RESEARCH REPORT

UNPAID CARE WORK

OXFAM IN TIMOR-LESTE RAPID CARE ANALYSIS

OXFAM

Australian AID

BRIDGING PEOPLES

Umbelina, Teofilo and their young child in their farm in Suai. Kate Bensen/Oxfam

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was commissioned by Oxfam in Timor-Leste and funded through the Hakbi'it Project, which is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). The field work was led by Milena da Silva with support from Oxfam partners Masine Neu Oecusse (MANEO), Binibu Faef Nome (BIFANO) and Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI). Analysis and report conducted by Bridging Peoples (https://bridgingpeoples.com).

This publication has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The views expressed in this publication are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.

This report was first published in 2022.

ABOUT OXFAM IN TIMOR-LESTE

Oxfam in Timor-Leste (OiTL) has a long and widely acknowledged track record in humanitarian response and development in Timor-Leste since 1999. For over 20 years, OiTL has partnered with over 70 different organisations, and today OiTL works with and funds 16 national and local NGOs and networks. OiTL's country strategy (2021-25) focuses on three pillars of Gender Justice, Economic Justice and Climate Justice. OiTL takes an influencing approach to all of its programming across these pillars, including a combination of social norm change work, promoting inclusion of diverse voices including women and people with disabilities, and increasing government and public understanding and use of relevant evidence.

OiTL's approach to Gender Justice is rights-based, holistic, systemic, and aims to challenge mainstream thinking which systematically discriminates against women. A key initiative to achieve this is our women's economic empowerment project, Hakbi'it (Empower Collective Action for Equality and Inclusion in Timor-Leste). The project is implemented by Asosiasaun Futuru Foin Sa'e Sustentavel (A-FFOS), Binibu Faef Nome (BIFANO), Empreza Di'ak, Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI), Masine Neu Oecusse (MANEO), Ra'es Hadomi Timor-Oan (RHTO), and Oxfam in Timor-Leste.

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Photo Cover: Natalia washes the dishes at her home in Oecusse. Francisco Ismenio Pereira/Oxfam

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFFOS Asosiasaun Futuru Foin Sa'e Sustentavel

BIFANO Binibu Faef Nome

FGD Focus Group Discussion

KSI Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute

OiTL Oxfam in Timor-Leste

OI Oxfam International

MANEO Masine Neu Oecusse

RAEOA *Região Administrativa Especial Oé-Cusse Ambeno* (Special Administrative Region Oecusse-Ambeno)

RCA Rapid Care Analysis

RHTO Ra'es Hadomi Timor-Oan

Maria waters her vegetables in her farm in Oecusse. Francisco Ismenio Pereira/Oxfam

Herminia and her daughter in Oecusse. Kate Benson/Oxfam

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, unpaid care work is undertaken by women, men, and children, influencing the wellbeing and economic participation of carers in their communities. Unpaid care work refers to the provision of services for family and community members outside of the market and can be defined as domestic work or the direct care of persons. Domestic activities include but are not limited to cooking, cleaning and collecting firewood; and direct care relates to activities such as childcare and the care of elderly members. Globally, more than 75% of all unpaid care tasks are undertaken by women, who additionally occupy 66% of paid care jobs.[1] Unpaid care work can impact a woman's economic opportunities in many ways, as care activities typically adhere to traditional gendered roles, and minimise the time that women spend on paid work. Previous research undertaken in Timor-Leste indicates that a higher contribution to unpaid care combined with lower earnings increases a woman's vulnerability to poverty.[2]

The literature on unpaid care work – and unpaid work generally – in Timor-Leste is relatively sparse, generally limited to small sections of research focused on other areas of community life. As such, this Rapid Care Analysis (RCA) was conducted to better understand patterns and perceptions of unpaid care work at the local level. The RCA is an approach designed for Oxfam International (OI) to explore relationships of care, identify work activities performed by men and women and their estimated work hours, identify gender roles and patterns, and identify options for reducing or redistributing care work. The various RCA tools are designed to be participatory, increasing visibility and improving community members' understanding of unpaid care work patterns, so that care work is recognised and redistributed, and the women, women with disabilities and children of a community will be fairly represented in the economy and in society. The overarching goal of the RCA is to uncover the less-understood issues that might detract from a woman's participation in humanitarian and development programming.[3]

It is recognised by Oxfam that as care work has the potential to add value to the economy and societies, it should be considered a 'societal good', rather than a burden. When public and private investments are made into quality caregiving, there is a long-term impact on the wellbeing and participation of the

1 International Labour Organisation, "Care Work and Care Jobs For the Future of Decent Work." ILO, 2018. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf.

2 Niner S (2016) 'Effects and Affects: Women in the Post-conflict Moment in Timor-Leste: An Application of V. Spike Peterson's 'Gendering Insecurities, Informalization and War Economies' The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development.

3 Oxfam (2016), "Participatory Methodology: Rapid Care Analysis. Guidance for Managers and Facilitators"

Natalia, Norberto and their family in Oecusse. Francisco Ismenio Pereira/Oxfam

community. Care work can not only contribute significantly to the economy but can also promote the participation of women in the paid market, politics and society in general. Moreover, unpaid care work strengthens the family unit, building communities' social capital and resilience. In Timor-Leste, it is expected that all members of a household contribute in different ways. Children learn essential skills that will help them in the future, older members are kept as active contributors within the family and the community, and the sense of mutual obligation between family members assists in maintaining strong social bonds.

A key aspect of Oxfam in Timor-Leste's (OiTL's) women's economic empowerment project, Hakbi'it, is to raise public awareness of gender imbalances in unpaid care work and provide platforms for the experiences of women to be voiced, with the ultimate aim to increase women's participation, empowerment, leadership and representation in public and private spheres.

