

VISUALIZE GENDER EQUALITY



Visualize Gender Equality - Viz5 - is an effort to help realize UN Sustainable Development Goal 5: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

THEME 2 - UNPAID WORK

The COVID-19 pandemic made it immediately clear to the Viz5 team that the second data set in our work to visualize gender equality should highlight the theme of unpaid work.

Over the last few weeks it has become impossible to ignore and overlook the extraordinary contribution that unpaid work makes to every day life and the global economy. We have seen schools close, elderly quarantined, many jobs transformed into fully remote home-based activities, and many jobs lost, with vast numbers of people left without any kind of economic or social safety-net. The impact of this pandemic goes far beyond the immediate and extreme public-health emergency, and to the heart of how the workforce and global economy function. The Atlantic's Helen Lewis stated it very clearly, when they wrote:

"We are not just living through a public-health crisis, but an economic one. As much of normal life is suspended for three months or more, job losses are inevitable. At the same time, school closures and household isolation are moving the work of caring for children from the paid economy—nurseries, schools, babysitters—to the unpaid one. The coronavirus smashes up the bargain that so many dual-

earner couples have made in the developed world: *We can both work, because someone else is looking after our children.* Instead, couples will have to decide which one of them takes the hit.”¹

And this says nothing of the impact that COVID-19 is having on the world’s poorest people - those living in low and middle income countries (LMICs), where the impact of this pandemic on everyday life will be most extreme and life-threatening.

A recent article published in The Lancet begins to look at the gendered impacts that this outbreak could have, and recalls data and experience from the 2014-2016 west African Ebola outbreak: “gendered norms meant that women were more likely to be infected by the virus, given their predominant roles as caregivers within families and as front-line health-care workers. Women were less likely than men to have power in decision making around the outbreak, and their needs were largely unmet. For example, resources for reproductive and sexual health were diverted to the emergency response, contributing to a rise in maternal mortality in a region with one of the highest rates in the world.”²

There is no question that this pandemic will magnify existing global inequities and injustices, and it is highly likely that women and girls will be the ones to experience the most extreme effects of this magnification. It is for this reason that we are sharing data on the theme of unpaid work, and seeking to recognize the extraordinary economic and social impact that this work has on our global community. Let’s help to raise awareness of this issue, and encourage people to advocate for the value of unpaid care and domestic work to be recognized, and for the provision of public services, social protections, and infrastructure to promote equal and shared household and family responsibilities.

As Ai-jen Poo, the American labor activist, and director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, says: “Care work, historically associated with the unpaid work of homemakers or the poorly paid work of women of color and immigrant women, remains undervalued and virtually invisible to public consciousness. We’ve now entered a new era, where our collective failure to account for family care work has become untenable.”³

ABOUT THE THEME:

The UN defines unpaid work as: “activities including food preparation, dishwashing, cleaning and upkeep of the dwelling, laundry, ironing, gardening, caring for pets, shopping, installation, servicing and repair of personal and household goods, childcare, and care of the sick, elderly, or disabled household and family members, among others.”⁴

In terms of its connection to the achievement of gender equality and SDG 5, the UN has set target 5.4, which seeks to: value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities.⁵

¹ <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/03/feminism-womens-rights-coronavirus-covid19/608302/>

² COVID-19: the gendered impacts of the outbreak, Crossref DOI link: [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(20\)30526-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(20)30526-2), Published: 2020-03

³ ³ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/29/nannies-housekeepers-home-health-aides-workers>

⁴ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-04-01.pdf>

⁵ <https://sdg-tracker.org/gender-equality>

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights states that, “it is estimated that if unpaid care work were assigned a monetary value it would constitute between 10 and 39 per cent of GDP. However, it is generally unrecognized and under-valued by policy-makers and legislators.”⁶ This status quo has far-reaching negative consequences for whole nations and societies.

On average, women spend approximately three times more hours per day doing unpaid domestic work and care-giving than men. This means that women have significantly less time to spend pursuing paid work, educational opportunities, or their own leisure and self-care. All of this reinforces the existing gender-based socioeconomic disadvantages and inequities that exist globally, and contributes to the perpetuation of systemic inequality by undermining the rights of those that bear the brunt of unpaid care work to live healthy, full, and well-balanced lives.⁷

ABOUT THE DATA

The data we’ve selected to share for the second month of Viz5 is taken from The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). This division of the UN is committed to “the advancement of the global statistical system.” They collect and share global statistical information, develop standards for statistical activities, and support countries’ efforts to strengthen their national statistical systems. They also facilitate coordination of international statistical activities.⁸

The data we have shared is based on time use surveys conducted between 1966 - 2015, across 85 countries worldwide. Time-use statistics gathered from these surveys seek to quantify summaries of how individual people “spend” and allocate their time. In these surveys this time is usually captured over periods of either 24 hours, or over a 7 day week. These metrics offer unique insight into wide ranging policy issues, such as “assessing quality of life or general well-being, analyzing division of labor between women and men, improving estimates of all forms of work (paid and unpaid), and estimating household production and its contribution to GDP.”⁹

This UNSD data set shows the average time spent on paid and unpaid work in a 24-hour period, disaggregated by sex for each country, with data compiled and made publicly available as of August 2018.¹⁰

Important Note on the Data: *Each of these national surveys were produced by different organizations and UN country offices. As a result, they do not always survey consistent target demographic groups. In some cases, multiple surveys aimed at different age groups exist for the same country and year. Removing the age column makes it impossible to distinguish the surveys, leading to an issue of messy aggregations (averages of averages) or seemingly identical rows (no label differentiator).*

⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/UnpaidWork.aspx>

⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>

⁸ <https://unstats.un.org/home/about/>

⁹ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/timeuse/index.html>

¹⁰ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/timeuse/index.html>

We believe this is a perfect example of the difficulties that come from doing cross-organizational analyses, and is an endemic problem faced by the UN's data professionals. #MakeoverMonday users will have to come up with creative ways to work with the Age column, whether it be by creating their own custom groups, using it to mine more insights, or perhaps ignoring it entirely. Rather than provide our own second-best solution to a subjective question, we'd rather let the community be creative in their grappling with this problem.

ABOUT VIZ5

The ultimate goal of Viz5 is to create a space where data advocacy and insights meet impact. This work seeks to ignite a data advocacy effort with the power to not only raise awareness of extreme gender inequality, but also catalyze global action to end it.

Viz5 is led by Operation Fistula, with #MakeoverMonday and Tableau Foundation operating as critical partners.

OPERATION
FISTULA

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FOUNDATION



MakeoverMonday

Viz5 will mobilize the power of the #MakeoverMonday and Tableau communities, to visualize 12 data sets, over 12 months. These data sets will feature 12 themes, curated to present different areas of gender inequality. Collectively, these data sets and visualizations will begin to tell the story of where and how gender inequality is at its most extreme.

The visualizations that are produced during Viz5 will serve as advocacy tools, awareness-raising artifacts, and data-driven insight drivers for anyone working to end gender inequality.

Join us as we work to visualize a more equal world! Sign up to our community at www.viz5.org.