

SMERU RESEARCH REPORT NO. 3/2026

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL NORMS RELATED TO UNPAID CARE WORK

Luhur Bima, Rezanti Putri Pramana, Dyan Widyaningsih, Hartika Arbiyanti, Esha Adnan

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The SMERU Research Institute

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Abstract

Understanding Social Norms Related to Unpaid Care Work

Luhur Bima, Rezanti Putri Pramana, Dyan Widyaningsih, Hartika Arbiyanti, Esha Adnan

This research examines male participation in unpaid care work (UCW) in Indonesia, focusing on the sociocultural context, intergenerational perspectives, and advocacy strategies to promote a more equitable distribution of care work. Using a mixed-method approach, a household survey was conducted with 1,599 households in Jakarta Barat, Pandeglang, Gorontalo, and Lombok Timur, complemented by qualitative data collection in Gorontalo and Lombok Timur through interviews, focus group discussions, and diary studies. The findings indicate that while there is substantial support for men engaging in UCW across all research locations, there remains a significant gap between positive perceptions and daily practice. Younger and more educated couples are more likely to share care work responsibilities, while older households tend to uphold traditional roles. Early exposure to UCW during childhood, particularly through being taught household tasks or having role models, strongly predicts adult engagement. Community norms—especially perceptions of neighbors' attitudes—emerge as the most significant driver, while patriarchal norms continue to shape which tasks are deemed "appropriate" for men. Five advocacy strategies—media, religious sermon, political, grassroots/community organization, and program-based intervention—demonstrate promising practices, although each strategy faces challenges, including cultural resistance and limited resources. The research concludes that male involvement in UCW remains inconsistent, despite the growing normative acceptance. Bridging this gap requires embedding UCW skills in early childhood education, promoting role modelling, leveraging peer and neighborhood norms, addressing persistent gender stereotypes, and sustaining advocacy through a combination of community-based, cultural, and policy-level approaches. Multilevel and long-term efforts are essential to shift both social norms and household behaviors toward a more equitable sharing of care work.

Keywords: unpaid care work (UCW), norms, intergenerational perspectives, gender equality, Indonesia

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List of Abbreviations

ADBMI	Advokasi Buruh Migran Indonesia	Advocacy for Indonesian Migrant Worker
ALB	Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru	New Men's Alliance
COVID-19		coronavirus disease 2019
FGD		focus group discussion
RT	rukun tetangga	neighborhood unit
UCW		unpaid care work

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report examines the dynamics of unpaid care work (UCW) in Indonesia, particularly focusing on men's involvement and the shifting social norms around caregiving. UCW—encompassing both direct activities such as childcare, care for older adults, and caregiving for the sick, as well as indirect tasks, including cooking, cleaning, and managing household needs—is vital for family and community well-being. However, it remains undervalued in economic systems, largely performed by women, and reinforced by deeply entrenched gender norms. Globally, engaging men in care work is recognized as a critical step toward gender equality, yet progress has been slow and uneven.

In Indonesia, the gender divide in UCW remains stark. On average, women spend 4.1 hours daily on care and domestic tasks compared to men's 1.4 hours, a disparity that persists across regions, income levels, and educational backgrounds. Cultural norms continue to position men as breadwinners and women as caregivers, limiting women's workforce participation and perpetuating the double burden of paid and unpaid labor. The COVID-19 pandemic created opportunities for men's greater domestic involvement, particularly among younger men, but social resistance and weak policy frameworks continue to inhibit progress.

Advocacy and intervention efforts have sought to challenge these norms through various strategies. International and local programs such as MenCare+ have encouraged men to take on caregiving roles, while digital platforms and social media campaigns have amplified discussions about gender equality and domestic responsibility. Religious leaders, community movements, and NGOs have framed male participation in UCW within broader gender justice and family well-being agendas. However, these initiatives face barriers, including limited policy support, inconsistent funding, and the persistence of traditional cultural and religious interpretations that reinforce gendered divisions of labor.

Despite these challenges, there are signs of gradual change. Younger generations are increasingly exposed to progressive gender norms, often through media and community engagement, which may influence more equitable practices in the future. Nonetheless, gaps remain in understanding how advocacy efforts shape long-term shifts in attitudes and behaviors, particularly across different generations and communities.

The report highlights three central research objectives: (i) to examine the sociocultural context and structural barriers affecting men's involvement in UCW; (ii) to analyze generational perspectives in order to see whether younger men are adopting more equitable caregiving roles; and (iii) to evaluate advocacy strategies employed by duty bearers and their effectiveness in promoting change. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study contributes to understanding how cultural narratives, policy frameworks, and grassroots movements interact to shape gender norms.

Ultimately, the report underscores that transforming UCW in Indonesia requires multilevel efforts: community-based advocacy to shift perceptions, supportive policies such as paternity leave and gender-sensitive education, and ongoing campaigns to normalize men's active participation in caregiving. Embedding these efforts into cultural and institutional frameworks is essential to reduce women's disproportionate care burden and to advance genuine gender equality.

Research Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine men's involvement in unpaid care work (UCW) and the social norms surrounding it in Indonesia. Quantitatively, a household survey was conducted across four *kabupaten* (districts)—Jakarta Barat and Pandeglang (representing lower levels of male UCW participation), and Gorontalo and Lombok Timur (representing higher male UCW participation). Using multistage random sampling, 1,599 households were selected, with both spouses individually interviewed to minimize bias. The survey revealed distinct demographic, educational, and economic patterns across *kabupaten*. Jakarta Barat and Gorontalo had higher average education levels, while Pandeglang showed the lowest. Household income varied widely, with Jakarta Barat reporting more than double the income of other *kabupaten*. Occupation data showed most husbands were either entrepreneurs or paid workers, while wives more often fell into "not working" or "unpaid worker" categories, highlighting gendered divisions of labor. Ethnic diversity also varied greatly: Jakarta Barat was highly heterogeneous, while Pandeglang, Lombok Timur, and Gorontalo were dominated by single ethnic groups.

Qualitatively, the research focused on Gorontalo (urban) and Lombok Timur (rural), where male UCW participation was relatively higher. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and diary studies involving policymakers, activists, religious leaders, program facilitators, parents, and adolescents. This allowed the team to map the enabling factors, advocacy strategies, and intergenerational dynamics shaping male UCW participation. Adolescents were included to capture how gender norms are transmitted and potentially shifting across generations.

While the study design provided valuable insights, it faced limitations. Qualitative findings from two *kabupaten* may not fully reflect conditions in the other two and the sensitive nature of gender norms meant reliance on self-reported data, which may differ from actual practices. Nonetheless, by combining quantitative breadth with qualitative depth, the methodology provided a robust foundation for analyzing how cultural, economic, and social factors influence men's engagement in UCW.

Unpaid Care Work among Males: Norms and Practices

This chapter explores the evolving role of Indonesian men in unpaid care work (UCW) and household responsibilities, revealing both encouraging cultural shifts and persistent challenges. Drawing from surveys and interviews conducted across Jakarta Barat, Pandeglang, Lombok Timur, and Gorontalo, the findings highlight a widespread acceptance of men's involvement in care and domestic work. However, they also expose a

significant gap between positive perceptions and actual practices, which are shaped by cultural norms, generational differences, and intergenerational learning.