Key results from this RCA are as follows:

- The prevalence of subsistence or mixed-economy farming households in Timor-Leste make it difficult to apply the RCA toolkit, as the realities of people's lives means there is a blurring between different categories or types of work. This also makes it difficult for community members to recognise the significant work women do when working in the fields as well as taking on unpaid care work. As such, the RCA is useful in bringing this to the surface, but needs to be nuanced to better fit the Timorese context.
- Caring responsibilities are shared between women, men, older and younger family members, but there is also a clear gendering of care work, with females often caring for many more people than males do.
- Women and men undertaking unpaid (care and non-care) work all work hard, with women responsible for more unpaid care work, and men doing more work in the fields.
- Recognising the prevalence of unpaid work across both sexes, women are significantly more time poor than men, because of their work in the fields as well as doing unpaid care work.
- While communities continue to operate with a gendered division of labour, there is also flexibility within households in how work is distributed, and female and male community members expressed a clear desire to change gender work patterns.
- Compared to women who operate under strong social norms of what makes a 'good woman', social norms for men relating to unpaid care work are minimal, with men emphasising their care work as an expression of love. Unlike many other cultures, Timorese men do not appear to suffer damage to their perceived masculinity if they undertake 'women's work'. These are clear local strengths to be built on.

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METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

The RCA comprises a suite of eight exercises, to be carried out via focus group discussions (FGDs) with men and women participants. These exercises are created to complement each other, with an aim of giving a broad snapshot and breakdown of participants' work and leisure activities over a set period of time.

RCA exercises were deliberately designed with the intention that research teams could select the most relevant tools for their context and needs.[4] In this RCA, OiTL selected six of these tools to use for each FGD, to be carried out over a single full-day FGD. The team began with an introductory session to discuss what care means to the participants, followed by the following RCA exercises:

Purpose	Exercises	Objective
Introduction	What do we mean by 'care work'	Explain the concept of 'care work' and create a good discussion environment
Explore relationships of care in the community	Exercise 1: Care roles and relationships	Participants reflect on who they care for, who cares for them and societal roles
Identify work activities performed and estimated hours	Exercise 2: Average weekly hours	To make visible the work done by women and men, and the share of care work
Identify gendered roles, social norms, changes in care patterns and most problematic care activities	Exercise 3: Distribution of care roles	Explore the distribution of care roles at the household level
	Exercise 4: Social norms	Identify and discuss social norms that influence the distribution of care work
	Exercise 6: Problematic care activities	Identify the most problematic care activities for women and the community
Identify options for reducing and/or redistributing care work	Exercise 8: Solutions	Identify and rank solutions to address problems with current patterns of care work, and to reduce difficulties for women around care work

Table 1: Purpose and objective of RCA exercises undertaken in the FGDs (RCA tools provided in Annex 3 of this report.)

FGDs were conducted primarily in Tetun, with translation into local languages as required. The facilitation team spoke with a total of 114 participants, including 77 women and 37 men. Eight participants were persons with disabilities.

The team conducted a total six FGDs, with the first two treated as pilot FGDs while the team learned how to use the various tools. Fieldwork was conducted as follows:

Pilot FGDs

FGD #1: Aldeia Watuguili, Suku Matemori, Maubara, Likisa (19 February 2021) included 24 participants (16 female, eight male).

FGD #2: Aldeia Watuguili, Suku Vatuvou, Likisa, Likisa (25 February 2021) included 15 participants (10 female, five male).

4 Oxfam (2016), "Participatory Methodology: Rapid Care Analysis. Guidance for Managers and Facilitators"

Full FGDs

FGD #3: Aldeia Manuinpena, Suku Lalisuk, Pante Makasar, RAEOA (24 March 2022) included 20 participants (14 female, six male). Two females and two males were persons with disabilities.

FGD #4: Aldeia Fatubijae, Suku Bobocase, Pante Makasar, RAEOA (25 March 2022) included 16 participants (10 female, six male). Two females and one male were persons with disabilities.

FGD #5: Aldeia Beilaco, Suku Raimea, Zumalai, Covalima (29 March 2022) included 21 participants (15 female, six male). Three female participants arrived late, so only participated in the afternoon's activities.

FGD #6: Aldeia Beilaco, Suku Raimea, Zumalai, Covalima (30 March 2022) included 18 participants (12 female, six male). One female was a person with disabilities.

RESEARCH TEAM

Each FGD was conducted by four facilitators, and local assistance provided by OiTL partners Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI), Masine Neu Oecusse (MANEO) and Binibi Faef Nome (BIFANO) who assisted with mobilising community members and translating into the local language where required. The facilitation team were as follows: Milena da Silva, Salvador de Jesus, Antonio da Costa and Rince Nipu. Enumerators included Isac Mascarenhas, Julio C. Da Silva and Imanuela N. S. Ribeiro. KSI assistants were Domiciana Cardoso, Bartolomeu Dos Santos and David Nunes, MANEO assistants were Pedronela Sico Elu and Paulos Siki, and BIFANO assistants were Lucia Quefi and Maria Aminda Sila. Analysis was conducted by Maeve Gill and Deborah Cummins.

CASE STUDY SITES

Case study sites were selected to provide an understanding of women's and men's working lives from a range of locations around the country. Likisa Municipality is close to Dili and comprises cultural groups that are mainly patrilineal. Covalima Municipality is a long distance from Dili, on the south coast, and comprises cultural groups who are mainly matrilineal. The special enclave of Oecusse (RAEOA) is only accessible by airplane, overnight ferry or by driving through Indonesia, and comprises cultural groups that are mainly patrilineal. Key features of the different case study sites are as follows:

Watuguili, Matemori, Maubara

Matemori and Vatuvou are small neighbourhoods located in the village of Watuguili, which is a one-hour drive from the main city of Dili. Both communities rely on agriculture and selling produce as their main economic activity. Occupants also partake in tua (wine) production and selling coffee.

Manuinpena, Lalisuk, Pante Makasar, RAEOA

Located in the centre of Oecusse, the village of Manuinpena is a 15-minute drive from the main city, surrounded by farmland and mountains. Oecusse is an enclave surrounded by Indonesia and separated from mainland Timor. The community in Manuinpena is mostly farmers, who grow vegetables, corn, and cassava.

Fatubijae, Bobocase, Pante Makasar, RAEOA

The village of Fatubijae is also located in Oecusse, a 20-minute drive from the main city. The community is mostly farmers, who grow corn, mung bean and vegetables. Such produce is used for sale, as well as household consumption. The area is surrounded by farmland and mountains, and occupants speak both Tetun and Indonesian.

Beilaco, Raimea, Zumalai, Covalima

The village of Beilaco is located an hour and a half from the town of Suai, and can take up to 12 hours' drive from Dili. The community is made up of primarily matrilineal farmers, who sell their produce to make a living. Most people in Beilaco partake in subsistence agriculture, rice production and vegetable farming.

