



East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences

ejass.eanso.org

Volume 8, Issue 3, 2025

Print ISSN: 2707-4277 | Online ISSN: 2707-4285

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2707-4285>



EAST AFRICAN
NATURE &
SCIENCE
ORGANIZATION

Original Article

Navigating Household Care Dynamics: Examining Gendered Roles in Low-Income Tanzanian Households

Dr. Regina Masatu Maunde, PhD¹* & Dr. Venance Rwegoshora Mutayoba, PhD¹

¹ The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy, P. O. Box 9193, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

* Author for Correspondence ORCID ID; <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1033-02492>; Email: regina_maunde@yahoo.com

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.8.3.3483>

Date Published: ABSTRACT

13 August 2025

Keywords:

*Gendered Division of
Labour,
Unpaid Care Work,
Gender Inequality,
Social Protection,
Tanzania.*

This study critically examined the gendered division of household care work in low-income households in Tanzania, exploring the relationship between cultural norms, economic realities, and gender roles. The study utilised a narrative literature review to synthesise existing research from 2000 to 2024 on the socio-economic and cultural factors contributing to gender inequalities in household care dynamics. Findings indicate that women spend an average of 4.4 hours of unpaid care work daily, compared to 1.4 hours for men, limiting their participation in paid employment and reinforcing economic dependency. Although urban areas exhibit a gradual shift toward shared caregiving, traditional gender norms remain deeply entrenched, particularly in rural areas. Despite the existence of frameworks such as Tanzania's Vision 2025, weak enforcement and cultural resistance hinder progress. The study concludes that addressing gendered household care dynamics is essential for advancing gender equality, enhancing household well-being, and fostering sustainable social development in Tanzania. The study calls for gender-sensitive social protection programs, recognition of unpaid work in labour policies and increased male engagement in caregiving responsibilities.

APA CITATION

Maunde, R. M. & Mutayoba, V. R. (2025). Navigating Household Care Dynamics: Examining Gendered Roles in Low-Income Tanzanian Households. *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 8(3), 170-182. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.8.3.3483>

CHICAGO CITATION

Maunde, Regina Masatu and Venance Rwegoshora Mutayoba. 2025. "Navigating Household Care Dynamics: Examining Gendered Roles in Low-Income Tanzanian Households." *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 8 (3), 170-182. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.8.3.3483>.

HARVARD CITATION

Maunde, R. M. & Mutayoba, V. R. (2025), "Navigating Household Care Dynamics: Examining Gendered Roles in Low-Income Tanzanian Households", *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 8(3), pp. 170-182. doi: 10.37284/eajass.8.3.3483.

IEEE CITATION

R. M., Maunde & V. R., Mutayoba "Navigating Household Care Dynamics: Examining Gendered Roles in Low-Income Tanzanian Households", *EJASS*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 170-182, Aug. 2025.

MLA CITATION

Maunde, Regina Masatu & Venance Rwegoshora Mutayoba. "Navigating Household Care Dynamics: Examining Gendered Roles in Low-Income Tanzanian Households". *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, no. 3, Aug. 2025, pp. 170-182, doi:10.37284/eajass.8.3.3483

INTRODUCTION

The division of household care work in Tanzania remains largely gendered, with women disproportionately carrying the burden of unpaid caregiving responsibilities. The country's diverse ethnic composition shapes traditional gender norms, where women primarily handle domestic chores and caregiving, while men are viewed as the main financial providers (Kirby, 2016; Opoku, 2024). These roles are reinforced by cultural beliefs emphasising male power and decision-making, often limiting women's participation in economic activities and leadership positions (Booth et al., 1993; Sakamoto, 2003).

However, modernisation and urbanisation are slowly transforming these traditional roles. Although women increasingly participate in the labour market, they still encounter systemic barriers, such as limited education and job opportunities, perpetuating economic disparities (de Pryck & Termine, 2014; Lambin & Nyssölä, 2022). Tanzania's low ranking in the Human Development Index, positioned 167th globally (UNDP, 2024), underscores persistent issues of poverty and inequality, with women being disproportionately affected. Many women rely on informal employment, which is typically characterised by low wages and minimal job security, further entrenching their caregiving responsibilities (UN WOMEN, 2022; World Bank, 2022). Moreover, the country's economy heavily depends on agriculture, where women play a crucial yet often overlooked role. This reliance on agriculture exacerbates gender disparities in economic participation and increases the burden of household caregiving (Isaya et al., 2018; Raney et al., 2011; Slavchevska, 2015).

