

Domestic workers are often unprotected by legislation on minimum wages and working time and also have limited access to social protection, largely because almost one third of the world's domestic workers fall outside national regulations (ILO, 2014c). Almost half of all domestic workers are of childbearing age and are likely to experience pregnancy or have young children while they are employed. Maternity, however, is a principal source of discrimination for domestic workers (Addati and Cheong, 2013). Globally, almost 40 per cent of domestic workers do not have the right to paid maternity leave and often have no access to quality and affordable maternal and child health care. The long hours of work required of domestic workers also make it difficult for them to reconcile the conflicting demands of work and family life. Without access to affordable childcare services, domestic workers prioritize the care needs of their employers' dependents over their own (ibid.).

A number of reasons have been identified for the low remuneration and poor working conditions of domestic workers. First, similar to other workers in care professions, their work is undervalued because of the cultural perceptions of unpaid household and care work that have been outlined above. As a consequence, domestic workers are not considered "real" workers, with the same terms and conditions as other workers. Other factors include low formal skills and educational levels, high incidence of informality, lack of collective representation, weak individual bargaining power and vulnerable social status. For instance, a study showed that in the majority of the countries analysed, domestic workers were either illiterate (India, Mali) or had only primary education (Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey and Viet Nam). At the same time, in Brazil, Peru, Philippines and South Africa, a significant proportion of domestic workers had secondary education (Oelz and Rani, 2015).

Early childhood care and education personnel

The early childhood care and education profession is largely female-dominated, with approximately 94 per cent of those exercising the profession being women. In some countries, only 2 to 3 per cent of all early childhood educators are men (Shaeffer, 2015). A study of 11 countries shows that the profession is more female-dominated in the private than public sector (ILO, 2012d).⁵³ As discussed in the case of domestic work, women are also overrepresented in early childhood care and education professions because of cultural beliefs about the nature of the work as an extension of the maternal role (Urban, 2009; Van Laere et al., 2014). This stereotype also creates a barrier to men's access to this area of employment, with a clear and considerable bias against men in early childhood care and education profession, who are perceived to be unfit for "mothering jobs" (Shaeffer, 2015). These social norms also result in an undervaluation of early childhood care and education as a profession, which is reflected in the wages and the nature of both career and professional development in this area. Since mothers and women are perceived as "naturally" equipped to perform these functions, the profession is often assumed to require little training or skills (ILO, 2012d).

Early childhood educators are the key determinants of quality early childhood care and education services but tend to be unqualified and untrained and receive lower salaries than their counterparts at the primary or higher education levels. Consequently, current remuneration levels do not reflect the importance of early childhood care and education work (ILO, 2014h). In middle and high-income countries, the salaries of public early childhood educators are usually lower than those of public primary educators. For instance, in Denmark, Kazakhstan and Norway, the salaries of public early childhood educators are routinely lower than those of primary educators. By contrast, in the Dominican Republic and New Zealand, the salaries of early childhood educators match those of primary educators (ILO, 2012d).⁵⁴

In the private sector, the remuneration of early childhood educators depends on the country and the areas within the country. For instance, in Brazil, whereas salaries are lower in private schools in poorer areas and educators in community schools earn the national minimum salary, salaries in wealthier urban areas may be 6–12 times the minimum salary (ibid.). As the skills requirements for entry into the profession rise, however, their wages have increased as well; thus, in Australia, New Zealand, Portugal and the United Kingdom, the salaries for early childhood educators are comparable to those of primary school teachers. This is more likely the case for educators working closely with the government systems and employed on stable contracts or even with civil service status. By contrast, this may not be the case for educators working in rural and remote areas (Shaeffer, 2015).

53. Findings on the percentage of women working as private early childhood educators are based on data from Belgium, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Montenegro, New Zealand, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Slovakia and Sri Lanka. Data were gathered from an unpublished ILO survey of early childhood education in 2011.

54. This is based on an unpublished ILO report (2011c).