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Empowerment of Women and Girls

Unpaid Care Work Programme: Nepal Progress Report (2012–13)

Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed and Deepta Chopra

February 2014

The IDS programme on Strengthening Evidence-based Policy works across seven key themes. Each theme works with partner institutions to co-construct policy-relevant knowledge and engage in policy-influencing processes. This material has been developed under the Empowerment of Women and Girls theme.

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UNPAID CARE WORK PROGRAMME: NEPAL PROGRESS REPORT (2012–13)

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1 Introduction

Nepal is one of four focus countries within the Unpaid Care Work Programme of the Accountable Grant. IDS is partnering with ActionAid International (AAI) to help each of the four ActionAid countries to develop and implement an advocacy strategy on making unpaid care work (UCW) visible in public policy, as well as integrate concerns about unpaid care into each country's programming. The IDS Unpaid Care Work Programme uses an action learning methodology to look at what works and doesn't work in making the care economy visible. Further, it aims to track and capture changes in policy and practice in order to improve understanding around the uptake of evidence (i.e. in what ways evidence is being used or ignored, by whom, and with what effects).

The methodology used in each of the countries has two components with IDS supporting the country teams in two ways:

1. Face-to-face support: this includes in-country capacity building workshops with relevant stakeholders (state and non-state actors), to design and implement strategic campaigns on unpaid care work. The first workshop (in the first year of the programme) is designed to develop the strategy to be adopted by each of the country offices, and the second workshop (in the final year of the programme) is to be based on capturing the reflections and learnings from implementing the strategy. Another element of the face-to-face support will be provided through bringing all the women's rights coordinators together in order to further exchange ideas and learning across the countries.
2. Quarterly reflective learning calls (over Skype) with the project team in each country, aimed at supporting the women's rights coordinators and their teams in their ongoing influencing and advocacy work. The aim of these workshops is also to record and reflect on innovation, change and learning as the advocacy strategy is developed and implemented.

It is anticipated that at the end of the programme, learning from the advocacy and influencing activities in each of the four participating countries will inform the development of a set of strategy guidelines that other international NGOs can use. These guidelines will set out what works well and what has been less successful, when integrating unpaid care issues into policy and practice.

This report covers the progress of the programme in Nepal over the first year and a half of the four-year programme. For a programme aimed at influencing national policy, it is critical to understand the political economy context of Nepal. A brief note on this context is presented in Section 2. It is also important to acknowledge at the outset that the IDS programme is based on primary research that ActionAid International Nepal conducted as part of the Making Care Visible project initiated by ActionAid International. This report draws in Section 3 on the findings of this research, which included community mobilisation through time diary collection by women belonging to REFLECT circles, to discuss the nature of unpaid care work in Nepal. This section also presents the results of research on mapping relevant policies, specifically social protection, in Nepal, aimed at identifying the gaps and opportunities that confronted AAI Nepal in trying to make unpaid care visible. A week-long workshop co-facilitated by IDS and AAI has been vital in enabling AAI Nepal to develop a focused advocacy strategy using a twin-tracked approach, the main process and elements of which are detailed in Section 4. Section 5 explores the key challenges, successes and lessons learnt that have emerged so far during AAI Nepal's engagement with the care policy agenda.

2 Political economy context of Nepal

Nepal has experienced periods of conflict and political instability, including the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, from monarchy to a republic, and from a centralised state to autonomy at the regional and local levels. As such, ongoing policy development in the area of social protection is taking place at a time when larger constitutional and democratic debates are happening (Harris, McCord and Sony 2013).

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in November 2006 between the government of Nepal and Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), which brought an end to the period of rebel insurgency in Nepal. An interim constitution was drafted to facilitate and manage the Nepali constitutional transformation process and came into effect in January 2007. However, the period since then has been marked by political instability – there have been five different governments in six years (Thapa 2011) – which has had an adverse impact on policy development. Nepal currently lacks both a parliament and a constitution following the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in May 2012. Additionally, there has been an absence of elected officials at local level since 2002, with significant demands being placed on central and local officers resulting in poor coordination, implementation, monitoring and accountability at the local level for social protection (and other developmental activities).

