

# ‘My Mother Does a Lot of Work’: Women Balancing Paid and Unpaid Care Work in Tanzania

National report for Women’s Economic Empowerment Policy and Programming



Elena Zambelli, Keetie Roelen, Naomi Hossain,  
Deeptha Chopra and Jenipher Twebaze Musoke

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 BRAC Research and Evaluation Unit

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# The Tanzanian context

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Agriculture is the main economic sector in Tanzania, with almost 70 per cent of the labour force employed on their own farms. However, weak infrastructure and communications, and dependence on rainfed cultivation mean the sector is comparatively underdeveloped (UNDP 2015: 10; Charle, Dhliwayo and Emenuga 2016: 3–4).

The economic growth enjoyed by Tanzania in recent years has not been evenly distributed, and poverty remains concentrated in rural areas. While crop production involves an approximately equal share of women and men labourers (Palacios-Lopez, Christiaensen and Kilic 2017: 52), women participate in the agrarian economy at a disadvantage. Women farmers tend to be older, less educated, and often widowed or divorced;<sup>1</sup> they also have less access to farm equipment, and less capacity

to demand or secure men's help in the fields (Buehren *et al.* 2015: 14).

Outside of agriculture, three-quarters of paid and self-employment opportunities are in the informal sector, with more women workers (an estimated 82 per cent of informal sector workers) than men (72 per cent) (Charle *et al.* 2016). Tanzanian women spend more time overall than men on unpaid care work activities, and less on cash-earning work (*ibid.*).

In the (predominantly rural) districts involved in this study – Lushoto and Korogwe – between 85 and 90 per cent of the population is employed in agriculture (Braslow and Cordingley 2016: 2; Mkwizu 2014: 18). The districts therefore offer useful insights into the everyday challenges that rural Tanzanian women face.

## KEY MESSAGES

The study findings indicate that women across the four research sites shoulder the majority of unpaid care work responsibilities, and struggle to balance these with paid work. There is no evidence to suggest that they are able to effectively redistribute or share their unpaid care work responsibilities with more help from men, state or community services or institutions, or purchased services. Reasons for this appear to include: the persistence of gender norms about who should do care work; the lack of public services essential to both the care and paid economies; and the low incomes earned by both women and the men in their families in these impoverished communities.

The study highlights that intervention is needed to support a rebalancing of unpaid care with paid work – whether through improved working conditions and pay, provision of childcare, public water or fuel services, gender-sensitive infrastructural development, or efforts to address gender-unequal social norms and values that proscribe the redistribution of care. Without such intervention, patterns of imbalance will reproduce and perpetuate themselves. Women will take up valuable economic opportunities that help to improve living conditions and, potentially, their household or community status, but these will add to the drudgery and physical and psychosocial stress of juggling paid work with unpaid work.

# The study

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This report presents the findings of mixed-methods research conducted in Tanzania as part of the 'Balancing unpaid care work and paid work: successes, challenges and lessons for women's economic empowerment programmes and policies' research project (2015–17).<sup>2</sup> In particular, it reflects the voices and experiences of women and their household members who live across four sites in the rural districts of Korogwe and Lushoto, in the Tanga region. The research explored how women and their household members balanced the unpaid work of caring – the labour of caring for children, the sick, and the elderly; work in and beyond the house to look after people and livestock; collecting water and fuel; food provisioning and preparation – with income-earning opportunities,

specifically those that came about through women's economic empowerment (WEE) programmes and policies. The research involved a quantitative survey of 200 women – on which the figures elaborated in this report are based – and detailed case studies of 32 of their households, involving interviews with multiple household members. The sample was stratified by the women's participation in two different WEE programmes (see below), which operated across the four research sites. Participatory exercises undertaken across gender and/or generational lines, and interviews with key community informants provided broader contextual information on people's norms and practices revolving around the organisation of unpaid care work.

## Women's economic empowerment (WEE) programmes

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### **Government of Tanzania: Women Development Fund**

The Women Development Fund (WDF) was established by the Government of Tanzania in 1992, and is administered through the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children. The objective of the WDF is to support the economic empowerment of women, and especially rural women, by providing them with loans that they can use to start/scale up a wide range of income-generating activities, including agriculture and livestock rearing, sale of processed food, and petty trade. The programme does not directly create jobs for women, but supports them in setting up small, income-generating businesses, which in turn are seen as a means to contribute to lifting their household out of poverty. Loans are made available to women either directly or through the network of Village Community Banks (VCBs) at a low interest rate of 10 per cent. The VCBs operate along standard microcredit lines, with access to loans via group membership, which creates a collective responsibility for meeting repayment deadlines.

### **Oxfam: Food Security for Tanzania Farmers**

The Oxfam Food Security for Tanzania Farmers programme aimed to increase food production and income, and to improve the quality of life and food security for smallholder farmers, particularly women, in Tanzania. In the districts of Lushoto and Korogwe in northern Tanzania, it aimed to strengthen women's participation in vegetable value chains (VVCs) in three ways:

1. Ensuring women's participation across the VVC and in particular in its most profitable nodes, and increasing women's access to, control of, and ownership of land;
2. Improving the quality of agricultural production by training farmers on global good agricultural practices and supporting them in obtaining quality certification; overall, contributing to expanding their marketing potential;
3. Training farmers in leadership, entrepreneurship and governance, in order to strengthen farmers' collective action *vis-à-vis* government and financial institutions.

# The social organisation of care

All the women involved in the study retained overall responsibility for care work in their families when they engaged in paid work. However, adult working women were more likely to retain responsibility for the collection of water and fuel than for some other tasks, for instance, livestock care.

The collection of water and fuel (such as firewood) are the most physically demanding and time-consuming care tasks that women regularly undertake. As Figure 1 shows, more than three out of four women stated that women bore sole responsibility for collecting these essential goods (79 per cent).<sup>3</sup> Husbands' involvement in these activities was very low, with only 10 per cent of the respondents reporting that they collaborated with their husband in undertaking these tasks. As it will comparatively emerge in the forthcoming figures, our findings suggest that male involvement in these activities is indeed the lowest across the whole spectrum of unpaid care work activities.