Cultural and religious beliefs strengthen traditional gender roles, with patriarchal structures

predominating family and social interactions. Men are generally considered the decision-makers, while women are expected to handle household responsibilities (Manyama, 2017; Mosha et al., 2013; Mshana et al., 2022). These societal expectations create power imbalances that limit women's autonomy in critical areas such as education and healthcare (Lundh, 2022; Mochache et al., 2020). Many women recognise the inequality in their workload but feel powerless to challenge these norms due to deeply embedded cultural beliefs (Lundh, 2022; Zum, n.d.). Religious teachings often further solidify women's caregiving roles, portraying them as submissive and primarily responsible for domestic duties (Mochache et al., 2020; Mwinuka & Hyera, 2022).

While policy interventions exist, such as Tanzania's gender policies and international commitments like CEDAW, they often fail to address the structural and cultural barriers preventing men's participation in caregiving. While changes in caregiving roles are emerging, especially in urban settings, traditional expectations persist. Understanding these dynamics is essential for addressing gender inequalities and improving the well-being of low-income households in Tanzania (Kirby, 2016; Kitole & Genda, 2024; Marcus & Somji, 2024). Thus, this study examined the household care dynamics in low-income households in Tanzania.

THEORETICAL REVIEW**Theoretical Review for Household Care Dynamics**

The theoretical review establishes a foundation for understanding household care dynamics by exploring three key theories: Feminist theory, Judith Butler's theory of performativity, and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) theory. These frameworks provide valuable insights into caregiving practices, gender inequality, and the

socio-economic factors that shape care dynamics in low-income Tanzanian households.

Feminist theory emphasises how patriarchal structures enforce gender roles within households, often placing women in subordinate positions. Traditional gender norms designate women as primarily responsible for domestic tasks such as childcare and household maintenance, while men are viewed as the primary providers and decision-makers. This division of labour is not a natural consequence of biological differences but a socially constructed hierarchy perpetuating gender inequality (Hjelmström, 2017).

Judith Butler's theory of performativity contributes to understanding gender as a socially enacted role rather than an inherent identity. Butler argues that individuals perform based on societal expectations, reinforcing traditional norms (Badstue et al., 2021; Butler, 2004). In Tanzanian households, cultural norms dictate that women engage in caregiving while men assume public decision-making roles. These performances are often difficult to challenge without social consequences. Using Butler's framework, this study examines how gender roles are reinforced or reshaped through household interactions and external influences such as education and awareness programs (Badstue et al., 2021).

The Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) theory highlights the significance of women gaining control over economic resources and decision-making power. Economic empowerment boosts women's agency within households and society. This theory recognises that women often bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, restricting their ability to engage in paid employment. Addressing this imbalance is crucial for enhancing women's economic independence and capacity to make informed choices impacting their well-being and families.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a narrative literature review to synthesise existing research on gender roles in household care in low-income Tanzanian families (Hesse-Biber, 2010). The review adopted a thematic approach by identifying key themes (e.g., cultural norms, socio-economic status, and gender roles) from the literature. Additionally, this exploratory study aims to identify gaps in current research while offering suggestions for future studies.

Literature Search Strategy

A comprehensive search for relevant literature guarantees the review includes a broad spectrum of topics. The search conducted in Tanzania involved academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, PubMed, ProQuest, Scopus, and Wiley Online Library. It also focused on Tanzanian and African-specific databases, including African Journals Online (AJOL) and the repositories of Tanzanian higher education institutions. Additionally, the search was broadened to incorporate grey literature sources, such as government reports, policy papers, NGO reports (e.g., from UN Women, ILO, and the World Bank), and research reports from local institutions. The search terms used were "Gender roles and household care work," "Care work and low-income households," "Gendered division of labour," "Social norms and gender," "Unpaid care work," "Intersectionality in care work," and "Tanzanian gender policies and household dynamics."

The inclusion criteria included: "Studies focusing on Tanzania or regions with similar socio-economic contexts," "Research conducted within the last 15–20 years", "Peer-reviewed articles, government reports, NGO documents, and policy papers; and "Studies examining gender roles in low-income households, care work, and related socio-economic factors. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria included: "Studies not specific to household care or gender roles," "Research outside of the low-income

or Tanzanian context," and "Older studies (more than 20 years) unless foundational to the topic.

Literature Screening, Selection Process, and Thematic Synthesis

The search results underwent the initial screening of an abstract and title review to identify relevance. Articles that do not directly address household care dynamics, gender roles, or the Tanzanian context were excluded. Selected articles from the initial screening underwent a full-text review to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. Key studies identified were used to source additional literature by reviewing their references and citations (backwards and forward referencing). Zotero, the reference management software, was used to organise the references and annotate key findings. The thematic analysis followed a thematic synthesis process.