In Nepal women have limited access to education and few opportunities for economic empowerment. There is a strong literacy gap between women and men, as well as a rigid division of labour. Violence against women and early marriage persist, with domestic violence constituting 80 per cent of total violence in the country. Poor, *dalit*, indigenous and rural women are especially vulnerable to violence and poverty. Women are underrepresented in politics and other leadership positions. Stereotypical attitudes and norms around gender roles impact significantly on Nepal's social, cultural, religious, economic and political institutions. Nepal was ranked 36th out of 86 in the 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index (OECD 2012). It was ranked 128 out of 155 in the 2012 Social Watch Gender Equity Index.

There has, however, been some progress in a number of areas. Nepal ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1991, and the Optional Protocol in 2007. The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has the role of coordinating gender mainstreaming efforts in Nepal. Key legislative measures aimed at the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women in Nepal include: the five-year strategic plan of the National Women Commission (2009–2014); the *Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act, 2009*; the *Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2007*; the *National Women's Commission Act, 2007*; and the *Gender Equality Act, 2006*. The National Women Commission (NWC) was established by the government of Nepal through an executive decision in 2002 and a separate Act was promulgated in 2007. It has a legal mandate to monitor and investigate cases of violence against women, provide legal aid, monitor the state obligations to UN reporting under CEDAW, coordinate with government and other agencies for mainstreaming gender policy in national development and recommend and monitor the reforms through research. With support from international development agencies and bilateral donors, the government has implemented a range of social protection policies and programmes designed to tackle poverty, promote livelihoods and economic opportunities, and enhance people's access to health care, education and other important basic services.

The government of Nepal already has a large number of social protection schemes in place – allowances for single women, the elderly, widows, the disabled and indigenous groups; child grants; scholarships for disadvantaged groups; and various employment programmes. The government has also increased expenditure for social protection programmes – from 0.5 per

cent of GDP between 2004 and 2007 to over 2 per cent in 2009 (World Bank 2011). A Social Security Fund (SSF) was set up and financed through a 1 per cent tax on the income of formal sector workers. It would be used to finance an old age allowance; medical, maternity, disability and unemployment benefits; and the needs of other vulnerable groups. The Social Security Fund Board (SSFB) oversees both the fund and social protection programming more generally. Its initial objective was to extend maternity, workplace injury and sickness benefit schemes to the informal sector, but this process is still under development and employers have not implemented these benefits. However, the lack of an overall strategy, a dissolved Constituent Assembly, weak institutional capacity at the central and local levels, and lack of access to more inclusive public goods and services affects the effectiveness, delivery and reach of social protection.

3 Unpaid care work and the policy environment in Nepal

The AAI Nepal programme on unpaid care is part of AAI's multi-country research programme (in Nepal, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda), focused on making women's unpaid care work more visible and valued by women and men, community leaders and the national government. As with the other three countries, AAI Nepal has adopted the REFLECT methodology in its work on unpaid care with local communities. The REFLECT methodology is a participatory learning process, which combines basic literacy and numeracy skills with discussions on power inequalities. REFLECT circles enable people to critically analyse their local contexts and the circles support them in coming up with shared collective solutions to their problems.

The UCW Programme in Nepal started with the collection of time diaries from REFLECT circles from two communities in two districts, Sarlahi and Tehathum. The AAI Nepal team first used a simplified time diary format that was based on the women being able to fill in their daily activities themselves. This sought to fulfil a dual function – that of collecting data, but also to help women and men begin to understand the time and energy that women spend on unpaid care work, and the detrimental effects of the imbalance of unpaid care work responsibilities. Twenty-five women were selected in each group with a total of 100 women, ranging from 15 to 60 years old. In total, seven time diaries were collected for women, and one time diary for men in Sarlahi and Tehathum who came from the same families. These time diaries were foregrounded with literacy courses and community mapping exercises.

