

Global Care Crisis

There is a growing need for care globally due to population growth, demographic changes, rising rates of disease transmission, social unrest, and conflict. By 2030 the number of care recipients is predicted to reach 2.3 billion, but despite this increasing demand for services, many workers are unpaid or under-paid, with poor working conditions and a lack of social protection. ILO data from 2018 highlights that this includes 381 million workers (249 million women and 132 million men), representing 11.5 per cent of global employment. It is in everyone's best interests to ensure good conditions for care delivery in both its unpaid and paid forms. Transformative care policies and decent work in the care economy are crucial to ensuring a future founded on social justice and gender equality.

► Care Provision through the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)

As people-centred, principle driven, member-owned businesses, cooperatives and other entities within the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)² have emerged as an innovative form of care provision, particularly in the absence of other viable public or private options. ILO Research indicates that SSE entities:¹

- Provide access to improved wages, working conditions and benefits and reduce employee turnover.
- Often multipurpose as beneficiaries' care needs are not singular, nor are the services cooperatives provide.
- Often multi-stakeholder in nature with the participation of workers, beneficiaries and local governments.
- Provide care in various ways throughout the world, though there are regional differences in the types of care provided that are shaped by local contexts and care needs.



The Makola Market in Accra, Ghana is a workplace for thousands of women informal traders and vendors, many of whom have no viable alternative but to bring their children to work. When government funding for a childcare center ended, vendors and traders came together with childcare workers from the center and representatives from the Ghana Association of Traders to form a Parent-Teacher Association and take joint responsibility for operations. The center now provides care for 140 children, starting at 6am and running until the last child is picked up. A flexible payment system is in place, with subsidies and free spaces for those who cannot afford the monthly fee. Some vendors also provide fresh vegetables and fruit from their own stalls for the children's daily meals.

In light of this, the ILO's Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI) and its Cooperatives Unit (COOP) are proposing an innovative cross-regional, multi-country programme. It will utilize an established intervention model grounded in the ILO's 5R Framework for Decent Care Work and Social Justice. The programme will pay particular attention to informal women workers, in all their diversity, operating in the care economy to increase their income and improve their rights by starting or expanding a cooperative. Effective monitoring & evaluation techniques will be embedded throughout the programme contributing to group-disaggregated evidence.



3 ILO. Childcare Solutions for Women Micro and Small Enterprises (2022)

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¹ ILO. Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work (2018)

² As defined by ILC.110/Resolution II and UNGA Resolution A/77/L.60 "The SSE encompasses enterprises, organizations and other entities that are engaged in economic, social, and environmental activities to serve the collective and/or general interest, which are based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic and/or participatory governance, autonomy and independence, and the primacy of people and social purpose over capital in the distribution and use of surpluses and/or profits as well as assets."



Intervention Model

National Assessmen Mapping out the legal, institutional and programmatic context and creating an informed pathway for the use of the cooperative model in the care sectors, with a focus on childcare, disability and long-term care. While the initiative will initially be based on specific countries, in order to assess its scalability & replicability at the global scale impact indicators will be developed from the start.

Validation Workshop To determine whether the assessment conducted accurately reflects the needs and priorities on the ground, key stakeholders including community experts with knowledge of the care sectors in-country, members of cooperatives and other SSE entities (including their networks, unions, and federations), and ILO constituents will be invited to provide their feedback and prioritize recommendations for follow-up action.

Pilot-testing

Existing ILO training tools on cooperative development, strengthening and management (Think.coop, Start.coop and Manage.coop) adapted to the care sector and the country context will be pilot tested in collaboration with national stakeholders and partners such as local governments and families of the beneficiaries.

Implementation

Participant action plan(s) will be developed, and revised. Pilot groups will be selected (1-2 per country depending on the context). Seed funds will be provided for implementation along with necessary technical guidance and advisory services (legal, managerial, marketing related, other).

Integration

SSEOs operating in the care sector are expected to emerge and develop in different trajectories depending on the national context. Good practices and lessons learned will be documented through internal evaluation assessments conducted both at the country and global levels. Based on this, emerging policy and programmatic recommendations will be disseminated widely and used for scaling up and supporting initiatives in other contexts.

The programme will work at three interrelated levels:

- 1. Macro Promote a more enabling environment for care provision through the SSE via collaboration, accountability, and policy integration in accordance with the ILO agenda.
- 2. Meso Strengthen the institutional infrastructure for development of cooperatives and other SSE entities in the care sector through local partners and service providers (BDS, NGOS, etc.).
- 3. Micro Establish and/or strengthen existing SSE providers of care by empowering members of care SSE units via the intervention model.

This programme will contribute to sustainable enterprise development through the recognition and valuing of both paid and unpaid care, in cooperation with internal and external partners. Wherever possible, the project will enact a participatory approach, making use of national expertise and institutions as this will not only maximize cost savings but drive capacity building. A more detailed breakdown of timeline and budget are available, and can be adjusted for scope and coverage following consultations with prospective donors.

⁴ The ILO's 5R framework emphasizes recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid housework and care through gender transformative care policy packages; rewarding care workers fairly, while generating sufficient care jobs to meet care needs and promoting decent work, including equal pay for work of equal value and jobs free from violence and harassment, for the paid care workforce in all their diversity; and representing care workers with rights, organization, voice and representation in decision-making, social dialogue and collective bargaining.