

Hanken School of Economics | EP1. From the economy of work to the care economy

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Sustainability Unwrapped, a conversational podcast about responsibility, ethics, inequalities, climate change, and other challenges of our times where science meets practise to think about a world and how to make our society more sustainable one podcast at a time.

Warm welcome to today's podcast episode of the *Sustainability Unwrapped* podcast series brought to you by Hanken School of Economics in Finland. I'm Charlotta Niemisto, director of the GODESS Institute at Hanken School of Economics. And today, our topic is from the economy of work to the care economy.

We will today discuss the division of paid and unpaid work and the effects of that. We focus on care as a gendered and aged phenomenon and how these relate to very core questions of social sustainability, namely ask questions around production and reproduction.

When we talk about paid and unpaid work, we also talk about the division of labour between men and women in the society and in organisations. Unpaid work is often referred to as care work outside of employment, meaning caring for children and other kin, but also meaning other kinds of household work that is often invisible and not acknowledged as a vital part of the society.

These questions, as questions around care more generally, are very gendered in our societies, and the social relations of care, home, and work constitute very fundamental aspects of gender relations in society. This is the case even in the often seemingly egalitarian context of the Nordic countries.

The Nordic system, with their own variations, relies on a relatively wide range of state-level policies for reconciling work with care, with, for example, relatively generous family lives and public daycare for children, enabling and expecting both women and men to take part in paid employment.

Despite this, strong assumptions remain embedded in the gender discourses of production and reproduction in these as well and in other post-industrial societies. Also globally, many economic, social, and political discriminations and inequalities are founded upon inequalities around gender, care, and work.

But now I'm delighted to welcome our podcast guests, Nikki van der Gaag, Anna Moring, and Jeff Hearn to discuss these topics. Nikki van der Gaag is an independent gender consultant and senior fellow at the Institute of Promundo, a world-leading organisation working on men and boys in the context of gender inequality. Until January 2019, she was director of Gender Justice and Women's Right, Oxfam, Great Britain.

She specialises in men and boys and gender equality, particularly on parenthood and work with adolescent girls and boys. Her books and reports include *Feminism and Men*, *the No-Nonsense Guide to Feminism*, six State of the World's Girl reports, and she has co-authored three State of the World's Fathers reports.

Anna Moring works as a leading specialist at the Network of Family Diversity. Her job is to gather information and ideas to develop the Finnish society towards more inclusive practises for all kinds of families. Jeff Hearn has worked long term on gender, age, and care in relation to work, organisations, and management, most recently, the new book *Age at Work* with Wendy Barking, Richard Housin, and myself. He is Professor Emeritus and research director at GODESS Institute, Hanken School of Economics, as well as a professor in Sweden and the UK where he's originally from.

Now I would like to start by asking you, Nikki, why should women and men need to share unpaid care work equally?

Thank you, [INAUDIBLE]. That's a really important question, and I think there are a number of answers to that. I think the first one is that because all over the world, the imbalance between women and men in terms of who does the caring is a key factor in holding back gender equality.

Second point is because women do at least three and sometimes up to 10 times more unpaid care and domestic work in the home than men do. And thirdly, because there's no country in the world where this is shared most equal. And the reasons why care is not valued and why men don't do it are rooted in patriarchy and patriarchal systems that go back for hundreds of years. They're interconnected and interlinked.

Because we value care less than paid work, it falls mainly to women to do it. And when it's paid work, it's paid badly despite the fact that without it our societies wouldn't function. And change is glacially slow. The global increase in men's time spent on unpaid care between 1998 and 2012 is 13 minutes, 13 minutes a day. And at the current rate of change, it means we will take 92 years to reach equality in unpaid care, and therefore, equality more generally. So I think it's absolutely clear that this is a key issue.

And feminist economists have long called for change, perhaps notably through the UK feminist economist Professor Diane Ellson who invented the three R's framework, which calls for care to be recognised and valued. That's the first reduced both through state provision of services, such as childcare, and through time- and labour-saving devices, and redistributed between men and women as well as from individuals to the state. A fourth R, representation, was added later to ensure that the voices of women were heard in these debates.