Ethical Considerations

Although this is a desktop review, ethical considerations included proper citation and acknowledgement to ensure all referenced literature is appropriately cited to avoid plagiarism. In addition, when dealing with Tanzanian cultural and gender norms, we had to provide culturally sensitive interpretations of key concepts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Household care dynamics in Tanzania are deeply shaped by economic and socio-cultural factors that dictate gender responsibilities. The unequal distribution of care responsibilities reinforces broader gender inequalities, limiting women's economic and social mobility. Existing research highlights the persistence of traditional norms that place caregiving responsibilities on women while men predominantly engage in income-generating activities. However, the evolving socio-economic landscape in Tanzania necessitates a deeper examination of how care work is negotiated within families. This literature review examines gender

dynamics in caregiving and suggests the way forward.

Gendered Division of Labour and Caregiving in Tanzania

The gendered division of labour in Tanzanian households is deeply rooted in cultural norms that place caregiving responsibilities primarily on women. Despite women performing an estimated 80% of agricultural labour, their contributions are often overshadowed by men, whose work is more formally recognised and rewarded (Isaya et al., 2018; Raney et al., 2011; Slavchevska, 2015; USAID, 2013). This imbalance reflects how unpaid domestic labour sustains households, yet fails to translate into economic empowerment for women. Patriarchal structures reinforce male decision-making authority, placing women in subordinate roles. Social expectations define caregiving as a woman's duty, with men participating rather than sharing equal responsibilities, thus perpetuating traditional gender norms (Badstue et al., 2021).

The disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women in Tanzania contributes to economic inequality. Women spend an average of 4.4 hours per day on domestic responsibilities, compared to only 1.4 hours for men (United Nations, 2024, p. 20; Zitting et al., 2023). This disparity limits women's opportunities for paid employment, reinforcing household poverty. Traditional gender roles further entrench these inequalities, positioning women as primary caregivers and men as breadwinners, thereby restricting women's agency and decision-making power (Lundh, 2022; Masanyiwa et al., 2014; Thomas & Rugambwa, 2011). The burden of care work also leads to "time poverty," where women must balance multiple responsibilities, often at the expense of their well-being (Cartier Philanthropy, 2023; Feinstein et al., 2010; Sakamoto, 2003). Overburdened women have less time for personal development and economic activities, affecting family health and education outcomes (Dillip et al., 2018; USAID, 2012). This imbalance hinders poverty alleviation efforts, as

women's limited participation in the labour market contributes to economic dependency (Fox, 2016; Lambin & Nyssölä, 2022; Spitzer & Twikirize, 2014). Studies indicate that care work remains gendered in Tanzanian households. This situation has been caused by structural gender inequalities, as reflected in feminist theory. Thus, research suggests that a more equitable division of care work could enhance women's access to paid employment, generating broader economic benefits (Bagambilana, 2018; Lokina et al., 2016). Recognising and redistributing unpaid care work through national economic policies is crucial to advancing women's empowerment and addressing gender inequality (URT, 2005; USAID, 2012).

Comparison of household Care Dynamics in rural and urban areas in Tanzania

The comparison of household care dynamics in urban and rural Tanzania reveals significant differences shaped by socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and resource access. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for addressing gender roles in caregiving and enhancing overall family well-being in both contexts. In Tanzania's rural and urban areas, socio-economic status (SES) significantly shapes household dynamics, especially with care work. Households with higher SES generally have better access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, especially in urban areas. This access influences the division of labour within families and the overall well-being of their members. For example, wealthier families can afford to hire domestic help or use childcare services, which reduces the burden of unpaid care work on women (Langa & Bhattha, 2023). In contrast, low-income households often depend solely on family members for caregiving, which places an unequal burden on women who are already involved in income-generating activities.

In rural Tanzania, traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained, with women primarily responsible for unpaid care work, such as childcare, cooking, elder care (Eeuwijk, 2016), and household maintenance.

These roles are reinforced by cultural norms that perceive caregiving as a woman's duty, often leading to the undervaluation of women's contributions (Mollet & Mtenga, 2000). Women spend around 4.4 hours daily on domestic tasks, while men typically engage in agricultural work or other income-generating activities (Zitting et al., 2023). This division of labour not only limits women's economic opportunities but also perpetuates a cycle of dependency and poverty.

Furthermore, women's roles in rural households extend beyond domestic responsibilities; they are often the primary caregivers for children and elderly family members. Studies show that women are usually the first to identify health issues within the family due to their constant presence at home (Feinstein et al., 2010). However, when it comes to seeking medical care or making health-related decisions, men often take charge, typically in matters involving the financial aspects of healthcare (Badstue et al., 2021). These dynamics highlight the traditional patriarchal structure that restricts women's agency and reinforces gender inequalities.