Collection of firewood is time- and money-consuming; many women reported that they either had to travel far to collect it from the

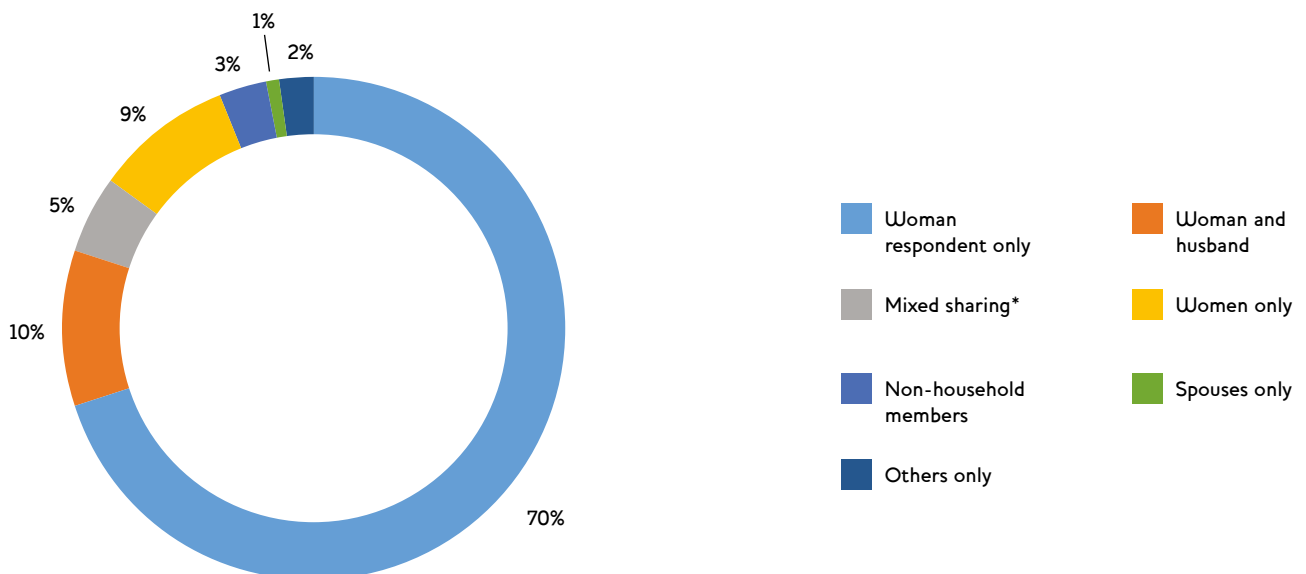
Fetching water affects my health because I fetch a lot of water and I get the water far from my home so I get too tired walking while carrying a bucket of water, and also I get chest problems because of carrying a lot of buckets and climbing mountains with [heavy] loads.

**Woman participating in the Care Work Matrix exercise, Lushoto district.**

forests, or pay for either helpers or readily-cut wood. The journey to the forests is in itself dangerous as it entails exposure to the risk of sexual violence. For instance, one male participant of the Care Body Map exercise in Lushoto noted that women ran the risk of rape when they collected water at night.

As relayed by Figure 2, over two-thirds of all women respondents (72 per cent) stated that the responsibility for undertaking household work – which includes washing, laundry, cleaning of the house and compound, and food preparation – rested with women only.

Figure 1: Person(s) responsible for collection of water, fuel and wood



Note: \* 'Mixed sharing' includes tasks carried out by the woman respondent and any combination of female and male household members jointly (each at least 2–3 times per week).

Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

17 per cent of the respondents relayed that household chores were undertaken together with their husband, and 7 per cent through the participation of different household members. In 3 per cent of the households, the woman respondent received help from non-household members, sometimes in the form of a paid service. Consistent with other findings on women's time-use in Tanzania (Fontana and Natali 2008: 22), our qualitative data suggest that men's participation in preparing food is particularly low.

When [my wife] is away some activities become hard for me to do, like taking care of the children; I cannot do exactly what their mother has been doing for them... Activities like cooking? Mmmmm... [for] a man like me to be in a kitchen peeling is somehow hard, so I end up going to a restaurant to buy food which is expensive because I will be using more money than what I would have used [had I cooked myself].

**Charles, 55 years old, who lives with his wife, Charlene, her daughter, and his sister-in-law in Lushoto district**

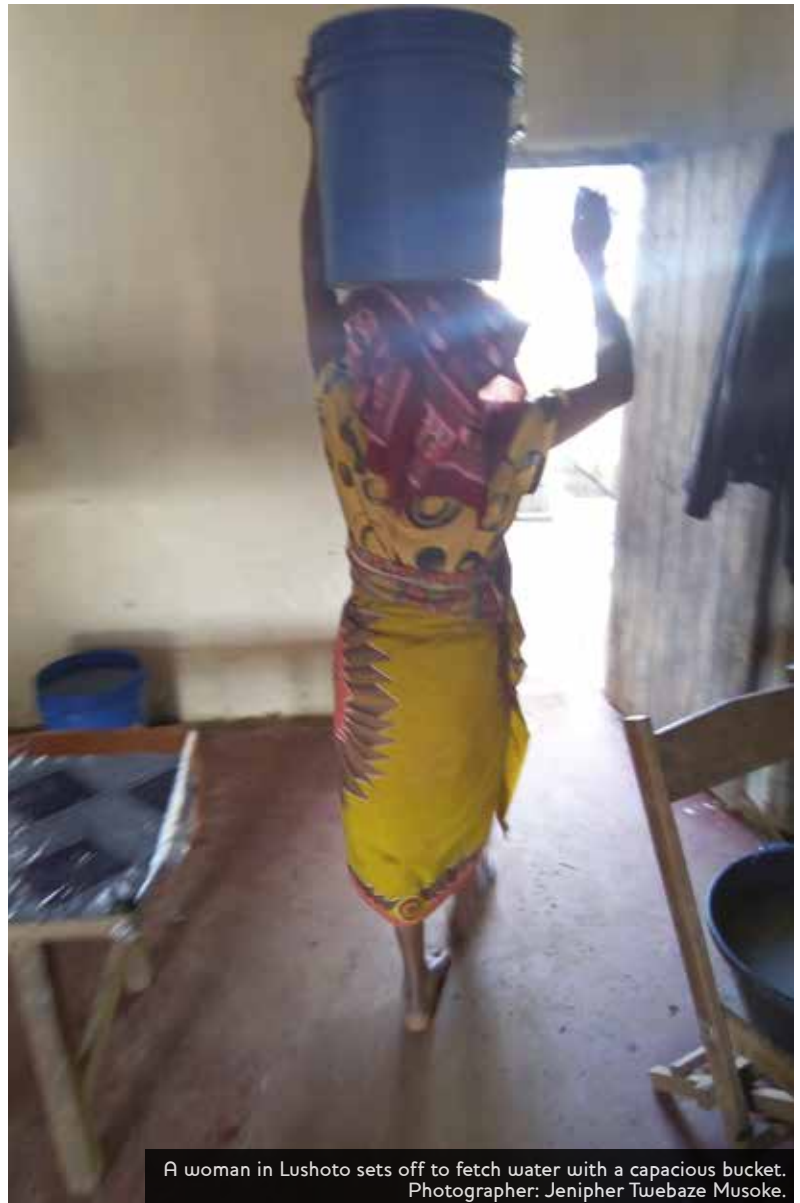
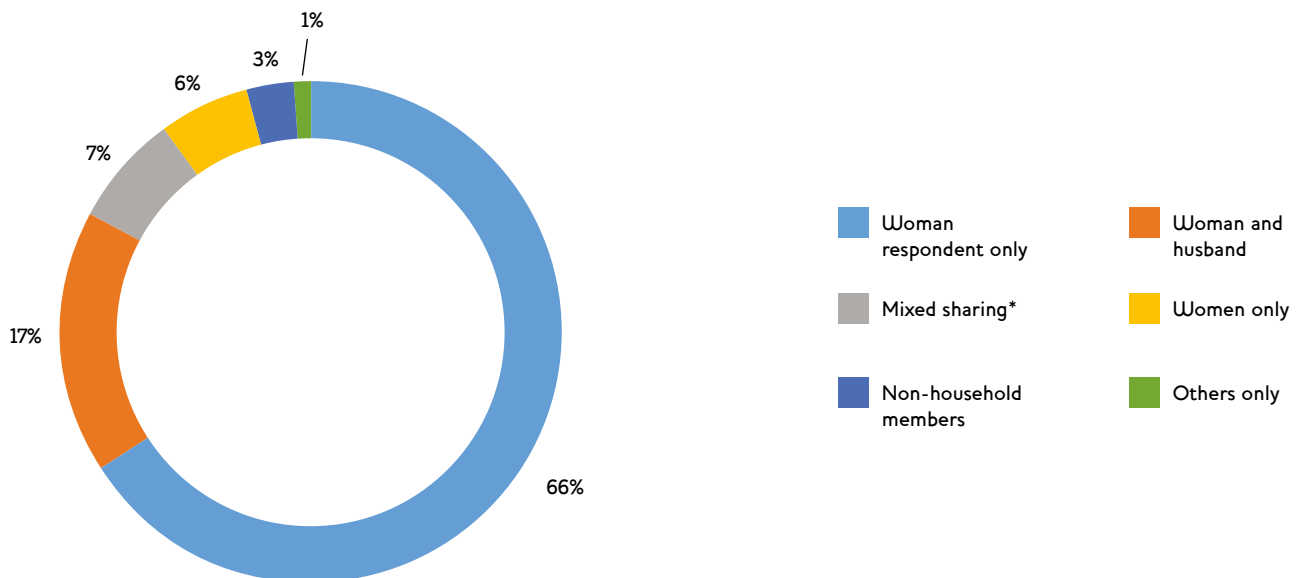