LIMITATIONS

This RCA was conducted as a test for OiTL, to explore whether and how these tools may become part of Hakbi'it's methodologies in working with communities. As it was new, there were various limitations that impacted on the scope, timing and depth of RCA results.

Incorrect Data

Because this was the first time the facilitation team had carried out these participatory activities there was a steep learning curve, leading to some incorrect data being gathered in some activities. This incorrect data was identified, fixed where possible, or otherwise excluded at the analysis stage. Sections where data was excluded are clearly identified in the report.

FGD Timing

While the designers of the RCA toolkit recommend two days to cover eight exercises, the facilitation team allowed one day to cover six exercises, which was overly-ambitious. FGD timing also affected RCA sampling. Younger people were largely unable to attend due to school commitments. Others arrived quite late due to their care responsibilities at home, so their contributions were only captured in later exercises and not during earlier exercises.

Allowing sufficient time for fieldwork is crucial, particularly given challenges with translating into the local language, and providing extra support for illiterate participants. Due to the high number of illiterate participants, the fieldwork team removed one of the exercises (concentric circles activity) from the last three workshops and instead held a broad group discussion, to allow sufficient time for people to fully participate in more complicated activities. As a result, this data was only collected in the two pilot FGDs #1 and #2, and FGD #3. While this decision was positive in that it allowed sufficient time for other activities to be completed, the replacement of the concentric circles activity with a broad group discussion appears to have reduced the depth and detail of those later discussions.

FGD venue

FGDs were carried out in small, open-air structures with a roof but no walls, and the heat of the afternoon coupled with a long day was very difficult for some participants. In addition, the choice of small open-air venues for FGDs made it difficult to hold separate discussions with male and female participants. This potentially reduced the depth and frankness of discussion.

Definitions of unpaid care in subsistence or mixed-economy households

There was some 'definitional creep' in how unpaid care work was understood and engaged with in this RCA, with various non-care activities being considered as unpaid care work. This was partly due to difficulties in translating and explaining the different categories of unpaid work to community members who have not been exposed to this language before, and also reflects deeper conceptual issues around unpaid care in subsistence or mixed-economy households (discussed in the next section). While the facilitation team did an excellent job in explaining the different categories, and all care was taken in examining fieldwork data to ensure consistency, it is likely that some of the figures presented in this report may not be an accurate reflection of the real gendered dimensions of care work in these communities.

Sample, Scope and Applicability of RCA Findings

The RCA tools were originally designed as diagnostic tools, and are not sufficient on their own to fully interrogate the meaning of unpaid care work, or how this is experienced by community members. Follow-up interventions are required to ensure that unpaid care work, and the gendered implications for men and women, are properly understood by community members and OiTL and partners.

A woman collecting water from a well. Francisco Ismenio Pereira/Oxfam

LEARNINGS

Managing FGD timing and venue

As noted above, the time that was allocated for FGDs was overly-ambitious, and open-air venues made it difficult to separate men's and women's groups, resulting in long, hot, exhausting days, and hurried discussions at the end. Following principles of Do No Harm, it is strongly recommended that both time and venue be reconsidered for future FGDs, potentially limiting to half-day FGDs spread over multiple days and/or providing air-conditioned venues, and ensuring there is space for separate private conversations.

Managing double roles for women participants

It is not uncommon for catering in a community setting to be provided by local women's groups, and this provides a good source of income for these women. But if the same women are acting as both participants and as caterers, this can impact on their participation. This was the case in FGD #5 where facilitators noted that three female participants were busy preparing food for the group, and therefore were not able to contribute to the discussion during those times. It is recommended that expectations around catering and participation are made clear in any future workshops.

Defining care work in a subsistence economy

While RCA tools mention subsistence agriculture and therefore appear on the surface to be easily applicable in subsistence or mixed economy households, participants and facilitators struggled in clearly delineating between paid productive or salaried work, unpaid care work, and unpaid productive work. As noted above, this likely reflects issues with translating and explaining new concepts. However, even with clear translation and explanations of the different categories, it is still likely that fieldwork teams will continue to struggle in applying these categories in subsistence or mixed-economy households due to deeper contextual issues.

In market-based economies it is relatively easy to separate work in the workplace from different types of unpaid work performed at home. However, in Timorese communities that are primarily subsistence agriculture with excess production being sold at the market, and income augmented by small side-businesses, the different lifestyle that ensues means there is a blurring between paid productive work, unpaid productive work, and unpaid care work. This poses a challenge for researchers imposing categories that assume clear divisions between different types of work that do not reflect how people live. For example, while grocery shopping and cooking meals can be easily understood as something that is separate to going

to the workplace to earn a salary, the delineation in subsistence households between growing a crop, bringing home some of those vegetables for the family meal, and then preparing and cooking those vegetables for the family is less clear. Similarly, whether and how facilitators should distinguish between cultivating kitchen gardens to feed the household, and caring for crops and livestock further from the house was contentious. While RCA facilitators attempted to delineate 'farming activities to earn money' and 'farming activities to feed the family,' the reality is that the work of crop cultivation and livestock care is the same, with the only difference being that some food is set aside for family consumption, and other food is sold on the market.

Francisco feeds his family's chickens. Francisco Ismenio Pereira/Oxfam

These points highlight a strategic tension within the study's objectives – whether the focus is on (i) the gendered dimensions of unpaid work, acknowledging that women are responsible for significant care and other work, or (ii) the elements and distribution of unpaid care work in particular. While the RCA is potentially a very good set of tools to help communities and organisations surface the gendered division of labour in Timorese households, more work needs to be done in contextualising the different types of work to the realities of subsistence households. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for Oxfam to make an important contribution to the literature on unpaid care work globally, by considering what unpaid care work looks like in non-market (subsistence) economies. This would require more time interrogating how different types of work are defined and understood in the local context to take into account the blending of activities that tends to occur in subsistence households.

Framing activities and materials to encourage male farmers' trust and participation

Given the nuances in differentiating between unpaid work as subsistence farmers and unpaid care work, it is important to acknowledge unpaid productive work as important and necessary for the household. This is necessary to build trust with male participants who may feel their unpaid work is ignored or under-valued. Activities and visual materials should also be framed to reflect women's and men's unpaid care and non-care work.

