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Supporting Policy Development on Unpaid Care Work for Intergenerational Equity in Togo and Benin

Impact Story 16

KEY IMPACTS

This project aims to generate and disseminate evidence on unpaid domestic work, strengthen the advocacy and analytical capacity of women's rights organisations, and mobilise political institutions to promote equity and shared responsibility in the care economy. By combining evidence generation, parliamentary engagement, engagement with state institutions and regional coalition-building, the project has helped bring unpaid domestic work from the margins into national debate.

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Project Overview

The [Supporting Policy Development on Unpaid Care Work for Intergenerational Equity in Togo and Benin](#) project seeks to scale up innovations in health and the care economy across Africa by increasing recognition of unpaid domestic work and integrating the care economy into public policy. It focuses on generating and disseminating evidence on unpaid domestic work, strengthening the advocacy and analytical capacity of women's rights organisations, and mobilising political institutions to promote equity and shared responsibility in the care economy.

The main target groups are parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, officials from relevant ministries, women's rights organisations, civil society organisations and political stakeholders in Benin and Togo.

Project Activities

The project carried out a range of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities for the key stakeholders identified above. A regional capacity-building workshop on the care economy and related socioeconomic issues brought together political stakeholders, officials from relevant ministries and civil society representatives from Benin and Togo in Parakou in September 2025.

A key intervention was a parliamentary orientation workshop held in Cotonou in October 2025, which initiated a parliamentary debate on unpaid domestic work and the care economy. The debate brought together all members of parliament and parliamentary

staff and drew on evidence generated by the project and previous research by the [Regional Consortium for Research in Generational Economics \(CREG\)](#).

Alongside these efforts, the project—through AADEF-Bénin in Benin and ACS Togo in Togo—conducted capacity-building and advocacy activities with beneficiary women’s rights organisations. These included webinars and consultations on the care economy, unpaid domestic work (UDW), intergenerational economics, National Transfer Accounts (NTAs), National Time Transfer Accounts (NTTAs), women’s leadership and competition for time.

The project also held a series of coordination and follow-up meetings within the coalition and with its partners to align strategies, assess capacity needs and plan future advocacy activities, including preparations for a roundtable on unpaid domestic work and the care economy at the African International Conference on NTAs, scheduled for July 2026 in Senegal. The project also initiated consultations with regional and international stakeholders, including the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Women’s Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence (WALPE), to explore synergies and funding opportunities for scaling up care innovations.

Project Achievements

The project has achieved significant results in policy dialogue, institutional engagement and civil society capacity-building.

A key outcome was a national debate on unpaid domestic work and the care economy that brought together all members of Benin’s National Assembly. Parliamentarians recognised unpaid domestic work as an issue of equity and responsibility and emphasised the need to strengthen existing legislation protecting women and their rights. The discussions also highlighted the value of developing a parliamentary policy brief on unpaid domestic work and the care economy in Benin.

This outcome was supported by sustained collaboration with a CREG parliamentary focal point, whose continued engagement following participation in the NTA Africa International Conference helped maintain momentum on the issue. The involvement of the Honourable Abdoulaye Gounou was identified as a key factor in securing this political outcome. The project also raised its academic profile through the publication of a well-received working paper on unpaid domestic work.

At the workshop organised by AADEF-BENIN on 29 April 2026, the Economic and Social Council (CES), the National Institute for Women (INF), representatives of various women’s networks and the President of the Union of Elected Women Councillors

(UFeC) committed to supporting the recognition and valuation of unpaid domestic work and the care economy, as well as related legislative and structural reforms.

Capacity-building activities conducted with AADEF and ACS highlighted the mental and emotional burden on women who combine unpaid domestic work with efforts to mobilise family resources, as well as the need for ongoing training. Assessments conducted during the webinars confirmed the need to build capacity to integrate the care economy into public policy, advocacy strategies and relevant institutional approaches.

The project also strengthened interregional collaboration by facilitating partnerships between stakeholders in West and East Africa and signing a memorandum of understanding with the Ivorian Centre for Economic and Social Research (CIRES), thereby expanding the community of practice on unpaid care work and the care economy.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The project highlighted the need to adapt advocacy strategies to evolving political contexts in Benin and Togo, including newly elected officials taking office and upcoming elections. Participant feedback also showed that, although online capacity-building sessions were useful, face-to-face exchanges were more conducive to in-depth understanding and meaningful political engagement. This lesson led to the decision to hold the regional workshop in Togo as a face-to-face event alongside the NTA Africa 2026 Conference.

Care Sector Contributions & Next Steps

The project's main contribution lies in advancing high-level political recognition of unpaid domestic work as an essential component of the care economy and strengthening the capacity of women's rights and civil society organisations to advocate for its integration into public policy. By combining evidence generation, parliamentary engagement, engagement with state institutions and regional coalition-building, the project has helped bring unpaid domestic work from the margins into national debate.

Next steps focus on strengthening advocacy through direct engagement, supporting beneficiary organisations in implementing national initiatives tailored to their contexts, deepening dialogue with new political authorities, and leveraging regional and international platforms, including the NTA Africa Conference, to advance policy dialogue on the care economy in Benin and Togo.

About the Africa Cares Together Community of Practice

The [Africa Cares Together](https://www.africacarestogether.org/) community of practice (ACT CoP) is a vibrant, inclusive network of diverse actors committed to amplifying care work across Africa. It is coordinated by ActionAid International (AAI) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and the Hewlett Foundation. The ACT CoP network is made up of members from the 19 projects of the [Scaling Care Innovations in Africa](#) (SCIA) initiative, a partnership between IDRC and GAC.

Acknowledgements

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