Figure 2: Person(s) responsible for household work inside the house



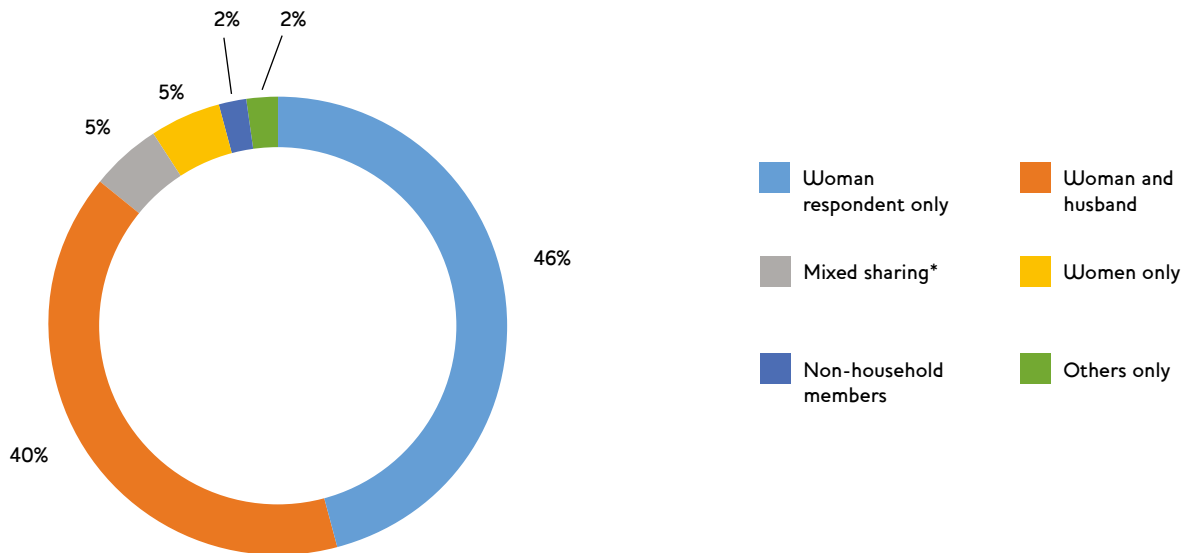
Note: \* 'Mixed sharing' includes tasks carried out by the woman respondent and any combination of female and male household members jointly (each at least 2–3 times per week).

Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

Childcare is more broadly shared compared to other care tasks. As relayed in Figure 3, just over half of the respondents described childcare as a responsibility that is held by women only (51 per cent). Joint responsibility for childcare across women and their husbands

was very high, amounting to 40 per cent. It should be noted, however, that these high percentages of men's involvement in caring for children may reflect respondents' inclusion of financial responsibility as part of what it means to 'care for' someone.

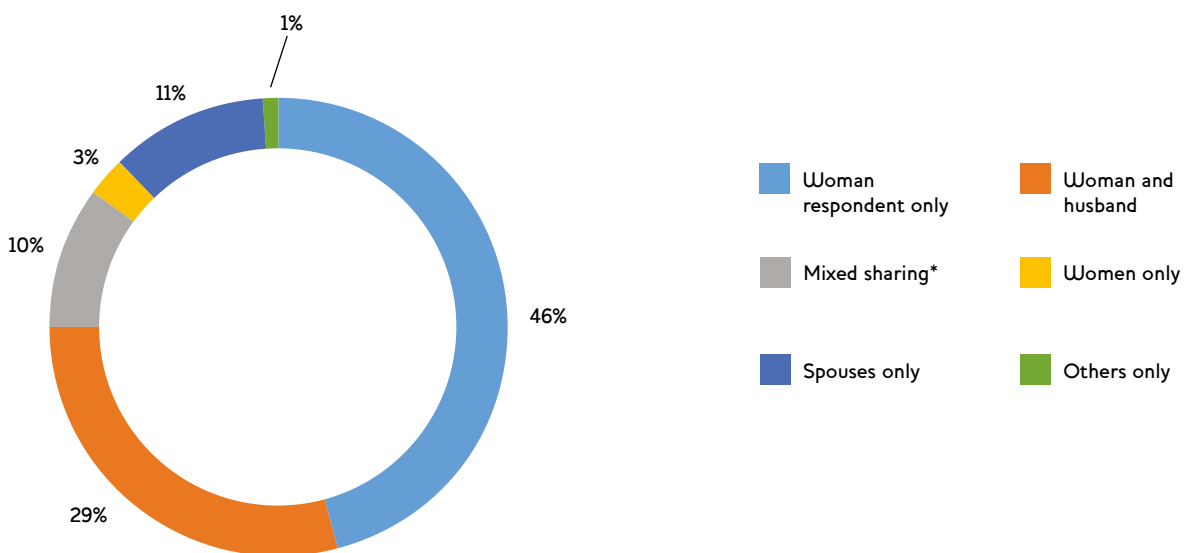
Figure 3: Person(s) responsible for childcare