DEFINING 'CARE RESPONSIBILITIES IN SUBSISTENCE HOUSEHOLDS'

To establish an understanding of how community members perceive care work, participants were asked to define activities they consider as being care. Women considered tasks such as 'washing the dishes, sweeping the floors and collecting wood' as their responsibilities, with one participant saying that these are the "types of jobs that we do where we don't get paid." Another female participant explained that unpaid care work is the "work we do at home, like cooking, washing clothes, washing dishes, cleaning the yard and so on." Others added "taking care of children." Two women added "weaving of traditional cloth (*tais*) that is not for sale." Men described tasks such as taking care of animals, building houses and looking after family. Most participants agreed that care work is a shared responsibility within a community, with one participant explaining that "working together as a group/community, we do things together … without being paid." There were some activities that were added that may not fall under classic definitions of care work, with some male participants suggesting that care work should encompass the "production of

food," "the feeding of animals" and even the "building of houses," and some female participants suggesting that care work should encompass the weaving of *tais* if it is intended for family use. These are marked with an asterix in the table below.

The following care activities were identified by participants:

	Care responsibilities for women	Care responsibilities for men
Women	• Look after sick people • Washing dishes • Collecting wood • Sweeping • Looking after the animals • Cooking • Cleaning the house • Planting vegetables • Making tais* • Taking care of children • Giving medication • Bathing children • Taking children to school • Washing clothes • Fetching water • Sewing • Buying and selling food in the marketplace	• Cooking • Fixing the gate • Planting vegetables • Looking after garden • Working in the field* • Providing for the family
Men	• Weaving tais* • Cooking • Washing • Planting rice • House cleaning • Collecting snails • Take care of household • Take care of husbands family	• Look after children • Collect firewood • Feed animals • Look after garden • Building a house • Make income from produce to support other care work • Taking care of parents • Taking care of field • Taking care of sick people • Cut the grass • Collective work*

Table 2: Activities considered as care work

While FGD results clearly indicate that a gendered division of labour does exist within subsistence farming households, with women taking the tasks of cooking and childcare after returning from the farm, this reality was more difficult to surface as nearly all work is unpaid. The most common response from women and men participants was that they all work hard, but that men do the (unpaid) 'heavy' farming work that women cannot do, and women do more (unpaid) household work. Various participants explained that they did not consider there is a hierarchy of value between different types of unpaid work. One younger female participant explained that to her, "men's and women's care work, whether paid or not, is all the same." A

male participant stated that for him, "jobs are all the same in order to move forward with life." Similarly, an older male participant explained that "because we are farmers, we do our jobs with love." This general approach was shared across all generations that participated in the RCA.

This activity was contentious at times. While some women laughed at the Universal Care Activities materials that showed women working in a variety of tasks, one male participant argued against what he saw as an assumption around women's and men's unpaid contributions: "it seems like we as men don't do any work. We work (in the field to provide for the family). We plant the rice, we harvest the rice, and it's not an easy job."[5]

FINDINGS: CARE ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Participants were asked to reflect on who household members care for, who cares for them, and how relations of care build on social roles, following the 'concentric circle activity'. Undertaken as an individual activity, each participant made three circles with 'daily' being in the inner circle, 'weekly' being the middle circle and 'monthly' the outer circle. This activity helped participants to visualise social roles and connections, but was dropped in the final three FGDs as taking too much time, with participants simply asked to discuss as a group who they care for, who cares for them and what impacts and shapes these care roles.

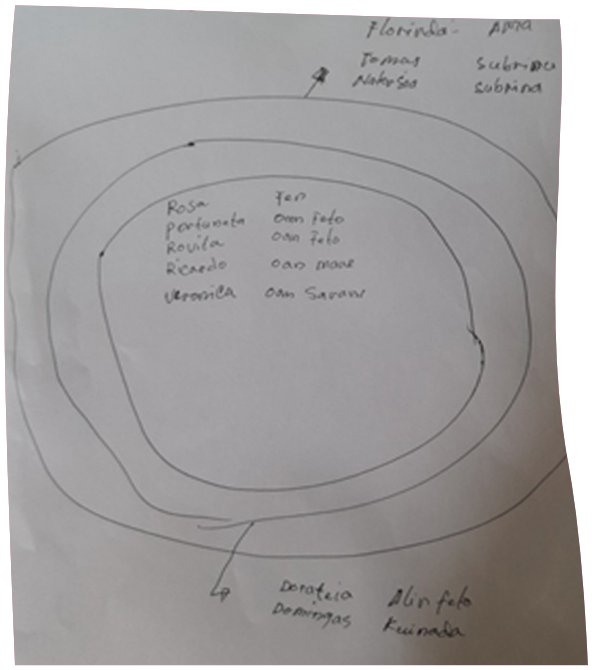

Image 1: Example of a concentric circle taken from FGD #2

FGD results indicate a sharing of care roles between women, men, children and elderly family members, with everyone playing a role. Married women care for their children, husbands, any elders in the family, and sometimes also grandchildren on a daily basis. Many women give birth to their first child when still a teenager, so grandmothers in the group were aged 39 years and above. Married male participants also explained that they care for their children on a daily basis. Most married men noted caring for their wives; some did not list their wives among the people who they care for. Men and women both reported caring for elderly relatives at least once a week, and caring for neighbours and other community members on a monthly basis.

The sharing of roles was also reflected in their explanations of how work is distributed between family members, with one woman stating, "we can't have the husbands go out and work while the women stay at home and sleep."[6] This was reflected by another woman, who noted: "the husband goes out to work, so we (wife) need to work."[7] In Covalima, a man explained, "domestic work is not only done by women, sometimes we men do the domestic work, like for example carrying firewood. During free time, men can do the domestic work, I've seen in many families."[8] Children also play an important role, with even very young children having caring responsibilities that increase as they get older. Reflecting the strength of the family unit and the limitations of government social services at the local level, there is a strong expectation of mutual obligation when caring for children, with one male participant explaining, "when we are sick, our grandchildren will take care of us."[9]

