



ANALYTIC NOTE

The Importance of Unpaid Work in Moldova

Despite the fact that the unpaid work¹, which is mainly performed by women, is not reflected in macroeconomic indicators, it has an indispensable importance for the economic development. The problem is that most of men's working time is dedicated to paid works, which are reflected in official statistics. At the same time, most of the women's work is not "accounted for" because it implies household chores that are not remunerated in cash, but are important for the daily life of families. In this analytical note we will answer the following questions:

- How important is the unpaid work in Moldova in comparison with other countries?
- What are the differences between men and women in this respect?
- Where the share of unpaid work is higher: in towns or villages?
- Who practice more unpaid work: people with high or low-income? With a higher or lower level of education?

¹Activities related to "Taking care of the household and family" and "Volunteer work and meetings".

In order to find answers to these questions, we will use the results of the Time Use Survey, carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics.

How significant is the unpaid work in Moldova in comparison with other countries?

In Moldova, the unpaid work is performed on the average 3.9 hours a day per person. Experts estimate² that the value of unpaid works performed by Moldovans during one year would be equivalent to the Gross Domestic Product³. Hence, the unaccounted-for activities are literally equivalent with the ones reflected in statistical indicators, having a huge significance in the Republic of Moldova.

The time allocated by the population of the Republic of Moldova for unpaid work is a bit higher than the average of the 29 member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Deve-

²Multiply the gross value added created on the average by an employed person to the 3.9 hours of daily unpaid work and then to the number of employed population.

³The calculations are made for 2012.

lopment (OECD) - 3.4 hours a day⁴. At the same time, the time dedicated to paid work⁵ in Moldova is lower than in the OCDE countries: 2.9 hours a day or 11.9% of the entire day time.

This situation differs significantly from the developed countries, where the ratio of unpaid to paid work is inverse. Thus, according to the average for OECD countries, about 14% of the total time is allocated to unpaid work and 19% - to paid work. This may be explained by the structural problems of the Moldovan economy, which lead to a much lower employment rate than in developed countries (38.5% in Moldova⁶, versus 65.1% in the OECD countries for 2012).

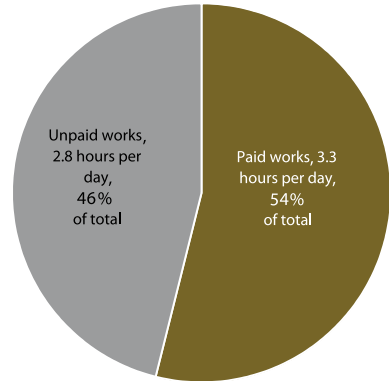
What are the differences between unpaid works performed by men and women?

In Moldova most of the unpaid works are performed by women: about 66% of the total working time constitutes unpaid work (4.9 hours a day). While men allocate twice less time for this activity (2.8 hours a day or 46% of the time used for various formed of works practiced by men).

Similar differences are also found in other countries, but to a lesser extent than in Moldova: in the OECD countries women allocate an average of 2.5 hours a day for unpaid work, and men - 1.7 hours a day.

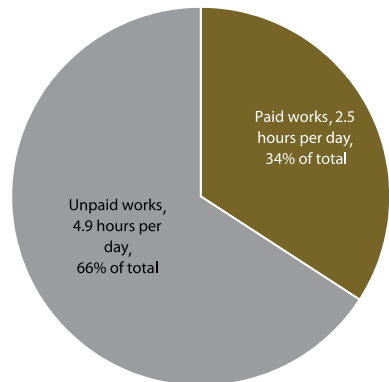
Figures 1 and 2 reveal the typical characteristics of a patriarchal society, where women are expected to take care of the household, and men - to earn the living. At the same time, this also explains why women are financially dependent on men, as women are not paid for most of their household work, the women's average salary accounts for 87.8% of the men's⁷.