In a 24-hour day – with a total of 1,440 minutes – women in both communities on average sleep shorter hours than men. Here, women work a total of 688 minutes per day compared to only 485 minutes for men. This means that, on average, Nepalese women work 1.4 hours for every one hour worked by Nepalese men (Budlender and Moussié 2013: 18). Women report an average of more than 200 minutes per day on housework, with time spent on childcare being around 71 minutes a day (Budlender and Moussié 2013: 20). Additionally, while being part of REFLECT circles and filling in time diaries, enabled the women to improve their literacy skills – as they were encouraged to write their names – it in turn impacted on their own unpaid care responsibilities (e.g. when attending REFLECT circles, their children were obliged to do the household work).

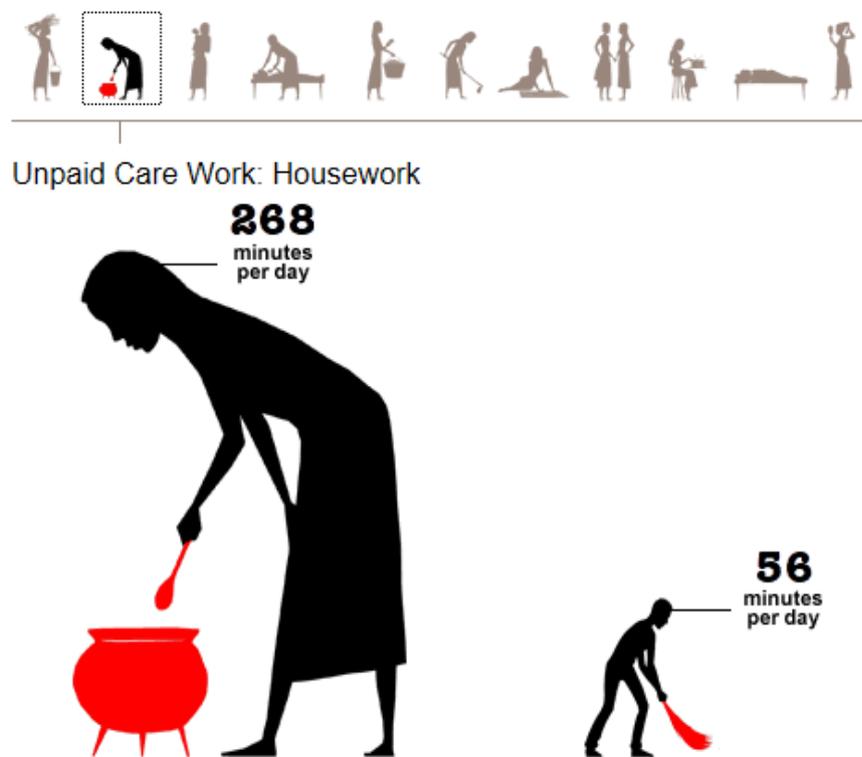
It was clear from the research findings that, in Nepal, unpaid care was a big problem affecting the economic empowerment of women and girls, mainly through constraining the time they had available to participate in social activities, leisure and rest and engagement with media. In addition, the social context of gendered roles and responsibilities meant that change at the community and household levels would require significant engagement with the communities. In order to identify some of the gaps and opportunities that existed in this policy environment that could inform the development of their advocacy strategy, a policy mapping was conducted.

The mapping exercise presented key policies addressing women's unpaid care work in Nepal. To fully understand the current nature of unpaid care work in Nepal's policy space, it is important to acknowledge that there is currently no definition, or proper understanding, of unpaid care work at policy level. As such, unpaid care work is not included in GDP or System of National Accounts (SNA), and there is no system for a Satellite Household Accounting System. Nepal's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) does not have any statistics on women's unpaid care work. Additionally, issues such as the weak policy implementation of the Social Security Fund, the lack of social security and public services, the lack of gender budgeting and the lack of quality education provide a stumbling block to making care visible in Nepal.

