

# National news: Unpaid, unequal, and undervalued, says new report on women's work and wages <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Read online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

Women are unpaid, undervalued and unequal, says a new report published today by Oxfam Canada and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

The recovery that followed the 2008 financial crisis has not benefited everyone equally. To respond to increasingly slow growth today, we need to understand how inequality is putting the brakes on our economy. Making Women Count looks at how women in Canada and around the world are affected by rising inequality, including the burden of unpaid work, the undervaluing of work in predominantly female fields, and the unspoken social norms that see men offered higher wages and rates of promotion than women.

Brittany Lambert, Policy Advisor for Oxfam Canada, said: "Women make up some of the poorest and lowest paid workers in the global economy. And as our report shows, women are doing more and more work to grow countries' economies without seeing equal benefits."

Kate McInturff, Senior Researcher at the CCPA, said: "Social inequality has become a perverse benefit in our upside down world – where the fact that women are paid less than men is good for profits. It's clear from our research that global economic growth is not leading to gender equality."

"In a world where so many women are still left behind, addressing the unequal economics of women's work will have a transformative impact on our economy," McInturff added.

## Unpaid, unequal, and undervalued

Access to work and wages is shaped by social as well as economic forces. If the role of women in the Canadian economy was determined by a market acting on rational self-interest, women would be better employed and more likely to occupy jobs in senior management—because they are better educated and work for less, as a group.

Yet they do not. In fact, Oxfam Canada and the CCPA's research shows that:

Women continue to bear the burden of unpaid work. In low and middle-income countries, women spend three times as many hours as men on unpaid care work each day. The situation in Canada is only slightly better, with women performing nearly twice as many hours of unpaid work each day as do men.

In spite of high levels of education among girls and women, the wage gap in Canada is getting bigger, not smaller. In 2009, women earned 74.4% of what men earned, in 2011 it was 72%. The gap is worse for marginalized women, including Aboriginal and racialized women.

The industries women find themselves working in are undervalued. For example, in Canada, truck drivers - the majority of whom are men - are paid an average of \$45,417 per year, while Early Childhood Educators - the majority of whom are women - are paid \$25,252 per year.

The new report offers a number of solutions to help make women count, including a shift towards policies that support better wages and access to employment for women, better financial support of public services – like health and child care – to reduce the care burden on women, and a greater focus by governments to prioritize women's rights.

Lambert said: "Women's rights must be at the center of economic development – whether in Canada or the global south. In 2016, it's time to level the playing field and make women count."

-reprinted from Northumberland View

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** international women's day <sup>[4]</sup>

women's work <sup>[5]</sup>

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