5 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

6 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

7 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

8 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

9 FGD #2, Watuguili (Likisa), 25 February 2021

The sharing of care roles was also reflected in participants' explanations of who cares for them if they need it, with participants noting their children, husbands/wives, and neighbours. One participant who is a widow explained, "when I feel under the weather, my children and my neighbours come and take care of me."[10] A woman in Oecusse explained, "I have disabilities, my kids help with the domestic work, they cook daily. For other activities such as working in the garden, I also have neighbours to help me out."[11] Similarly, a young mother described, "I gave birth to my kids, my own blood, I'm the one who takes care of them. When I get sick, my children take care of me."[12] There was sometimes also some disagreement during FGD discussions: while one husband noted that he cares for his wife when she is sick, this was disputed by his wife who stated that nobody cares for her when she is sick.[13]

While caring responsibilities are shared between women, men, older and younger family members, results also indicate there is a clear gendering of care work. Results from the concentric circle activity that was facilitated in the first three workshops indicate that on average, male participants cared for 3.4 people on a daily basis, and female participants cared for 5.8 people daily. A number of women noted they care for up to 13 people daily. Discussions between participants also indicated an imbalance between the care given by wives to husbands, and the care given by husbands to wives, with wives much more likely to note their husbands as primary beneficiaries of their care, alongside their children. Some women participants expressed their surprise at just how much care work they were doing on a daily and weekly basis.[14] As one woman said: "to the guys who go out to work, look at this picture (showing the Universal Care picture distributed by the facilitators). You go out to work and say that we women, do not do any job. Look at the picture!"[15]

While both women and men framed the care they provide in terms of love, women also emphasised the social norms of being a wife and a mother in terms of obligation and duty. One woman explained, "when preparing the food, our husbands will be happy when the food that they eat is good. He won't eat it if the food is bad." When an older mother described her long list of caring tasks, she simply noted, "This is the life. No matter what we do, it is a necessity."[16] Another woman described her children as "my own blood" and that therefore she "must be the one to care for them."[17] This was echoed by another female participant, who asked, "if we don't do this work, who will do it?"[18] There is also a cross-generational gendering that takes place, with daughters easing their mothers' care load if it is too heavy. As one woman explained, "my daughter helps me with the housework. Every day I take care of my mum, who is in her 80s and has a vision impairment. From sunrise till sundown, I take care of her; I feed her, I bathe her, I take her to the bathroom. When she wants to take a nap, I take her to the bedroom. She's my mother.'[19]

AVERAGE WORKING HOURS

This section presents findings from FGD #3, FGD #4 and FGD #6, excluding the other three FGDs due to discrepancies in the data. The RCA exercise aimed to make visible the total volume of work done by women and men, and identify the care work done respectively by women and men. Participants were asked to note down all of the activities that they perform on a typical day, also noting activities that they may perform simultaneously if multi-tasking, and assign these to six different categories of work: (i) work to produce products for sale; (ii) paid labour and paid services; (iii)) unpaid work producing products for home consumption or for the family; (iv) unpaid care work; (v) unpaid community work, and (vi) non-

10 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

11 FGD #4, Fatubijae (Oecusse), 25 March 2022

12 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

13 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

14 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021; FGD #2, Watuguili (Likisa), 25 February 2021

15 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

16 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

17 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

18 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

19 GD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

work time. They were then asked to estimate the number of hours spent for each category. As noted in the section 'Learnings', there was a blurring between 'work to produce products for sale', 'unpaid work producing products for home consumption' and 'unpaid care work'.

The table below shows the average hours per week reported by participants across the three FGDs. Responses per individual FGD are provided in Annex 2 of this report.

Categories of Activity	Male	Female
Work to produce products for sale	30	16
Paid labour and paid services	0	6
Unpaid care work	17	57
Unpaid production of products for home consumption	7	5
Unpaid community work	0	0
Non-work	107	80

Table 3: Weekly average hours by sex

It should be noted that as a small exercise with participants who are largely not accustomed to time-keeping, these figures are an indication only and there are some hours that are unaccounted for in the week. Nonetheless, the patterns of labour indicate three important points. First, the breakdown of participants' days confirm participants' explanations that they all work hard, rising early so they can get everything done. Second, the breakdown confirms participants' explanations that while women are responsible for unpaid care work, men do more work in the fields. Male participants work for an estimated 37 hours per week, doing a mixture of paid and unpaid productive work, compared to their female counterparts who do an estimated 21 hours of paid and unpaid productive work. Third, female participants are significantly more time-poor. Female participants are able to claim about 80 hours per week of non-work (sleeping, personal care and relaxing) compared to their male counterparts who can claim about 107 hours per week of non-work. The reason for this is the reality that women do productive work (paid and unpaid) as well as the vast majority of unpaid care work.

This was confirmed during FGD discussions. As both male and female participants explained, male farmers tend to spend many hours in the field, and once finishing for the day return home to rest and eat. In Covalima, an older male stated, "In my family when I return from the rice field or gardens, I take a break because I'm exhausted. My wife and kids do the cooking for me."[20] This was echoed by a female participant, who explained, "In the field, men do work hard and all the heavy work is done by them. For women, we also work in the field, the difference is men once they return home, take a break. But not for us women, we have to cook and continue doing the housework."[21] This was reflected by another woman, who explained, "working as a farmer isn't easy, when we get home, we have to prepare meals, then clean the house or take care of the grandchildren."[22]

Due to the small sampling and the predominance of farmers as FGD participants, it is unclear whether this pattern is also reflected for non-farming households. However, one interaction was telling: when a woman shared that her husband was a teacher and that he assisted in the housework, another woman replied: "in this case, her husband is a school teacher. But as a farmer, women do most of the domestic work."[23] It may be worth exploring and clearly disaggregating patterns of labour in farming vs non-farming households, should OiTL continue using RCA methodology in the future.