The blunt fact is, Lotta, that we don't care enough about care or value it. And though it's reductive perhaps to put a price on it, the monetary value of women's unpaid care work according to an Oxfam report last year was \$10.8 trillion, three times the value of the world's tech industry.

Thanks, Nikki. Could you give some examples or ways of working with men and boys on care?

Yes, there are lots, and most of it's been on individual and group level. It's clear that if we want to change things, we need to go beyond the individual and the group, and we also need to think about the kinds of families that we're working with. So most families are not nuclear.

We need to look at what Shahra Razavi calls the care diamond. So families, individuals, communities, but also the state and its institutions, and the private not for profit sectors. And we also need to start young to work with boys and girls. Because we know that having a father or other male caregiver who participated in daily care in the home when he was a child is a really important factor for boys doing it when they grow up.

So just three short examples of the many that there are. Promundo has something called Programme P, Papa, or Papai, which is parent training intervention. And it's been used in more than 15 countries in the past 10 years. And for example in Rwanda, it's called Bandedereho, role model in Kenya Rwanda. And it's on the path to be implemented on a national scale led by the Ministry of Health. So it's being integrated into the systems.

Second example I'd like to give you is the Men Care campaign, which has partners in 50 countries, which supports and encourages men and boys to care through campaigns, programmes, and policy change, such as parental leave, and produces the State of World's Fathers reports. And then finally, Oxfam's We Care Programme in several countries marries research programmes and policy solutions in order to make care work more visible, and address it is a factor influencing gender equality. So those are just three. But there are many more. And I'm sure we can discuss them later on in the discussion.

Thank you, Nikki. I would have one more question to you. Do you think, can the challenges of COVID bring about any positive change?

I hope so. There's a wonderful quote by Indian writer Arundhati Roy last year, which says, "Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one's no different. It's a portal, a gateway between one world and the next." And on good days, I feel that's right. Cares become everybody's business. And this gives us an opportunity. And care is not just for ourselves and our families, but also for our communities, our societies, and our planet.

But on a bad day, it's very clear that the effects of COVID for women's rights and gender equality are not looking good. So there's more women juggling paid and unpaid work, more women dropping out of the labour force, an increase in violence in the home, fewer women leadership positions. The list goes on. And again, we can talk about it later.

But I'm trying to think about what we can do to make that change happen. There have been a number of initiatives thinking about this. I mean, we've seen new movements and connections across the world on a whole range of different issues, like Black Lives Matter, like climate change, which gives us an opportunity to reframe and imagine the world anew.

And specifically, many organisations are calling for a care economy, and trying to work out what that would mean. So it's putting people before profit, valuing care for ourselves and our families, and I'm thinking about the planet as well. So in the UK, the Women's Budget Group has published a detailed report, which includes not only gender equality and unpaid care, but well-being, sustainability, and it covers everything actually, from trade, to tax, to subsidised childcare, paid leave, social and physical infrastructure, and the environment.

So we have these blueprints. And we can build on those, I think. And we also know that more men have been at home because of lockdown, and giving hands on care to their kids. And so they've seen it firsthand what this involves. And hopefully, that means that they can go on doing that if we have the support structures and support to allow them to do it.

And then last but not least, I think one of the many opportunities for the global north to learn from the global south. When it comes to care and survival, women in the global south long led the way. For example, lessons from how communities supported each other during Ebola and HIV/AIDS crisis have been very much in evidence during the pandemic.

So there are models. There are ways which we can learn. And it's really important that we don't let women's rights and gender equality go backwards now.

You're absolutely right, Nikki. There's a lot of excellent, excellent stuff that you talk about. How about the other guests? Would you like to comment on what Nikki just said? How about you, Jeff?

Yeah, thanks, Nikki. I mean, that was really fascinating. And you raised some really big issues, global issues, that affect the whole world. A couple of things just occurred to me straight off. I mean, one is, how the pandemic I think, has had very contradictory effects. You know, I think there's some evidence that there's a group of men focusing on that for a moment, probably minority, who actually are more involved in care, in housework, and childcare, and so on.

But of course, also, I think there's a lot of evidence that the other-- because at the other end of the continuum, that there are some situations that got far worse, I mean, and issues around violence, I think the most graphic of that. So you have this sort of polarisation possibly, perhaps overstating the word. But that's one aspect.