Figure 1. Gender balance of housework in Nepal

Making Care Visible

Women's unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya



Source: ActionAid International (2013) Making Care Visible Infographics (www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/womens-rights/unpaid-care-work)

The report found the following policies that had either one of the three objectives – recognition, reduction and redistribution:

1. On recognition: Nepal's Sixth Development Plan (2011–2015) recognises unpaid care work, while 2020 BS (Nepal's civil code) recognises that childcare should not be the sole responsibility of the mother:
'If a woman cannot and does not want to take to her child, it is the legal duty of father to take care of the child'.
However, this provision applies most to cases of divorce rather than to everyday life.
In 2011 CBS developed a questionnaire to collect data on 40,000 citizens regarding unpaid care work. Additionally, the *Disabled Persons Protection and Welfare Act, 2039*, the *Children's Act, 2048* and the *Senior Citizen Act 2058* state that it is the family's legal obligation to provide the disabled, young and elderly with care.
2. On reduction: *The Labour Act 2048* has provisions relating to children, which states that an organisation having 50 or more female workers should establish day care centres for meeting the childcare needs of working mothers. Additionally, the provision of a trained nurse, including some necessary toys, shall also be arranged for these children. However, there is no proper monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of gender-responsive budgets, which would determine if this money is being spent on women's capacity building

purposes. Additionally, offices should allocate time where female workers can breastfeed their children as required, during their working hours. Although the *Labour Act 1991* states this, only Singha Durbar, Parliament House, makes such a provision. The Civil Servants Wives' Association (CSWA), under the coordination of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, set up a day care centre for the children of female civil servants working at Singha Durbar whose children are above three months and below three years of age. At present the government bears all the costs at the centre, with the cost for implementation including infrastructure for the first year being around Rs. 25,000 per month per child (around £160). It is said that in subsequent years this will be lower.

3. On redistribution: Under the Education for All National Plan Action (2001–2015), there are three types of Early Child Development (ECD) programmes: school-based, community-based and home-based child development programmes. The school-based programmes, which include nursery, kindergarten, day care centres and pre-primary classes, are mostly run by private organisations and under the *Income Tax Act 2058*, they have to pay VAT for their services, whereas in other countries these fees are waived. Therefore, there is need to reform this Act to take care into account. The *Education Act 2001* and *Education Regulations 2002* clarified the structure, modalities, and community involvement in managing ECD programmes. The *Local Self Governance Act, 1999* has also given rights to local government bodies – Village Development Committees (VDC) in villages and municipalities in urban localities – to establish pre-primary schools/centres with their own resources and to grant permission to establish, implement and organise such schools/centres. In spite of this, in a study done in six different districts by the National Planning Commission in coordination with Women Rights and ActionAid, it was found that the budget allocated for women in Village Development Committees were used for infrastructure (road, tap and well) constructions instead of for their health, education and capacity building. Investment in infrastructure does help to reduce the workload for women, but policies still need to be care-sensitive to ensure that care is not forgotten. While the government has a separate budget allocated for women in Village Development Committee (VDC) infrastructure development that would reduce the drudgery of unpaid care work, officers do not actually dispense these funds to women. While the government of Nepal has policy provisions for ECD, usually only children aged three or older are eligible. Community Child Care Centres, on the other hand, can have children from as young as six months. There is therefore a need to advocate for ECDs to include children younger than three years.

4 Building an advocacy strategy in Nepal

Nepal's week-long workshop titled 'Unpaid Care Work Capacity Building Workshop' was held in February 2013. The workshop aimed to help AAI Nepal develop an advocacy strategy to raise the visibility of women's unpaid care work while pushing the state to take on greater responsibility for care provision. This involved AAI Nepal staff and local community leaders, and also AAI Nepal's partners and representatives from relevant government departments. The workshop had four main objectives:

1. Increase participants' understanding that house care and women's rights are key to achieving social justice;
2. Review and discuss key policy demands that can address women's disproportionate responsibility for the provision of care;
3. Identify stakeholders who will help to bring about change and discuss advocacy strategies and entry points;
4. Begin to develop a collective advocacy strategy that can raise the visibility of women's care work and push the state to take on greater responsibilities for care provision;