20 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

21 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

22 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

23 FGD #6, Beilaco (Covalima), 30 March 2022

Maria fries peanuts in her kitchen in Oecusse. Kate Bensen/Oxfam

HOW CARE ROLES ARE DISTRIBUTED

This section presents the results from FGD #3, FGD #4, FGD #5 and FGD #6, excluding the first two pilot FGDs due to discrepancies in the data. In this exercise, participants were asked by facilitators to look at their one-day recalls and categorise the activities of their day into the universal categories of care. While categories varied slightly depending on the group, the daily care activities in a household revealed six types of dominant activities: preparing meals; cleaning the house; doing laundry; taking care of children; taking care of a sick family member; and moral or emotional support and advice. Using the social categories provided in the RCA of girls (under 18), boys (under 18), women (18-40 years), men (18-40 years), older women (above 40) and older men (above 40), participants were then asked to mark who does what type of care work, and how regularly. Three dots indicate daily, two dots indicate sometimes/once a week, one dot indicates rarely/once a month, and 0 dots indicates never. The following is an example of a completed matrix:

Ranking Matrix – Male Group
FGD 2
Location: Fatubijae, Bobocase, Pante Makasar, RAEOA
Date: 25 March 2022

Care activities	Sub category of care activities	Girls under 18 years old	Boys under 18 years old	Women between 18 – 40	Men between 18 – 40	Women above 40	Men above 40
Preparing meals	Collecting firewood	..	..				
	Fetching water	...	.	...	..	..	...
	Picking vegetables	...	..	...	..	...	.
	Cleaning the rice and the vegetables	...	.	...	.	...	.
	Preparing the fire	...		...	..	...	.
	Washing the pots and woks	...	.	...	.	...	.
	Cooking the meal and putting the meal on the table	...	.	...	.	...	.
Taking care of a sick person in the family	Bathing the person (especially person with disabilities)	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Giving medicine	.	..	..	...	...	...
	Taking the person to the toilet	.	.	...	...	...	..
	Feeding the person	.	.	...	...	...	..
	Take the person to the hospital	.	.	..	..	..	..
Cleaning the house	Cleaning the floor	...	..	...	..	...	.
	Cleaning the yard	...	..	...	..	...	.
	Removing spider webs	...	..	...	..	...	.
	Cleaning every corner of the house	...	..	...	..	...	.
	Cleaning the windows	...	..	...	..	...	.

Preparing clothes	Washing clothes	...		.		...		.	...
	Putting the clothes in the sun	...		.		...		.	...
	Removing the clothes from the line	...		.		...		.	...
	Ironing	...		.		...		.	...
	Folding up the clothes	...		.		...		.	...
	Putting the clothes in the drawer	...		.		...		.	...
Taking care of the kids	Bathing the kids	..				...		..	..
	Putting their clothes on	..				...		..	..
	Feeding the kids	..				...		..	..
	Doing homework with the kids	..				...		..	..
	Singing lullabies	..				...		..	..
	Taking the kids to school	...		...		...		..	..
Moral support	Education within the family					.		.	.
	From friends								
	Formal education								

Table 4: Ranking matrix example

Results from the four FGDs support the broad finding that care work is shared but gendered within the household. While the RCA discussions only provide a quick snapshot of care work for small groups of people, these results are nonetheless revealing. Matrices revealed that in general, males and females of all age groups contribute, but that females of all age groups are mainly responsible for preparing meals and childcare. This reflects the previous section, which showed that females are significantly more time-poor than their male counterparts. Matrices also revealed that men over 40 and boys under 18 tended to have fewest regular caring responsibilities, compared to men aged between 18-40. Results for older women aged over 40 were mixed: in some locations they were still very active, but in other locations they had fewer responsibilities. This likely reflects differences between case study sites, and also differences between specific households, reflecting the very small sample size.

The gendered division of labour was reflected on during discussions. When asked what activities a man should do, participants gave answers such as building fences, collecting firewood and taking care of the field. Expected tasks for women included cleaning, cooking, planting, weaving *tais*, and doing laundry. Participants explained this gendering as a combination of practicality, and the values that have been handed down from the ancestors. When asked why tasks are divided up with women doing most of the cooking and the childcare, and men building fences and collecting firewood, men and women participants generally agreed that out of practicality, many outdoor physical tasks should be done by men. As one man

A woman carries firewood in Timor-Leste. Photo from Oxfam

noted, "cutting trees, tilling the soil, are done by men."[24] One man living with a disability who builds and fixes household items explained that for him, "men bring money to the family, buy water for cooking, bathing, and washing clothes."[25] It is important to note that these norms are upheld by women and men, and across age groups. A young woman in Oecusse explained that from her perspective, "an example is when building a house, men should do it not women … because women are not brave enough to climb to the top of the house."[26]

In addition to this understanding of what is 'practical' for men and women, participants also frequently referenced their culture, and what was handed down by the ancestors. For example, one woman explained, "all of these things came from our ancestors, such as men's job is collecting wood." This was echoed by another woman, who explained: "because it is a strong culture, women need to do all of the food preparation. The *barlaki* culture, when men have fulfilled that *barlaki*, women need to do all of the jobs around the house. These are all heard from our household/family, and followed by our society." Participants also spoke about their parents teaching them how to do certain tasks, with an older man explaining, "I heard it from my parents, they showed us and we follow them." Similarly, a younger woman explained that she cooks because "we heard it from mum, grandmother. Our mother heard it from their mothers." Similar responses were given by participants across all six FGDs.

Reflecting the skills that they were taught from a young age, and how they see people operating around them, some activities were male or female tasks simply because that 'made sense' to participants. For example, a young woman explained, "women weave *biti* (mats used for sleeping) … [because] it doesn't make sense for a man to weave *biti*". Despite suggestions that care roles are changing, she was firm in her belief that because of their culture, this is how tasks should be divided. This was echoed by another woman participant, who simply stated: "women weave *tais*, men build fences."

24 FGD #3, Manuimpena (Oecusse), 29 March 2022

25 FGD #3, Manuimpena (Oecusse), 29 March 2022

26 FGD #2, Watuguili (Likisa), 25 February 2021

However, not all participants believed that work should be gendered in this way, with both female and male participants explaining that they want to see change. The importance of these social norms, and how they may be changing, is discussed in the next section.

IDENTIFYING SOCIAL NORMS

Various commentary around gender social norms were shared throughout all FGD activities. These were then clarified in a final exercise that focused on the attitudes and perceptions that men and women hold around care work, and what they consider to be the qualities of a 'good man' or a 'good woman.' While FGDs were conducted in various communities representing matrilineal and patrilineal cultures, all discussions revealed strongly patriarchal values of what makes a 'good woman'. Tellingly, while there were many contributions around what qualities are represented in a good woman, there were far fewer observations made around the qualities of a 'good man'.