Across the four *kabupaten*, both men and women generally express strong support for men participating in UCW. Male respondents report very high acceptance rates, ranging between 0.89 and 0.96, while female respondents show similar levels of support, between 0.83 and 0.95. Pandeglang consistently emerges as the most supportive region, with both men and women viewing male participation in UCW as normal. By contrast, Jakarta Barat demonstrates a more complex picture: while it shows the highest acceptance of wives as breadwinners, men's involvement in domestic work is perceived as less common. This contrast reflects an uneven evolution of gender roles, where women's economic contributions are welcomed, but traditional divisions of household labor remain entrenched.

Couples' responses provide further insight into household dynamics. A vast majority (84%) report that both spouses share the view that men's engagement in care work is normal, signaling a growing cultural foundation for more balanced domestic roles. Yet, pockets of resistance remain. Around 3% of couples hold strictly traditional views, believing domestic work should be left entirely to women. Others demonstrate asymmetric attitudes, where one partner supports male UCW while the other does not, often reflecting tensions between progressive intentions and ingrained expectations. Notably, generational and educational differences strongly influence these attitudes: younger and better-educated couples are significantly more likely to embrace men's involvement in UCW, while older and less-educated households remain more traditional.

Regression analysis of the data confirms that community norms are the most powerful factor shaping individual attitudes. The perception that neighbors accept men's participation in UCW significantly increases both husbands' and wives' support for such roles. Men's childhood experiences are also pivotal. Those who were taught to do laundry or care for siblings during their youth are far more likely to support UCW as adults. Interestingly, household income has no significant effect on attitudes, underscoring that cultural and social factors matter far more than economic status.

Despite broad acceptance of men's involvement in UCW, daily practices fall short. Roughly 80% of men express support for UCW, yet most do not translate this belief into daily practice. Only about 11% align their support with UCW engagement in their households. Pandeglang illustrates this paradox most sharply: it has the highest level of verbal support, yet the lowest rate of actual engagement. Conversely, Jakarta Barat, while still showing a gap, has the highest proportion of men who align their supportive attitudes with active participation (15%). Common tasks undertaken by men in all four *kabupaten* include cleaning, childcare, and shopping, while more traditionally "feminine" duties such as laundry or meal preparation remain stigmatized. In many households, men's contributions are framed not as shared responsibility but as "helping their wives," often only stepping in when women are unavailable due to illness or childbirth.

These patterns are deeply rooted in cultural and religious interpretations. Indonesia's 1974 Marriage Law legally defines husbands as providers and wives as homemakers, reinforcing traditional roles. Concepts such as *kodrat wanita*, which frame domestic duties as the

natural destiny of women, continue to influence perceptions of manhood and womanhood. In more patriarchal regions like Lombok Timur and Gorontalo, men are expected to handle only specific domestic tasks, usually those involving physical labor, while tasks such as diapering or washing women's clothes are considered inappropriate. Religious misinterpretations and patriarchal ideology further perpetuate stigma against men who engage more fully in domestic work, with some even facing criticism or ridicule from their communities.

Intergenerational learning emerges as a critical driver of change. Men who observed or were taught UCW skills as children are much more likely to practice them as adults and to pass down these skills on to their sons. Tasks such as cleaning and sibling care are the most commonly passed down, while cooking and laundry remain less commonly adopted due to gendered perceptions. Importantly, this intergenerational transfer suggests a slow but steady shift toward more equitable domestic practices. Adolescents' involvement, however, continues to reflect strong gender divides. Girls often feel an obligation to help their mothers from a young age, while boys tend to participate later and usually only when asked. Peer expectations also play a role, as boys may avoid tasks like washing dishes for fear of being mocked. Yet in Gorontalo, where norms are more relaxed, boys are more commonly involved in varied domestic and caregiving roles, signaling regional variation in cultural flexibility.

Overall, the evidence suggests that Indonesia is in the midst of a cultural transition. Support for men's UCW is high, but daily practices fall short of normative ideals. Younger generations, higher education levels, and early exposure to household tasks are paving the way for greater equity, while community norms remain a powerful influence on individual behavior. At the same time, patriarchal norms, cultural assumptions, and the persistence of rigid gender expectations continue to limit progress.

To move forward, interventions must focus on bridging the gap between attitudes and action. Strengthening community acceptance of men's UCW, embedding household training for boys from an early age, and addressing cultural and religious barriers are essential. By fostering environments where men's involvement in domestic work is both accepted and practiced, Indonesia can advance toward more equitable households and a more balanced society.

Advocacy Strategies to Promote Male Involvement in Unpaid Care Work in Indonesia

This chapter examines the strategies used by different actors in Indonesia to promote men's involvement in UCW. Although a few organizations explicitly focus on this issue, various advocacy efforts—ranging from media initiatives to grassroots movements—indirectly contribute to challenging gendered divisions of labor at home. The findings reveal both promising approaches and persistent obstacles in shifting social norms.

Five main strategies are identified: media, religious sermons, political, grassroots/community organizations, and program-based interventions. Alternative and social media outlets such as Magdalene and personal activist accounts use storytelling,

data, and interactive discussions to raise awareness of the value of care work. While effective in engaging younger audiences, these efforts face sustainability challenges, limited resources, and frequent public misinterpretation. Religious sermons offer another avenue, as progressive preachers reinterpret scripture to emphasize equality in marriage and caregiving. This approach resonates strongly in religious communities but faces resistance from conservative clerics and deeply rooted patriarchal teachings.

Political advocacy remains limited. Few policymakers prioritize UCW, often dismissing it as a "Western" concept that clashes with local traditions of *gotong royong*. While political networks can provide influence, party ideologies and voter priorities often sideline UCW in favor of economic agendas. Grassroots organizations, by contrast, have been more effective. Groups such as Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru (ALB or New Men's Alliance) frame caregiving through fatherhood and personal responsibility, creating relatable entry points for male engagement. Their peer-to-peer and role-model strategies foster reflection and behavior change, though they struggle with sustainability due to reliance on volunteers and donor cycles.

Program-based interventions, such as Sekolah Setara (literally, Equality School) and the Dream Man Award, combine structured education with community mentoring to encourage more equitable household roles. These initiatives can produce local champions and raise awareness but are constrained by a lack of funding, limited participant reach, and cultural resistance. Collaboration with local governments has proven important in sustaining and expanding these programs, yet external funding remains their lifeline.

These approaches highlight that changes in gender norms around UCW are gradual and context-dependent. Most progress occurs at the level of individual behaviors rather than collective cultural shifts. While men increasingly help at home, such practices are not yet fully normalized. Grassroots and community-based strategies appear most effective in reducing resistance, particularly when linked to personal experiences such as parenting. However, broader and lasting change requires institutional support—through education, policy, and long-term funding.