Note: \* 'Mixed sharing' includes tasks carried out by the woman respondent and any combination of female and male household members jointly (each at least 2-3 times per week).

Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

Figure 4: Person(s) responsible for animal care



Note: \* 'Mixed sharing' includes tasks carried out by the woman respondent and any combination of female and male household members jointly (each at least 2-3 times per week).

Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.



Figure 4 shows that women's responsibility for caring for animals inside the compound (e.g. feeding, fetching water) is the lowest across the range of care work tasks. Less than half of all women respondents (49 per cent) stated that this activity was solely a woman's responsibility. Almost one-third of the women reported that they shared responsibility for this task with their husbands (29 per cent), and approximately one in ten (11 per cent) said that their spouse was solely responsible for the task.

Social norms around the type and amount of unpaid care work that children ought to do within their household meant that they did

different types on the basis of gender and age, with a higher contribution from girls. This emerged clearly in interviews with male community leaders.

In Korogwe, for example, upon return from school the girls helped with washing utensils, while boys cut fodder or otherwise helped with animals. Older girls who did not attend school helped with all aspects of housework, including washing, cooking and cleaning; some also do daily wage labour of harvesting or weeding on plantations. Older boys who did not have jobs of their own also went to the farm with their parents.

## The role of the state, the market, and the community

Some women reported that neighbours occasionally helped with caring for their children when they were away. Nevertheless, when asked whether 'the community' could contribute significantly to improving the ways in which women balance their paid and unpaid care work, they were generally sceptical.

Poor water and electricity infrastructures, distant health facilities, and bad roads all have a knock-on effect on the time that women spend doing a number of care tasks, which subtracts from the time they can invest in cash-earning activities.

All in all, women living in these low-income households in remote rural areas were left facing the brunt of unpaid care work in very difficult circumstances, with no significant help from the state or the market in sharing the responsibilities and costs of looking after their families and bringing up children.

The community helps but to a small extent... they only care when they find your child on the streets fighting or saying bad words, [then] they can stop him/her, but to a bigger extent, regarding care, they can't do so much. Everyone is doing it [unpaid care work] for their own family.

**Carol, 29 years old, a single parent of three daughters whom she also provides for financially**

I can't buy milk for my children for them to have a good health. Instead I save the money so that I can buy firewood that will help in cooking the family food.

**A woman during the Care Wallet participatory exercise, Lushoto district**

## Women's paid work



A woman in Korogwe prepares to go to the market to sell her agricultural produce and processed food.  
Photographer: Jenipher Twebaze Musoke .

Women's reasons for engaging in paid work were generally linked to improving family livelihoods, mostly in a context where their spouse's income – predominantly from agricultural-based, income-generating activities – was insufficient to meet all household needs. Engagement in paid work was generally presented as the result of a joint, rational decision of the marital couple, in the face of economic need.

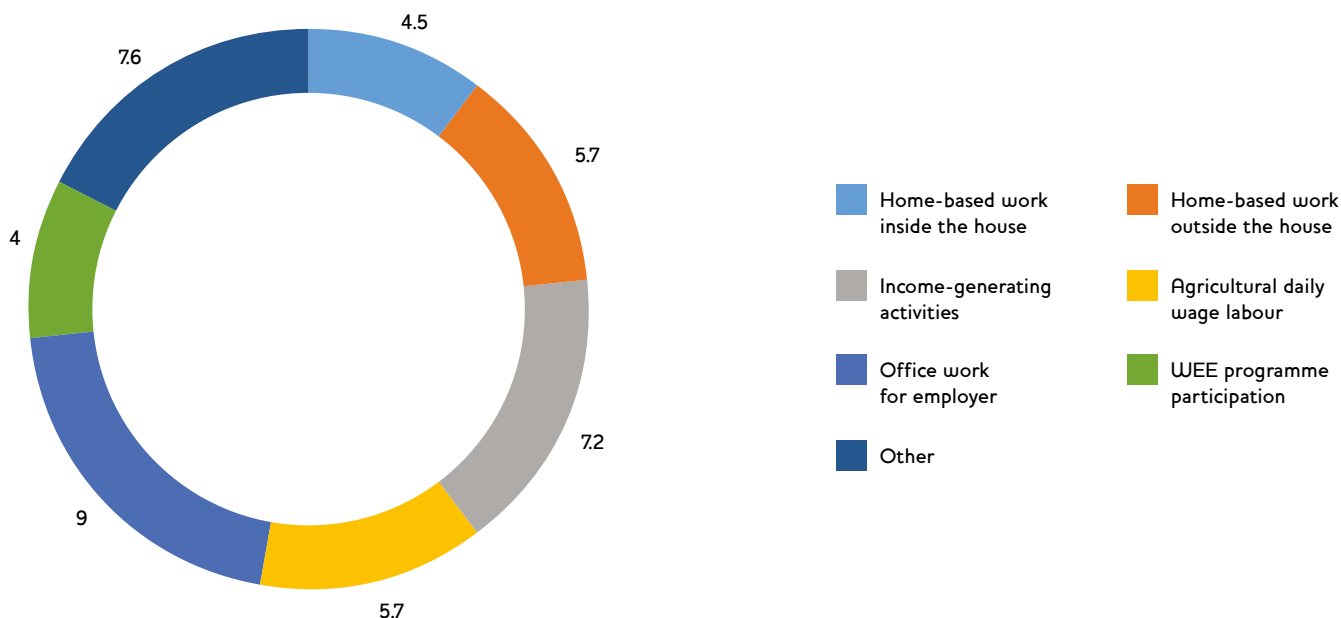
Due to the predominantly rural character of the fieldwork districts, women's cash earning possibilities mainly revolved around agricultural work, food processing, and small petty trade businesses (e.g. in chickens, clothes, soap, and food stuffs). Depending on the season, women frequently combined or alternated between different types of cash-generating activities. This included working on their household's plot of land or on a plot rented from others, and selling the produce that exceeded household

My husband's income is not enough to take care of the family and buy all our needs... so I discussed with him that I have to do some paid work so that we can overcome the hardships of life by helping each other in taking care of the family.