The other thing I think you mentioned about different levels of different sort of forums, or arenas. I think this is a really key question. Well, one can approach these questions both in a very individual way with groups of individuals, so-called workmates as they're called, colleagues at work, and then in whole organisations, and then nationally, and beyond.

So I think it's like trying to make this discussion like more normal, basically, not some weird exceptional situation, but something that is quite ordinary to talk about, say, with colleagues, or with bosses, and so on and so forth. Those are two things that occur to me, but there are many more things. Maybe I'll pass it back to Lotta, or Anna.

Anna, would you like to say something here?

I think that Nikki has a really interesting point though, when she talks about different ways of trying to get men and boys to engage more in care. Because what I see, we have a family leave reform going on in Finland at the moment. And the big structural reform that it brings with it is that all the family leave days are divided equally between the two parents, like men and women, fathers and mothers, both get equal shares.

But what we see in the public discussion is a huge male resistance to world care in this sense. These men are rising to the barricades saying, hey, hey, this isn't fair. Families need their freedom of choice. And this freedom of choice discourse, which is of course, from a sort of neoliberal perspective, it's very difficult to resist, is also something that mothers, women are standing up for. They're like, hey, we want to choose. We don't want to be forced to sort of let the men in on our parental leaves.

And this is something that I think is in a key position, because when we see that when parents start out parenting equally with small children, they will continue during when the children grow up, and the care will be divided more equally. But how can we deal with this resistance is one question that I have.

Lotta, could I come back briefly on that? Because I think both of those are really interesting points from Jeff and Anna. I think the Finnish example is a really fascinating one, because what you're describing is a kind of individuals resisting change. And yet, what we know is it's not just about individual choices.

So I've been really interested to watch younger people here in the UK who are parents struggling with how they balance looking after their children. And very often, for example, this is just to give one example, very often, it's the man still who's earning more money. And therefore, it's the woman who stays at home. Not just because that's the way you know, we have the kind of tradition of women staying at home and men going out to work, in many countries for many, many years.

But if the man's earning more then financially, they can't afford for him to stay at home. And in the UK, there's been real problems with the way that parental leave has been introduced because of exactly that problem. So some of these things are very much a structural policy level, rather than at an individual level. And I think that's something that we really need to think about and to address.

So how does change happen is a very big question, but change doesn't just happen through individuals changing their mind. It happens through changing social norms. It happens through changing policies. It happens on a whole range of different things. And we need to identify those.

And we've done that a bit in State of the World's Fathers, you're absolutely right. We've seen from research that men who are there at the birth, and they're with their children when they're young, continue to have good relationships on the whole with them as they grow older. And then to Jeff's point, yes, I mean, I think the general norm is not around men sharing equally. And I always resist that word helping, because you hear, well, men are going to help in the house. It's not about helping. It's about sharing equally.

So again, you know, how do we make this something that's part of the mainstream. And I think there is an opportunity with COVID to do that. But we do need to seize it now, and not wait until it's too late, and we're back to normal again.

Thank you all. And actually, I'd like to link back to what Nikki just replied to Anna about the debates in the UK. I think we can recognise them also in Finland, and also dividing that debate even a bit more. When we think about stipulations around reconciling work and family, and this is my question to Anna, how would you describe their families, and their situations can sort of say, fall between chairs when they don't fit the norm in the society, and whatever the norm then might be. How do you comment this?

Yeah, I think that what Nikki said right at the start, structures of care are deeply gendered. It applies also to diverse families, in all sorts of families, their structure is highly gendered. But what we see when the family diverges from the norm of the nuclear family with two parents who have biological children born at different times, and nobody has died, or separated, or otherwise sort of broken from the nuclear, what we see in these diverse families is that there are many gendered structures of care that don't become visible in the public discussion.

Say, for example, the care that's done by non-resident fathers, or by single mothers, or by grandparents to their grandchildren. And there also, gendered structures are present. And I think that in these situations, it's often the case that we try and apply some system.