While suggestions such as sensitising family members, community and society on the issue of unpaid care work, and input from the government in terms of time minimisation of water, fuel, and food collection, were made as to how unpaid care work can be put onto the agenda, by the end of the workshop, AAI Nepal pinpointed two strategies that could lead to policy change. The first, which is specific to the social protection sector, entails a social security policy that takes into consideration the elderly, widows, women and children. The second involves a concrete plan and public financing focusing on Early Child Development (ECD) or Community Child Care Centres that are care-friendly, to reduce, redistribute and recognise women's UCW.

The rationale behind the approach to the policy-influencing and advocacy intervention for the UCW Programme was as follows:

1. Social Protection: As shown in Section 2, Nepal has a history of social protection schemes and civil society engagement to improve their design and implementation. Additionally, the Nepalese government is working towards a National Social Security Fund under their planning agenda
2. Early Childcare Development Centres (ECDCs): Existing provisions have not been implemented efficiently, and AAI Nepal and its partners see a valuable window of opportunity to put forth an ECDC model that can be replicated in other contexts.

It was agreed that work there needed to be in collaboration with the National Planning Commission (NPC) during the planning process to address issues on unpaid care work. The focus of the advocacy would be specifically with the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the Social Security Fund because national budget planning is based on the NPC's data and analysis. There is therefore a further need to focus on advocating when the NPC is conducting its research. This can be done by working with the CBS to modify survey questionnaires and collect baseline that includes women's unpaid care work.

Furthermore, in focusing on social protection and ECD, it must be acknowledged that as unpaid care work falls under different sectors (e.g. agriculture and land rights) there is a need to lobby and advocate with the government for it to be incorporated into both the planning and implementation of policymaking in different sectors.

Below is a summary of the major findings from the workshop:

4.1 Nepal’s advocacy strategy for effective policy involvement

Having chosen its two policy approaches, groups undertook a stakeholder mapping exercise and identified three critical paths¹ to making the changes necessary to reach the identified goals. Both the critical path and stakeholder mapping exercises are useful tools enabling identification of: the fundamental issues (e.g. community childcare centres) that need to be politicised; which aspects to focus on (e.g. the existing *Labour Act* that has provisions for women in the formal sector – if there are 50 women in a workplace, the company should provide crèche facilities); who it would be of interest to (e.g. unpaid care work in relation to community childcare centres could be of interest to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and trade unions); and who to target (e.g. ministries).

4.2 Stakeholder mapping: Early Child Development Centre

In three groups – one on Targets, the other on Allies and the third on Opponents – participants undertook a stakeholder mapping exercise in which they identified critical actors with different kinds of powers to influence programming around the ECD Centre. Below are the national and community targets and allies identified at the workshop for the ECD Centre.

Targets (National)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Planning Commission • Women & Children Development Office • Department of Social Welfare • Education Ministry • Health Ministry • Labour Ministry • International Labour Organization • Political parties • Trade unions

Targets (Community)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local NGOs • Women's groups • REFLECT groups • Women’s networks • Local media • District Women and Children Department • Women’s rights groups

Allies (National)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INGOs and NGOs (ActionAid, Save the Children, World Vision) • UN agencies • ILO • Health Ministry

Allies (Community)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s groups/networks • Other community groups such as saving and credit groups • Child clubs • Paralegal committees • Middle-class leaders

The findings from the stakeholder mappings can also be found in the detailed workshop report (see Pradhan 2013).

¹ A critical path is a sequence of outcomes that we need to achieve collectively in order for change to happen. It helps us focus on the issues that need to change in each outcome in order to reach our final campaign goal. The critical path helps us think for the future. We need to break down a big issue such as UCW into smaller parts so we should be SMART about our goals so that they are achievable.