Women participants' reflections on a good woman were that she should be "diligent and respectful," she should be able to "prepare breakfast in the morning for her parents, children and husband [because a] woman's job is inside the house," and she should "dress like a modern woman (stylish), but know how to respect other people." Male participants' reflections were that "a good woman is a woman who loves her family," "knows how to do domestic work," "is a woman who can bear a child," and "is ready to help her family, not only taking care of her own family but able to take care of her husband's family, too." By contrast, contributions on the qualities of a good man were fairly meagre, with one male participant explaining, "a man is 'good' because he collects wood" and that "a 'bad' man is someone who is lazy and doesn't help his parents." Similarly, a female participant suggested that "a 'good' man needs to do his work such as collecting wood, looking after the garden" and that a 'bad' man is a criminal or a sex offender.

The long list of social expectations placed on women compared to the relative freedom of men from these gendered expectations is also reflected in women's and men's attitudes towards care work, with women describing their care work as a combination of duty and love. Across all case study sites, the social norm and expectation that women will be responsible for caring for children/family was consistently stated. For example, in Oecusse, one woman explained "it doesn't matter if the domestic work is light or heavy, this is part of our work as women. We have to do it." Similarly, an older man in Covalima noted "Yes, women do more housework and it's very heavy, but it's our responsibility even if it is heavy but we do it with our heart because of love. Because she cares about her family." Similar explanations were given by other participants.

By contrast, men described their care work as something done voluntarily, as an expression of love, and sometimes religion. One man explained, "mostly I wash the clothes, collect wood, and cook the food for the children because I do it out of love." A husband in Covalima explained that he cares for his wife who has disabilities, "it depends on the situation or needs, my wife has disabilities … I take care of her," which was echoed by his wife, who stated, "my husband takes care of me, he cooks for me, washes the clothes. This is what love is all about." A younger male participant explained, "I take care of my brother's children because I feel like they are my own children, too." Another man noted his religion as a reason for care work: "we love doing domestic work, we do it because we care. It's based on God's teaching; we have to do it with our whole heart."

There were also various participants who reflected on changes that they had already seen happen in how men and women work, and who argued that there should be more flexibility in who does what. For example in Vatuvou, when a man suggested that only men can make garden gates, a woman replied saying, "women can do it as well." Similarly, in Maubara, a woman argued that "our ancestors are the ones who said this. Both men and women are capable of doing the job (collecting firewood)."

The desire to see things change was reflected across sexes and age groups. In Covalima, a young woman stated: "Based on our culture, women should stay home. Long ago, as women, we stay in the kitchen. But now, the time has changed. We want to be away from home … attend meetings in the village together with local leaders. We want to get access to education, and healthcare. I want to access those things. Long ago, only men were permitted to attend, and we women stayed in the house. Now the time has changed. Men and women have equal rights and can gain access to many things equally."

Similarly, an older man in Maubara explained, "things have changed … both women and men have the same rights. When a woman is smart we need to encourage her to go work just like men because she's smart. For an example, my own son who studies in UNTL (National University in Timor-Leste), even though he is a male, I still ask him to wash the dishes."

In considering social norms for women and men in relation to care work, it is important to note that there were no social norms expressed *against* men doing care work. Care work did not seem to damage their or others' perceptions of their masculinity. The relative freedom of men from social norms in relation to care work, the free expression of doing care work out of love, and the changing social norms are all important strengths to be built on in the Timorese local context.

PROBLEMATIC CARE ACTIVITIES

The objective of this exercise is to identify the most problematic care activities that men and women face, and which activities are the most challenging for women. Due to time constraints, this activity occurred in a discussion format rather than using the ranking matrix provided by the RCA methodology. Facilitators asked the women and men respectively what they considered to be the most problematic care activities, and which of these is the most important issue. Across the FGDs, discussion was limited due to the exhaustion of participants after a long day.


Sauli washes the dishes at his home in Oecusse. Francisco Ismenio Pereira/Oxfam

Problematic activities raised by men were not necessarily related to unpaid care work, but tended to be issues that were more visible to them, including collecting water and walking to the markets, as these tasks are difficult and dangerous. Other problematic activities related to structural and practical issues such as irrigation, pest control and lack of access to public transportation.

Working in the field and being expected to do housework was raised across the six FGDs, with women explaining that they do not get to rest when they return from the fields. Various women expressed the difficulty of managing time and doing all the housework, with one woman explaining, "[it is] heavy, because one mother can't take care of all of her children on her own, to make sure that they are fed, putting their clothes on, taking them to school and waiting for them at school until the school hours is done. There's not enough time to take care of the garden."[27] Some women raised the difficulty of household work in general, with a young woman in Oecusse stating, "domestic work is hard work. For example, washing dishes, cooking, taking care of the kids, feeding the pigs."[28] This was echoed by another woman in Covalima, who explained "it's a 24 hour a day job – I feel that that domestic work is heavy."[29] Women also identified that undertaking such tasks can be problematic for elderly people, with

27 FGD #2, Watuguili (Likisa), 25 February 2021

28 FGD #4, Fatubijae (Oecusse), 25 March 2022

29 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

one woman saying that "picking vegetables in the garden, this can be a hard task for the elderly because they have to bend down to pick the vegetables."[30]

DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

The objective of this exercise is to support participants in developing innovative solutions to identified problems, and then ranking these solutions according to various measures including whether they are feasible, achievable, socially acceptable, and will be effective in reducing the difficulty for women around care work. A key question of the exercise is how care work can be redistributed within households, or distributed to the state or other providers. As this was the last activity of the day, time constraints meant that facilitators could only conduct this session in a discussion format, without using the RCA ranking tool provided. Some participants had to leave in order to return to their chores and fields.

Solutions that were offered fell into three categories: (i) redistributing care work in a household, (ii) working more communally to support each other, (iii) seeking external support from Oxfam or government to ease the pressure of labour-intensive activities for the whole community.

Suggestions to redistribute care work in the household focused primarily on the husband taking on more domestic work, with a few participants also suggesting children should contribute more. A common solution suggested by the male participants was that they help out with the care load even if they are tired, recognising that their wives are also very tired. This requires not only a better awareness of uneven workloads, but also husbands' desire to contribute more. As one woman participant stated, "only some men understand that they can help with the housework; when men don't understand, they don't help."[31] A few participants also suggested that children contribute more, with one younger male explaining that care work should "come from the people in our household that we take care of … for example, our own children. We take care of them, love them, feed them, teach them so that in the future they would take care of us."[32]

Others suggested that workloads could be eased by working more communally via existing social networks and/or formally established groups such as Oxfam's savings and loans groups. While it is clear how this may apply to productive labour (paid or unpaid), it is less clear how this might work for unpaid care work.

