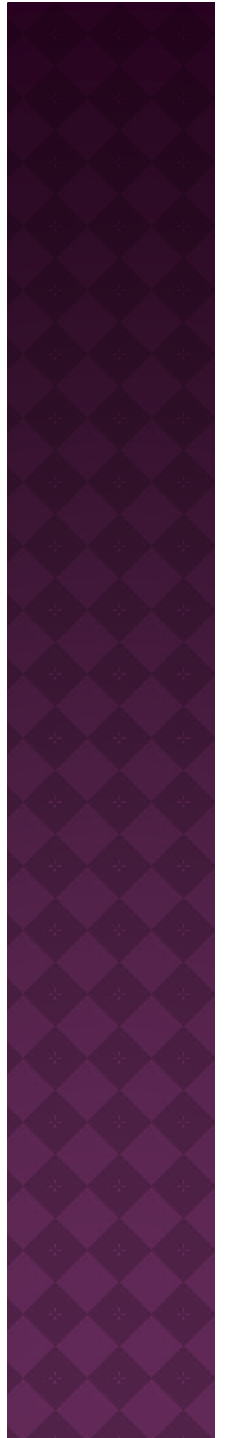
- ❖ Women's and men's division of labor between paid work and unpaid care work and its effects on gender equality with respect to decent work outcomes, and one's ability and power to make and act on choices
- ❖ Its interconnection with individual and family poverty; and on how economic and social policies and institutions influence women's options by reducing or increasing the burden of unpaid care work.



- ❖ Unpaid care work shapes the ability, duration and types of paid work that can be undertaken.
- ❖ As it does not offer monetary remuneration, it reduces the exercise of any influence over decision-making and impacts on one's ability to accumulate savings and assets.



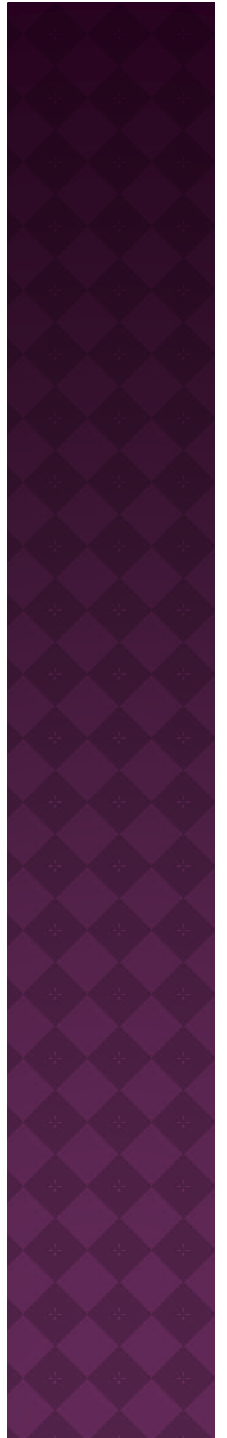
- ❖ Being regarded a woman's "natural" work - performed in the "private" sphere of the family - unpaid care work hides away its economic dimensions and contributions; and being undervalued, it assigns paid social reproduction (care) workers to jobs that are presumed to be unskilled, with low pay, slender options for promotion and scant social protection.



- ❖ Most importantly, unpaid care work entails a systemic transfer of hidden subsidies to the rest of the economy that go unrecognized, imposing a systematic time-tax on women throughout their life cycle.
- ❖ These hidden subsidies signal the existence of power relations between men and women.
- ❖ But also, they connect the “private” worlds of households and families with the “public” spheres of markets and the state in exploitative ways.