Ultimately, the study underscores that shifting norms around men's involvement in UCW in Indonesia must be a multilayered effort. Media can shape narratives, religious leaders can legitimize new practices, grassroots organizations can foster peer change, and structured programs can build local champions. Yet, without integration into formal education and progressive policies, these efforts risk remaining fragmented. Sustainable transformation will depend on embedding gender equality into Indonesia's cultural, political, and educational systems so that men's participation in domestic work becomes not exceptional but expected.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This research provides compelling evidence that while traditional gender norms still dominate, a gradual and promising shift is underway in Indonesia. The COVID-19

pandemic served as a catalyst, and intergenerational learning and community-based programs are proving to be effective drivers of change. The findings underscore that a fundamental shift in social norms requires a two-pronged approach: grassroots cultural change and top-down policy reform. Learning from existing strategies, we found that the transformation of social norms related to men's involvement in UCW should be considered a gradual process, moving from individual usage to becoming part of a societal folkway.

Recommendations

This study highlights the complex relationship between gender norms and men's participation in unpaid care work (UCW) in Indonesia. While most men and women express positive attitudes toward men sharing domestic responsibilities, this acceptance rarely translates into practice—household chores and caregiving remain overwhelmingly performed by women. Younger, better-educated men, particularly those exposed to household tasks in childhood, are more likely to both value and practice UCW, often teaching these skills to their sons. Community norms and peer influences strongly shape whether men engage in care work, underscoring the importance of social context in reinforcing or challenging gender roles.

Shifts toward greater male involvement show promise, especially through community-based initiatives and advocacy efforts. Current strategies—ranging from media campaigns and religious sermons to grassroots organizing and program-based interventions—illustrate the need for culturally sensitive, emotionally resonant approaches. By framing UCW within relatable issues such as parenting or domestic violence prevention, advocates reduce resistance and foster dialogue. However, progress remains incremental, with changes more visible at the level of individual behavior than in established social norms.

The report recommends three key pathways forward. First, foster "organic communities" where men can openly discuss and model care work through peer-to-peer engagement. These informal networks, led by male change agents, build trust and normalize shared responsibilities. Second, the government should actively support cultural change by promoting male UCW through public service announcements and complementary policies such as paternity leave. Finally, long-term transformation requires embedding gender equality into education from the earliest levels, using curricula, textbooks, and role-playing activities to normalize men's involvement in domestic work. Together, these measures can accelerate generational change, making men's contribution to UCW not an exception but a social norm.

I. Introduction

1.1 Global Discourse on Unpaid Care Work

The discourse concerning unpaid care work (UCW) and men's engagement has garnered increasing global focus, particularly with gender equality efforts continuing to raise the imperative to redistribute care work. Gender roles have long relegated women to caregivers, limiting their economic and social participation, with men generally expected to act as economic providers (Lightman and Kevins, 2021). However, breakthrough programs and policies worldwide are defying these norms by actively engaging men in caregiving and domestic chores (Hess, Ahmed, and Hayes, 2020). This shift is crucial in spurring greater female participation in the public sphere, energizing economic empowerment, and promoting in more equitable household labor divisions (Coffey and Staszewska, 2017).

Care work, especially UCW, is a critical—yet largely invisible—dimension of human well-being. It encompasses essential domestic services performed within and across households, as well as across communities. "Unpaid" refers to activities performed by individuals that receive no monetary compensation and—because they fall outside the production boundary defined by the System of National Accounts—are excluded from GDP calculations. The term "care" refers to activities that support people's well-being, extending to both personal care and care-related tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry. "Work" denotes that the activities carried out entails time and energy. To distinguish it from market-based work, UCW is also referred to as "reproductive" or "domestic" work. The International Labour Organization uses the term "workers with family responsibilities" (Blackden, 2009).

Care work comprises two overlapping domains: direct and indirect care work. Direct care work activities involve face-to-face interactions and are sometimes referred to as nurturing or relational care. Direct care work includes breastfeeding, attending to babies and young children, taking care of sick or healthy family members, caring for older people, and supporting family members with special needs. Indirect care work is referred to as non-relational care or household work and typically enables relational care. It includes tasks such as shopping and preparing meals, cleaning the house, doing the dishes, mending clothes, collecting water and fuel, and paying household bills (International Labour Organization, 2009). Indirect care work is essential labor within families. It allows some members of the family—usually men or husbands—to earn an income or to assume the role of breadwinners, while others—usually women or wives—take on responsibility for household tasks. The care work carried out by women enables male privilege, that is, by allowing men to disengage from care work (Utari, 2023).

Taking care of one's household and family needs is often framed as a labor of love, yet it can also be a source of emotional strain and physical toil. UCW, while rooted in feelings of obligation and commitment to others' well-being, is also embedded in patriarchal structures that interact with the economy. This invisibility underscores the urgent need for UCW to gain recognition. The male-breadwinner/female-caregiver polar representation

perpetuates a "gendering" ideology that distorts and limits human potential and narrows the range of experiences of "being" and "doing" for men and women. To make further progress toward gender equality, it is imperative to address the fact that it is neither "normal" nor "natural" for women to be performing most of the unpaid labor (Ghosh, 2022).

Most importantly, UCW entails a systemic transfer of hidden subsidies to the formal economy, which go unrecognized, imposing a systematic time tax on women throughout their life cycle. These hidden subsidies signal the existence of power relations between men and women; also, they connect the "private" worlds of households and families with the "public" spheres of markets and the state in exploitative ways (International Labour Organization, 2009).

To prevent the gender gap from widening, it is necessary and possible to take into account the UCW placed on women in addition to their productive labor. This could be an opportunity for systemic change that could reduce women's double workload and allow care work to be valued and accounted for in economic and social policies.

1.2 Indonesian Women and Unpaid Care Work

In Indonesia, women continue to bear the disproportionate burden of UCW. Women spend on average, 4.1 hours per day on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to men who just spend 1.4 hours (International Labour Organisation, 2018). This unequal distribution persists across urban and rural areas, socioeconomic classes, and levels of education, indicating that deeply ingrained gender norms continue to assign care responsibilities primarily to women (Statistics Indonesia, 2021). These norms are reinforced by cultural expectations that position men as breadwinners and women as primary caregivers, often limiting women's economic participation and career advancement (World Bank, 2020). Women also tend to be the backbone of the community. Married women often take on roles in community service, participating in neighborhood initiatives aimed at enhancing community resources (Miranti, Sulistyaningrum, and Mulyaningsih, 2022). Consequently, women's labor force participation is low because many women leave the workforce after marriage and having children (Cameron, 2023).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, which confined people under lockdown, men's role in care work has gradually shifted. Recent surveys by UN Women in Indonesia suggest that while some men have shown positive attitudes toward helping with domestic tasks, their actual involvement depends on their willingness. Evidence suggests that more Indonesian men—especially the younger generation—are increasingly participating in household tasks, (Lembaga Demografi, 2023). However, advancements in gender equality still face major obstacles, including cultural resistance, inadequate policies, and social pressure that discourages men from taking on care roles (Morales, 2016). These obstacles underscore the need for sustained efforts in redefining masculinity and caregiving within Indonesian society.

