

**Assessing
the Impact
of Unpaid Care
Work on Families
in Barbados**



JOINT SDG FUND



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

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Author

Daniele Bobb, PhD

UN Women Proofreading

Isiwa Iyahan and Sharon Carter-Burke

UN Women Publications Coordination

Sharon Carter-Burke

Graphic Designer

Vilmar Luiz

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Acronyms

CARICOM The Caribbean Community and Common Market

ILO International Labour Organisation

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

UDCW Unpaid Domestic and Care Work

UCW Unpaid Care Work

UN United Nations

An illustration at the top of the page shows two hands reaching towards each other. One hand is yellow and the other is green, both with white palms. They are set against a blue background with wavy yellow and green shapes. Below this is a large light blue rounded rectangle containing the title.

Introduction

Globally, women do more unpaid domestic and care work (UDCW) than men. On average, women do 2.8 more hours than men on UDCW (Hanna et al 2023). This implies that women, particularly the poorest and most disadvantaged, have the double burden of both paid and unpaid work, which leaves them more time-poor than men. Women bear the multiple burdens of productive and reproductive responsibilities that severely limit their economic opportunities and remain a barrier to their engagement in paid work.

Care work consists of those activities that serve people and are necessary for their day-to-day physical and emotional well-being. Care work is ever-present in all our lives. It can be paid or unpaid. For example, paid care work includes work done by domestic workers, and paid workers at hospitals, long-term care facilities, homes for the elderly, and so on. Unpaid care work is caring work that is done without remuneration. Unpaid care work is most often provided by household and family members for the direct benefit of other family and household members and indirectly for the benefit of society. For example, childcare, domestic chores, shopping, paying bills, pet care, elderly care, etc.

Unpaid care work is a fundamental aspect of societal functioning, yet it remains largely unrecognized and undervalued. UDCW is usually invisible in policies and budgets because it is not part of the conventional definition and measurement of the economy (Sharp, 2003). The overall objective of this project is to encourage evidence-based policy dialogues and advocacy on the care economy and support the development and implementation of policies to Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute, Represent, Reward paid and unpaid domestic and care work (5Rs).

This report presents the findings of six (6) focus group discussions (Retired people, Fathers, Mothers, Faith-based, Youth, and People Living with Disabilities) and explores how emerging themes and narratives from the discussions align with the UN framework's 5R principles. In the focus groups, participants defined unpaid care work (UCW) as childcare, domestic chores, elderly care, and care for people living with disabilities.



Background

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015, embody a roadmap for progress that is sustainable and leaves no one behind. Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is integral to each of the 17 goals.¹ The SDG Joint Programme (JP) “Integrated Population Data and Policy Solutions to Accelerate SDGs achievement in Barbados and Montserrat”² aims to facilitate increased access, availability and completeness of quality, real-time disaggregated spatial and demographic data and gender analysis for evidence-based national sustainable development policies and programmes in Barbados and Montserrat, with a focus on SDG3 and SDG5. This project specifically focuses on SDG indicator 5.4.1 (Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location) as data on this is sparse in CARICOM.

UN Women believes that “improved measurement of the amount, kind, and distribution of unpaid care work between men and women within families and communities (through time-use surveys and other instruments) and of paid care work, decent work deficits, and occupational segregation will help shape better and more gender-responsive care policies and systems,” (UN Women Toolkit 2022, p. 6).

Thus, UN Women Multi Country Office (MCO) – Caribbean is implementing a programme to increase access, availability, and completeness of quality data to support sustainable development in Barbados. The agency’s particular focus in this programme, is on UDCW data. The aim is to assess the impact of UDCW on families. Six (6) focus groups (retired people, fathers, mothers, people living with disabilities, youth and faith-based groups) were held between October 14-24, 2024.

¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs>

² [Integrated Population Data and Policy Solutions to Accelerate SDGs Achievement in Barbados and Montserrat | Joint SDG Fund](#)



Purpose

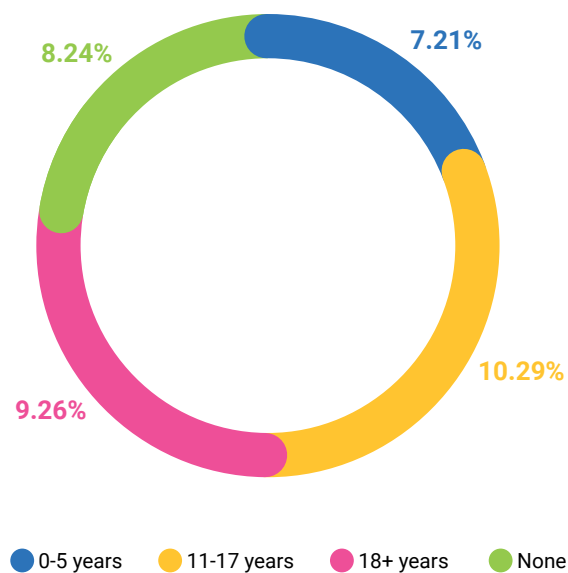
The focus group discussions aimed to assess the impact of UDCW on families and communities, as well as to acquire feedback on what policies, programmes, and services are needed to address the challenges. The experiences and perspectives captured were diverse yet similar in some instances, highlighting the complexity of UDCW. Emerging themes were varied, such as the burden of care work, the lack of appreciation, the need for support, the gendered division of care work, the time commitment, the financial strain, social and cultural values, gender norms, and the need for policy and systemic changes. These themes can be better organised when the United Nation’s “5R framework for decent care work” is utilised as it provides a more structured approach, allowing for the incorporation of recommendations to address the challenges associated with unpaid care work.

Findings and Analysis

Table 1 – Participant Demographics

Focus group	Married	Single	Employed (%)	Male	Female	Total
Faith-based	4	2	6	0	6	6
Fathers	5	1	5	6	–	6
Mothers	6	–	6	–	6	6
Youth	1	5	6	3	3	6
Retired people	2	2	0	2	2	4
People Living with Disabilities	2	5	1	2	5	7
Total				13	22	35

Chart 1. Ages of Children Represented in the Sample



N.B. One person did not respond



Themes

The data was organized using the UN's 5R Framework – Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute, Represent, and Reward.

Recognize

UN Women defines the first R – recognize, as the acknowledgment of care work at the national economic level such as statistics and measures of economic progress (UN Women Toolkit 2022). Most participants oppose the monetary value of unpaid care work but argue that it should be acknowledged and valued as important socially, that is, through the expressed appreciation from those receiving the care. The FGDs emerging themes that encompass recognition are an acknowledgment of unpaid care work, the financial strain, social and cultural values, and dependency on family.

Participants emphasized the need for society to recognize and appreciate unpaid care work as essential labour that contributes significantly to the economy and social well-being. This includes acknowledging the emotional and physical labour involved in caregiving roles. Women are doing significantly more UCW than men. According to the Barbados report on ***Piloting the Measurement of SDG indicator 5.4.1 in the Barbados Continuous Labour Force Sample Survey***, women are doing nearly 2.5 times more childcare than men which highlights the need for recognition of this societal disparity (Nicholson and Hesse-Bayne 2024). Most of the female participants believe there is a need for a formal acknowledgment of unpaid care work as a significant economic contribution. The discussions indicate that many feel there is “no value” placed on this work, highlighting the necessity for recognition. However, the fathers and retired groups adamantly opposed the monetary valuing of unpaid care work because they see it as “natural”, “morally upright”, an indication of “love”, and fear it would not be willingly given if there is a cost attached.

One father argued that a monetary cost would deter the free assistance embedded within the society's moral fabric. He noted that *“attaching a monetary value to these activities [unpaid care work]... would bring irreparable damage to our success. And that's my hope, that we will never reach a position where running the place on this means that people don't want to help one another.”*

Another father stated, *"It becomes more critical if it's family, like your son, to take care of you; if he expects to be paid is a serious thing. You know that is. That would be so crucial and critical to this society that we want to see."* The father believed that it would be problematic for parents if one's children expected to be paid to care for them.

