

CARE WORK AND THE ECONOMY

Advancing policy solutions with gender-aware macroeconomic models

2021 ANNUAL MEETING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

May 12 – 14, 2021

The Care Work and the Economy (CWE-GAM) held its concluding Annual Meeting virtually on May 12 - 14, 2021. The conference was the first meeting with all 40+ researchers and stakeholders since the 2019 Annual Meeting because the meeting planned for 2020 was replaced by virtual webinars. Maria Floro, a Co-Principal Investigator, began the meeting by giving an overview of the project accomplishments since its inception in 2016. The work has culminated into 33 working papers, some forthcoming in special issues of *Feminist Economics* and *World Development*, policy briefs, and blogs. There are two more important project activities this summer. The first is an international policy dialogue conference held in Seoul, South Korea and virtually from June 1-3 (EST) (June 2-4 JST). The second is an intensive virtual course in gender-sensitive macroeconomic modelling held from June 28- July 17. It will be run by 10 instructors and facilitated in 3 different time zones.

Understanding the Present and Future of Family Caregiving

The first day of the conference focused on family caregivers and the role they play in the care economy in South Korea. The session was chaired by Ki-Soo Eun, Director of the Center for Transnational Migration and Social Inclusion and Professor at Seoul National University. The presentations included were based off the following papers:

1. “The Toll and Rewards of Family Caregiving: Eldercare in South Korea” by Jiweon Jun, Elizabeth King and Catherine Hensly
2. “COVID-19 and Work-Family Balance in South Korea” by Ito Peng and Jiweon Jun
3. “Unmet Demand for Care: Family Caregivers’ Perspectives” by Seung-Eun Cha, Eunhye Kang, Maria Floro, Shirin Arslan, and Arnob Alam

The paper presentations in this panel discussed the burdens that family caregivers experience, how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated that, and the unmet demand for care that leaves family members and households falling short. A lively discussion in the zoom chat brought clarification and resources to the presenters and other researchers in attendance. The questions led to thoughtful consideration of policy recommendations and

ideas for where future research can inform policy as we move forward past the COVID-19 pandemic.

Macroeconomic Policy Tools: Towards a Caring Economy

On the second day, the focus shifted from the microeconomic perspective of the first day to a macroeconomic perspective. The first session of the day was chaired by Mieke Meurs, Professor and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, American University. This session consisted of three paper presentations:

1. Towards a Caring and Gender-Equal Economy in South Korea: How Much Does the Regulation of Labor Market Working Hours Matter? by Ipek Ilkkaracan and Emel Memiş
2. Child and Elderly Care in South Korea: Policy Analysis with a Gendered, Care-Focused Computable General Equilibrium Model by Martín Cicowiez and Hans Lofgren
3. Evolving Demographic Change and Care Support in Korea and the US by Gretchen Donehower and Bongoh Kye

These papers discussed the macroeconomics of the care economy against the backdrop of a rapidly aging population, decreasing fertility rates, and a high gender wage gap, which characterize the South Korean economy. Emel Memiş discussed reduced working hours as an alternative national policy to reduce the gender disparity in household care provision. Martín Cicowiez presented a Computable General Equilibrium Model to measure the impact of care related macroeconomic policy changes. The simulations showed interesting results: ways that policies addressing care and wage discrimination can make a difference, how focus on the GDP part may lead to misleading results, and a call for policy packages. Finally, Gretchen Donehower, by making use of Care Support Ratios, discussed the sustainability of current care practices (in South Korea and the US) given future demographic changes.

Research Gaps About the Care Economy

The second session of the day was a discussion on avenues for future research and how the work of the project could better serve its mission. This session was chaired by Nancy Folbre, Professor Emerita of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Panelists included Young Ock Kim, Senior Fellow, Korean Women's Development Institute, Emel Memiş, Research Associate, Levy Economics Institute and Caren Grown, Global Director, Gender, World Bank Group. Young Ock Kim suggested that future research should focus more on the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic and also go beyond the CGE model by expanding and modifying existing macroeconomic models. She also suggested setting up a research fund focused on the care economy to attract talented young economists. Data challenges were the focus of Emel Memiş's discussion. Suggestions included more detailed information on paid work time use and paid work activities, data on the intersection of inequalities such as regional inequalities, ethnic based inequalities, and time use data that

includes more classifications. Caren Grown wrapped up the session with suggestions to incorporate new technology to collect data and disseminate research findings, make the case for care as a part of economic infrastructure and focus on the elderly and distinguishing between different health and care dimensions, different types of communicable diseases, different risk profiles, and different types of care populations.

From Research to Policy: Insights from the CWE-GAM Project

The third and final day of the concluding Annual Meeting started with an overview of policy implications stemming from the project's research presented by Elizabeth King. She provided a conceptual framework of the care economy; the framework explicitly recognizes the important roles of four groups of actors--the individual, household, and community; the paid care providers; employers; and the government--and the tools they have in affecting the care economy. Breakout group discussions followed to discuss possible priorities of a national care agenda, the obstacles to realizing that agenda, and who the policy entrepreneurs might be. Diane Elson moderated the plenary discussion. The groups emphasized the importance of seizing the opportunity that the COVID-19 pandemic created in relation to care infrastructure. Quality of care was another major point brought up by every group and how the government must take an active role to keep costs low while providing quality care. While obstacles of funding were brought up, the conversation left on the positive note that groups of researchers like this one, other feminist economists, advocacy groups, funders, and NGO's are the policy entrepreneurs that are moving us forward on the right trajectory.

From the Funders of Care Research and Advocacy

Funders from the Open Society Foundations and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Marina Durano and Althea Anderson, spoke about their experience working alongside our researchers and other grantees in their portfolios. Durano discussed how she sought to create a multiplier effect in political arenas by focusing on feminist economics, the care economy, and funding complementary research. While OSF remains committed to economic justice for women, they are ending the Women's Rights Program and shifting their focus away from the care economy, which will still play a part in their regional grants. Anderson shared excitement over the attention that care agendas were getting recently and then discussed some lessons that she and her team learned from the CWE project. These lessons included the importance of feminist led research with common principles driving all aspects of the process, the importance of collaborative partnership and inclusive decision-making, and the importance of starting a research project with clear use cases and planned engagement with the stakeholders.

What's Next: New Research on Care and the Economy

The final session of the annual meeting revolved around where the project will be going from here. Ito Peng, from the University of Toronto, discussed that the next iteration of the project aims to expand the research done in South Korea to a global and comparative level using 8 new countries as case studies. There are plans to conduct individual and household care work and time use surveys and detailed interviews in all of the countries. Isabella Aboderin introduced the African portion of the project and gave more details about it. They will focus on early childhood care and elder care, and will take a sub-regional and continental approach to the case studies. The main objective will be to create African-centered knowledge to inform policy decisions and partner with advocacy groups. Ana-Maria Tribin shared more details about the project in Columbia. Their goals are to provide the public with qualitative and quantitative tools to understand the gendered aspects of economic outcomes in their country. The project emphasizes engagement with advocacy groups and policymakers to get their support for investing in care. Moving forward out of the COVID-19 pandemic will be a main aspect they will look at because Columbia is the only country in Latin America with time use survey data through the pandemic. This will provide the project with rich and interesting insights into care work during this period. This session was wrapped up by Maria Floro who expressed excitement about the future of the project and its ability to bring access to high quality research and reach audiences who can bring about change.