1.3 Advocacy, Movement, and Campaign on Equitable Distribution of Care Work

Indonesia has adopted some of the many strategies used worldwide to encourage men's involvement in UCW. Through community-based programs, policy activism, and training workshops, programs such as MenCare+ have been instrumental in convincing men to take on caring roles (Utari, 2017). Researchers have identified changes in attitudes resulting from these interventions, including a decline in tolerance toward domestic violence and growing support for gender-symmetrical caregiving (Haryanto, 2017). Policies in other countries—such as flexible working hours and extended paternity leave—have shown potential to increase men's involvement in child-rearing. These shifts, in turn, can shape the policymaking landscape in Indonesia. To ensure lasting progress in gender equity and shared care responsibilities, problems surrounding them must be addressed through policy reform and cultural change (Haryanto, 2017).

Public information campaigns—through social media and digital media—that potentially challenge perceptions of gender norms are a key part of efforts to increase women's economic participation and support the country's broader development agenda. (Lembaga Demografi, 2024; Utari, 2017). Social media platforms such as Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) may enhance the campaign's visibility (Sukardi and Simorangkir, 2025). By sharing content related to topics such as UCW, these platforms help reach individuals who may not yet recognize how feminism relates to their everyday experiences. An online interactive discussion on double burden by a key opinion leader can reach up to millions of impressions and tens of thousands of engagements (International Labour Organization, 2024). Digital media and online platforms have amplified long-marginalized voices. These platforms have not only played a transformative role in raising awareness among women about UCW. But no systematic research has yet been done on the strategies and their effects on community norms.

1.4 Where Is the Social Norm Now?

Existing research on gender equality and UCW in Indonesia has largely centered around economic implications of UCW as well as the labor market and conditions. However, there remains a significant gap in the current understanding of whether recent advocacy efforts—particularly those aimed at transforming gender norms and pushing for legislation such as the Domestic Worker Protection Bill (RUU PPRT)—have influenced public attitudes towards the recognition and redistribution of UCW. It is unclear whether these movements have effectively penetrated the broader population or led to measurable shifts in social norms. Furthermore, little is known about intergenerational perspectives: have younger generations—with the assumption that they are more exposed to progressive norms through various media—internalized different norms compared with their parents, and if so, through what mechanisms or systems did these changes occur?

These unanswered questions point to the need for deeper, more nuanced research that examines both the reach and the drivers of normative change in UCW across generations. This study aims to address existing research gaps through the following objectives. Firstly,

it examines the sociocultural context influencing men's participation in UCW, including the structural obstacles affecting change. Secondly, it explores intergenerational perspectives on UCW to assess whether younger generations are adopting more equitable norms and practices related to caregiving. Thirdly, it explores the strategies duty bearers employ to advocate for gender-equitable caregiving, along with the conditions under which their strategies are generating positive change. By addressing these research gaps, the study enhances understanding of how advocacy efforts can result in normative change in men's participation in UCW. By examining cultural, policy, and intergenerational factors that shape men's participation in UCW, this study contributes to broader gender equality efforts through the identification of effective advocacy strategies that challenge entrenched norms and promote more equitable caregiving roles in Indonesia.

1.5 Report Structure

The research report is structured as follows. The introduction outlines the central issues, research objectives, and the significance of addressing UCW from a gender equality perspective. The introduction section presents a desk review and insight from secondary data to map the current landscape of Indonesian regulations, cultural narratives, and statistical trends regarding men's participation in care work, while highlighting prevailing gender norms and their historical roots. The methodology section details the quantitative and qualitative data collection activities. The findings section summarizes the empirical insights gathered, including strategies used by various actors, perceived barriers, and outcomes of advocacy efforts. Finally, the analysis explores the broader social and structural factors influencing gender norms and delves into the enabling environment—emotional, institutional, cultural, and political—that supports or constrains duty bearers in promoting more equitable practices of care work in Indonesia.

II. Methodology

2.1 Quantitative

2.1.1 Data Collection Strategy

A household survey was conducted to explore the intrahousehold distribution in unpaid domestic and care work and the social norms regarding men's participation in these types of work. The survey was carried out in four *kabupaten* (districts) that reflect the variations in this country. Based on the secondary national household survey data, we identified *kabupaten* that have a relatively high proportion of men's participation in unpaid domestic and care work and those that have a relatively low proportion. For each of these two groups, we select one rural and one urban *kabupaten* for our sample. Therefore, we chose Jakarta Barat (Special Capital Region of Jakarta Province) to represent the urban area and Pandeglang (Banten Province) to represent the rural area for *kabupaten* that have low rates of male participation in unpaid domestic and care work. Meanwhile, Gorontalo (Gorontalo Province) represents the urban area and Lombok Timur (Nusa Tenggara Barat Province) represents the rural area for *kabupaten* with higher rates of male participation in unpaid domestic and care work.

In each *kabupaten*, we surveyed 400 households that were randomly selected through multistage random sampling methods. First, we used the data administered on the number of households per village from the Ministry of Home Affairs to select *kecamatan* (subdistricts) and villages. Survey enumerators then visited the selected villages to obtain updated data on the number of households in each village, which served as the sampling framework for randomly choosing two neighborhood units (RT) per village. The enumerator visited the heads of the selected RT to list all households in the respective RT and use the list for randomly selecting five households in each RT as survey respondents.

As the survey seeks to evaluate the distribution of unpaid domestic and care work within households, one couple from each selected household was chosen as respondents. Consequently, households consisting only of a widow/widower or couples where both spouses were unavailable for interview during our survey (such as fishers and migratory workers) were omitted from the sample. Enumerators were instructed to conduct separate interviews with each respondent to minimize potential bias in their responses due to the presence of their partners.

2.1.2 Data Description

The survey was conducted between December 2024 and February 2025. We were able to collect information from 1,599 households in four *kabupaten*. Based on the survey data (see Table 1), across all four regions, the average age of both female and male respondents was consistently in the mid-40s, ranging from 41.1 to 45.4 years for females and 46.3 to 49.2 years for males. Gorontalo recorded the highest average age for both female and male respondents, while Lombok Timur had the youngest. The consistency in

age profiles suggests a mature demographic. Furthermore, educational attainment, measured by educational levels, shows considerable variation. Jakarta Barat and Gorontalo exhibit the highest average educational levels for both males and females (completion of junior high school), indicating a more educated population in these urbanized areas. In stark contrast, Pandeglang consistently shows the lowest educational attainment, with both males and females, on average, only having completed elementary school. Meanwhile, Lombok Timur has a slightly higher level of education for males compared with females. The consistently low p-values (<.001) for all demographic and education metrics underscore that these differences are statistically significant, not merely random fluctuations.