These comments suggest that while the value of care work is recognized, there is a cultural barrier (the viewing of care as a natural indicator of love) that is strengthened by the economic fears of assigning a cost to this type of care which individuals cannot afford and worried it will be a deterrent to providing the care needed. The retired group which comprised both men and women, agreed that attaching a monetary cost to UCW *"would make it messy"*. UCW within households/families remains a marker of love and morality which inhibits its complete recognition.

The retired women believed that the problem was not the economic valuing of unpaid care work, but the upbringing of the children that would encourage them to care for their elderly parents. They argue that the economic value is not attached, yet children abandon their elderly parents. In this group, the women reiterate the need for parents to establish good relationships with their children, socializing them to be 'morally upright' so that care can be reciprocated when older. It demonstrates the cultural and social barriers to the recognition of unpaid care work. Still, participants call for awareness campaigns to educate the public about the importance of unpaid care work and its impact on families and communities. They agree there is a lack of recognition and value placed on unpaid care work within society and families, and emphasized the need for greater acknowledgment of the contributions made by caregivers, which often go unnoticed.

From the focus groups, recognition is two-tiered:

1. Acknowledgment and appreciation of UCW (emotional/social value)
2. Monetary/economic value

Some participants articulated their support for the economic valuing of unpaid care work. They agreed this will have to be a joint effort between the government and the private sector. One woman from the faith-based group said, *"it might just be a stipend, but at least it puts something in their pocket, which often they have to rely on someone else to provide them for a means of support because they're not getting."* Here she reminds us that unpaid care work hinders women's participation in income-earning activities.

However, the financial impact of unpaid care work was a significant concern, with participants discussing lost wages and career opportunities due to their caregiving responsibilities. This was mostly the experience of mothers and people living with disabilities. For the latter group, this also included the sacrifices made by their caretakers. One person with a physical disability recalled having to compromise on food so the family could afford her medical bills. They highlighted the cost associated with physical therapy, medication, loss of income (due to job loss/unemployment), and transportation. People living with disabilities recognize the care they receive as work, and believe that the government should provide some financial support to family members who take care of relatives living with disabilities. For this group, they express feelings of guilt in lacking the financial capacity to remunerate their caretakers, but also for the

burden they recognize their care needs put on others. One woman said that although her family does not complain, she sometimes hides some of her needs because she feels guilty being completely dependent on her relatives who are already doing so much. She joined in the call from her group members for this unpaid care work to be recognized and rewarded by the government. They noted that there is a need for direct financial aid that aligns with the cost of living presently, as the NIS support is insufficient. The discussion around financial support is crucial, indicating a recognition of the financial burdens faced by caregivers and the need for assistance.

Policy and Programme Recommendations

The financial strain can lead to economic vulnerability and dependence on external support systems. The discussions around support systems and financial assistance highlighted the economic challenges faced by caregivers. Many participants expressed a need for more robust support mechanisms to help alleviate financial pressures.

Participants believe that more conversations such as the focus group discussions are needed, as well as programmes aimed at changing societal perceptions, particularly in recognizing caregiving roles as valuable contributions to family and society. Overall, all participants believe there is “no value” placed on unpaid care work and stress the need for it to be recognised.

Reduce

This theme focuses on reducing the disproportionate share of unpaid care work carried by women and girls. It is proposed that this can be done through “increasing access to care-relevant infrastructure and time- and labour-saving technologies” (UN Women Toolkit 2022, p. 14). The emerging themes that are grouped here are the burden of unpaid care work, time constraints, gender roles, support systems and services, and access to resources.

Focus group discussions revealed that caregivers often face overwhelming time commitments, leading to time poverty, stress, and burnout. This aligns with the report on **Piloting the Measurement of SDG indicator 5.4.1 in Barbados** by Claudia Nicholson and Lebrechtta Nana Oye Hesse-Bayne (2024) which indicated time poverty limits income-generating activities, education, and leisure. Like the findings in this study, that report advocates for policies to reduce the amount of UCW women are expected to perform.