Say, for example, in this family leaves reform, we try and apply some system on the diversity that is actually not taking all this different situations into account. And then we end up in a mess where families feel that they aren't recognised. And when we actually end up putting up obstacles for caring, for dividing care more diverse, or more equally even.

And specifically, because I think we have a humongous amount of care potential in non-resident fathers. We have very many fathers that could be an enormous resource in the life of their children, and in the life of the mothers of their children. And this resource we are under using at the moment.

And there are several different reasons for that. Some of them are legal. Some of them are normative. Some of them are social. And some of them are just emotional, or affectionate, or whatever. Many fathers experience conflict, and then sort of diverge from their parenthood.

But what my question here perhaps is, how could we remove these obstacles in ways that would be sensitive toward these different sorts of arrangements and the different reasons, the difference in these obstacles. There is no one good solution, but we see a lot of different ways that we actually could tackle these issues.

So the problem is that they might be contrary to each other. And there might be contrasting interests as we see in, for example, when we try to think about how to divide say, money between parents. If we give money in relations of care, we might end up in a situation where the mothers become even more financially or economically troubled.

If we don't divide the money with the care, then we won't have an incentive for the fathers to step in, or at least not a financial incentive. And here, I think these kinds of structures are interesting in terms of specifically gendered care.

Can you see any sort of-- what are the most acute need of for example, policies or other developments to more fully embrace this?

Well, I think in Finland at the moment, we have two processes that are in key position in this sense. The first is, of course, this family leaves reform, which is going to divide care more equally. But also give a possibility, hopefully, if it is amended in the way that I and my organisation hope that it's amended. It will give also a possibility to share care with parents in different family situations.

For example, a non-resident father could have the right to take out family leave. Or a social mother, or a mother who is not the juridical parent of her child, but the partner of the birth mother. Or also, if you have a LGBT kind of family, a family with a lesbian couple and a gay couple, then all four parents could use family leave. So we would have very many different situations where a family leaves could be used.

This is one key thing. And specifically, I think in this reform, the fact that it strengthens the position of the non-resident father is also in situations where they are living apart from the child from the very beginning. But the other key reform is the one on joint physical custody. We have a governmental Programme that says that they will work to take out obstacles from the way of joint physical custody.

And in these reforms, for example, the possibility to give some extra allowances to non-resident fathers, for example, so that they would be able to afford a bigger apartment is one of the key questions. So it's as much about structures, it's some about also like real money, just to give out more euros to non-resident fathers, so that they can have enough space for their children. But also, it's about attitudes. And I think both of these reforms give out a very good signal about attitudes, and about the will to take into account different families, and different family forms.

Thank you, Anna. Would you like to comment, Nikki?

Yes, thank you, Anna. That was really interesting. And yeah, lots of things I could say. I'm just going to say three, really. One is, clearly, diversity is so important. And we in the global north often assume the nuclear family is the norm. It's absolutely not, even here. And certainly not in other countries where the extended family is absolutely the norm.

The forthcoming State of the World's Father has done has looked in a little bit into single sex parenting, and saying how disadvantaged many single, you know-- sorry, not single sex, I mean, parents from who are from the same gender. And they are very disadvantaged. And I think we need more research on that.

We also need to look at other kinds of diversity. So also, Promundo did some research on COVID-19. And if you go back to unpaid care, found that although 57% of white respondents said their daily domestic care workers increased during COVID, among Black and African-American respondents, it was 71%. Among Hispanic and Latino, Latina, 74, and 79 among Asians. So we need to look at that kind of diversity as well. It's really important.

And I think finally, there's been quite a lot of research in South Africa on non-resident fathers, because the percentages are so high. And again, I think there are things that we can learn from countries like South Africa about how they deal with this, and what they would recommend. I haven't got time to go into detail, but thank you. That was so interesting.

How about you, Jeff? Do you have comments? Or shall we move on to your questions?

I'll try and be brief. I think the thing that struck me when Anna was talking was the relation between this sort of big structural picture, whether it's national, or whether it's international, or whether it's even an organisation. And then this sort of hands on situations that you graphically described, which are very complicated sometimes. There's not like an easy sort of role that solves every situation, and that was one thing.