The average number of household members varies slightly across the regions, with Gorontalo having the largest households (4.3 members) and Lombok Timur the smallest (3.8 members). This suggests potential differences in family structures or living arrangements. On the other hand, the variation of average household income across the regions is quite significant. Jakarta Barat demonstrates a substantially higher average monthly income (Rp4,741,040) compared with all other regions. This figure is more than double that of Pandeglang (Rp2,003,170) and significantly higher than Gorontalo (Rp3,442,883) and especially Lombok Timur (Rp2,811,718). In terms of asset ownership, people in rural areas are more likely to own their homes than those who live in urban areas. Moreover, across *kabupaten*, respondents are far more likely to own a motorcycle than a car or gold.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents by *Kabupaten*

Characteristics	Jakarta Barat	Pandeglang	Lombok Timur	Gorontalo	Sig.
Age of females	45.4	42.4	41.1	44.7	<.001
Age of males	49.2	47.1	46.3	47.4	<.001
Education of females	3.1	2.2	2.7	3.2	<.001
Education of males	3.1	2.5	2.71	3.2	<.001
Number of household members	3.9	4	3.8	4.3	<.001
Income	4,741,040	2,003,170	2,811,718	3,442,883	<.001
Asset ownership:					
Likelihood of owning a house	0.57	0.95	0.95	0.76	<.001
Likelihood of owning a car	0.07	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.03
Likelihood of owning a motorcycle	0.86	0.82	0.85	0.76	<.001
Likelihood of owning multiple properties	0.08	0.28	0.42	0.08	<.001

Characteristics	Jakarta Barat	Pandeglang	Lombok Timur	Gorontalo	Sig.
Likelihood of owning at least 10 grams of gold	0.09	0.03	0.03	0.03	<.001

Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW; authors' calculation

n: 1,599

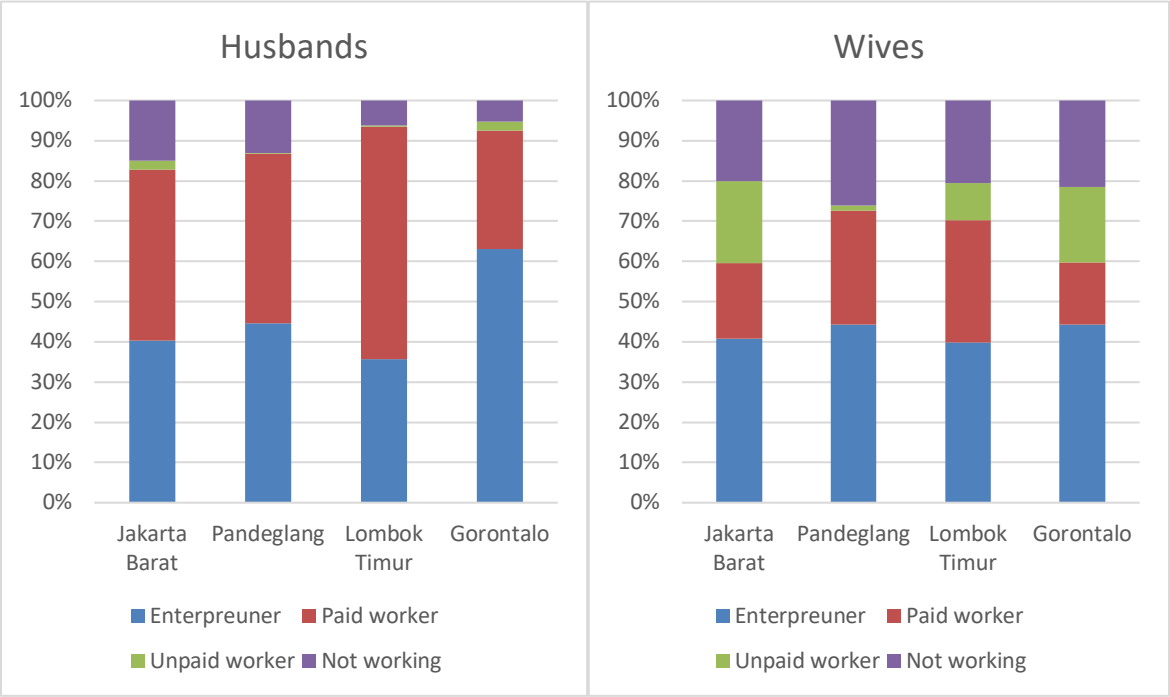
Regarding occupation (shown in Figure 1), across all four regions, an overwhelming majority of husbands are engaged in either entrepreneurial activities or are paid workers. In Pandeglang, Lombok Timur, and Gorontalo, "paid worker" is the largest category for husbands, indicating a strong reliance on formal employment or wage-based labor. Specifically, in Lombok Timur, the proportion of paid workers is remarkably high, exceeding 50% and appearing to be the dominant form of employment. Meanwhile, in Jakarta Barat, a significant proportion of husbands are categorized as "entrepreneurs" (approximately 40%), which is the highest among all regions for this category. This pattern suggests a more active entrepreneurial landscape or greater opportunity in this more urbanized area.

The employment status of wives presents a more diverse and complex picture, reflecting a broader range of economic engagement and caregiving roles. Compared with husbands, a much higher proportion of wives across all regions are categorized as "not working", particularly prominent in Pandeglang and Lombok Timur, where it appears to be close to or above 20%. Nevertheless, "entrepreneur" and "paid worker" constitute significant portions—similar to husbands—of wives' employment status. Additionally, the "unpaid worker" category is notably more substantial for wives than for husbands across all regions. This underscores the significant, often invisible, contribution of women to household economies through UCW.

Jakarta Barat shows a relatively high proportion of "entrepreneurs" for both husbands and wives. Husbands are split between entrepreneurs (approximately 40%) and paid workers (approximately 40%). Moreover, wives in Jakarta Barat constitute a significant share of "paid workers" and "entrepreneurs", while also forming a visible segment of "unpaid workers" and "not working" categories—reflecting a mix of economic engagement. In Pandeglang, a substantial proportion of wives fall into the category of "not working" alongside a notable segment of "unpaid worker". This suggests the persistence of traditional gender roles, in which wives are less frequently engaged in formal paid employment outside the home.

In Lombok Timur, husbands are predominantly categorized as "paid workers". Meanwhile, wives in Lombok Timur constitute a large share of the "not working" category—similar to Pandeglang—but a represent a relatively smaller share in paid work or entrepreneurship than Jakarta Barat. Moreover, the survey also indicates that a high proportion of husbands in Gorontalo are categorized as "entrepreneurs" (approximately 60%) compared with those as "paid workers". Meanwhile, wives represent a more balanced distribution across "entrepreneur," "paid worker," and "not working" categories, with a considerable "unpaid worker" segment—suggesting a more varied economic participation compared with Pandeglang or Lombok Timur.