**Christine, 45 years old, who lives with her husband, four children, and her adult brothers in Lushoto district**

consumption needs. Digging was the most frequently quoted type of agricultural wage work done on other people's land. Similarly, men worked primarily on agricultural-based activities, either outside the house or as part of income-generating activities, and supplemented this work with casual labour on farms and in construction.

Figure 5: Average number of hours spent on this type of work



Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

As Figure 5 illustrates, the number of hours per day that adults spent on income-earning work varied greatly across different types of work, ranging from 4 hours for WEE programme participation and 4.5 hours for home-based work, to 9 hours for office work. This may reflect the degree of flexibility offered by different types of work and the extent to

which they may be combined with other activities. On average, women appeared to spend the same number of hours on home-based work outside the house, which is predominantly agricultural work on their household's land, as on agricultural daily wage labour (5.7 hours).

We own a small piece of land in the valley where we cultivate beans, maize and yams. But we also do day labour jobs if someone wants their farm cleared... like today, my husband is not here, he went out to search to some labour job... I also sell the produce from our farm in the market.

**Janice, 37 years old, who lives in an extended household with her husband, two daughters, three sons, and her mother-in-law in Korogwe district**

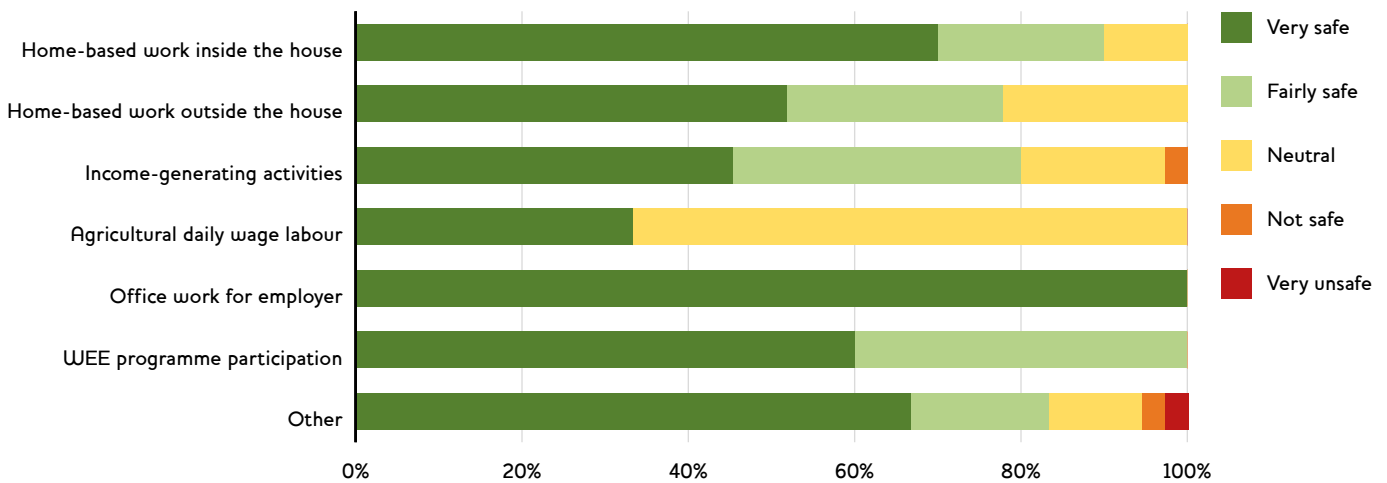
When you go to do the paid job [for others], you are unable to do the household chores... for example, you can come back home after work, and as you are preparing lunch for the children, another job opportunity comes up for the afternoon session so you are not able to even clean your house.

**Marvin, 35 years old, who lives with her husband and four daughters in Lushoto district**

As Figure 6 shows, safety conditions at work were generally considered to be 'very safe', 'fairly safe', or 'neutral' across all types of work. Agricultural daily wage labour registered

the highest 'neutral' response (66.7 per cent), followed by home-based work outside the house, which generally encompasses a large degree of agricultural work.

Figure 6: Perceptions of safety conditions per type of paid work



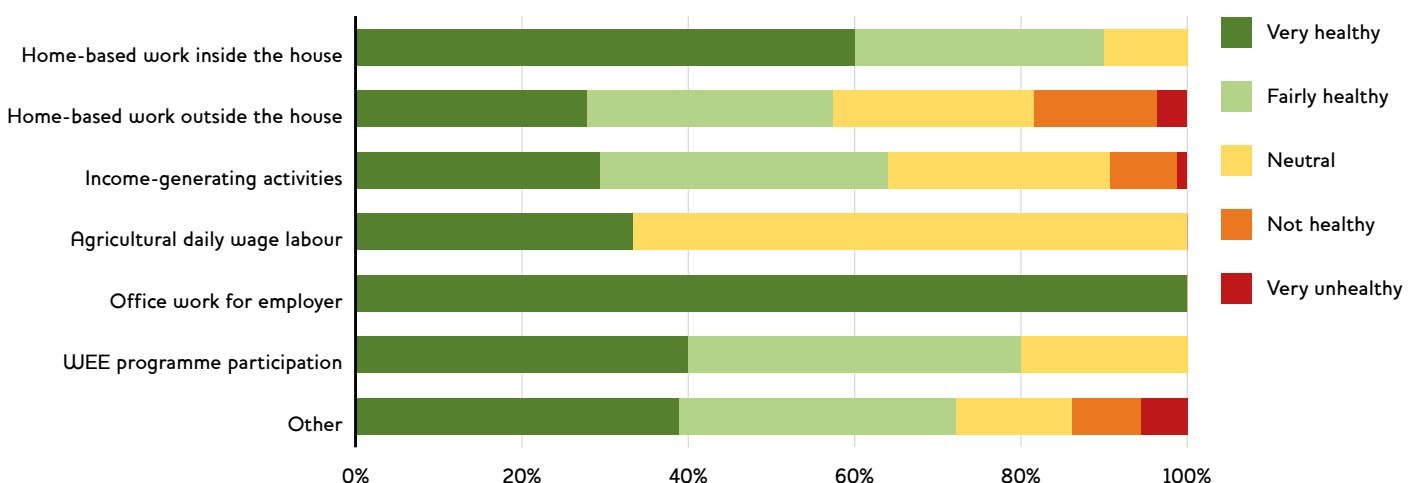
Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

As Figure 7 relays, health conditions at the worksites were more variable, particularly for home-based work outside the home and income-generating activities. More than half (57.4 per cent) of all women undertaking home-based work outside the house reported conditions to be 'very healthy' or 'fairly healthy', but almost one in five women doing such work (18.5 per cent) experienced 'not healthy' or 'very unhealthy' conditions. Experiences are equally mixed with respect to health conditions at sites of income-generating activities. The physical hazards that

women mentioned the most revolved around agricultural work, and included back injuries, broken skin on their hands, breathing in dust, and overexposure to the sun and heat.