Urban households in Tanzania are experiencing a shift in care dynamics due to increased economic opportunities and exposure to diverse cultural influences. As urbanisation progresses, more women enter the workforce, challenging traditional gender roles. However, despite their participation in paid employment, women still carry most domestic responsibilities (Cartier Philanthropy, 2023). On the other hand, rural areas are also seeing gradual changes as education levels improve and awareness of gender equality grows. Women are increasingly speaking out about their rights and abilities beyond traditional caregiving roles. However, these changes often encounter resistance from deeply rooted cultural norms that still dictate gender expectations (Hjelmström, 2017).

Emerging Gender Roles and Household Care Dynamics in Tanzania

Emerging gender roles are beginning to reshape household dynamics in Tanzania despite traditional norms (Manyama, 2017; Mnimbo et al., 2017; Mosha et al., 2013). Urban and rural settings are witnessing emerging gender roles influenced by globalisation and changing socio-economic conditions. In urban areas, there is a growing recognition of the need for shared responsibilities in caregiving. Globalisation and economic development have led to an increase in women's participation in the labour force. More women seek employment outside the home, challenging traditional expectations of their roles (Badstue et al., 2021). However, even as women enter the workforce, they often continue to shoulder the majority of domestic responsibilities. Constant negotiations among men and women at the household level are paramount in promoting men's understanding of the benefits of supporting domestic responsibilities. Recent initiatives promoting gender equality have begun to encourage men to share caregiving responsibilities more equitably. Programs that engage men in discussions about gender roles have shown promising results in changing attitudes toward shared household duties (Zitting et al., 2023). Although these changes are still evolving, they represent a critical step toward redefining household gender roles.

Tanzanian Government Policies on Gender and Care Work

Examining national policies in Tanzania related to care work and gender equality reveals a complex landscape of progress and challenges. This discussion focuses on key frameworks, such as Tanzania's Vision 2025, social protection programs, and gender policies, highlighting their implications for household care dynamics and gender roles. Tanzania's Vision 2025 is a strategic framework designed to transform the country into a middle-income economy while promoting sustainable development and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens. A key aspect of this vision is the commitment to gender equality and women's

empowerment. The framework highlights the necessity of integrating gender considerations into all areas of development planning and implementation (UNDP, 2022). However, critiques have been raised regarding the practical application of gender equality principles within national policies. For example, while Vision 2025 sets ambitious goals for women's participation in economic activities, there has been inadequate alignment between these goals and specific sector policies (Badstue et al., 2021). Additionally, the lack of comprehensive data on gender disparities across various sectors hinders effective monitoring and evaluation of progress toward these objectives. Consequently, while the vision outlines a positive direction, its impact on actual household care dynamics remains limited due to gaps in implementation and accountability.

Social protection programs in Tanzania are designed to support vulnerable populations, particularly women who endure most unpaid care work. The National Social Protection Policy aims to provide safety nets for poor households through various initiatives, such as cash transfers and food assistance (USAID, 2023). These programs are essential for alleviating some of the economic pressures of low-income families and can help redistribute household care responsibilities. However, challenges remain in reaching the most marginalised populations. For example, while conditional cash transfer programs aim to encourage behaviours like school attendance and health check-ups, they often overlook the underlying gender dynamics that dictate who is responsible for caregiving within households (Nattey et al., 2013). As a result, women may still be burdened with managing domestic tasks while meeting program requirements, thereby reinforcing traditional gender roles instead of challenging them.

Tanzania has implemented several gender policies to address inequalities and promote women's rights. The National Gender Policy (2000) and subsequent strategies highlight the necessity of gender

mainstreaming across all sectors (TGNP Mtandao, 2018). The government has also ratified international agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which requires it to take measures that promote gender equality. Despite these efforts, significant barriers still exist. For instance, customary laws often conflict with statutory laws regarding women's rights to land ownership and inheritance (USAID, 2013). Although there are legal frameworks designed to protect women's rights, enforcement remains weak due to societal norms that prioritise patriarchal structures. As a result, many women continue to face discrimination in both public and private spheres.

Additionally, while recent initiatives like the National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children (2017-2022) reflect a commitment to addressing gender-based violence (GBV), challenges with implementation still exist. Reports indicate that many women lack access to justice and support services due to insufficient funding and infrastructure (UNDP, 2023). This gap highlights the need for comprehensive strategies to promote legal reforms and ensure women can access resources and services effectively.

