

New report highlights issues surrounding the future of the care economy.

May 10 2022



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As society continues to emerge from COVID-19 into a recovery economy, questions about the future of care also emerge. In Canada, the

pandemic revealed existing problems with the care economy such as the poor conditions in long-term care homes and the dearth of affordable and high-quality early childhood education as well as the low pay and poor working care workers face on a daily basis.

A new report, *Care Work in the Recovery Economy: Towards a Caring Economy*, from the Institute for Gender and the Economy (GATE) at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management highlights key issues about a post-COVID-19 society where care is centered and provides considerations and research questions for care policies and care research. Earlier this year GATE convened a virtual research roundtable with support from Women and Gender Equality Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Over 60 scholars and practitioners at the workshop presented their research, identified research agendas, and discussed [policy implications](#) for the future of care, which is summarized in the report.

The report suggests prioritizing care and the caring economy in research and policymaking will ensure better outcomes in future crises. Among some of the considerations, one of the key gaps in developing effective government and organizational policy is the lack of data on the care economy. Data collection and analysis should capture the complexity of the care economy especially by focusing on historically neglected care activities. This may include data on the value of unpaid care, on less direct forms of [care work](#), and on temporary and migrant care workers and their transitions in and out of care work.

The toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on care workers suggests the importance of making their physical and mental well-being a policy and research priority, including through ensuring high-quality working conditions with labor protections. And [policy makers](#) should include care workers' voices in policymaking and aligning policies with communities and care workers rather than making policy for them may result in more

effective policy outcomes. The report also suggests care policy should not be seen as independent of other government policy making. For example, integrating care policies with immigration [policy](#) would help [care workers](#), including temporary workers.

The report was written by Laura Lam, a Ph.D. student at UofT's Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources and a researcher with the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration; Carmina Ravanera, a research associate at GATE; and, Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor of Gender & the Economy and Professor of Strategic Management, and director of GATE.

More information: Report: www.gendereconomy.org/caringeconomy

Provided by University of Toronto

Citation: New report highlights issues surrounding the future of the care economy. (2022, May 10) retrieved 22 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-05-highlights-issues-future-economy.html>

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