4.3 Critical paths for influencing policies to address unpaid care work

Having successfully undertaken a stakeholder mapping exercise, participants identified a desired final outcome and drew a pathway of changes needed in the next five years to achieve that outcome. This was also done in two groups, with one group working on how to drive the single advocacy agenda for ECD centres while the second group worked on how to effectively mainstream other existing policies to ensure that they respond to unpaid care work issues. The critical paths identified were:

- National Women's Health Insurance Policy addressing unpaid care work in Nepal
- Policy establishment of a Community Child Care Centre (CCCC)
- Policy establishment of a Community Child Care Centre (CCCC) with respect to UCW

Table 1 below outlines the steps needed to achieve these critical paths.

- STEP 1: Identify the final outcome that represents the change you want to see.
- STEP 2: From your starting point identify other outcomes or 'stepping stones' that will help you reach your final outcome OR work backwards from your final outcome to your starting point.
- STEP 3: Transform your outcomes into SMART objectives that will help you to develop an advocacy strategy.
- STEP 4: Debrief with the group and explain your critical path.

Table 1. Critical paths for influencing policies to address unpaid care work in Nepal

Topic	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4*
National Women's Health Insurance Policy addressing UCW in Nepal	There is currently no health insurance for women involved in UCW. So ensure insurance for women involved in unpaid care work.	With the help of CBS, [†] ensure satellite accounts have been developed by 2015 at the national level. This can be done through mass meetings and dialogue on unpaid care work.	The government has a policy for health insurance by 2016.	Different international agencies have 'basket funds' for health (e.g. DFID, OXFAM and GIZ are working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and running pilot projects on universal health coverage in five different districts of Nepal). These projects can influence the policymaking process. Sensitise the community by 2017.
Policy establishment of Community Child Care Centre (CCCC)	The following currently exist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No CCCC • ECD does not incorporate unpaid care work • Children's homes are orphan-focused 	Two-pronged process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working from local to national level for advocacy and sensitisation.[‡] 2. After advocacy and awareness campaigns, the concept of CCCC will be implemented by establishing CCCCs in districts. 	Lobby for policy reform, which would include the 3Rs of unpaid care work in women's work.	Final outcome achieved by completing all the steps.
Policy establishment of a Community Child Care Centre (CCCC) with respect to unpaid care work	Unpaid care work is a new concept which the community does not understand. Currently childcare dominates women's workload. At the same time, the government has not been able to fulfil codes such as Education for All (EFA) included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which affects enrolment, dropout and continuation rates.	Create a timeline with month and year deadlines for each objective in the critical path. Ensure that each stepping stone has its own goal in order to reach the next objective.	Community mobilisation and sensitisation are needed first before lobbying the government for policy reform and insistence on reaching the final objective.	Final outcome achieved by completing all the steps.

*STEP 5: Final outcome achieved by completing all the steps.

[†]Satellite accounts are a framework that enables attention to be focused on a certain field or aspect of economic and social life in the context of national accounts, such as the environment, tourism or unpaid household work.

[‡]AAI Nepal has been able to achieve this in one district, Parsa, where work has just started. After several meetings with local government, and also at the community level with women in group discussions and REFLECT circles, local government provided some space and money to establish a CCCC. In this district, AAI Nepal are working through their partner DYC (Dibya Yuwa Club) and the development of full provisions and mechanisms for sustainability has yet to be accomplished.

4.4 Programming and messaging

Participants also identified key points and designs to use in successfully communicating their message on social protection and ECD centres to policymakers, politicians, donor agencies and traditional rulers. This included changes in policy and practice to make them more gender-sensitive and attentive to the care economy. This could be done by changing the existing modality, manuals and questionnaires in data collection and developing strategic plans and strategies that help recognise, redistribute, and reduce women's unpaid care work. There could also be sensitisation of different government officials, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Additionally, there is a need to build the capacity of civil society and ensure community participation that allows male and female members of the community to actively participate but also the space and ability to do so.