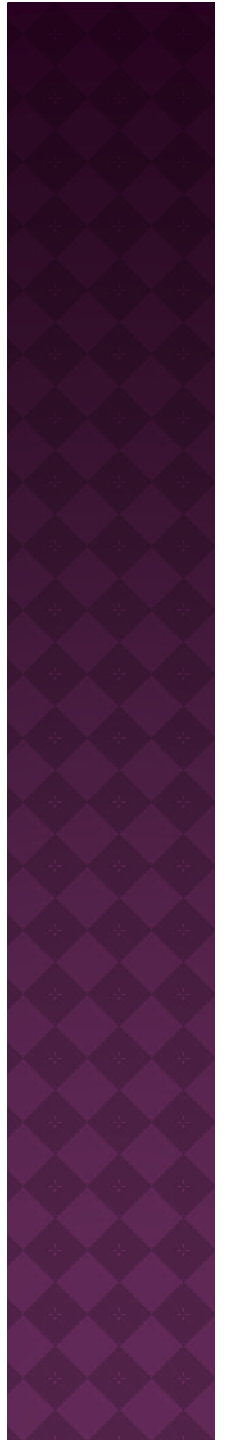
- ❖ It is important to shed light on these interconnections and draw attention to a pervasive form of inequality, in ways that motivate public dialogue and action on behalf of policy makers, in the hope that change is possible.



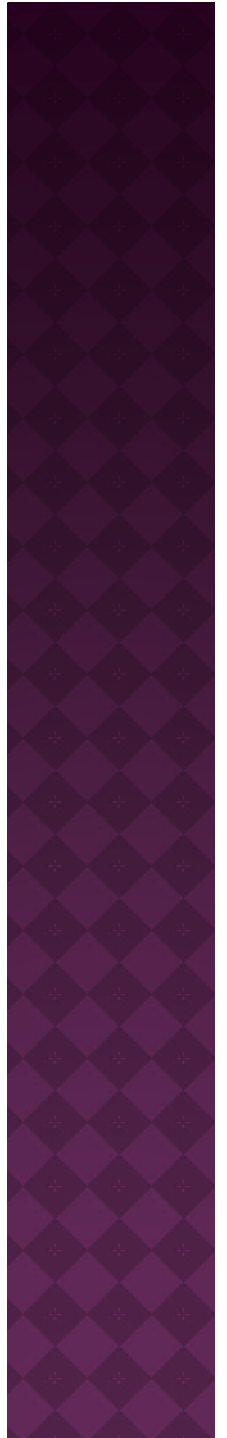
WHAT IF WE MADE CARE WORK VISIBLE?

- ❖ By making unpaid care work visible we are pushing governments to rethink how they understand the economy and how they priorities the allocation of public resources.
- ❖ Can lead to the progressive realization of women's rights and is an important component to addressing inequality and poverty in all countries.

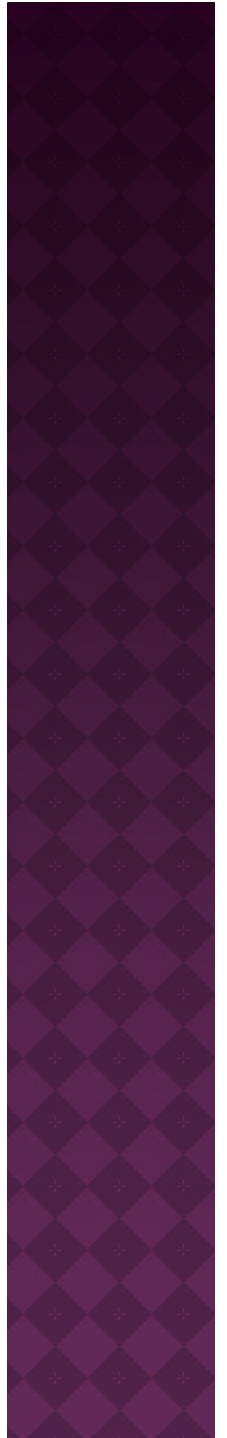
- ❖ In other words, we would be challenging the gendered division of labor in which we treat public sphere as the sphere of rights and the private sphere as the sphere of care



