

FUTURE DEMAND FOR CARE

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND VIETNAM

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding future care demand is crucial for guiding strategic investments in the care economy. In Southeast Asia, countries face unique care challenges and contribute significantly to meeting global care needs. Yet, critical gaps in knowledge and policy exist¹ relating to key drivers behind the future demand for care, current and potential roles of the private sector, and enablers and barriers to developing **a more inclusive and sustainable care ecosystem**.

To help address these gaps, the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) at the Australian National University, in partnership with Investing in Women (IW), an initiative of the Australian Government, published the report, *The Future Demand for Care in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam*.² Focusing on three domains of care – childcare, care for older people, and care for persons with disabilities, the report explores **how future demand for care is likely to shift over the next 25 years**, and how public and private investments can transform care systems in ways that promote gender equality. This fact sheet highlights the key findings from the report.

KEY FINDINGS



Demographic shifts will put growing pressure on traditional family-based care.

Demographic shifts, such as longer life expectancy, increasing disability prevalence, declining fertility rates, and migration, as well as evolving care norms will outpace traditional family-based care.



Rapidly rising care demands are prompting government and private sector action.

Higher educational attainment and economic opportunities for women, together with growing middle-class have increased demand for paid care services. However, affordability and quality remain as concerns.



A gender lens reveals care's impact on women's economic equality.

As demand for formal care accelerates over the next 25 years, urgent investments in care infrastructure, technology-enabled solutions, and professionalised services will be crucial to meet evolving needs and advance women's economic participation.



Public and private sector investments can transform care systems in ways that promote gender equality.

In order to meet changing care demands, there needs to be coordinated legislative, policy and community efforts to shift gender norms and redistribute paid and unpaid care responsibilities across all genders and support private sector care provision.

¹ These gaps were identified in a 2023 landscape analysis by GIWL in partnership with IW. See [The Care Economy in Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia](#).

² See [The Future Demand for Care in Indonesia, the Philippines & Vietnam](#).



Multi-country Findings

The following are the common trends and shifts that were observed across Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

As fertility rates decline and family sizes shrink, fewer family members will be available to take on caregiving responsibilities, creating an urgent need to develop alternative sustainable care systems.



Emerging trends may either ease or worsen the unequal distribution of unpaid care work, depending on whether social norms and policies actively work to reduce women's caregiving responsibilities.

Demographic shifts will put growing pressure on traditional family-based care.

- The increasing proportion of older people in the population and higher rates of older people living alone who require support with daily activities increases demand for care.
- A common trend across the three countries is the **feminisation of ageing** driven by women's longer life expectancy compared to men. Fertility rates are also declining rapidly.
- **Migration**, whether from rural to urban, across regions or international, weakens informal caregiving arrangements upon which families have historically relied on.
- Younger generations show **shifts in attitudes and behaviours** towards more equal sharing of childcare and adult care responsibilities between partners.³

Rapidly rising care demands are prompting government and private sector action.

- A growing share of each country's population is entering the middle class or aspiring to do so. As household incomes rise, more families will be able to afford paid care services, leading to **increased care demand across all life stages - for children, older people, and persons with disability**.
- As women attain higher education levels and labour market opportunities expand, **demand for formal childcare services is expected to grow**.
- **Affordability will remain a critical factor** – not only for low-income households but increasingly for middle-class families due to cost-of-living pressures – even while demand for higher quality services increases.

A gender lens reveals the impact of care on women's economic equality.

- **The unequal distribution of unpaid care work** remains a key barrier to women's full workforce participation and career advancement, limiting their economic equality.
- Meeting changing care demands requires a **redistribution of both paid and unpaid care responsibilities**. This involves increasing men's participation in care and challenging the expectation that women are the default carers.
- Increasing demand for care services may provide opportunities for women's economic equality. For instance, the **expansion of the paid care sector** presents further employment opportunities for all genders. It also enables more people to enter the workforce, primarily women, given they take on more care responsibilities. However, this must be paired with fair wages, legal protections and recognition of care as skilled work.
- Strong preferences exist for home-based care, and private sector providers play a leading role in delivering these services. These models not only **create new employment opportunities for caregivers** but also help **reduce the unpaid care burden** within households.

Public and private sector investments can transform care systems in ways that promote gender equality.

- **Leveraging the role of the private sector** is key, given limited fiscal resources across all three countries. Workplace policies can support women's workforce participation

³ Companion study on Social Norms, Attitudes, and Practices (SNAP) by GIWL in partnership with IW, to be published in January 2026.

The Future Demand for Care advances existing literature on care economy through the following key contributions:



Long-term, generational, forward-looking foresight



Integration of social norms and socio-economic structures



Actionable private sector-oriented, market solutions



Whole-of-life approach, adopting a comprehensive definition of care



Multi-country snapshot that recognises country-level contexts

and more equitable distribution of care, such as **flexible work arrangements**, **paid parental and carer's leave**, and **employer-supported childcare**, but they require improvements in the regulatory environment. Targeted policies are also needed to support private sector care provision, for example tax incentives and streamlined licensing, permit, and zoning processes.

- Investment from public, private, and community sectors is essential to **promote shifts in care norms and elevate the status of care work**. Recognising caregiving as a profession and investing in a skilled workforce is essential to meet the demand for higher standards and improved working conditions. Entrenched gender norms can be challenged by nationwide awareness campaigns to promote shared caregiving responsibilities.
- **Enhanced data collection, monitoring, and gender-responsive policy evaluation** is critical to capture the full scope of care work and needs, and to enable evidence-based resource allocation in quality care system.

Responding to the future demand for care in...

Indonesia. A **national care economy roadmap** and high ambitions to increase women's labour force participation will create a stronger demand for paid and quality care, especially in growing urban areas.

The Philippines. The compounding **impact of climate change and migration** will strain care systems, but employment-related care policies, such as flexible work, can support women's labour force participation in the short-term.

Vietnam. **Rapid ageing and rising economic pressures** reinforce the importance of individualised, expert-led care at home, and through communities and service facilities.



Key recommendations. To respond to the projected care demands, governments and private sector can:

1. Develop and strengthen national care economy frameworks
2. Allocate limited fiscal resources strategically
3. Leverage the role of the private sector in care provision
4. Invest in care alternatives, including flexible, home-based, and community-based care
5. Develop and strengthen workforce policies relating to care
6. Recognise, value, and invest in care work professionalisation
7. Improve data collection, monitoring, and evaluation
8. Promote equitable care norms
9. Promote economic productivity growth that is responsive to care needs
10. Increase agency and equality-based approaches to care
11. Invest in further research on gender-responsive care
12. Develop care contingency plans for unforeseen and high-impact events

Read the full reports

[Future Demand for Care in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam \(2025\)](#)



[The Care Economy in Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia \(2023\)](#)