5 Challenges, successes and learnings

5.1 Challenges

While the government has introduced some gender-sensitive policies, there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of making monitoring and evaluation gender-sensitive in economic and sectoral development policies, investing in skills training and education for the large numbers of women found in low-paid jobs, and incorporating the labour market into social security.

An interview with an AAI Nepal team member reveals that one of the challenges is that engaging with issues of unpaid care work is still relatively new in Nepal:

Nepal is quite young in terms of understanding and programming on UCW... we [AAI Nepal] have limited human resources in our team, so we're trying to get buy-in of others – best use of our resources. So that they own the issue and incorporate it into their own work/programmes.

An additional challenge is the issue of budgets and competing women's rights issues:

It's very difficult in Nepal. The government tries to leave everything to the NGOs. Local government does not have much budget, and there are so many needs, so women's needs are not treated with high priority. But at same time, especially in our earlier days when we were saying that women's work is not accounted for in GDP, so people from CBS used to laugh at us and say you know it's not possible. We had discussions with others, came to know that the whole system is guided by the international community. At least you can have a household satellite account. If you have a fund. (AAI Nepal team member)

There is also the issue of 'invisible resistance' in government and at every level – even within our own organisation, and other thematic specialists... Perhaps through lack of understanding... The state may say that the power should be redistributed at family level; but this is very difficult. Some divert the discussion: Are you women wanting us (i.e. government) to pay you for everything you do? (AAI Nepal team member)

This 'invisible resistance' can also lead to being 'brushed off' and a dilution of the issue of unpaid care work by bringing in 'different issues to dilute the whole discourse (migration, men are also working, etc.)... issue of cultural value, not like Western culture. It comes in different guises.' (AAI Nepal team member)

There are also organisational challenges within AAI Nepal. For instance:

Very few have concrete understanding about this, despite it's a day-to-day reality... Many women's rights organisations love to talk about violence against women, etc. But the concrete knowledge is not there. Lack of knowledge. Patriarchal attitudes. (AAI Nepal team member)

In addition, there is a disconnect between Early Child Development as a child rights issue versus providing a service through which women can also benefit, as an ECD centre is seen as 'a child's right to be looked after by [a] mother (they talk about mother rather than parents).' (AAI Nepal team member)

There are also operational challenges in Nepal. For instance, although a strategy has been drafted, AAI Nepal recognises the need for more consultation on it. There is a Social Security Fund, but it is not a department, so there is the challenge of engaging with them and helping them to improve on social security provisions. Unpaid care work is also not in Nepal's statistics, and there are not enough funds to help generate the necessary data.

5.2 Successes

In the selected REFLECT communities, after women received their training sessions from AAI Nepal and partners, they realised that one of the major workloads restricting their ability to go out and engage in other work was childcare. This realisation led to a very practical solution of building a community childcare centre, in which AAI Nepal was able to help:

Now we are trying to see that it is [childcare centres] built in the right manner. To build the childcare centre they went to government, got funding and have now built the centre (in project area of Irish Aid project). Because we had just discussed it in the training, they got on with it and followed up themselves. The community people themselves, they have put one childminder there. And our partners have given certain money to them, as has government.²

Another indicator of success is the increase in awareness and understanding about the issue of unpaid care, reflected through people's everyday conversations:

It hits every woman. They might do it in a different way, and we might analyse in a different manner; a women's group from B... – they did a campaign after training ('Burn your curry'). It is very difficult to make our husbands understand how much we contribute, it's taken for granted, we're not appreciated. So when cooking, they pretended they had to go and do something else, asked help from husband/brother/father. If they cooked nicely, they took part; if they burned it, they would see that they ruined it because they didn't take much interest. The fact that they had the courage to undertake this campaign at household level is an achievement.

Recently in our participatory review and reflection programme, another example came up from Nawalparashi district, where women fenced the grazing land and that reduced women's workload as they didn't have to look after cattle all the time and could use that time for some other work. It is a small initiative incorporated with [a] livelihood initiative but helped in reducing workload and also tension of going after cattle all the time.