Figure 8 shows that the overwhelming majority of women reported not having any childcare facility available at their worksite. Childcare facilities were reported to be available on-site for a small number of income-generating activities and 'other' employment, and the one woman who was employed in office work also reported childcare facility provision.

Figure 7: Perceptions of health conditions per type of paid work



Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

However, all women pointed out that their earnings were very low, unpredictable, and often involved arduous labour and considerable amounts of travel.

Some women pointed out the limited nature of the work options available to them, emphasising also that local demand for their products tended to be low.

Others complained that markets did not work as they should, including several women whose businesses regularly suffered because of bad debtors who were unable or unwilling to pay

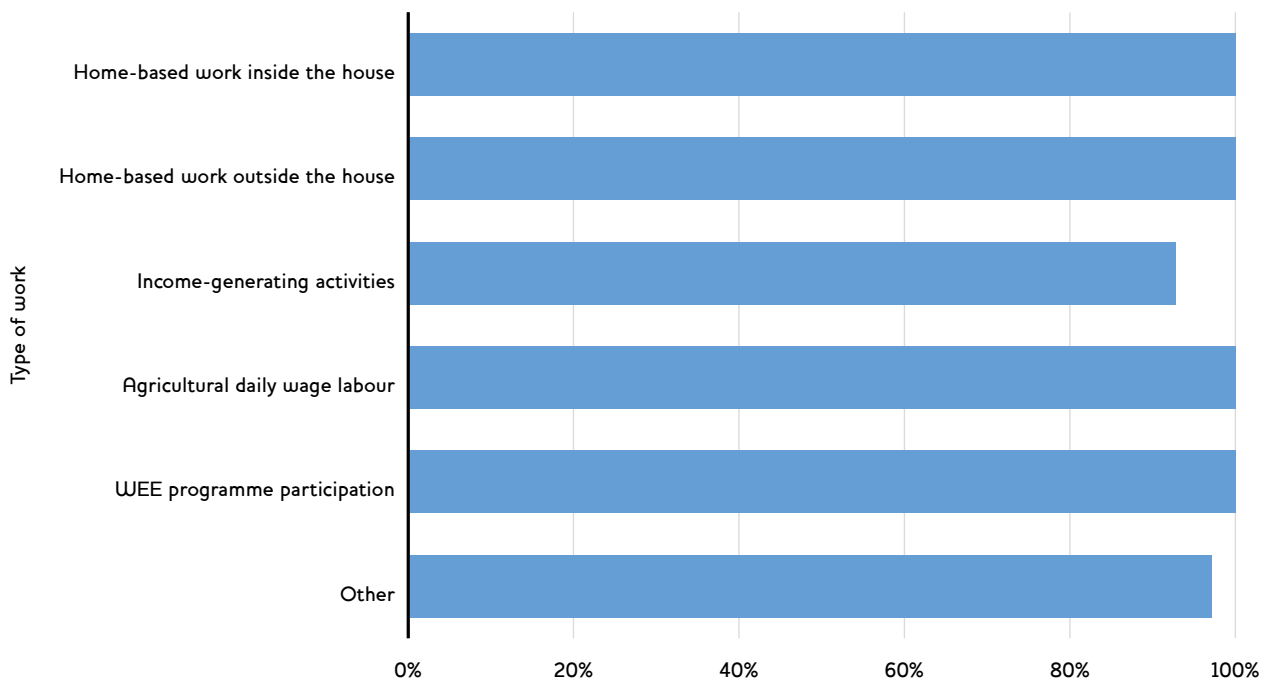
A group of women in the Care Body Map exercise in Korogwe relayed the negative effects of paid work:

1. 'Cutting myself with a hoe while digging in the farm, which can lead to other diseases like tetanus, so I can't do other work because I am sick';
2. 'The body hurts when you go to the farm to dig or water the vegetables because it is a big farm';
3. 'Getting flu and cough from the dust in the farm while weeding or planting more vegetables';
4. 'My backbone hurts from digging for a long time while in the farm';
5. 'My hands are paralysed from digging such big sections of land'.

I might cultivate and expect big profit from it, but due to things like lack of water the products won't be good and hence [I will have only a] small profit... it depends on the farming season: I might get low income, and when I sell tomatoes I can get profit.

**Denise, 34 years old, who lives with her husband and their five children in Lushoto district**

Figure 8: Childcare facilities unavailable at worksite (%)



Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

## Effects of women's paid work

Women attributed great importance to the income they earned from paid work, which they considered to be providing a critical contribution to meeting the household's basic necessities – in particular, food, health, and children's education (e.g. school fees, uniforms, books). When asked about the effects of paid work, most women emphasised its financial dimension, and notably the positive difference this additional income made to their lives.

Lack of income was a major source of stress. Women's pride was also unanimously echoed by their husbands, for whom their wives' additional income partly relieved them of the pressure associated with men's responsibilities as breadwinners.

Women's engagement in paid work had mixed effects on their children's education. On the one hand, women's engagement in paid work generally resulted in a partial transfer of their care work responsibilities onto their children, and especially their daughters, which in some cases could generate a trade-off between women's work and their daughters' educational outcomes (e.g. tiredness, failure to do homework, reaching school late). Yet, on the other hand, paying school fees was one of the reasons that women cited the most when explaining why their paid work was valuable to them.

Children were ambivalent about their mothers' income-earning work, reflecting awareness that this was a response to their household's poverty rather than a 'free' choice, and which resulted in their mothers' physical exhaustion and, in fact, depletion.

My work allows me to take good care of my children, they eat nice food, they go to school and they get [health] treatment when they are sick.

**Roberta, 35 years old, who lives with her husband and their six daughters in Korogwe district**

Sometimes my son gets tired because he takes on the work after he comes from school so it becomes too much for him that he does not get enough time to study.

**Barbra, 37 years old, who lives with her husband and their five sons in Korogwe district**

Sometimes when I go to look for money she can't go to school. She has to remain home.

**Roberta, 35 years old, from Korogwe district, talking about the eldest of her six daughters who helps her cope with unpaid care work**

My mother does a lot of work... I know that working is good but she over works so I would like her to get some rest after her work. But again, she needs to do the digging so that we have food. So I don't know [if her paid work is good or not].