What emerged across the focus groups as an area of growing concern is the care of elderly people. From the discussion, there is a slow movement away from the norm that only women should care for their parents. Two (2) men indicated that they were caring for elderly relatives. However, these people did not reside in the same household. Where women indicated they were caring for elderly relatives, for all but one (1) participant, the relative resides in the same household. One (1) participant said, *“Everywhere I go, I take my mother with me. That is why she is sitting in this room with us today.”³ Everything I do is around*

³ Her mom was present during the focus group but remained quiet.

her... So, yes, it's hard, but for the past three years I've had every emotion, but I'm not sure how many of you have had to deal with anything with Alzheimer's. It is not an easy task. My mother is long gone from a strong independent woman. This is a shell of a great woman..."

This participant indicated that her mother was also diagnosed with cancer which required chemotherapy and this made the situation more difficult. She explained what was entailed in caring for her mother during this process: *"People think chemotherapy is just going and sitting and wait, but it is a whole day thing that you have to plan for... so I used to go- pillow, my blanket, socks, Crocs, water, everything. But it was also making sure her [elderly mother] nutrition was good because it [chemo] drains, it kills everything."* This single mother of two (2) daughters, one of whom *"suffers with seizures"*, now takes her mother everywhere with her, and negotiates her job by working the night shift when her daughters are home to care for their grandmother. She noted that the physical impact is seen in her *"slim stature"*, and the emotional impact she masks as best she could, but there have been *"several meltdowns"*.

Participants suggested the need for policies that allow for flexible work arrangements to help alleviate this burden. The retired group called for young people to focus on self-care, ensuring they spend time *"exercising, eating well, and relaxing"*. With the hands-on continuous care required by elderly people with mental and physical illnesses, there is a need for government-subsidized reliable home helpers and centres to provide relief for caretakers. The retired group also indicated the need to plan financially for the future, so the burden of care is not left solely to one's children. Still, they expected their children to take care of them when they got older, which aligns with cultural practices.

Access to Resources

Accompanying the call for self-care, was the requirement for more accessible support services for the elderly. The retired people noted that they are still at a stage where they can take the bus or drive their vehicles but noted that it may be difficult for older people who may require physical assistance. Loneliness was identified as an emotional issue that affects most elderly people. One person noted, *"there are old people who go to the doctor's office not because they are ill, but to meet and talk with other people"*; Another chimed in, *"they actually go to the beach to do that too, or even take a scenic bus drive on a Sunday and talk to the bus driver."* They believe that as one gets older, going out cannot be done without the assistance of someone. All other groups agreed with this call as they highlighted the burden of caring for elderly relatives, especially those with cognitive issues such as different stages of dementia or Alzheimer's. Participants noted that they need someone to assist so they can have a few hours' break or be able to pursue paid work. While they appreciated the home help support through the government programme, they felt that some did not do all that was required such as cooking, therefore not significantly reducing their burden. Thus, the kind of support needed was not just in terms of time by minding the elderly person, but also in terms of completing care activities (bathing, feeding, cleaning) so the primary caretaker does not have to do it all.

The fathers' group indicated the need for *"reputable babysitting cost-efficient after-hours services"* so they could have time to go out with their partners and know their children are safe. While they agree

to pay a fee for this, they believe it should be subsidized by the government to ensure affordability. Jackman and Naitram (2021) in their study on the cost of childcare in Barbados, found that childcare services were very costly for Barbadians, and the government-subsidized care was over-subscribed. While there is a clear need for the latter, it is not prioritized by the state. According to (Barker, et al. 2021, p.22), this lack of prioritization is “because economies and economic policies value financial growth and profit rather than equality, human beings, and the care we all need.” Participants in this research are not just calling for this government-subsidized daycare, but also safe night care for children.