Finally, people have begun to understand that AAI Nepal does work on UCW, which has led to good visibility for the organisation and has enabled them to develop local-level policy advocacy strategies. They have also been contacted by universities and the media.

² Two community childcare centres have been established in Mahottari and Parsa districts and AAI Nepal are also trying to build a similar CCCC in another project area. This one is in Tehrathum, where AAIN had earlier conducted research, and is funded by the European Commission (EC).

5.3 Key lessons learnt

One of the key lessons learnt is the presence of unpaid care work in different sectors (e.g. ECD, health), which could provide an opportunity to be involved in various issues (e.g. universal health care coverage as a right). However, in doing this it is critical that the demands of making care visible should not be hidden. As an AAI Nepal team member says:

There cannot be one policy on UCW. It has to be incorporated into other policies, such as: health policy, gender mainstreaming, economic development. UCW has lots of facets, so it's difficult to be everywhere and to keep track of everything. (AAI Nepal team member)

In mainstreaming and integrating UCW into other programmes, the AAI Nepal team has also recognised the importance of working with/through others, also bringing government officials from a range of ministries to workshops, in order to increase understanding of the issue across government departments.

There is a need to understand UCW in other programmes, and to help others understand UCW, making it part of the analysis informing programme design. Time diaries are a powerful advocacy tool for this – which points to the importance of evidence-based advocacy:

It's visible, people can relate to it, and men can understand it too. During local budget planning, this data is very useful. By end next year, we want to compile it all and show... The action research gave us the evidence base so it was easier for our programme staff to understand, and people outside. (AAI Nepal team member)

Unpaid care work should also be on the agenda during project planning meetings and programme activity and there are linkages between the Social Security Fund/CCC/GDP/NPC/CBS/Tax Justice/Public financing and UCW:

I can also see that AA staff are learning new things, and are putting it in their work; when they go on monitoring visits, etc. I also have improved my understanding. We had several international forums. (AAI Nepal team member)

The importance of a different perspective is another learning:

I worked for rural women in the beginning; women's rights to land; labour. When I got into this UCW, if we're (1 February 2002) really talking about structural change, we have to change the whole perspective towards women. (AAI Nepal team member)

Finally, an AAI Nepal member expressed aptly: 'It is difficult initially and then gets easier... you shouldn't be afraid even if you don't know [how to tackle] the issue... need a passion to work on [UCW]'.

6 Future directions

The plans for Years 2, 3 and 4 of the Unpaid Care Work Programme in Nepal include the following:

1. Begin the process of community sensitisation by collaborating with local community organisations and working towards creating their National Advocacy Strategy on Unpaid Care Work for Community Childcare Centres and the Social Security Fund. To do this, ActionAid Nepal will:
 - a. Build a working plan in connection with local programmes and national policy provision;
 - b. Make unpaid care work an agenda item and raise awareness about it in REFLECT groups/circles and also with staff and community members;
 - c. Share the learnt methodologies (i.e. power analysis, building advocacy strategies via critical paths and stakeholder mapping) with colleagues and the community;
 - d. Initiate CCCC establishment in communities;
 - e. Work with media;
 - f. Lobby for resource allocation for UCW in public services;
 - g. Advocate for unpaid care work as a women's rights issue at family, community and national levels.
2. Ongoing influencing and advocacy work, led by AAI Nepal in a three-pronged approach:
 - a. Enabling and empowering our rights holders;
 - b. Mass awareness (through international days, community discussions, research findings shared with policymakers/community members/academics);
 - c. Policy advocacy: mostly done at local level; women understanding the importance of UCW; they're asking government to build childcare centres, etc; a good way of making government accountable on use of budget/resources.
3. Promote information sharing across the partner countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda) for mutual learning, preferably through a face-to-face meeting of all partners (to be facilitated by IDS).
4. Share a draft advocacy strategy by AAI Nepal and consult with IDS on this strategy for finalisation.
5. A second and final year workshop to be designed and planned according to emerging learning and requirements from the first two years of the programme.

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