

10 Things to Know About



The Cost of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

1



As is the pattern throughout the world, Jamaican women do far more unpaid care and domestic work than men, and less paid work than men do, irrespective of their consumption quintile, age group, and where in the island they are.

2



There is a gender division of labour between paid and unpaid work that is undergirded by deeply held, gendered beliefs and expectations that men are to be the breadwinners, dedicated mainly to paid work, and women the nurturers, dedicated mainly to unpaid care and domestic work. There is also a rural-urban divide in how time is spent between paid and unpaid work, with rural people spending less time in paid work, and more time in unpaid work, than their urban counterparts.

3



The significant and unequal amount of time that women dedicate to unpaid care and domestic work means that their care and domestic activities may carry an opportunity cost, as it reduces their ability to participate in and dedicate more time to paid work, to perform more productively in income-earning work, and to find and keep quality jobs.

4



Unpaid care and domestic work remains statistically invisible to many policymakers, economists, planners, and national statisticians because it falls outside of the conventional definitions of what counts as work. Given that it is not included in the system of national accounts, it is not calculated as a proportion of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

5



Making visible, quantifying, and attributing value to unpaid care and domestic work allows for a recognition that some of the time that both women and men spend in unpaid work might be used more productively, to the benefit of the individual worker, to the firm, and ultimately to the national economy.

8



The value of unpaid care and domestic work at the most conservative estimate is twice the value of agriculture, and its value using a slightly less conservative estimate is twice the value of manufacturing, mining, construction, and utilities.

6



Three valuation methods are used to value unpaid care and domestic work, the specialist, the generalist, and the minimum wage approaches; the minimum wage approach is the most conservative. Time use survey data provides the information needed to calculate what is the market value of the unpaid care and domestic work done on a given day.

9



The care activity that has the highest monetary contribution to GDP is caring for children aged 0-5 years at J\$94 billion, which represents 4 percent of GDP. The domestic activity that has the highest monetary contribution to GDP is preparing and serving of food at J\$258 billion, which is 12 percent of GDP.

7



Unpaid care and domestic work in Jamaica has a total annual value of J\$991 billion (equivalent to 45 percent of GDP) if measured using the specialist wage approach, J\$628 billion (equivalent to 30 percent of GDP) if the generalist wage approach is applied, and J\$340 billion (equivalent to 15 percent of GDP) if the minimum wage approach is applied. All three wage approaches show that women's contribution is almost twice the men's contribution, with regard to GDP.

10



A number of professionals identified time and resource constraints as significant barriers to gender-sensitive reporting, noting a lack of long-form reporting in this space. Many journalists often do not have the capacity to give the topic the time and consideration it deserves. High turnover rates were also considered a barrier to building pools of well-informed staff who are trained in gender-sensitive reporting.

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