All participants spoke about the burden of UCW, and the ways they make sacrifices to account for the child and elderly care requirements, but it was the mothers who sacrificed their careers, education, and self. Most men across the groups described their care work as supplementary or as ‘help/assistance’, suggesting they did not see it as their primary responsibility. For example, one father noted that he “tries to make his wife’s life easier by assisting where he can because he works from home”. The men also indicated their care work was aligned with gender norms such as transporting children (driving), outdoor work, and property maintenance tasks. However, one father noted that he did just as much as the mother, except carry the child and give birth, but he was present at every doctor’s appointment and even at the delivery. He explained that he scheduled his vacation around the delivery time so he could be present and added that paternity leave is necessary so a father can bond with their baby. All participants across the focus groups advocated for paternity leave, seeing it as a right, and also a means to reduce and redistribute the care responsibilities for a newborn baby.

In the conversations, men used technology to “assist” in domestic chores, such as washing machines. Technology was recommended as a mechanism by which to engage men’s participation in unpaid care work (Barker, et al. 2021). Vehicles were another example of this technology. One retired grandfather expressed joy in transporting his grandchildren to and from their activities; many fathers also expressed how involved they were in transporting their children to school and other activities. While mothers shared that they drove their children to school and extracurricular activities, their focus was on the preparation involved in getting the children ready, the tasks required to ensure their children were cared for during those activities, the emotional support required, and the management of the events. One mother indicated that with men, *“unfortunately, they may require a checklist or you to tell them to do something... then you have to put time and effort into creating the checklist, this our planner. You have to be explicit with your instructions.”* The mothers agreed that part of their unpaid care work involves taking care of their husbands.

The retired participants demonstrated the complexity of care work as they spoke about how much they enjoy doing it, especially because they have more time now. It was also seen as an indicator of accomplishment, as a ‘good’ mother or woman.

However, most participants highlighted the significant amount of time dedicated to unpaid care work, which often encroaches on personal and professional lives. This time commitment can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and can hinder personal development and career progression.

The discussions highlighted the emotional and physical impacts of caregiving, with participants mentioning stress, burnout, and health issues as common consequences of their caregiving roles. This toll underscores the need for support systems to alleviate these burdens. There is also a need for policies to reduce the amount of UCW women are expected to perform such as promoting shared care responsibilities within households (Nicholson and Hesse-Bayne 2024).

Policy and Programme Recommendations

- Participants called for increased government support, including affordable childcare, eldercare, and disability services.
- There was a strong consensus on the need for policies that recognize and support unpaid caregivers.
- Workplace flexibility – the need for flexible work arrangements was emphasized, as many participants highlighted the challenges of balancing work and caregiving responsibilities during the traditional work day hours. Policies that promote workplace flexibility could significantly improve the quality of life for caregivers.
- Resource Accessibility – participants expressed a need to gather opinions and experiences to better understand the needs of caregivers, so that resources can be made more accessible such as subsidized day and night childcare services.
- Respite Care Services – the need for temporary care options was implied, suggesting that caregivers face numerous challenges that could be alleviated with additional support.
- Peer Support Groups – the importance of community support was highlighted, with a call for open conversations and sharing experiences in a safe space. The mothers spoke of the many WhatsApp groups that emerged to support new mothers during the pandemic. They highlighted how helpful those groups were but admitted that they were not widely accessible and were based on a referral system.
- Participants highlighted the importance of access to community resources, such as childcare services and elder care support, to help reduce the time spent on unpaid care work.

Redistribute

Redistribute refers to the redistribution of care responsibilities equitably between women and men, in households, communities, the world of work, and with the state (UN Women Toolkit 2022). This also involves investing in quality, affordable, and accessible care services. The themes that emerged here were gender disparities in care work, shared responsibilities, and traditional gender roles.