The final set of solutions revolved around infrastructure or services to facilitate community members in doing their work, making them less time- or labour-intensive. As one young woman explained, "in order to make women's job easier, everything should be accessible. If we don't have something, we need to work hard to get it. For example, if [all household materials] in our house are complete then our job will be easier, or else we have to work harder."[33] In Beilaco, participants explained that during Indonesian occupation they had a marketplace in Herakain very close to where they live, but now they must walk seven kilometres to Zumalai to sell and buy vegetables and other goods. One solution was therefore that this marketplace might be reinstated.[34]

In Vatuvou, participants explained that their unreliable water tank leads to a lot of time collecting water, adding stress for women who need clean water for washing and bathing. In Beilaco, participants also described problems with water access, explaining that their closest river is unsafe because of crocodiles.[35]

Solutions included asking the government for help for improved piping of water, fixing the water tank and/or getting support from Oxfam regarding water access.

30 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

31 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

32 DGF #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 Fevrieru 2021

33 FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

34 FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

35 FGD #6, Beilaco (Covalima), 30 March 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations, including using the RCA toolkit in the Timor-Leste context are as follows:

- The set of exercises are clearly useful in making women's care responsibilities more visible, with many women participants in particular noting their surprise at how many people they care for, and how many hours they invest in unpaid care work. However, these should be contextualised to better reflect subsistence and mixed-economy households. Discussions should also be framed by recognising the unpaid work that is performed by both women and men.
- The prevalence of unpaid work generally in farming households can make it difficult to recognise the extra work faced by women, compared to their male counterparts. Participatory activities that allow participants to discover this for themselves are potentially very powerful, tapping into husbands' love for their families to encourage redistribution of care responsibilities.
- The relative freedom of men from social norms relating to unpaid care work, and men's emphasis on voluntarily performing care work as an expression of love, are clear local strengths to be built on. Awareness-raising activities related to unpaid care work could emphasise these points, encouraging men and boys to demonstrate love via unpaid care work.
- The many hours of domestic labour performed by women cannot be separated from other important infrastructural and community development needs in the community. Lack of clean, accessible water supply, and marketplace access problems are common throughout the country, and significantly increase the time women spend doing unpaid labour. Oxfam could bring this understanding into other aspects of its influencing work with development partners and government, to deepen gender mainstreaming across its influencing work.

Sabina in her farm in Oecusse. Kate Bensen/Oxfam

Annex 1: List of participants by location

FGD #1, Watuguili (Likisa), 19 February 2021

Gender	Age	Marital Status
M	48	Married
M	67	Married
F	60	Married
F	25	Single
F	60	Married
F	23	Married
F	16	Single
F	15	Single
F	25	Married
F	37	Married
M	66	Married
M	66	Married
F	60	Married
F	16	Single
F	21	Single
F	30	Married
F	45	Married
M	17	Single
F	24	Married
F	24	Single
M	29	Married
M	24	Single
M	35	Single
F	60	Married

FGD #2 Watuguili (Likisa) 25 February 2021

Gender	Age	Marital status
F	56	Married
M	62	Married
M	43	Married
F	22	Married
M	29	Single
F	60	Married

F	46	Married
F	49	Married
M	57	Married
F	39	Married
F	50	Married
F	48	Married
M	43	Married
F	34	Married
F	36	Married

FGD #3, Manuimpena (Oecusse), 29 March 2022

Gender	Age	Marital Status
M	54	Married
F	63	Married
F	35	Married
F	45	Married
F	59	Widow
F	57	Married
F	32	Married
F	54	Married
F	54	Married
F	55	Married
F	35	Married
F	40	Married
M	46	Married
M	42	Married
M	59	Married
M	34	Married
M	49	Marreid
F	45	Married
F	43	Widow
F	42	Married

FGD #4, Fatubijae (Oecusse), 25 March 2022

Gender	Age	Marital status	Women/men with disabilities
F	49	Married	X
F	23	Married	
F	75	Married	
F	42	Married	
F	30	Married	
F	26	Married	
F	63	Married	
M	62	Married	
M	54	Married	
M	62	Married	
M	26	Married	
M	36	Married	
M	32	Married	X
F	50	Married	
F	60	Married	X
F	45	Married	

FGD #5, Beilaco (Covalima), 29 March 2022

Gender	Age	Marital status
M	34	Married
M	63	Married
M	46	Married
M	39	Married
F	31	Married
F	21	Single
F	60	Widower
F	36	Married
F	24	Married
F	39	Married
F	40	Married
F	52	Married
F	43	Married

M	44	Married
M	63	Married
F	30	Married
F	53	Married
F	35	Married

FGD #6, Beilaco (Covalima), 30 Marsu 2022

Gender	Age	Marital status	Women/men with disabilities
F	39	Married	
F	43	Married	X
F	50	Married	
F	29	Married	
F	30	Married	
F	51	Married	
F	61	Married	
F	34	Married	
M	19	Married	
F	32	Single	
F	26	Married	
M	50	Married	
M	55	Married	
M	37	Married	
M	28	Married	
F	50	Married	
F	32	Married	
M	27	Single	

Annex 2: Weekly averages by FGD and sex

Category	Work to produce products for sale	Paid labour and paid services	Unpaid care work	Unpaid production for home consumption	Unpaid community work	Non-work and other
FGD 3 - Male	31.45	0	23.3	2.31	0	107.3
FGD 4 - Male	37.3	0	22.16	0	0	91
FGD 6 - Male	19.8	0	5.8	18.6	0	121.3
Average	**29.51**	**0**	**17.06**	**6.97**	**0**	**106.53**
FGD 3 - Female	10.75	16.5	53	10.75	0	76
FGD 4 - Female	28	0	62.3	0	0	68
FGD 6 - Female	8.1	0	54.8	4	0	95
Average	**15.61**	**5.5**	**56.7**	**4.91**	**0**	**79.66**

Annex 3: Rapid Care Analysis Resources

Toolbox of Exercises

https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620147/ml-rapid-care-analysis-toolbox-exercises-151116-en.pdf?sequence=2

Guide for Managers and Facilitators

https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/participatory-methodology-rapid-care-analysis-guidance-for-managers-and-facilit-620147/

Maria tends to her farm. Kate Bensen/Oxfam


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