Figure 1. Types of Respondents' Occupation by *Kabupaten*

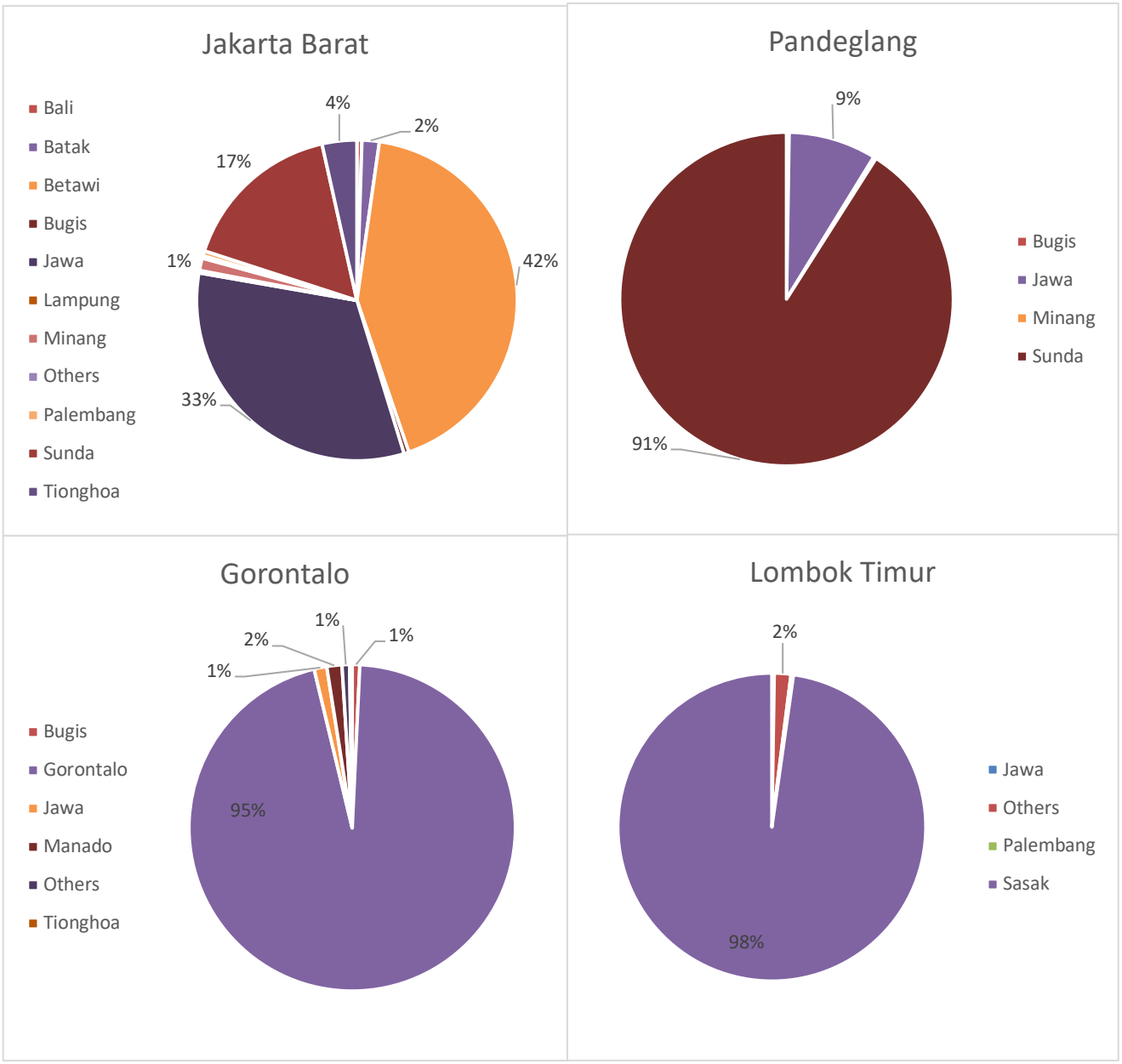


Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,599

Compared with other *kabupaten*, Jakarta Barat exhibits the highest degree of ethnic diversity (see Figure 2), reflecting the characteristic of a major urban center that attracts migrants from across the archipelago. The largest ethnic group in Jakarta Barat is Betawi, accounting for a significant 42% of the population. This is expected, as the Betawi are the indigenous ethnic group of Jakarta. However, Jakarta Barat is also home to a substantial population of other ethnic groups, such as Batak (17%), Sundanese (14.4%), and Javanese (13%). In addition, other smaller ethnic communities such as Balinese (2.1%), Bugis (1%), Lampungese (1%), Minangkabau (1%), and Tionghoa/Chinese Indonesians (0.5%), further underscoring the *kabupaten*'s multicultural fabric. The presence of "others" at 33%, comprising 130 individuals, indicates a diverse range of smaller ethnic groups, thereby strengthening Jakarta Barat's role as a hub for national integration.

Figure 2 Ethnicities of Respondents by *Kabupaten*



Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation
n: 1,599

In stark contrast to Jakarta Barat, Pandeglang demonstrates a highly homogenous ethnic composition, overwhelmingly dominated by the Sundanese ethnic group, which constitutes 91% (363 individuals) of the population. This strong majority is typical of *kabupaten* within West Java, where the Sundanese are the indigenous inhabitants. Moreover, Kabupaten Gorontalo also shows an extreme level of ethnic homogeneity, with the Gorontalo ethnicity forming a dominant 95% (382 individuals) of the population. Similar to Pandeglang and Gorontalo, Lombok Timur is characterized by an overwhelming majority of a single ethnic group, the Sasak, who comprise 98% (391 individuals) of the population. The Sasak are the indigenous people of Lombok Island, explaining their significant dominance in this *kabupaten*.

2.2 Qualitative

A qualitative approach was carried out in order to map the context, enabling factors, and best practices implemented by duty bearers to break down gender stereotypes that prevail in society regarding men's involvement in UCW. With this aim, qualitative data collection was conducted in two study areas, which—based on the secondary national household survey data—were identified as having a higher tendency of male involvement in UCW than the other two study areas. Accordingly, Gorontalo (which has urban characteristics) and Lombok Timur (which has rural characteristics) were selected as the primary locations for qualitative data collection. Meanwhile, data was gathered through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and diary studies involving communities, as well as key figures at both national and regional levels. Table 2 presents the types and objectives for each qualitative data collection activity.

Table 2. Qualitative Data Collection Activities

Activities	Characteristics of Informants	Purpose of Activities
	National Level	
In-depth interview	National-level duty bearers who advocate gender issues with the following characteristics: a) as policymakers, b) using feminist media platforms, c) based on religious sermons, and d) using community-based (grassroots) movements	Mapping the context and enabling factors—for policymakers, within the mass media ecosystem, the role of religion, and community engagement—to drive changing norms of men's involvement in UCW
	Kabupaten (District)/*Kota* (City) and Village/*Kelurahan*[1] Level	
In-depth interview	*Kabupaten/kota*-level duty bearers with advocacy experience on gender issues for: a) 15–20 years (both female and male) b) 5–8 years	Mapping the local context and factors supporting changing norms of men's involvement in UCW
	Policymakers or local government organizations that consistently advocate for gender issues at the *kabupaten/kota* level	1. Gaining a general overview of norms and social trends regarding men's involvement in UCW 2. Mapping the local context and factors that support changing norms of men's involvement in UCW 3. Triangulating the role of duty bearers in driving normative change in men's involvement in UCW
	Partners of duty bearers at the *kabupaten/kota* or village/*kelurahan* level	

[1]A *kelurahan* is a village-level administrative area located in an urban center.