Figure 1. Time allocated for paid and unpaid work by men, hours a day and % of the total



Source: NBS

Figure 2. Time allocated for paid and unpaid work by women, hours a day and % of the total



Source: NBS

The failure to recognize and keep records of the unpaid work is one of the main explanations for the high shares of women among the poor population all over the world⁸.

⁴ Society at a Glance, OECD Social Indicators, 6th edition, 2011.

⁵ The working time and other activities related to employment (time spent at the place of work before starting or after completing the work, activities performed to find a job).

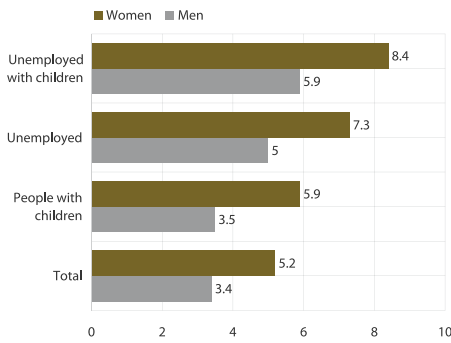
⁶ National Bureau of Statistics.

⁷ 2011 data (the most recent available), source: NBS.

⁸ <http://www.unpac.ca/economy/unpaidwork.html>.

These differences between men and women are the most visible in the case of unemployed people with children, as they form the category of population that allocate most of their time for unpaid activities (Figure 3).

Figure 3. **The time allocated for unpaid work by people of 25 to 64 years old, by sex, hours a day**



Source: NBS

A large share of women who are in charge of most household chores (unpaid) are also employed. Therefore they are frequently short of time. Thus, 57.8% of all the people who reported being frequently short of time are women, though their participation on the labor market is much lower than men's.

What are the main forms of unpaid work practiced by Moldovans?

The most frequent type of unpaid work involves cooking, baking and canning food, which is mainly performed by women: an average of 1.3 hours a day versus 0.3 hours a day allocated by men.

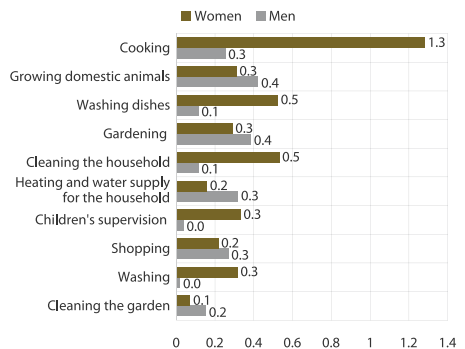
The second type of unpaid work, in terms of its importance, is poultry and livestock breeding, for

which men allocate about 0.4 hours a day, and women - 0.3 hours. Dish washing is another form of unpaid work, which mainly involves women: 0.5 hours a day versus only 0.1 hours a day allocated by men.

Overall, we may notice that women allocate much more time than men to the household activities perceived as "female" (cooking, baking, canning food, dish washing, cleaning up the house, laundry, physical care and supervision of children). At the same time, the time allocated by women for activities perceived as "male" is similar to the one allocated by men.

Thus, the gender gaps found in the activities performed mainly by women are much higher than in the case of those performed mainly by men. For instance, the discrepancies are not that large in case of livestock breeding or gardening as the ones noticed for cooking, dish washing, for which men allocate significantly less time (Figure 4).

Figure 4. **Time allocated for the main forms of unpaid work, by sex, hours a day**



Source: NBS

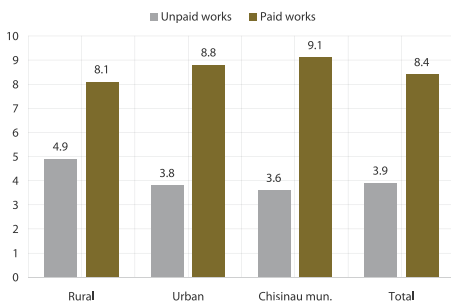
This may be also caused by the labor migration, which is more intense in case of men: in 2012⁹, the share of men accounted for about 66.6% of all Moldovan working or searching for a job abroad. In such cases women must take over the activities that are normally performed by men.