Promotion of Household Care by NGOs

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international agencies, such as UN Women and the International Labour Organization (ILO), play a crucial role in promoting the fair distribution of care responsibilities within Tanzanian households. These organisations collaborate with local governments, communities, and various stakeholders to address the challenges associated with unpaid care work and to advocate for gender equality. This section explores the different initiatives and programs these organisations implement to change the care dynamics in Tanzania.

UN Women is actively addressing women's unpaid care work in Tanzania, recognising it as a

significant barrier to achieving gender equality. The organisation highlights the need for policies that acknowledge and redistribute care responsibilities between men and women. A key initiative in this effort is the "Strengthening Women's and Girls' Meaningful Participation, Leadership, and Economic Rights at the Local Levels" project, which aims to enhance women's economic rights by tackling unpaid care work (Zitting et al., 2023). This project is being implemented in several regions, including Singida and Dar es Salaam, and focuses on empowering women through training, advocacy, and community engagement.

Furthermore, UN Women is committed to incorporating care work into national economic frameworks. Their strategy involves promoting investments in public and private sector care services to reduce the burden on women (Zitting et al., 2023). By collaborating closely with the Tanzanian government, UN Women aims to ensure that care responsibilities are recognised as essential elements of economic development, fostering a more equitable distribution of domestic labour.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is vital in promoting decent working conditions for care workers in Tanzania. Recognising that a large portion of care work is informal and often unregulated, the ILO advocates for policies that enhance labour rights and caregiver protection. Their initiatives focus on creating decent jobs in the care sector, which include improving wages, working conditions, and access to social protection for caregivers. The ILO's "Care Economy" project addresses caregivers' challenges by promoting gender-sensitive labour policies that acknowledge the value of unpaid care work. This initiative aligns with broader efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which seeks gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (ILO, 2024). By advocating for decent work standards within the care sector, the ILO aims to change societal perceptions of caregiving roles and

encourages a more equitable distribution of household responsibilities.

Collaboration among NGOs, international agencies, and local governments is essential for effective policy advocacy regarding care work. Platforms like the Global Alliance for Care, established during the Generation Equality Forum, allow stakeholders to share best practices and develop coordinated strategies to address unpaid care work (Zitting et al., 2023). These collaborative efforts aim to create an environment where caregiving responsibilities can be shared more equitably between men and women.

Additionally, initiatives such as community awareness campaigns are crucial for changing social norms related to gender roles. By engaging men in discussions about shared responsibilities and promoting positive masculinity, organisations can create an environment where caregiving is seen as a collective duty rather than solely a woman's responsibility (Zitting et al., 2023). These grassroots efforts are vital for challenging deep-rooted cultural beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality.

These interventions led by NGOs and international agencies have produced positive outcomes in household dynamics across Tanzania. By addressing the root causes of unequal caregiving distribution, these organisations enhance women's participation in economic activities while promoting shared caregiving roles within families. Research shows that when men actively participate in caregiving tasks, it reduces the workload for women, strengthens family relationships, and improves children's well-being (Dillip et al., 2018).

Furthermore, by integrating care work into national policies and economic planning frameworks, these initiatives contribute to elevating the status of caregiving roles within society. This recognition is crucial for creating an environment where men and women can equally engage in domestic responsibilities without facing stigma or societal pressure.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Promoting equitable care distribution in Tanzanian households is crucial for advancing gender equality and overall family well-being. Policy reforms can significantly enhance care dynamics, particularly in social protection and support for unpaid caregivers. This section outlines recommendations for policy and practice aimed at achieving these objectives.

Gender-Sensitive Social Protection Programs

Implementing gender-sensitive social protection programs is crucial for addressing disparities in unpaid care work. The Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) program, initiated by the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), is a model for incorporating gender considerations into social protection frameworks. This program combines conditional cash transfers with labour-intensive public works, explicitly targeting vulnerable populations, including women-headed households (ILO, 2019). To enhance its effectiveness, it is recommended that the PSSN reserves a minimum percentage of cash transfers and public works opportunities specifically for women. This approach provides financial support and empowers women by recognising their contributions to household care.

Additionally, expanding the scope of social protection to include provisions for caregiving roles can help alleviate the burden on women. For instance, introducing direct cash transfers to caregivers or providing subsidies for childcare services can enable women to participate in paid employment while ensuring that children and dependents receive adequate care (USAID, 2023). Such measures can contribute to a more equitable distribution of household caregiving responsibilities.

Support for Unpaid Caregivers

Recognising and supporting unpaid caregivers is crucial for transforming household care dynamics. Developing policies that formalise and value unpaid care work, which women predominantly perform, is

essential. One effective strategy could involve implementing training programs that equip caregivers with relevant skills for both caregiving and income-generating activities. For example, early childhood education or healthcare training initiatives can empower caregivers to transition into paid roles while still fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities (Zitting et al., 2023).