Participants noted societal expectations and stereotypes regarding caregiving roles, particularly in the context of mothers and fathers. These expectations can create pressure and limit the involvement of men in caregiving, reinforcing traditional norms. One youth said his single mother raised both him and his sister with the skills to cook and clean, challenging gender role assumptions that only girls should

be involved in domestic work. Although they had their specific chores, when his mother became ill and depended solely on them, that was when he understood the magnitude of work involved in taking care of a home. The youth agree that mothers often shelter them from unpaid care work which is another barrier to the redistribution. Similarly, another youth discussed how unpaid care work in her family remained primarily the responsibility of her mother, until her parents divorced, and her mom was now expected to provide financially for the family. She noted that the responsibility fell on her, not because her mother asked, but because she felt the need to support her mother. Thus, she took care of her younger sibling. It was only then that she recognized the amount of time and mental energy required to prepare a meal. She noted, *"when you come home you just see food ready, but you don't really look at the fact that, you know a person would have spent time doing these, cooking the food, preparing ingredients, even purchasing the ingredients."* Now that she is married, she continues to support her mother in caring for her younger sibling which includes school and activities drop off and pickups, among other things. This redistribution was required so her mother could engage in paid work; this redistribution reinforced the gender ideology that frames women and girls as responsible for unpaid care work. Nonetheless, this redistribution allowed the tasks to be shared. The absence of men in the household should not absolve them of their unpaid care responsibilities and is a challenge to the redistribution of unpaid care work. Even when men are present, they still spend less time than women on UCW Nicholson and Hesse-Bayne (2024) note that married individuals spend 42 minutes more than single people on UCW, and people with children under 6 years spend on average 2 hours more on UCW than people with older children. There is a need for parental leave policies to allow more equitable sharing of care duties.

The focus group discussions revealed that traditional gender roles often dictate who is responsible for unpaid care work, with women frequently bearing the brunt of these responsibilities. This division can perpetuate inequalities in both domestic and professional spheres. The discussions pointed out the unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities, predominantly falling, on women. Participants advocated for initiatives that encourage shared caregiving roles among family members, including promoting male involvement in caregiving tasks.

The dynamics of caregiving across generations were explored, with discussions about the roles of retired people and youth in caregiving. These intergenerational relationships can influence the distribution of caregiving responsibilities and the support available to caregivers.

Policy and Programme Recommendations

- There is a need for policy interventions that promote equitable distribution of care work, such as parental leave policies that encourage both parents to take time off for caregiving.
- Incentives for Shared Care- the conversation around shared caregiving responsibilities indicates a need for policies that promote collaboration among family members. Given the socio-cultural and gender norm barriers, specific government policies are needed to enforce the shifts and redistribute unpaid care responsibilities.
- Public awareness campaigns and training are needed to shift gendered ideologies that assign unpaid care work as the responsibility of women and girls.

Reward

The UN's 5R framework defines reward primarily in relation to paid care workers, specifically around ensuring "decent work and social protection, including for migrant workers. This entails improving current care jobs and creating new quality, decent care jobs that reflect the principle of equal pay for work of equal value," (UN Toolkit 2022, p. 6). While this research did not interview paid care workers, the theme emerges in discussions around the financial requirements needed to support unpaid care work, as well as the call by people living with disabilities to have paid care workers compensated better. Thus, some of the themes captured here are fair wages and benefits, and valuing the skills required to perform unpaid and paid care work.

Participants discussed the necessity of fair compensation for paid care workers, emphasizing that decent wages and benefits are essential for attracting and retaining skilled caregivers. People living with disabilities and some participants from the retired group noted that government-assigned home helpers are usually underpaid. Some of the PLWD community shared that while they often want to supplement the home helpers' income, they do not have enough funds to do so.

They believe that if the government recognizes the work entailed and the skills required particularly to take care of someone living with a disability, then caretakers will be rewarded fairly. Similar to Nicholson and Hesse-Bayne (2024) report, participants believe that integrating the idea of rewarding UCW in broader economic and social policies can help ensure that caregivers are supported.