Who allocates more time for unpaid work, the urban or rural population?

The population from villages allocates more time for unpaid work (4.9 hours a day) versus the urban population (3.8 hours a day) and the one from Chisinau municipality (3.6 hours a day).

At the same time, the rural population allocates less time for paid work (8.1 hours a day) versus the population from towns (8.8 hours a day) and the one from Chisinau municipality (9.1 hours a day) (Figure 5). In this respect, Moldova is comparable with Japan and Mexico, where people work 9 and 10 hours a day, respectively¹⁰.

Figure 5. Time allocated for unpaid work by area of residence, hours a day

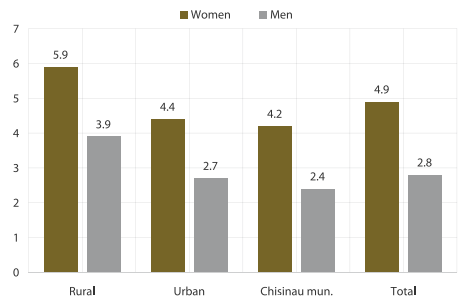


Source: NBS

The differences in the time allocated for unpaid work in the rural and urban areas are explained by the peculiarity of rural life, where people spend a lot of time for household chores (gardening,

poultry and livestock breeding, etc.). At the same time, the limited employment opportunities in the rural area lead to less time allocated for paid work. This is also explained by the much lower income and, respectively, living standards of the rural population, whose work is not appraised and measured at its fair value.

Figure 6. Time allocated for unpaid work by sex, hours a day



Source: NBS

Does the level of income and education influence the time allocated to unpaid work?

The people earning more than MDL 5000 a month allocate only 3.5 a day for unpaid works, as compared with only 4.6 hours a day allocated by people who earn less than MDL 5000 a month. This reveals the inverse relationship between people's level of income and the time dedicated for unpaid work, which is confirmed by the international empirical evidence¹¹.

Moreover, these gaps are more visible in particular in the case of women: earning under MDL 5000 a month allocate 5.4 hours a day for unpaid work, while men from the same category of income allocate only 3.6 hours a day. But, with the increase in income level, the difference becomes insignificant (Figure 7).

⁹ NBS, Labor Force Survey.

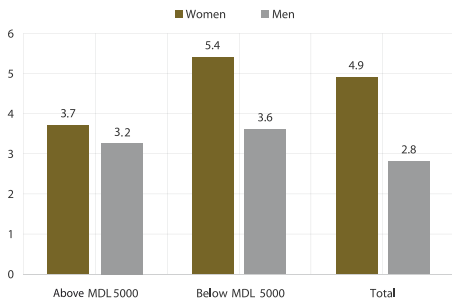
¹⁰ People from Western Europe and Southern Africa allocate the least time for paid work: 7 and, respectively, 7.5 hours a day respectively.

¹¹ V. Miranda, „Cooking, Caring and Volunteering: Unpaid Work Around the World”, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 116, 2011.

This implies the fact that the household chores consume a large share of women's time, which constitutes a barrier for their economic empowerment. But with the more active integration on the labor market and increase in own income, women allocate less time to unpaid work, reaching a similar level as the time allocated by men for such works.

Another explanation could be the fact that with the increase in welfare the endowment with household appliances increases as well, which in turn leads to less time allocated to household chores (e.g. cooking, dish washing, etc.). At the same time, families with higher income can afford employing baby sitters or housekeepers, which perform a large share of the personal time dedicated to unpaid work.