Creating awareness campaigns to challenge societal norms surrounding caregiving can promote greater acceptance of shared responsibilities between men and women. Further, engaging men as active participants in caregiving lightens women's workload and promotes healthier family dynamics (Dillip et al., 2018). Community-based programs encouraging discussions about gender roles and caregiving responsibilities can facilitate this cultural shift.

Integration of Gender Perspectives in National Policies

Incorporating gender perspectives into national policies and development plans ensures that gender considerations are included across all sectors. Tanzania's Vision 2025 highlights the importance of achieving gender equality; however, translating this vision into practical policies remains challenging (UNDP, 2022). Policymakers should prioritise gender-responsive budgeting, which allocates resources for initiatives to reduce gender disparities, particularly in care work.

Moreover, enhancing data collection on gendered care dynamics is critical for informed policymaking. Establishing comprehensive databases that track time use in unpaid care activities can provide valuable insights into the extent of women's contributions and the need for policy interventions (ILO, 2019). This data should be used to advocate for policy reforms that recognise and address the challenges faced by unpaid caregivers.

Collaboration with NGOs and International Agencies

Collaborating with NGOs and international agencies is vital for implementing effective policy reforms. Organisations such as UN Women and the International Labour Organization (ILO) support local initiatives that promote gender equality and the equitable distribution of caregiving responsibilities (Zitting et al., 2023). By leveraging their expertise and resources, policymakers in Tanzania can develop comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of gender inequality in care work.

For example, partnering with NGOs can enhance community engagement initiatives that raise awareness about the importance of shared caregiving responsibilities. These collaborations can also help implement pilot programs to test innovative approaches for supporting unpaid caregivers, providing valuable insights for scaling successful interventions at the national level.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the complex interaction between cultural norms, economic realities, and gender roles in shaping household care dynamics in Tanzania. While there are signs of gradual change with increasing female labour force participation, entrenched cultural beliefs continue to pose significant challenges. While policy frameworks exist, their effectiveness is hindered by weak enforcement and deep-seated cultural norms. Addressing these issues is vital for improving individual household well-being, advancing gender equality, and fostering sustainable social development in Tanzania. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, focusing on effective strategies for promoting the equitable sharing of caregiving responsibilities and enhancing women's empowerment within their households and communities.

REFERENCES

- Badstue, L., Farnworth, C. R., Umantseva, A., Kamanzi, A., & Roeven, L. (2021). Continuity and Change: Performing Gender in Rural Tanzania. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 57(2), 310– 325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2020.1790534>
- Bagambilana, Y. (2018). Women in the labour market in Tanzania. *MenEngage Africa Alliance*. <https://menengageafrica.org/news-item/women-in-the-labour-market-in-tanzania/>
- Booth, D., Lugangira, F., Masanja, P., Mvungi, A., Mwaipopo, R., Mwami, J., & Redmayne, A. (1993). *Social, cultural and economic change in contemporary Tanzania: A people-oriented focus*. SIDA.
- Butler, J. (2004). Performative acts and gender constitution. *The Performance Studies Reader*, 154-166 (B. Henry, Ed.). Psychology Press.
- Cartier Philanthropy. (2023). *Shifting Gender Attitudes in Tanzania*. Women's Social & Economic Development. <https://www.cartierphilanthropy.org/news/shifting-gender-attitudes-in-tanzania>
- de Pryck, J. D., & Termine, P. (2014). Gender Inequalities in Rural Labor Markets. In A. R. Quisumbing, R. Meinzen-Dick, T. L. Raney, A. Croppenstedt, J. A. Behrman, & A. Peterman (Eds.), *Gender in Agriculture: Closing the Knowledge Gap* (pp. 343–370). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8616-4_14
- Dillip, A., Mboma, Z. M., Greer, G., & Lorenz, L. M. (2018). 'To be honest, women do everything': Understanding roles of men and women in net care and repair in Southern Tanzania. *Malaria Journal*, 17, 459. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12936-018-2608-7>
- Eeuwijk, P. van. (2016). Three: Older people providing care for older people in Tanzania: against conventions - but accepted. In J. Hoffman & K. Pype (Eds), *Ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa Spaces and Practices of Care* (pp. 71– 94). <https://bristoluniversitypressdigital.com/edcollchap/book/9781447325277/ch003.xml>
- Feinstein, S., Feinstein, R., & Sabrow, S. (2010). Gender Inequality in the Division of Household Labour in Tanzania. *African Sociological Review*, 14 (2), 98–109. <https://doi.org/10.4314/asr.v14i2.70239>
- Fox, L. (2016). *Gender, economic transformation and Women's economic empowerment in Tanzania* (p. 23). DFID/ODI. https://set.odi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Gender-application-to-Tanzania-paper_March_Final.pdf
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2010). *Mixed methods research: Merging theory with practice*. Guilford Press.
- Hjelmström, J. (2017). *Feminist perspectives on women empowerment in Tanzania: A case study of why economic development is not enough* [Södertörn University | School of Natural Sciences, Technology and Environmental Studies]. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1171286/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- ILO. (2019). *Tanzania: Gender-responsive public works as a key building block of social protection for all* (Employment Intensive Investment Programme, p. 4) [Policy Brief]. International Labour Organization. <https://www.ilo.org/media/410631/download>
- ILO. (2024). Decent work and the care economy. *International Labour Conference, VI*, 69. <https://www.ilo.org/media/534421/download>
- Isaya, E. L., Agunga, R., & Sanga, C. A. (2018). Sources of agricultural information for women farmers in Tanzania. *Information Development*,