The other thing that got me thinking was that Nikki was talking right at the beginning about patriarchy, or patriarchy, which is a big framework if you like, the big system. And then Anna was talking about some of these very hands on, very quite complicated situations. And that to me, suggests really a huge transformation from the idea of fatherhood based in power, or possession, or ownership, to something really very different from a biological father to social fatherhood. And fatherhood doing, if you like, or practises, that are based in care.

OK. Thank you. The questions of care and work, social sustainability, also relate very much to age. So I would like us to discuss more about age too. So Jeff, how do you think we should take into account the shifting responsibilities in relation to age, or ageing, if you like.

Yeah, thanks a lot for that question. When we talk about care and care responsibilities, I think it's very common that two things happen. One is, that there's an assumption that it be men and also girls who will take care of most care, as has been talked about. But also, I think there tends to be a focus on parenting and care of young children, whether it's at home or in daycare. And I mean, both these two issues as we've discussed, are absolutely central, and key issues.

But I think the care economy, if you want to use that term, is an even wider question than that. The sense that can responsibilities continue, and they also change, and often, even get more complex or complicated as people age. So they obviously include care of young children, and also, older children. I would actually say adult children as well in many cases. And they also involve care of older people, and of parents, of people with disabilities, as well as spouses, and partners, and friends, and neighbours, I think as well.

So I think the whole issue about should we say care leave, isn't just only about childcare. It's about many, many aspects. And I think this has become really key with many countries, not all, the ageing population. This has become more obvious. At least, it's not new at all.

So for example, if we just think about this a bit historically, from about 1950, there's been in Europe at least, there's been an increase in life expectancy of about 12, 13 years, which is a lot. I mean, it's a transformation again. And what this means, there's a much longer period of what you might call oldness, of being old. And that itself is a complicated thing.

I mean, it involves both being old, or older. But also being very active. But also can mean being old or old, and also being more dependent. So this is a bit of a different situation to say, 50 years ago. And also, there are really big increases before [INAUDIBLE] even more relatively in the older old, say, 80 plus or 85, even 90 plus, and that will probably increase in many countries.

And I think the point is, that when we start putting together, if you like, [AUDIO OUT] age, gender, as we've discussed, there are many connections. I mean, there's a lot of talk about the gender wage gap. That's pretty standard discussion on sort of headline news still. Though, It doesn't change very fast. In addition to this question about ageing and increasing numbers of older old, it's important also to think about how gender and age work together, or combined together in many different ways.

This really affects care and care responsibilities. I mean, there's a lot of talk. And it's even sometimes headline news in newspapers around the gender pay gap. But actually, in many countries, the gender pension gap, or the if you like, the gap in income and wealth after retirement in older age, is actually much bigger. In Finland, it's about 20%, the gender pension gap, which is close to twice the gender pay gap.

And this really affects people's self care. It affects the care for others. It also affects the care needed by others. And of course, this is partly, or very largely result of the loss of a lack of value of unpaid care, and domestic care in earlier parts of women's lives, and working lives.

Well, how is the relation between age and care visible, or indeed, invisible in organisational life, Jeff?

Yes, well, I would say the relation of age and care, and also gender, is both very visible, but also invisible at the same time within organisational life. I mean, care is partly about the shifting care responsibilities of people as people age. And this affects people's time, resources, energy for work in say, the employing workplace. And this is also gendered as well.

So I mean, just to give one example, in the EU, the Nordic countries have the greatest flexibility for taking say, one or two hours off from work. But also have the largest gender gap in taking up that flexibility. And taking off that time is more often, thought about in terms of say care for a child who was ill, so-called [INAUDIBLE] in Swedish. And that might be much more legitimate in many workplaces than for many of the demands arising from age, such as care for parents, or care for friends, or care for spouses, and so on. So that's one sort of angle.

Another sort of basic thing, which I think has to be put really essentially is the organisation of care of older people, whether it's actually an organisation, so-called institutions, or whether it's a home, or whether it's some combination of both in institutions and at home. And of course, this also involves a gender undervaluing of that work, that care work of those care workers, professional care workers.

And then thirdly, there's a really huge question around care and age actually within organisations and workplaces. And I can't overstate the importance of this. I mean, we're living in an era where there's a lot of should we say, policy statements around things like dignity at work, and respect at work. But that can also even be accompanied by reductions in people's security. And that can often be affected or related to age, both for younger workers and for older workers.

