

Building capacity and creating knowledge on international issues of population ageing



The global importance of family carers in sustaining the care ecosystem

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EMPOWERING FUTURES: Shaping a Dignified Long-Term Care Ecosystem for Healthy Ageing and Well-being of Carers and Older Persons in the Middle East and North Africa
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The place of families in the care ecosystem

✦ *Despite decades of research documenting the importance of family care, moving care from a private, family responsibility to a societal issue deserving of public action continues to be immensely challenging.*

✦ Fast, J., Duncan, K., Keating, N., Kim, C. (2023). Valuing the Contributions of Family Caregivers to the Care Economy. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-023-09899-8>



UN agencies have urged governments to act

Across UN agencies, two main themes are apparent.

- ✚ **1. Care involves both public and family responsibility for those who are dependent.** Directives to governments are to avoid family responsibility as the default position.
 - ✚ *UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030)*. Governments should develop long-term care systems to support older persons, thus relieving families from full responsibility for care
 - ✚ *UN International Year of the Family (IYF+30) (2024)*. Creating a public/family balance in responsibility for care, requires formal systems of child-care and long-term care to support family carers to both groups



UN agencies have urged governments to act

- ❖ **2. Carers are marginalised and their work undervalued.** Directives to governments are to recognize care work as valuable.
 - ❖ *International Labour Organization.* Need to create ‘decent work’ for both paid and unpaid carers. Unpaid carers remain invisible; their work conflated with all domestic labour; and their economic opportunities diminished. Paid care workers fare poorly with low status and pay, poor working conditions and lack of social protection.
 - ❖ UN DESA. Unpaid care work remains invisible because it is poorly measured, thus obscuring the true scale of caregiving and limiting proactive actions enabling support to unpaid caregivers, often women.
 - ❖ *UN Women.* Injustice for women whose unpaid care supports economies and fills in for the lack of social services and whose reward is a lifetime of truncated economic wellbeing.



Families and the social care ecosystem

- ❁ Social Care Economy. That sector of the broader economy comprising paid and unpaid work to those needing assistance with daily functioning
- ❁ Care tasks. Support with basic physical activities of daily living (ADLs); and those that require higher levels of problem solving (IADLs)
- ❁ Care workers. Those whose care work is paid and those whose care work is unpaid
- ❁ Care dependent groups. People who need support with activities of daily living to live their best lives:
 - ❁ older adults with chronic conditions/disabilities,
 - ❁ younger people with chronic conditions/disabilities
 - ❁ young children

Keating, N., Badets, J. & Robibaro, F. (almost) under review. Conceptualising and measuring the Social Care Economy. *Journal of Global Ageing*.



Supporting family carers requires knowing families

- ✪ *“We all know families. We live them in variously as safe havens or as sources of trauma; with members close to home or separated by vast distances; who may be chosen, inherited, or left behind”.*

- ✪ Keating, N. & Battams, N. (2024). Introduction. In Families Count 2024 (pp.iii-vii). *The Vanier Institute of the Family*. <https://vanierinstitute.ca/families-count-2024/preface-introduction>



How we know families influences how we act to support family carers

- ✦ Understanding family diversities
 - ✦ Family Structure
 - ✦ Family Work
 - ✦ Family Identity

 - ✦ ...and wellbeing outcomes for families

- ✦ The Vanier Institute of the Family. (2022). Family Diversities and Wellbeing Framework. <https://vanierinstitute.ca/family-diversities-and-wellbeing-framework>
- ✦ The Vanier Institute of the Family is a national independent think tank committed to enhancing family wellbeing by making information about families accessible and actionable.
- ✦ Keating, N. & Battams, N. (2024). Introduction. In Families Count 2024 (pp.iii-vii). *The Vanier Institute of the Family*. <https://vanierinstitute.ca/families-count-2024/preface-introduction>



Knowing families: The UN International Year of the Family (IYF+30)



- ✦ State of Qatar will host the 30th anniversary conference of the International Year of the Family. Family And Contemporary Megatrends October 2024
- ✦ Vanier Institute of the Family will release its state of knowledge of families in Canada, *Families Count 2024* on 30th April 2024.
- ✦ Regional reports on family megatrends are available from UNDESA
 - ✦ Plan of Action on the Family in Africa
 - ✦ Population Ageing and Family Wellbeing in Europe
 - ✦ Megatrends & Families: Focus On Demographic Changes In Latin America
- ✦ Keating, N. & Battams, N. (2024). Introduction. In Families Count 2024 (pp.iii-vii). *The Vanier Institute of the Family*. <https://vanierinstitute.ca/families-count-2024/preface-introduction>