- 34(1), 77– 89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02666666916675016>
- Kirby, K. L. (2016). *Empowerment processes in the lives of Tanzanian women: Intersection of family, education, and digital technology* [Doctoral dissertation, Kent State University]. https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/etd/r/1501/10?clear=10&p10_accession_num=kent1478777628317389
- Kitole, F. A., & Genda, E. L. (2024). Empowering her drive: Unveiling the resilience and triumphs of women entrepreneurs in rural landscapes. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 104, 102912. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2024.102912>
- Lambin, R., & Nyysölä, M. (2022). *Employment policy in Mainland Tanzania: What's in it for women?* (Working Paper 2022/67). WIDER Working Paper. <https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2022/198-3>
- Langa, N., & Bhattha, T. (2023). The rural-urban divide in Tanzania: Residential context and socio-economic inequalities in maternal health care utilization | PLOS ONE. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0241746>
- Lokina, R., Nyoni, J., & Kahyarara, G. (2016). *Social policy, gender and labour in Tanzania* (ESRF Discussion Paper 68). ESRF. <https://esrf.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/THDR2017BP-7.pdf>
- Lundh, O. (2022). *Gender roles in households: A case study on gender roles in households in northern Tanzania. Thesis.* [JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY, School of Education and Communication]. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1690976/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Manyama, W. (2017). Dynamics in Family Patterns in Tanzania: The Case of Kijitonyama Ward, Kinondoni District, Dar Es Salaam Region, Tanzania. *Journal of Sociology and Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jssw.v5n1a7>
- Marcus, R., & Somji, A. (2024). Transforming gender norms for women's economic rights and empowerment (p. 129). https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/align_-_report-wee-digital.pdf
- Masanyiwa, Z. S., Niehof, A., & Termeer, C. J. A. M. (2014). Gender perspectives on decentralization and service users' participation in rural Tanzania. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 52(1), 95–122. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X13000815>
- Mnimbo, T. S., Lyimo-Macha, J., Urassa, J. K., Mahoo, H. F., Tumbo, S. D., & Graef, F. (2017). Influence of gender on roles, choices of crop types and value chain upgrading strategies in semi-arid and sub-humid Tanzania. *Food Security*, 9(6), 1173–1187. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-017-0682-2>
- Mochache, V., Wanje, G., Nyagah, L., Lakhani, A., El-Busaidy, H., Temmerman, M., & Gichangi, P. (2020). Religious, socio-cultural norms and gender stereotypes influence uptake and utilization of maternal health services among the Digo community in Kwale, Kenya: A qualitative study. *Reproductive Health*, 17(1), 71. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-020-00919-6>
- Mollel, N. M., & Mtenga, N. A. (2000). Gender roles in the household and farming systems of Tchenzema, Morogoro (Research Report No. 29). Department of Agricultural Education and Extension, Sokoine University of Agriculture.
- Mosha, I., Ruben, R., & Kakoko, D. (2013). Family planning decisions, perceptions and gender dynamics among couples in Mwanza, Tanzania: A qualitative study. *BMC Public Health*, 13(1), 523. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-523>