So I mean, there are great dangers that organisational life as we called it, itself, can easily become uncaring. And issues around neoliberal tendencies and so-called financialization can often mean tighter controls and surveillance of workers and employees, which can go along with more authoritarian, even simply uncaring management or supervision. And that is very often-- I mean, not always, clearly, but under the control of certain men in management. I'd like to say men of middle years or older years.

So this raises again, the question of how men behave in organisations, and how to avoid what I mean, some of us have called double ageism in organisations. That means ageism both to younger employees, and ageism to older employees. And trying to change in a sense, the ways in which organisations workplaces again, function in towards a more caring way of actually being and doing organisational life.

Thank you. Thank you, Jeff. How about you others? Would you like to comment on this? How about Nikki?

Sure. Thank you, Jeff. Gosh, you really covered a very wide range of issues there. And all of them absolutely key. So I think I've got three or four points to make. The first one is on the point about the age divide. I mean, in some countries, the ageing population is growing hugely.

And in other countries, particularly in Africa, there's a huge youth bulge. There is far more young people. So we've got real huge global divides in terms of this. But yeah, in many countries, a really very large ageing population.

My second point is about the mental-- what is often called the mental load, so the planning, the taking responsibility for things. And you're absolutely right. It's not just childcare, and doing the cooking, and the shopping, and the washing, and maybe fetching fuel and water. It's also looking after elderly people, people who've got disabilities.

And Oxfam's research has shown that if you count in all those different things, and taking the responsibility for it, really increases the time that particularly women have to spend on this. It's not just the doing them. It's the planning them.

Third quick point around the pension gap, I think that shows so clearly the implications of what's known as the motherhood penalty. So up to the point that young people have children, often, they're able to be more equal perhaps than their parents or grandparents. But once they have children, actually, we see the fact that pension contributions go down, that women earn less, that women leave the workforce. So the motherhood penalty there is really important.

And finally, flexible working. So I've been part with Promundo of something called a corporate task force on parental leave, which has done a study of parental leave and flexible working during the pandemic. And shows how many companies are trying to adapt now, because more people are working from home. That's another whole topic. But I think that issue of how organisations adapt to the caring needs of both the men and the women in their organisations is really important.

Thank you, Nikki. How about Anna?

I would like to continue from where Nikki left this sort of possibilities of organisations facilitating their employees possibilities to take care. In Finland, we have now implemented this EU legislation, or we are in the process of doing so. And in that process, we get this five days leave that you can take to take care of a close person. It's called [SPEAKING IN FINNISH] in Finnish.

And this is something that is of course, welcome for many families. So if your parent, for example falls ill, and you need to take care of them, then you can get five days off. But what I'm wondering is that these structures are often unpaid. And they are also something that women, as Jeff said, are very much more likely to take advantage of. Which again, results in more pay gap, but also, more of these invisible structures where women are seen as less of a reliable work force.

You can't ever really tell either their kids are sick, or their parents are sick, or their niece is sick, or someone is sick, and they have to take care of them, or there's some other thing why they need to cut their hours or whatever. And this is something that I'm quite critical of. But also, I don't have a solution on how to resolve it in a way that would further equality.

Another thing that when Jeff talked about the gendered pension gap. A group that I would like to mention here is that of the single mothers, the ones who have been taking all of the responsibility for their children by themselves. They not only have the problem of this family leaves and the gap in pension that that creates, but also, the possibilities of advancing in your career might be compromised. Or you might have long periods of unemployment if you have problems combining work and family.

And that will of course, then further increase the gendered pension gap for these parents. And these kinds of structures would be so important to find ways to tackle how would you build a pension system that would take into account, for example, a single parent situation. Could you get a single parent raise to your pension, or something like this. It's really important to find policies that would address these specific issues.

You're absolutely right, Anna. I think these questions are so central when you think about social sustainability, and production, and reproduction. And I think the sort of key challenge is to find ways to measure production and reproduction in a more complete ways. Don't you agree? OK. Nikki, what do you think would be for you the key one or two takeaways from the discussions today?