Activities	Characteristics of Informants	Purpose of Activities
	Program mentors/facilitators who serve as extensions of duty bearers at the village/*kelurahan* level	1. Gaining a general overview of norms and social trends regarding men's involvement in UCW 2. Triangulating the role of duty bearers in driving normative change in men's involvement in UCW 3. Identifying factors that support changing norms of men's involvement in UCW
	Traditional/religious/community leaders at the *kabupaten/kota* or village/*kelurahan* level (both female and male)	1. Gaining a general overview of norms and social trends regarding men's involvement in UCW 2. Triangulating the role of duty bearers in driving normative change in men's involvement in UCW
	Community Level	
In-depth interview	Parents, with wives involved in the following types of work: a) working full-time, b) work with flexible working hours or working from home, and c) not engaged in income-generating work	1. Mapping changing norms of men's involvement in UCW within the community 2. Triangulating the role of duty bearers in driving normative change in men's involvement in UCW 3. Identifying factors that support changing norms of men's involvement in UCW
Diary study and in-depth interview	Adolescents from households whose parents have been interviewed	
FGD	Male adolescents	

The varied characteristics of duty bearers at the *kabupaten/kota* level are based on differences in gender and the length of advocacy activities the duty bearers have undertaken. This purposively considers the possibility of changes in advocacy strategies over time and the different challenges faced by female and male duty bearers.

Meanwhile, to gain an intergenerational perspective on norms regarding men's involvement in UCW, qualitative data collection was conducted among female and male adolescents. This was accomplished through diary studies supplemented with in-depth interviews and FGDs. We concluded that the most effective way to examine gender norms was by using a live-in method, which allows for direct observation of existing norms. However, given the limited duration of the data collection period, we attempted to minimize the discrepancy between knowledge (perceptions) and behavior (action) by

involving adolescents as study informants. Including adolescents as informants also served as a method of data triangulation to assess changes in norms regarding men's involvement in UCW at the household or community level.

The approach adopted in the study is not without its limitations. Firstly, qualitative data collection was conducted in only two of the four quantitative study areas. As a result, qualitative findings from Gorontalo do not necessarily apply to the quantitative findings from Jakarta Barat, despite both being urban areas. Similarly, qualitative findings from Lombok Timur do not always align with the quantitative findings from Pandeglang, even though both areas have rural characteristics.

Secondly, because norms related to men's involvement in UCW are a niche topic within the broader discourse of gender equality, the advocacy mapping conducted by duty bearers, at both the national and local levels, tend to be flexible. As a result, it may extend beyond men's involvement in UCW, addressing broader gender-related issues. However, in conducting this mapping, we ensured that the gender issues advocated by duty bearers remained contextually relevant. Thus, their approach to exploring context, enabling factors, and best practices are still expected to align with efforts to challenge prevailing gender stereotypes regarding men's participation in UCW.

Lastly, the norms discussed in the qualitative study were self-reported. While live-in fieldwork remains the most effective method for observing norms in practice, time constraints prevented the team from conducting observations in real-life settings. To address this limitation, the team incorporated additional diary-study activities with adolescents to gain insight on how norms are enacted in everyday life.

III. Unpaid Care Work among Males: Norms and Practices

This chapter examines male participation in caregiving and domestic tasks at home. We begin by examining societal perceptions of males engaging in unpaid care duties. Additionally, we examine these perceptions from both male and female perspectives to assess whether a substantial disparity exists between them. Furthermore, we examine the enactment of unpaid caregiving and domestic tasks performed by males through an analysis of their daily activities. This investigation shed light on whether everyday activities reflect a positive perception of males performing unpaid care duties. The final section of this chapter examines how Indonesian men are exposed to unpaid care and household responsibilities throughout childhood and whether these early experiences influence their behavior regarding the transmission of caregiving roles to the next generation.

3.1 Respondents' Perceptions of Men Performing Unpaid Care Work

Based on the survey, we learned that male respondents in all *kabupaten* show a high likelihood of supporting men performing UCW, with scores ranging from 0.89 to 0.96 (see Table 3). Pandeglang stands out with the highest level of male support (0.96), followed closely by Gorontalo (0.92) and Lombok Timur (0.91). Jakarta Barat has the lowest, though still high, with support at 0.89. The statistically significant difference (.002) confirms these regional variations are not by chance. This widespread support indicates a strong cultural shift towards more equitable domestic roles among men.

The survey also reveals that male respondents in Pandeglang and Gorontalo assume that 57.8% and 58.4%, respectively, of men in their neighborhoods have engaged in at least one hour of UCW per day, which is the highest proportion of male involvement as perceived by men across the four *kapubaten*. By contrast, Jakarta Barat reflects the lowest proportion of perceived male involvement in UCW (48.2%). This suggests that in more rural or traditional settings such as Pandeglang and Gorontalo, there might be stronger collective awareness or expectation of men's participation in domestic tasks. Additionally, male respondents in Pandeglang believe that approximately 75% of men in their neighborhood view men's participation in UCW as a normal practice, which represents the highest proportion among the four surveyed *kabupaten*. On the other hand, Jakarta Barat again has the lowest perceived acceptance (64.4%).

Nevertheless, we learned that male respondents in Jakarta Barat show the highest perceived acceptance of wives as breadwinners. Male respondents in Jakarta Barat believe that, on average, 31.4% of men in their neighborhood will agree that wives taking on the role of breadwinners is normal. Meanwhile, male respondents in Gorontalo reported the lowest perceived normalcy of wives serving as the primary breadwinner (20.6%). This could be attributed to the more urban and economically diverse environment of Jakarta Barat,

where dual-income households and women's economic contributions are likely more visible and accepted.

From the wives' (female respondents') perspective, Pandeglang reveal the highest likelihood of women supporting men performing unpaid care (0.95), while those in Lombok Timur have the lowest (0.83). The support levels in Jakarta Barat (0.86) and Gorontalo (0.86) are similar. This again highlights Pandeglang as a region with high mutual spousal support for equitable domestic roles, while Lombok Timur appears to be more conservative from the perspective of female respondents.

Our female respondents in Gorontalo and Pandeglang assumed that 57.6% and 52%, respectively, of men in their neighborhood have engaged in at least one hour of UCW per day, which is the highest proportion of male involvement in UCW as perceived by women. Jakarta Barat has the lowest proportion of male involvement in UCW as perceived by women (41.6%). This mirrors the male perception data, confirming the idea that men's UCW is more visible in nonurban regions. We also learned that female respondents in Pandeglang perceive the highest acceptance of men performing UCW as a normal practice (67.8%), while those in Lombok Timur have the lowest perception (54.8%). On the other hand, we found that the highest proportion of men that, believed by female respondents, would accept wives as breadwinners is in Jakarta Barat (34.4%), with Gorontalo again having the lowest (21.6%) perceived male acceptance from the wives' perspective. This result confirms that both genders in Jakarta Barat perceive a higher acceptance of nontraditional economic roles for women.

The data presents a nuanced picture of perceptions surrounding UCW. Overall, there is a strong inclination for both men and women to support men's participation in UCW. However, regional disparities are pronounced. Pandeglang consistently seems the most progressive region, with both genders demonstrating the highest support for men's UCW and perceiving strong community norms that align with this view. In contrast, Jakarta Barat, while a hub for female economic empowerment (indicated by high perceived acceptance of wives as breadwinners), shows lower perceived participation and acceptance of men's UCW, suggesting a complex social dynamic where economic and domestic gender roles are not evolving in parallel. While Gorontalo and Lombok Timur are generally supportive of men's UCW, both regions show lower perceived acceptance of women as breadwinners, indicating a more traditional view of economic gender roles. These findings are crucial for understanding the varied social landscapes of Indonesia and for designing targeted interventions that address specific regional attitudes and behaviors to promote greater gender equality in both domestic and economic spheres.

