

6.1.8. External Resolution: Care Workers - Underpaid, Undervalued, Under-resourced

Title of proposed resolution	Care Workers: Underpaid, Undervalued, Under-resourced
Proposed by	BPW Canada
Seconded by	NFBPWC
Supported by	BPW UK
Financial Impact	Administrative costs only

MOTION:

Aware that women are the backbone of the care economy, comprising 67% of the global health and social care workforce and performing 76% of unpaid care activities. Care work is highly gendered, undervalued, and often associated with poor working conditions and low pay; and unpaid care work is highly invisible.

Mindful that the world is faced with an increasing aging population and although traditionally families cohabited and provided care for aging family members, living arrangements have changed in recent years and there is a heightened demand for different forms of care.

Acknowledging that government laws and policies related to care and support of the elderly as well as the conditions of work for those providing care, are important to achieve SDG 3 (healthy lives and well-being), SDG5 (valuing unpaid care and domestic work), and SDG8 (productive employment, decent work, equal pay for equal value).

Recognising that there is a lot of variability across countries' labour codes, definitions and standards of care workers and the International Labour Organisation differentiates between institution-based and home-based personal care workers.

Be it Resolved:

That all Affiliates urge their governments to:

- a. ensure that laws and policies for care workers in both the informal and formal sectors (inclusive of family carers), include social protections, such as workplace safety, benefits (e.g., health care), and pay equity;
- b. develop high quality standards for staffing, staff education and training to drive better outcomes;
- c. recognise the value of care workers by ensuring equal pay for work of equal value;
- d. develop policies based on the 5R approach (recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work and rewarding and representing paid care work); and
- e. establish standards and benchmarks with targets, measures, and national reporting.

RATIONALE FOR THE RESOLUTION:

People across the world are living longer and there is a higher chance of frailty, illness, disability and health needs. For many elders, insufficient care services and support limit their right to independent living and quality care.

Women carry the majority of unpaid care which impacts their income and mental health, and places them at risk for a life in poverty. Due to unpaid care responsibilities, they often adapt their work patterns by taking career breaks, working part-time or leaving the workforce

prematurely. Vulnerable groups, such as domestic and migrant care workers, are particularly challenged.

As for paid care, the international long-term care community suffers from staffing shortages, wages below a living wage, and an unsupportive work environment. Those in paid employment are not receiving equal pay, with women earning on average 24 percent points less than men who are doing similar work. The 5R approach (recognizing, reducing and redistributing, reward and represent) is central to policy approaches to decent care work.

European Commission. (2022). (rep.). The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions on the European care strategy. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0440>

UN Women (2022). A toolkit on paid and unpaid care work: from 3Rs to 5R. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0440>

World Health Organization. (2024). Fair share for health and care: gender and the undervaluation of health and care work. <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/9789240082854>

IMPLEMENTATION:

Affiliates of BPW International advocate their government on this issue and BPW International works with UN agencies to bring about world-wide change