**Justine's five-year-old daughter who lives in Lushoto district with her parents, two brothers and her grandfather**

## Balancing care, unpaid, and paid work

Generally, women said they could fulfil both their care and paid work responsibilities, except in cases of their own or their children's sickness, or when the agricultural season was at its peak which demanded more unpaid work on their plot of land and/or offered more income-earning opportunities on other people's. Most women recounted fitting care tasks around their paid work – which was their means to have access to the cash they needed to contribute to the household's expenditure – especially by stretching their day (e.g. waking up early to prepare food and get their children ready for school before leaving for paid work).

During the period of preparing farms it is difficult to combine paid work and unpaid work... because there is so much to do in the farm so I have to leave home activities undone and go to the farm first.

**Daniela, 47 years old, who lives with her husband and four sons in Lushoto district**

Nevertheless, most of our respondents reported an overwhelming feeling of tiredness, as they struggled to manage everyday life amid environmental hazards, diseases, and economic precariousness. Admission of their tiredness was, however, always accompanied by a sense of responsibility, pride and determination which allowed them to keep going – the harshness of the dual burden they endured notwithstanding.

I get tired even when I have not yet finished my tasks. I get fatigued, I also get a headache and feel overworked... [My husband] sees the pain that I go through but because he is also always out looking for money, he helps [in care work] but not very much.

**Jolly, 29 years old, who lives with her husband and their three sons in Korogwe district**

Women described the value of their participation in saving and lending groups, some of which were part of the WEE programmes operating in our research sites, for their function as safety nets which allowed them to cover onerous expenditures (e.g. school fees, medical bills, funerals, etc.).

We contribute an amount for the community, so when one member is sick or gets a problem then the group is giving her an amount to comfort her in her difficult situation. If someone is getting married and can't afford the expenses the community contributes to help in making the wedding happen.

**Bernadet, 35 years old, who participates in a saving and lending group in Lushoto district**

More generally, women who appeared to cope better with their dual care and paid work responsibilities were able to use some of their paid work earnings to either hire workers who would help them with care or unpaid work, or to purchase water and firewood.

This arguably increases the opportunity cost of women's engagement in paid work, especially when its returns are particularly low and when it does not affect the uneven distribution of unpaid care work within the household, between women and men, or across the care diamond<sup>4</sup>.

## WEE programmes vs other types of paid work

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WEE programme participation did not appear to significantly alter the balance between paid and unpaid care work for the women included in this study – either positively or negatively. We found no discernible difference between women participating in WEE programmes and other types of paid work.

This overall finding may in part be due to the nature of the WEE programmes that were studied as neither offered direct linkages to either formal or informal paid work. Findings also suggest that paid work as a result of WEE programme participation represents but one of multiple types of paid work that women engage in depending on the season, the availability of work, and personal circumstances.

The absence of a positive effect on the balance between paid work and unpaid care work, or indeed a move towards a ‘double boon’, should not lead to negative conclusions about the

WEE programmes, however, because neither programme set out to offer the main form of paid work or income for women, or in fact to address the balance between paid work and unpaid care work. For each WEE programme, we have therefore elaborated a detailed guidance note which sets out a number of recommendations on how to mainstream unpaid care work within their initiatives (see Müller and Zambelli 2017a, 2017b).

Paid work helps in my unpaid work as [with] the income I get I can buy firewood, or water and it helps to ease the work responsibilities at home.

**Michel, 33 years old, who lives with her husband and their three children in Lushoto district.**



# Explaining patterns of care, unpaid, and paid work

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## The role of gender norms

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Women continue to be perceived as the main providers of unpaid care work in the household. Their own responses revealed that they subscribe to this view and that they find pride in their caring role, which was overwhelmingly echoed by their husbands and children. Yet, this leads to their attempts to stretch the day and to manage their time more effectively to comply with this responsibility, and also leads to their worries for the burden they pass on to other household members when they fail to do so.

The perception of unpaid care work as being a predominantly female activity reflected a broader, gendered view of work. The large majority of women perceived men to be naturally better at household repair and construction, agricultural activities, or care for animals – i.e. activities that require more energy and strength. By contrast, roughly half of all women that were interviewed mentioned that caring for a sick child was the foremost task that they were better at, and roughly one-third of all women reported household work inside the house to be the main task that they were better at than men. Gender norms appear to be enforced from a young age, with girls doing more household chores than their brothers, who do more care work outside the home; however, this allocation is not as rigid as in later stages of life. For both, unpaid care work encroached on the time and energy they could dedicate to their education, although the imbalance was higher for girls (see also Fontana and Natali 2008: 37).

Notwithstanding our respondents' strong views about the gendering of work, our data also point towards contradictions between the norms women and men formally hold on to, and the everyday negotiations they engage in to cope with the harsh contexts that they live in. In particular, qualitative data suggest that norms and practices around men's participation in unpaid care work do sometimes collide. We observed contradictions between what men from different households voiced in front of one another, and what individual respondents relayed in the context of a one-to-one interview. Hence, beyond stereotypical imageries of male irresponsibility and unfitness for household work, in more discreet, one-to-one interview settings many women, men and children relayed that men did participate in care work.

Both spouses generally presented women's income contribution as ancillary, but in a few instances women reclaimed their primary role in both the care and paid work spheres. For most male respondents, however, their wives' engagement in paid work was a symptom of their household's poverty, rather than an ideal situation they subscribed to. They expressed a preference for their wives to remain home and in charge of care work, thereby taming the risk of these responsibilities remaining unfulfilled, or being transferred to men. This reflects a trade-off between income and time, whereby generation of income requires tapping into a finite amount of time that is available for women and men alike.

## Factors influencing women's experiences of 'double boon', as compared to double burden

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### Family structure and support

The extent to which households get close to a 'double boon' – where women's paid work supports and enables (rather than undermines and depletes) household members' wellbeing, personal growth and development – depends on how effectively care is shared within the household. In families that were managing to balance women's paid work with the household's unpaid care needs relatively successfully, care tended to be shared in an accepted and regular or systematic way, among people who had the competency and capacity to undertake such tasks. It appeared to be routine and accepted that others would perform some tasks, in particular when the women were absent for long periods or many hours at a time, and the arrangements were made in advance, rather than *ad hoc* and left to chance or inclination.

In households where a more or less successful balance was being achieved between paid and unpaid work, older children – usually aged ten or above – frequently helped with key tasks. Although their work was important in the overall sharing of care, households with fewer children and/or more grown-up children were more likely to show signs of getting closer towards a double boon, due to the fact that caring for young children is very intense.