Policy and Programme Recommendations

- There is a call for recognizing the skills and qualifications of care workers, which should be reflected in their compensation and career advancement opportunities.
- Tax Relief Options – the need for financial incentives was echoed in the context of shared responsibilities, suggesting that policies should encourage family members to participate more actively in caregiving roles. Participants called for reduction in items such as "rent [and] tax".
- Government should implement paid parental leave (maternity and paternity) for at least 3 months per parent. The International Labour Office (ILO) mandates a minimum of 14 weeks maternity leave and recommends increasing it to 18 weeks (ILO 2022). Participants felt the stipulated 12 weeks maternity leave in Barbados should be increased.

Represent

Represent refers to the formalization of care and domestic work so there can be collective bargaining. Themes emerging from the data that can be categorized as representation are collective bargaining and support for care workers.

Focus group discussions highlighted the importance of collective bargaining and social dialogue to ensure that care workers or the experiences of people who engage in care work (paid and unpaid) inform policies that will affect their lives.

They emphasized the need to support organizations that advocate for the rights of care workers, ensuring their representation in discussions about labour rights and social protection. The mothers and faith-based group (which comprised 5 mothers) were especially grateful for a space to share their experiences and validate the work they do. They call for similar spaces to be co-created. One participant said, “[I am] thinking through how we can also offer opportunities or support within our families and communities, recognizing the need for collaboration not depending solely on the government, but also recognizing that the government has a responsibility, a social responsibility for citizens you spoke about.”

Policy and Programme Recommendations

- The establishment of groups to advocate for the rights of paid care workers.
- Skills Development Workshops – the need for training was highlighted, focusing on the various policies, programmes, and services that could enhance caregivers’ skills and knowledge. For example, care for elderly people with cognitive illnesses.
- Recognition of unpaid care work as central to societies, and ensuring it is reflected in policies and programmes.
- Community Events and Workshops – organizing events to bring caregivers together was suggested, fostering a sense of community and shared experience.
- Leadership Training for Caregivers – empowering caregivers to advocate for their needs was suggested, emphasizing the importance of understanding what policies and programmes are necessary for support.
- Local Organization Partnerships – the need for collaboration with local organizations was emphasized, as participants discussed the importance of community involvement in supporting caregivers.
- Awareness Campaigns – the call for raising public awareness about caregiving challenges was evident, focusing on the impact of UDCW on families and communities.

An illustration at the top of the page shows two hands reaching towards each other. One hand is white with a yellow sleeve, and the other is white with a green sleeve. They are set against a blue background with yellow and green wavy shapes.

Conclusion

The UN “5R framework for decent care work” was used to explore and understand the challenges highlighted by UDCW. The emerging themes and subthemes from focus group discussions underscore the urgent need for action in recognizing, reducing, redistributing, rewarding, and representing care work. By implementing strategies that align with this framework, Barbados can create a more equitable and supportive environment for caregivers, ultimately contributing to gender equality and the well-being of families and communities. Some of the general recommendations emerging from the six (6) focus groups are as follows:

1. The need for government-subsidized elderly care and childcare centres that are accessible during the day and night.
2. The need for training and capacity-building programmes related to UDCW, but also to bring awareness to the importance of UDCW.
3. The need for government policies to support equal distribution of UDCW (e.g. paid paternity leave).
4. The introduction of work-life balance education and awareness initiatives so people can understand the importance of managing caregiving alongside other responsibilities.
5. The need for integrated policy approaches that are comprehensive, with a focus on gathering quality data to inform sustainable development efforts.
6. Advocacy for caregiver rights – the discussion around the rights of caregivers indicates a need for advocacy, highlighting the importance of being strategic and deliberate in policy discussions.
7. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are required – the importance of assessing the impact of policies was highlighted, suggesting that gathering opinions is essential for effective policy-making.
8. The need for community engagement and support networks from the government for the redistribution of UDCW.

An illustration at the top of the page shows two hands reaching towards each other. One hand is yellow and the other is green, both with white palms. They are set against a blue background with wavy yellow and green shapes. Below this is a large light blue rounded rectangle containing the title.

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