



Annual Structured Dialogue with Civil Society and Local Authorities on the Implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III - November 28, 2023

Recommendations on the Care Economy

In the third annual GAP III Structured Dialogue, high-level EU representatives met with representatives of more than 100 civil society organisations (CSOs) and associations of local authorities (ALAs). The meeting featured an interactive discussion on the care economy. Participants discussed in breakout groups promising practices of transformative care policy and the role of the EU and other development actors in promoting decent care work in partner countries. The discussion centred around two main questions: 1. What lessons can be drawn from successful models, policies and strategies of care economy promotion in different regions, and how can these models be adapted to different cultural and socioeconomic contexts? And 2. How do you imagine a care-centred, gender-responsive city, and what services and structures would be in these cities?

The following are the main recommendations that emerged from those group discussions, formulated by civil society and local authorities' representatives in the steering group of the GAP III Structured Dialogue, and directed towards the European Union (INTPA headquarters, EEAS and EU Delegations in countries) and national governments.

On the question of **lessons drawn from successful models of care economy promotion**, the European Union should:

- Support the adaptation of successful models to socio-economic and cultural contexts, respecting local conditions.
- Support incorporating the voices of disadvantaged segments of society, such as immigrants, in care economies.
- Allocate increased ODA to support care economy, public social services and social protection, and invest in generating decent care jobs (overall global target of 80 million decent care jobs).

National governments should:

- **Encourage and incentivise** informal structures that support care economies into formal and structured policies. This should include a focus on informal workers, the majority of which are women, and including those facing intersecting discrimination such as migrant workers. Providing social and legal protections for those groups, and ensuring their priorities are integrated into policy design and implementation, can be a good starting point towards formalising structures.
- Include social participation mechanisms in care policies at the territorial level so that key actors can participate in the design and the follow up of care policies. Ensure care policies and financing are informed, designed, implemented and monitored with systematic input from diverse groups of women, whilst ensuring women's co-leadership throughout the project cycle. This includes working with and financing Women's Rights Organisations (WROs).
- Reflect the unpaid work by caregivers in national GDPs, highlighting the true value of unpaid work.
- Allocate public sector funding to support the care economy (10% of public financing in country, through increased ODA and tax). At the same time ensure public sector accountability and responsibility for care and social services.
- Encourage public-private partnerships in support of the care economy, in which care services are accessible and of quality towards wider usage by working parents. The private sector can complement action by employing care policies that support women and ensure gender equality through parental and care leave and flexible work arrangements to enable women to achieve their full potential. Increased understanding of

gender inequalities in businesses and the company's supply chain would contribute towards gender- just corporate decision making and equal opportunities.

Both the European Union and national governments should:

- Integrate an intersectional gendered lens from the outset. This includes prioritising measures and investments that benefit women and girls and requires collecting, analysing and using sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data, while putting in place gender strategies that apply across sectors.
- Work with local CSOs, WROs and Women Lead Organisations (WLOs) for guidance on women's priorities and needs.
- Promote the alignment of Global Gateway projects, especially in the areas of education and health, with the rights-based and decent-work-centred vision of care economy described in this document.

On the question of **how a care-centred, gender-responsive city looks like**, the European Union should:

- Invest in effective infrastructure and design accessible and quality care services. These investments should include a focus on strengthening public care and social services, as well as generating decent care jobs.
- Ease access to financial resources, especially for young people.

National governments should:

- Consider the multicultural dimension in a cosmopolitan city with a linguistic variety.
- Prioritise the issue of security in cities and the risk factors that women face within a care ecosystem.
- Promote effective use of gender budgets by local governments for effective services and policies.
- Provide decent work and quality education for women, girls and gender non-conforming people whilst addressing gender-based violence and harassment in both the private (e.g. home) and public (e.g. workplace) sphere. This includes the wide ratification of ILO Convention 190, its effective implementation, including ILO Recommendation 206 to ensure the right for everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment. This also requires public policies and private sector commitment and action to create and ensure family friendly workplace environment, while building a green economy ensuring decent and sustainable jobs for women and other discriminated groups.

Both the European Union and national governments should:

- Use the education system to raise awareness of a care-centred city.
- Consider the impact of climate change in cities, both on the demands fuelled by climate change and on providers of care services, by:
 - Prioritising gender equality (as a key focus area, not an optional add-on) across its green transition and green work policies, prioritising measures and investments that women and girls benefit from, and collecting, analysing and using sex-, age- and disability- disaggregated data to assess the green transition's impact on gender equality. Proactively addressing the barriers that prevent women from benefiting from green work opportunities, especially by building a caring economy (see above, care economy); and tackling gender barriers in the world of work, incl. violence and harassment, through implementing the ILO C190.
 - Generating decent green work opportunities for women. This includes upskilling women and girls for green and higher-skilled jobs, investing in STEM education for girls / providing targeted training and education to open high-skilled work opportunities and traditionally male-dominated sectors to women, and removing barriers for women and girls to enter these jobs – for instance, through quotas, specialised recruitment and engaging with WROs. Special measures are also needed to specifically facilitate access to green jobs for informal and migrant women workers, and others facing intersectional discrimination.
- Promote policy coherence between EU development cooperation policies and **UN processes** promoting a rights-based care economy, such as:
 - [UNGA Resolution \(24 July 2023\) Resolution: International Day for Care and Support – 29 October](#)

- [OHCHR Resolution](#) (12 October 2023) Centrality of care and support from a human rights perspective
- UN ECOSOC – Commission for Social Development Resolution (14 February 2024): [Promoting care and support systems for social development](#)