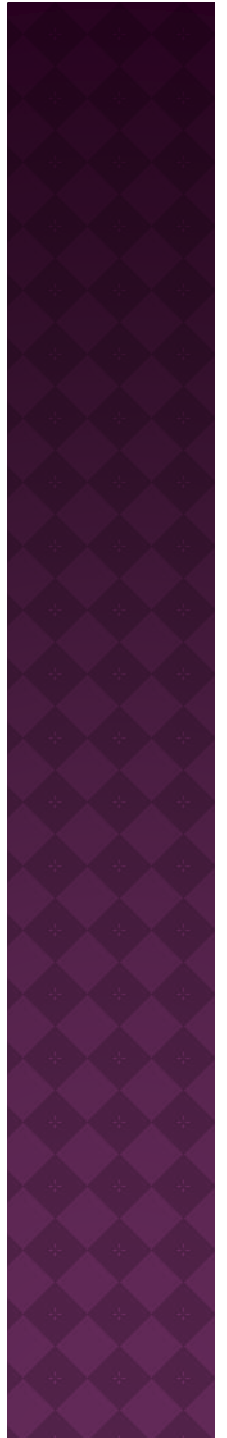
- ❖ Every day the majority of women spend time - and often very long hours - cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, the ill and the elderly. Yet this work is not captured in data, is not discussed in national debates, and is usually not considered when designing and implementing economic and social policies.
- ❖ It remains invisible even though care is a central human need and maintains every society.



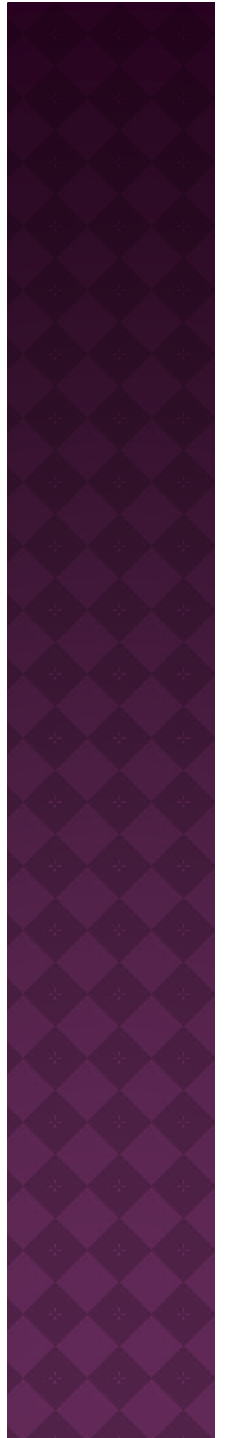
- ❖ When care work, including both domestic chores and care giving activities, is carried out within one's household it is generally unpaid.
- ❖ In contrast, when it is done in other people's households or in public and private institutions - for example in the case of domestic workers, nurses and chefs - it is paid, although the pay may be low.
- ❖ Some of this paid care work will be captured in national statistics, but the unpaid care work women and girls do in their homes will not. Yet turning a blind eye to unpaid care work hampers efforts to address inequality and reduce poverty in all countries.



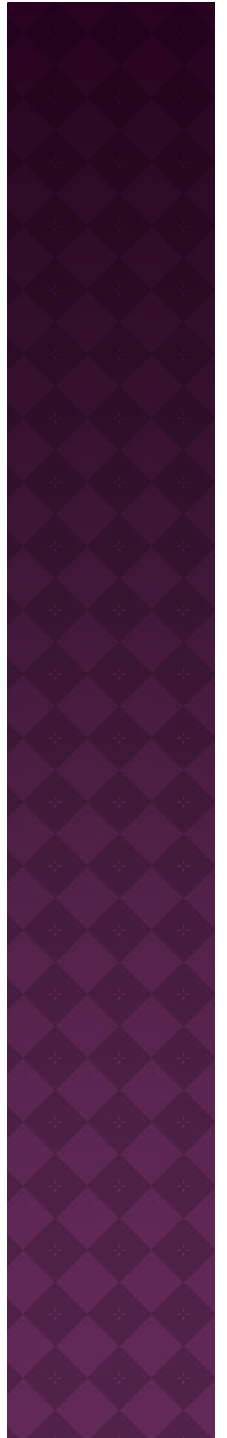
- ❖ For women living in poverty, their disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work can prevent them from accessing other opportunities and enjoying their rights.
- ❖ People living in poverty who require care, such as the ill, those with disabilities and the elderly, may also not receive quality care due to a lack of resources and time on the part of other household members.