- Mshana, G., Peter, E., Malibwa, D., Aloyce, D., Kapiga, S., & Stöckl, H. (2022). Masculinity, power and structural constraints: Men's conceptualization of emotional abuse in Mwanza, Tanzania. *Social Science & Medicine*, 292, 114606. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscim.2021.114606>
- Mwinuka, L., & Hyera, E. O. (2022). Effect of socio-cultural factors on gendered decision-making in the adoption of improved maize storage technologies. *Cogent Food & Agriculture*, 8(1), 2132849. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311932.2022.2132849>
- Natthey, C., Masanja, H., & Klipstein-Grobusch, K. (2013). Relationship between household socio-economic status and under-five mortality in Rufiji DSS, Tanzania. *Global Health Action*, 6(1), 19278. <https://doi.org/10.3402/gha.v6i0.19278>
- Opoku, R. (2024). *Women-on-Women-Violence-in-Tanzania: Current Realities and Future Directions*. REPOA. <https://www.repoa.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Women-on-Women-Violence-in-Tanzania-final.pdf#page=112.05>
- Raney, T., Anríquez, G., Croppenstedt, A., Gerosa, S., Lowder, S. K., Matuschke, I., & Skoet, J. (Eds.). (2011). *The role of women in agriculture* (ESA Working Paper 11-02). <https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.289018>
- Sakamoto, K. (2003). Social Development, Culture, and Participation: Toward theorizing endogenous development in Tanzania. PhD Thesis. [Waseda University]. <http://www.tzonline.org/pdf/socialdevelopment.pdf>
- Slavchevska, V. (2015). Gender differences in agricultural productivity: The case of Tanzania. *Agricultural Economics*, 46(3), 335–355. <https://doi.org/10.1111/agec.12168>
- Spitzer, H., & Twikirize, M. (2014). Professional Social Work in East Africa: Towards Social Development, Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality. Fountain Publishers.
- TGNP Mtandao. (2018). *Reducing the Gender Gap in Social Economic Activities through Fiscal Policy Measures*. TGNP Mtandao. <https://tgnp.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/National-Budget-Brief.pdf>
- Thomas, M. A. M., & Rugambwa, A. (2011). Equity, Power, and Capabilities: Constructions of Gender in a Tanzanian Secondary School. *Feminist Formations*, 23(3), 153–175.
- UN WOMEN. (2022). *The status of women's economic empowerment in Tanzania*. https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/policy_brief-the_status_of_womens_economic_empowerment_in_tanzania.pdf
- UNDP. (2022). *Gender Equality Strategy*. <https://www.undp.org/tanzania/publications/tanzania-gender-equality-strategy-2022-2027>
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2024). *Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world (Human Development Report 2022/2023)*. UNDP. <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2023-24reporten.pdf>
- UNFPA. (n.d.). *Gender equality*. UNFPA Tanzania. Retrieved September 18 2024, from <https://tanzania.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-equality-3>
- United Nations. (2013). Gender Inequality Index. In *Human Development Reports*. United Nations. <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index>
- United Nations. (2024). *Unpaid care work. United Nations in Tanzania*. <https://tanzania.un.org/en/269293-unpaid-care-work>, <https://tanzania.un.org/en/269293-unpaid-care-work>

- URT. (2005). Country Report on the Implementation of The Beijing Platform for Action and The Outcome Document of The Twenty-Third Special Session of The General Assembly- Beijing +10. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/UNITEDREPUBLICOFTANZANIA-English.pdf>
- USAID. (2011). *Urban-Rural and Poverty-Related Inequalities in Health Status: Spotlight on Tanzania*. MEASURE Evaluation. <https://www.measureevaluation.org/prh/research/best-country-fact-sheets/Urban-rural%20country%20fact%20sheet%20Tanzania.pdf>
- USAID. (2012). *Tanzania's Socio-Economic Transformation toward middle income status* (Empowering Women and Youth, p. 79) [Country Development Cooperation Strategy. October, 2014 – October, 2019]. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PBAAE273.pdf
- USAID. (2013). *Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2020— 2025*. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/Tanzania_CDSCS_2020-2025_Public_1.pdf
- USAID. (2023). *Gender and Youth: Tanzania*. USAID. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/Gender%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Jan%202023.._2.pdf
- World Bank. (2022). Tanzania Economic Update: Addressing Women's Economic Constraints Could Accelerate Tanzania's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tanzania/publication/tanzania-economic-update-addressing-women-s-economic-constraints-could-accelerate-tanzania-s-economic-development-and-po>
- Zitting, T., Nunas, K., & Addou, H. (2023, November 1). *Op-ed: Addressing Women's Unpaid Care Work - A Catalyst for Tanzania's Progress*. UN Women - Africa. <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/op-ed/2023/11/op-ed-addressing-womens-unpaid-care-work-a-catalyst-for-tanzanias-progress>
- Zum, J. E. (n.d.). *Gender in Tanzania*. Retrieved September 14 2024, from <http://library.mstcdc.ac.tz:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/236/1/gender%20in%20tanzania.pdf>