

## 6. Promoting decent work for care professionals, including domestic and migrant workers

The shortage of care professionals poses a challenge and, at the same time, offers crucial employment opportunities to both women and men. To accommodate the decent work deficits in the care professions, including for domestic and migrant workers who provide care services, the profession needs to be re-evaluated in terms of the type of work that this demanding occupation entails. Where there are gaps in labour and social protection, these must be remedied to ensure decent work for workers providing care services in institutions or in private homes. The overall level of public valuing and recognition for care work should also be improved. These measures should be matched with adequate skills training and recognition to ensure that quality care services are provided to households willing to pay for them. The resulting better working conditions, including wages and better employment relations, would encourage younger workers to enter into this profession. Similarly, changing the perception of care work is crucial in encouraging more men to work in this sector, as is necessary to fill the gap in the supply of care workers in both youthful and ageing societies. In the case of domestic and migrant workers, the provisions of ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) and Recommendation (No. 201), 2011, together with the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), should underpin laws, policies and practices to achieve non-discrimination, decent work and professionalization in this profession.

In the context of LTC, some countries have established programmes that focus on recruitment from underrepresented or inactive populations. Such programmes can provide income and meaningful work for persons with low prospects of finding jobs, and making the pool of LTC workers more heterogeneous. These programmes should, however, provide adequate training and support to potential carers to ensure that they are equipped with the skills necessary to deliver LTC. Higher diversity among care workers is likely to increase acceptance of formal care, including in cultures where there is stronger resistance to professional (as opposed to family) care. Sufficient numbers of skilled formal LTC workers with decent working conditions are required to ensure the accessibility of LTC services, increase retention and reduce the burden of informal care.

In addition, in view of the crucial role that migrant workers play in responding to care deficits in high and middle-income countries, steps should also be taken to combat the phenomena of the brain drain and brain waste of skilled women migrants. Governments should be encouraged to set up more skills recognition programmes to ensure that qualified women migrants can continue to work in their professions without experiencing the downgrading of skills and jobs.

The ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel (2014) provide guidance for early childhood care and education stakeholders on how to improve quality through decent work. For early childhood educators, improvement of their status, training, remuneration and working conditions would mean that the importance of their work was recognized and would enhance the service quality. This can be accomplished through compensating overtime, evening and weekend shifts and providing incentives to recruit educators to work in rural and remote areas (ILO, 2014b). In addition, providing on-the-job training may improve career progressions in the field of early childhood education. Some countries have started investing in their early childhood educators by improving working conditions and providing in-service training. For instance, the Republic of Moldova doubled early childhood care and education teachers' salaries between 2002 and 2008, while China and Singapore offer special incentives. New Zealand and Portugal reported pay parity for teachers at all levels (ILO, 2012d). In Bhutan, 50 per cent of educators receive annual training, while in Cambodia, educators are trained for five days a year. In Viet Nam, educators undergo training during school breaks and weekends, and in Nauru, early childhood educators participate in distance learning courses from Australia (Shaeffer, 2015).

One way to promote decent work for care professionals is to adopt job evaluation methods that are free of gender bias, which would ensure that the care work is not seen as a purely feminine skill and that the job characteristics of care work are adequately valued. Analytical job evaluation methods break jobs down into multiple factors and sub-factors, such as skills and qualifications, responsibility (for equipment, money and people), effort (physical, mental and psychosocial), and working conditions. Points are attributed to these factors, which allow for the comparison of the value of two different jobs (Oelz et al., 2013).