Figure 7. Time allocated by women and men for unpaid work, by monthly income, hours a day



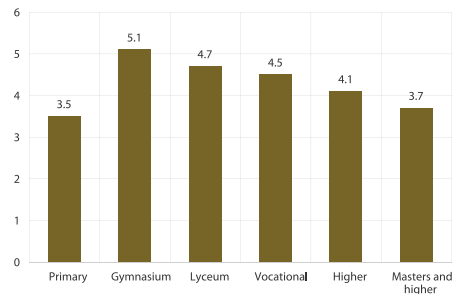
Source: NBS

The inverse relationship between the time dedicated to unpaid work and income level is confirmed by the fact that people with a higher level of education allocate less time for unpaid work¹².

Therefore, with the increase in economic opportunities, determined by the higher level of education, people tend to minimize the time dedicated to unpaid works. Thus, people with post-graduate education allocate on the average only 3.7 hours a day for unpaid works, while people with secondary

education dedicate as much as 5.1 hours a day for these activities¹³ (Figure 8).

Figure 8. The time allocated for unpaid work by the level of education, hours a day



Source: NBS

Conclusions:

- Moldovans allocate more time to unpaid work and less time to paid work, if compared with the Western European countries;
- The largest share of unpaid work is carried out by women, while men are mainly involved in paid work;
- The more time allocated by women for unpaid work than for paid work, as compared with men, reveals the traditional features of the distribution of women's and men's roles in the households. Thus, while men are mainly specialized in income-earning activities, women are in charge of household management;
- This division is more visible in the rural area, where the time dedicated by women for unpaid work is much higher than in towns. Thus, because of the more limited economic opportunities in villages, men are responsible for field works and other activities requiring consistent physical efforts, while women carry out domestic work. Moreover, most migrants are men originating from the rural area,

¹² We admit the assumption about the inverse relationship between the level of education and level of income.

¹³ In the case of people with primary education, the relatively low number of hours a day is explained by the young age of respondents (10-11 years), who dedicate little time for household chores.

and thus the women who remained at home can dedicate more time to household and family;

- Another cause of the more time allocated by the rural population for unpaid works consists in the fact that the families in villages have fewer household appliances and equipment, which facilitate the household chores and allow to save time;
- People with higher incomes allocate less time for unpaid works. At the same time, the gaps between women and men in terms of the time allocated for domestic works are the most significant for the population with higher incomes. In these families, women carry out the biggest share of unpaid work;
- People with a higher level of education allocate less time to unpaid work, which is explained by their wider access to the labor market and other economic opportunities.

Recommendations:

- The volume of unpaid work cannot be neglected in the Republic of Moldova. Hence, to ensure a more comprehensive measurement of the country's economy, it is necessary to find out feasible ways of integrating the unpaid work in the national accounts system. This would be in line with the existing international practices¹⁴, and the Time Use Survey is a fundamental source of information for this purpose;
- The Government, together with the civil society and development partners, should carry out consolidated measures to ensure women's economic empowerment. For that it would be appropriate to implement programs aimed at enhancing women's awareness and training (including for entrepreneurship activities), in particular in the rural area, and increasing people's awareness of gender equality;
- The lack of employment opportunities in the rural area, revealed by the larger share of unpaid work, in tandem with a low share of paid work, as compared with the urban area, underlines again the need to improve the business environment at the local level. For that it is crucial to extend and modernize the basic physical infrastructure (e.g. extend the water supply, sewerage and gas supply networks, rehabilitate the local roads, etc.). At the same time, the Government should encourage the activity of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, which is the main sustainable solution for job creation and poverty eradication in villages;
- The situation of mothers, in particular of those who raise children by themselves, should not be neglected. Thus, it is necessary to organize a wide national campaign on the reconciliation of family with professional life, aimed at encouraging the involvement of men in bringing up and educating children, gender partnerships in the family, sharing the household chores by men and women, provision of some employer-parent stimuli (e.g. increase and streamline the allowances for parents with young children, encourage men to take child care leaves, etc.).



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¹⁴ A Critical Review of Selected Time Use Surveys, Debbie Budlender, UNRISD, June 2007.