

Progress towards improving Unpaid care Work in Africa; A Case of Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe

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ICATUS (2016) defines unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) as performance of work without monetary compensation by caregivers. Globally, it is estimated that women and girls undertake more than three-quarters of all unpaid care work. The UN reports estimate that UCDW accounts for \$10.8 trillion of global output per year, equivalent to roughly 13% of global GDP.

The concept of UCDW originated from the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995; the Beijing Platform for Action. Since then, there have been considerable efforts by states, civil society, international organizations, and other stakeholders to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which addressed various aspects of gender equality and women's rights. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) addresses UCDW under Goal 5 and Target 5.4 which emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing UCDW through various means such as public services, infrastructure, social protection policies, and promoting shared responsibility within households. At regional level, the 'Africa Agenda 2063' commits to the global agenda by promoting the development of joint programmes that encourages debates on UCDW.

Oxfam International has been implementing the Women's Economic Empowerment and Care (WE-Care) program to transform UCDW in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The Theory of Change is that women and girls are most affected by the unequal distribution of care tasks in society. For change to come over time, it needs to involve individuals, governments, private sector, and civil society. In the WE-Care programme, we work with a wide range of stakeholders at individual, local, national regional and global level to challenge social norms, provide greater access to time and labour-saving services, infrastructure and equipment, and to facilitate collective action to exert pressure on decision-makers to influence transformative change on unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW).

The WE-Care programmes' theory of change is based on the "4Rs" approach: **Recognition** of the value of unpaid care – in formal and informal decision-making spaces, at all levels – must be accompanied by **reduction** of the arduousness and time spent on these activities through adequate and improved access to care sensitive equipment, infrastructure and services. **Redistribution** of care responsibilities between women and men, and from poor families to states and employers, facilitated by more resources, care-responsive public services and infrastructure, ultimately acknowledging that care is a responsibility of society as a whole is also a necessary step to create sustainable change. For commitments on recognition, reduction and redistribution to be effective, civil society and women's rights actors at all levels, as well as carers themselves, must be **represented** in relevant decision-making spaces and have the capacity and adequate evidence to advocate and monitor duty-bearers' commitments on UCDW. This systemic and concerted approach

to UCDW will contribute to sustainable impact at scale, ensuring more women and girls can have choice over their time.

WE-Care sees these key pathways as leading to our vision of women and girls having more choice and agency over activities and time use and therefore benefiting more from their participation in social, economic and political life.

Recognition: Pushing UCDW up the agenda is a critical part of influencing change. As a critical first step, WE-Care identifies entry points and blockers to the agenda, while working with allies to access influential spaces in government, private sector and regional and international bodies. Once in these spaces, we build relationships with key actors, raise awareness of existing evidence on the importance of UCDW and to the value of collecting data on it, with SDG 5.4 as a guiding reference for engagement. This is an important step to position our policy asks in these agendas and understand the decision-makers' motivations to support them. This will then lead to governments and regional bodies recognising the link between UCDW and existing economic and development priorities. Therefore, regional and international bodies will strengthen their guidance for implementation and reporting of international commitments on UCDW, such as SDG 5.4, and national governments will increase implementation and report towards it. When engaging with companies, WE-Care works to build an argument on the benefits of supporting UCDW. We believe that this will lead to companies being convinced that addressing UCDW in their policies and strategies is good for business, and as a consequence, more companies will commit to addressing UCDW in their policies, strategies and advertising plans. Governments, regional and international organisations will be motivated to adopt new policy commitments on UCDW and to better implementation of existing obligations in this area.

Reduction: Providing greater access to time and labour saving infrastructure and services are critical to our theory of change. We believe that combining equipment and infrastructure with skills building training on the use and maintenance of these will help to reduce the time women and girls spend on care related tasks. We assume that by involving individuals and communities they will appreciate the benefits of change and feel ownership. That will lead to greater sustainability going forward, as individuals will be directly involved in maintenance, and can even decide to make more investment in new equipment for the household. Simultaneously we assume that if we gather evidence on care sensitive infrastructure and services, if individuals are more engaged in demanding new and better care infrastructure and if we engage with decision-makers to advocate for this, governments will be convinced of the benefits these investments can bring and will increase them. That will lead to the provision of new and better care sensitive equipment, infrastructure and services, which means more individuals and communities will have access to them.

Redistribution: We believe that working directly with communities through institutional and individual opinion leaders, including male role models, to cascade messages around social norms is impactful, cost effective and sustainable to bring about changes in how UCDW is valued and distributed in society. We assume that with time the girls and women and boys and men in targeted communities who participate in social norms activities will express different attitudes and behaviours about UCDW. Because institutional and individual leaders will resonate/reinforce/support messages about the value of UCDW, and the importance of redistributing it more equally, girls and women and

boys and men will be more confident to express different attitudes and behaviours in public, especially men and boys. With more individuals expressing positive attitudes about UCDW, social norms in the community will start shifting. Importantly, as UCDW becomes more valued and a more equal distribution of care tasks between men and women are more acceptable, women and men will be less vulnerable to violence if they don't perform socially expected care roles. We believe that this will lead to more participation of men and boys in care activities and more equitable distribution on unpaid care work between men and boys and women and girls in households and communities.

Representation: We believe that representation of unpaid carers in governance structures and economic decision-making, is vital to bringing about change that is driven by their realities and needs. We therefore work to support women's rights, youth and carer movements to lead and implement effective advocacy activities on UCDW. We assume that once women, youth leaders and carers have greater knowledge, skills and confidence on their influencing capacities, they will be more able to influence debates and policy on UCDW. Women, youth leaders and carers will be supported by a network of allies, convenors, funders, facilitators collaborating on a common agenda on UCDW. That will enable greater collective voice and stronger advocacy towards decision-makers. Once civil society, women's and youth organisations are established and recognised in relevant decision-making spaces, there will be greater opportunities for them to participate in policy and budget making processes on UCDW. These groups will then have the space and the capacity to influence development and global institutions on issues of UCDW.

The Women's Economic Empowerment and Care Project (WE-Care) Phase IV was a three-year program. It became effective on April 1, 2020, and it closes in August 2023. The project also had a Pan-African and Global component. The program is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The project aimed at *"Scaling up civil society-led advocacy to push for tangible policy commitments on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) at sub-national, national, regional and international levels."*

Oxfam has partnered with international, national and local WROs and CSOs to achieve WE-Care's collective advocacy, influencing and learning objectives. These organizations are presented in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1. 1: List of Organizations that Partners with Oxfam

Country	Organization	Acronyms
Ethiopia	Network of Ethiopian Women Association	NEWA
Kenya	Association of Women Agriculture in Kenya Youth Alive! Kenya	AWAK YAK
Uganda	Ugandan Women's Network	UWONET
Zimbabwe	Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe Women's Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence Padare Men's Forum on Gender Bethany Project Bekezela Home Based Care	WCoZ WALPE
Pan-African Level	African Leadership Foundation	ALF

Findings reveal that public and private sector institutions have increase their commitment & investment on UCDW, opinion shaping narratives UCDW as an economic development agenda have increased. To effectively fast tract these changes it was found that men are the custodian of the culture, and therefore should be involved in all activities of We-care and UCDW for it to make a progressive change.