### Structural and contextual aspects

The opportunities for income-earning work for women across the four research sites were generally limited to fairly low-return and unpredictable farming, and some small-scale trading and retail business activities. Accessing water and fuel (firewood) was generally straining and time-consuming, affecting the burden of the unpaid care work necessary to satisfy a household's basic survival needs. Bad roads also exacerbated the time that women invested in caring for their own and their household members' health, as travelling on low-quality roads increased the

time taken to reach out to health facilities. Childcare facilities were substantially absent, and women wage labourers with very young children who could not rely on the help of other household members were either forced out of paid work, or had to carry their kids along in the fields, so that they could manage their dual responsibilities. Local social cohesion appeared to make a considerable difference to the achievement of a better balance of paid and unpaid work. Where women had the support and cooperation of other women and neighbours, this helped improve both their paid and unpaid work conditions.

### Market provisioning

Access to markets for labour, products and services played a key role in enabling women to achieve a 'double boon' through their participation in economically empowering work. Indeed, where markets were absent or failing to provide the kinds of jobs, customers or services that women needed, women and their families faced particular struggles to balance paid, unpaid and care work. In general, all women appreciated the opportunity to earn some cash in order to top up household income, with many mentioning schooling and medical costs, additional food, and other household needs as items they spent their own incomes on.

However, all of the women also pointed out that their earnings were very low, unpredictable, and often involved arduous labour and considerable amounts of travel. Some women used part of their paid work earnings to outsource some of their unpaid care work responsibilities. Nevertheless, this arguably increases the opportunity cost of women's engagement in paid work, especially when its returns are particularly low and when it does not affect the uneven distribution of unpaid care work within the household, between women and men, or across the care diamond.

# Conclusions: Working towards a 'double boon'

The insights offered by the women and men, and to some degree, children who were involved in this study overwhelmingly point towards the need for: (1) decent work that provides ample payment at regular intervals and for which conditions can be negotiated or adapted to the women's and families' needs, and (2) basic service provision that provides the enabling environment for developing paid work opportunities, to reduce drudgery and directly improve families' wellbeing.

When asked about ways to improve their working conditions, women overwhelmingly responded that what they wished for was to be paid more, and more regularly. Timely access to a decent, or at least the agreed, wage was also seen as contributing to maintaining a supportive social environment, in contexts where people frequently postponed payments to cope with lack of cash.

My employer should ensure he pays me on time so that I can help support my family... because there are times when your boss doesn't pay on time, yet you had promised to pay up a debt which spoils the connection you have with someone, or he does not even pay you at all.

**Erica, 24 years old, who lives with her husband and their three children in Lushoto district**

For most women, however, self-employment represented a better option than being employed by others – the latter being seen as constraining their capacity to determine their conditions of engagement (e.g. time of work, payment).

Access to higher loans with lower (or no) interest rates, or to productive assets (e.g. livestock) and technology (e.g. fertilisers,

watering systems, etc.), in fact, were the most frequent demands that women voiced when asked what would ease their dual responsibilities in care and paid work, as these would enable them to create/strengthen income-generating opportunities around their care responsibilities.

Most women demanded improved basic service provision, and in particular they mentioned water, public health-care facilities, and education.

Basic service provision would reduce the time spent on unpaid care work. On the other hand, our findings have shown that the need to pay for children's school fees and expenditures is often both the trigger of women's participation in paid work, and what consumes a significant part of the income they earn out of it. If fees were lifted, women and their household members could divert part of their income to meeting other needs and aspirations.

If they could give us goats, cows and chickens to graze and get profits, it would be good.

**Jolly, 29 years old, discussing how the government could help develop her business and community**

I would like my employer to pay school fees for my children... I wouldn't mind about my salary as long as the kids go to school.

**Bernard, a construction worker who lives with his five daughters and two sons in Lushoto district**



These demands resonate with the recommendations agreed during the 61st UN Commission on the Status of Women, which urged governments, civil society, the private sector, employer organisations, and trade unions, *inter alia* to:

**[t]ake all appropriate measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting policies and initiatives supporting the reconciliation of work and family life and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men... through the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy, transport and information and communications technology, as well as accessible, affordable and quality childcare and care facilities and by challenging gender stereotypes and negative social norms and promoting men's participation and responsibilities as fathers and caregivers.**

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Although these recommendations are not binding, their implementation remains critical in order to ensure that women move closer to achieving a 'double boon', whereby their engagement in paid work also empowers them by providing more support for their unpaid care work responsibilities.

## Notes

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1. In Tanzania, 67 per cent of sole female plot managers are widowed, separated, or divorced (*ibid.*).
2. The project was carried out in four countries (India, Nepal, Rwanda and Tanzania) as part of the Growth and Equal Opportunities for Women (GrOW) programme, funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Department for International Development (DFID) and the Hewlett Foundation. In Tanzania, the project was implemented through a partnership between Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and BRAC Research and Evaluation Unit (BRAC-REU).
3. The data reflect the sum of category A (task carried out by woman respondent only (at least 2–3 times per week)) and category D (task carried out by women household members only (each at least 2–3 times per week)).
4. The 'care diamond' is a framework for the provision of care that comprises the family/household, markets, the public sector, and the not-for-profit sector (Razavi 2007: 20).

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# 'My Mother Does a Lot of Work': Women Balancing Paid and Unpaid Care Work in Tanzania

National report for Women's Economic Empowerment Policy and Programming

Balancing unpaid care work and paid work carried out qualitative and quantitative research in India, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania across 16 sites. This research explores how women's economic empowerment policies and programmes can take unpaid care work into account, in order to enable economic empowerment to be optimised, shared across families and sustained across generations. It focusses on the social

organisation of care in low income households, and at the role of families, state, private sector and not-for profit sector.

Ultimately it aims to identify measures that can lead towards a 'double boon', creating paid work that empowers women and provides core support for their unpaid care work responsibilities.

The Balancing unpaid care work and paid work project explores the successes, challenges and lessons for Women's Economic Empowerment programmes and policies.



TANZANIA



Research was undertaken in 2016 in four sites located in two districts of the Tanga region of Tanzania

📍 Lushoto

📍 Korogwe

## PROJECT LEAD:



Institute of Development Studies

## RESEARCH PARTNERS:



BRAC Research and Evaluation Unit

## UPTAKE PARTNER:



Oxfam Tanzania

For more project background information, publications and access to datasets and case studies, visit [interactions.ids.ac.uk/wee](https://interactions.ids.ac.uk/wee)

Balancing unpaid care work and paid work is part of the global Growth and Equal Opportunities for Women programme (GrOW) [bit.ly/1PbKwAd](https://bit.ly/1PbKwAd)



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