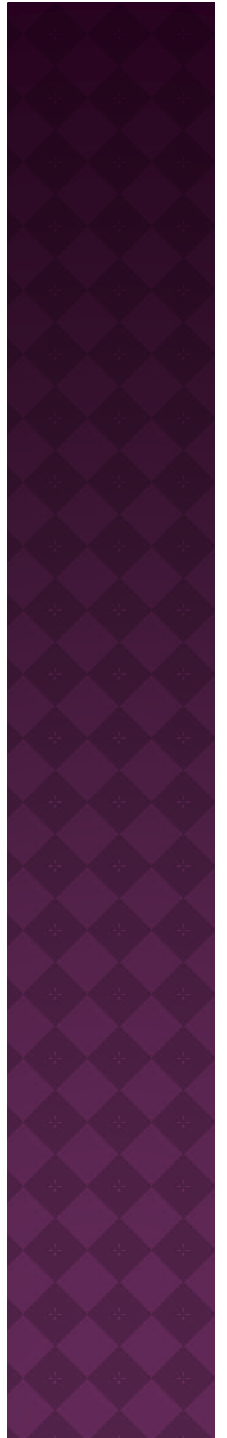
- ❖ As more and more women enter the labor market they have to juggle their unpaid care work with other activities such as subsistence agriculture or small-scale trading, to earn a living for themselves and their families.
- ❖ Care work is often shifted to other women and girls in the household as a result.



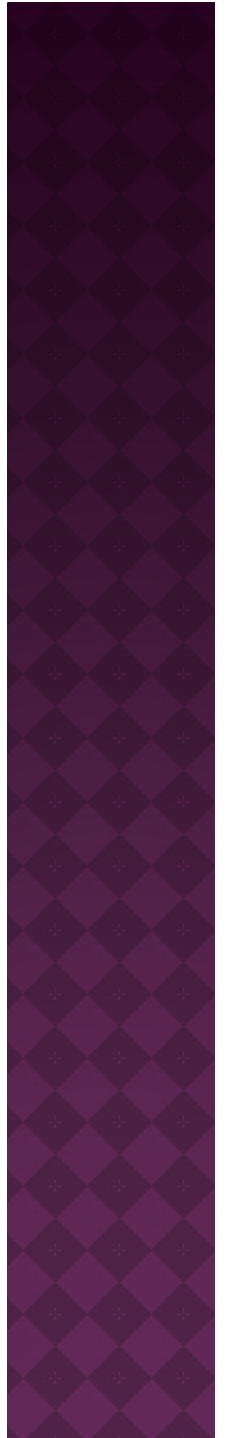
- ❖ *Important to work for accountability for care provision between women, men, the community and government.*
- ✓ To start changing women's and men's beliefs that unpaid care work is primarily the responsibility of women and girls and that it is not as valuable as men's contribution through paid work.



- ✓ Demand acknowledgment of its value from communities and local leaders.
- ✓ The third component is for women to demand more public services from local and national authorities to fulfill their basic human rights and support their households to provide better quality care, while saving them time and energy to engage in other activities.
- ✓ About women's individual and collective empowerment.



- ❖ How can we use family law, property law, inheritance law, to recognize the contribution that you have made to caring?
- ❖ Despite decades of research on care it is often invisible.



FURTHER READING

Action Aid (2013) *Making Visible Women's Unpaid Care Work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya*

Hoskyns, Catherine and Shirin Rai (2007)
'Racasting the Global Political Economy:
Counting Women's Unpaid Work' *New Political Economy*

Stewart, Ann (2013) *Gender, Law and Justice in a Global Market*

Razavi, Shahra (2007) *The Political and Social Economy of Care in a Development Context*



THANK YOU
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