Closing childcare policy gaps offers high return on investment [1]

There is a compelling social investment and gender equality case for transforming childcare policies so that they universally and effectively cover children from birth until the start of mandatory primary education, new ILO research has found.

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Excerpts

GENEVA (ILO News) – Providing continuous childcare to parents from the birth of their child to the start of compulsory primary education – to close the so-called childcare policy gap – could bring a return on investment (ROI) of more than US$3.7 for every dollar invested, according to a new brief from the International Labour Organization.

Such investments could also lead to reductions in gender and other inequalities, generation of decent jobs, improvements in health and wellbeing, and help create a path to social justice.

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The childcare policy gap refers to the period between the end of statutory childcare-related leave and the starting age for free, universal early childhood care and education or primary education. Currently, this averages approximately 4.2 years globally. Maternity, paternity and combined parental leave available to households average 6.1 months globally, while the average starting age for free and universal early childhood care and education is 4.7 years. The gap affects 90 per cent of actual and potential parents (nearly 3.5 billion people) worldwide.

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It's estimated that 84 per cent of total net employment created by closing the policy gap would go to women, as they exchange unpaid care work for paid and formal employment.

The brief, *The benefits of investing in transformative childcare policy packages towards gender equality and social justice*, is based on findings from the new ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator, the largest online care policy modelling tool.

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The brief lays out a number of policy responses that are aligned with international labour standards needed to support the care economy transformation, which are also detailed in the new online ILO Global Care Policy Portal , which presents the status of national care policies. These policies include national social dialogues that engage with those who provide and receive care and using these to design rights-based programmes; building fiscal, regulatory and technical capacity; promoting understanding of the benefits of investment in care polices and jobs, and strengthening the capacity of governments, employers and workers organizations.

Related link: The benefits of investing in transformative childcare policy packages towards gender equality and social justice [3]
The Future of Work podcast: Should we treat the care economy as an investment or a cost? [4]

Region: International [5]

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