It's been such a rich discussion. It's hard to pick out a couple of things. I think for me, there's definitely a thread running through this about valuing care. That actually, if we did value care in the same-- and I'm not just talking monetary value. I'm talking heart valuing-- in the same way that we valued paid work, then I think so many things would change, so many of the things that Jeff and Anna have raised are about the fact that we don't value care as much as other things. So the valuing care thing seems to me to be really key to all of our discussions.

And then the second point, really around back to the point about, can COVID give us an opportunity to change things? Very often, it's care systems were inadequate beforehand. So is there an opportunity to really look at this with a very sharp focus, and improve them? And I think it was the WHO Director General said last year some time that we can't go back to the way things were.

And there was an interesting interview with the outgoing CEO of the African Women's Development Forum who said, when people build back-- there was a lot of talk about build back better. And she says, when people say build back better, I hope we're going to say build better. Because back wasn't very good for most of us. And I think that's about taking a global perspective and looking at the inadequacies of many care systems, perhaps not so much in Scandinavia, but certainly in the rest of the world, and building better, being the slogan that we need to follow through.

Thank you so much, Nikki. How about you, Anna? What were your key takeaways?

Yeah, I think Nikki really nailed it there when she said value care. And I would add value care in all the forms that it takes. See care where you haven't seen it previously. And also notice what the obstacles are for making care possible for everyone that has a desire to do it.

But also, how to sort of how to teach people to care in a way that is also gender sensitive, and also takes into account all the different obstacles and norms that for example, men, that it's not masculine to care, or that you're not a real man if you care.

My grandmother lived in an elderly care home. And I overheard a discussion with her and a couple of other residents. One of them said, yeah, I have daughters. I'm lucky. This one, she has sons, and they never visit. And this is something that I would like to see broken. I would like to see a society in the future where it wouldn't make a difference if you have sons or daughters, that they would all take the risk of caring, bear the burden of caring, but also gets all the benefits, and all the love, and all the wonderful things that come with a good care relationship to near and dear ones.

Thank you, Anna, really good. How about you, Jeff? What's your takeaway, or key takeaways?

There are so many out there, so many issues. I think one thing I want to mention is about the question of the diversity of how people live. I mean, we actually haven't talked much about people living alone, but I think this is an increasingly important question how that relates to both doing caring for others, and being cared for.

And also, in a very different sense, I think one thing again, we haven't-- perhaps it's not takeaways-- we haven't discussed much, is about racialization of paid care in many countries. This is a really big issue in terms of people have migrated, Black and minority ethnic people actually doing a lot of the employed care work.

And then there's two other small, or quick rather, but big things, one is about how policies are very, very important. But there's also often what happens in the workplace-- now focusing on that-- is affected a lot by your immediate boss, basically, you know, your immediate superior. Because they can actually either encourage or discourage people taking more time for childcare, or care for other people.

And finally, I mean, this is a bit of a cliché, and this is also building on what Anna said and Nikki, you know, care is also work, basically. I mean, not totally. It involves the heart, or feeling. But also, it is work as well. And I think that's an important thing for me, hence the term, care work.

I totally agree. My two takeaways would be, I'm echoing Jeff here thinking actually about how we value. If we think about again, production, reproduction, what we value, how we measure what we value. So those are sort of I think, the steps for any society to think about very hard, and let it show also in policies and elsewhere.

And the other one I think a very important point that Nikki, you said it in a sentence, that we should learn from each other. And I think we're maybe a bit arrogant here in the global north not actually seeing how much we have to learn from other societies, and also, this question of value. So it directly relates to the question of I mean, even how you measure a family.

So it's sort of we discuss here how families is measured in legislation, and so on, but still thinking about other societies where it's self-evident that extended family, for example, is the family you talk about. So maybe these would be for my part, and I would love to continue discussing this.

But I think we have to round up just about here. But let's continue the interesting and important discussions. And many thanks for joining us today. So thank you, Nikki. Thank you, Anna. Thank you, Jeff.

Thank you, Lotta and the others for a great discussion.

Thank you. Thank you, Nikki, Jeff, and Lotta. This was a wonderful discussion. And I hope it continues.

[MUSIC PLAYING]