



European Expert Meeting

**Gender Equality, Sustainability  
& Workplace Wellbeing**

# Good practices, better workplaces

Family friendly workplaces as a  
cornerstone for an economy that cares





# **Dismantling social norms in the workplace**

# Expanding Choices

through  
Family-Friendly Policies

A project to transform lives in partnership with the private sector and governments in the Western Balkans and Moldova



Working with the private sector to **pilot and promote family-friendly workplaces**, which can make significant improvements in gender equality, and benefits both companies and employees.



Supporting governments to **strengthen and improve gender-responsive family policies** promotes gender equality, more equal distribution of unpaid care work and boosts economic growth.



Addressing harmful gender stereotypes to **expand choices for women** and encourage men to take an active role in fatherhood and care responsibilities.




Building the evidence, knowledge and tools around this relatively new body of work to **deliver evidence-based advocacy** and create a tested and replicable model for gender-responsive family policies.



With funding from

 Austrian Development Cooperation



“ a social norm is  
defined by “shared”  
beliefs – **expectations**  
– about a behaviour  
or practice”

UNFPA, 2020, *How Changing Social Norms is Crucial in  
Achieving Gender Equality.*

# Gender norms

## Women as caregivers

Unfair distribution of unpaid care work that disproportionately burdens women

Lack of recognition and value placed on women's paid work

Labor force participation, gender pay gap, low paid, informal, part-time work, poverty rates in older women

## Men as breadwinners

Lack of recognition and value placed on men's caregiving role

Pressure of being financial provider for family

Negative short and long term psychosocial, health, and economic consequences on children

# Consequences of harmful gender norms

“In Albania, 32% of women and girls (15-29) are **neither in school nor working because of their household duties** and in Moldova around half of mothers with preschool children **do not intend to look for a job**”

“A majority of men in Eastern European countries agree that it is better for preschool children to have **a mother that does not work** - 75% in Armenia and 58% in Belarus”

“In Georgia, only about 40% of women of working age participate in the labor market, the **economic cost of this is 11% of Georgia's GDP**”

“Kosovo faces one of the **lowest female labor force participation rates in the world** at 18%”

“It's estimated that having women's full participation in the labor force could lead to a **US\$28 trillion boost in the global economy**”

“Data prove that the **gendered distribution of housework tasks persists between generations**, once it witnessed and internalized during childhood,”



# **The role of the private sector**

Changes in the private sector, including in workplace culture, staff practices and policies, can have **huge implications** on society.

These can help normalize more **equal gender norms** and roles, such as men taking on an equal share of the unpaid care work through the use of paternity leave.

**Ultimately leading to a  
more equal and prosperous  
society for all**



## Family-Friendly Workplaces

# Business Case

- Better reputation and status
- Lower absenteeism, turnover, health-related and recruitment costs
- Greater retention of female staff, especially working mothers returning to work after maternity leave
- More inclusive and equal workforces
- More innovative, productive and profitable companies

# How



**“With our 'Parenthood Manifesto' we guarantee that the careers of our employees who use their 20 weeks of maternity and 12 weeks of paternity and adoption leave will not be interrupted.”**

Murat Yüksel, Chief People & Culture Officer (CPCO),  
GittiGidiyor Company



**7**  
**Value and invest in caretakers to capitalize on the skills developed by employees during parenthood**

8 WAYS TO MAKE WORKPLACES MORE FAMILY FRIENDLY

Expanding Choices through Family-Friendly Policies

UNFPA

With funding from Austrian Development Cooperation

Photo: Ukraine 2017 UNWAT Ukraine-Volenym Kuzyn



**Katarina Matson –**  
Culture & Diversity at Volvo Cars

*“We believe when all parents are supported to balance work and family, it helps close the gender gap and allows everyone to excel in their career”.*



#ExpandingChoices



# Family-friendly workplaces:

A family-friendly workplace aims to support all employees to balance their work responsibilities with their care and family responsibilities, by creating a supportive work culture and environment and providing both practical and abstract support to employees to do so.



## PRACTICAL SUPPORT

*Providing men and women the necessary tools*

Practical support for employees is mainly connected to time, IT and financial support. These can include:

- Supportive routines and policies (i.e. flexible and remote working, meetings scheduled only during core working hours)
  - Necessary equipment (i.e. IT equipment for remote working, tools for flexible time management etc.)
  - Financial support (i.e. paid parental leave, domestic/household support, childcare support)
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## ABSTRACT SUPPORT

*Providing men and women the  
agency*

Abstract support is the more intangible support provided to employees, especially by their managers and senior staff, and is based on positive and enabling attitudes, behaviours, leadership, role models and communication.

It changes **expectations** around behaviors and practices - and therefore social norms.

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# Redefining families



# Main takeaways

- Practical support
- Abstract support
- Families