Table 3. Perception of UCW

	Jakarta Barat	Pande-glang	Lombok Timur	Goron-talo	Sig.
Male respondents' perception:					
Likelihood of supporting men performing UCW (0 = do not support; 1 = support)	0.89	0.96	0.91	0.92	0.002
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to have done at least one hour of UCW	48.2	57.8	56.2	58.4	<.001
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to accept men performing UCW as a normal norm	64.4	73.4	66	65.4	<.001
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to accept wives as breadwinners as a normal norm	31.4	24.8	27.6	20.6	<.001
Female respondents' perception:					
Likelihood of supporting men performing UCW (0 = do not support; 1 = support)	0.86	0.95	0.83	0.86	<.001
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to have done at least one hour UCW	41.6	52	52	57.6	<.001
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to accept men performing UCW as a normal norm	55.8	67.8	54.8	61.2	<.001
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to accept wives as breadwinners as a normal norm	34.4	29.4	30	21.6	<.001

Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,599

If couples agree on how to divide household tasks, men are more likely to help with care and domestic activities. As shown in Figure 3, the perceptions of couples reveal that an overwhelming majority (84%) believe both wives and husbands in the same family share a common vision of accepting men performing UCW as a normal practice. This substantial proportion suggests a widespread and growing acceptance, if not active encouragement, of shared domestic responsibilities within the family unit. This finding is highly significant, as it challenges traditional gendered divisions of labor and points to a progressive shift in household dynamics. It implies that a significant cultural foundation exists for promoting greater gender equality in the distribution of care work.

However, 3% of couples are more traditional, believing that domestic and care tasks are not for men. These couples believe that domestic activities are the responsibility of women, and they find it uncommon for men to help their wives with these tasks.

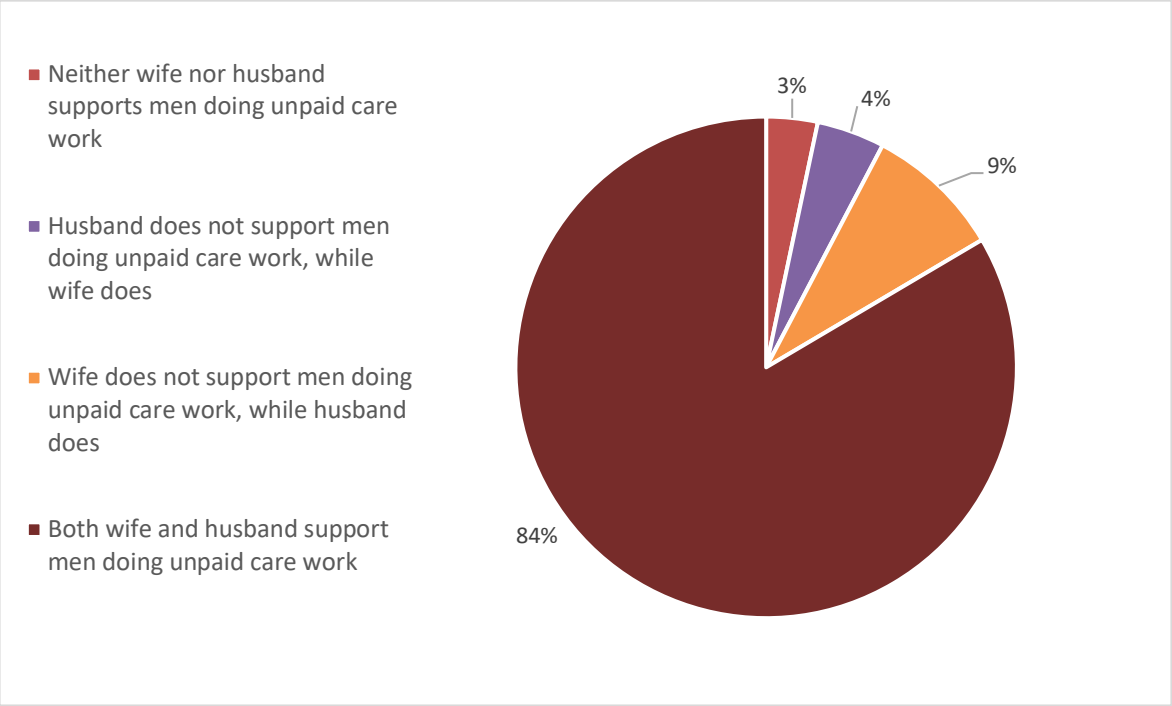
> I think it is not good for the husband to do the housework. I don't agree with men doing housework because it's not a man's job. (Interview, female parents, Gorontalo, 13 December 2024)

> Not all men do the housework. For example, my neighbor is like any other husband who just plays with his cell phone while his wife is busy washing dishes, washing clothes, making cakes to sell, taking care of children in the morning, and delivering cakes here and there. But his wife seems to understand and feels that [all the work] is her responsibility, so if her husband doesn't help, it's acceptable. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Gorontalo, 16 December 2024)

Furthermore, there are instances of asymmetric support. Approximately 4.4% of respondents indicated that husbands do not support men performing UCW, while wives do. This discrepancy may reflect a desire among wives for a more equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities—one that is met with resistance from husbands or constrained by their traditional views. On the other hand, a slightly larger group, comprising 9%, reported that wives do not support men performing UCW, while husbands do. This particular finding is intriguing and could suggest several underlying dynamics. It might indicate instances where husbands are willing to contribute more to UCW but are met with traditional expectations from their wives, perhaps due to ingrained beliefs about gender roles, a desire to maintain perceived control over domestic spheres, or even a lack of trust in the husband's caregiving abilities.

The data strongly suggests a predominant societal shift towards supporting men's involvement in UCW, with the vast majority of households expressing mutual support from both spouses. This widespread acceptance provides fertile ground for policies and initiatives aimed at promoting more equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities. However, the smaller but significant segments where support is absent or asymmetric highlight persistent pockets of traditionalism or internal household conflicts regarding gender roles. Understanding these nuanced areas of resistance is crucial for designing targeted interventions that can effectively address barriers to gender equality in UCW. Further qualitative research could explore the specific reasons behind the asymmetric support, particularly in cases where wives do not support men’s involvement in UCW, despite the husband's willingness.

Figure 3. Couple's Perception of Men Performing UCW



Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,599

In Indonesia, ideas of womanhood and manhood are deeply shaped by cultural and state discourses. Indonesia's 1974 Marriage Law defines a husband as the head of the family who will provide all necessities of life required in a family. A wife, according to the law, is a housewife who shall manage the household to the best of her ability. The legal definition of husband and wife and cultural discourses on gender actively shape ideas of womanhood and manhood. Indonesia has terms such as *kodrat wanita* that refer to the "nature" of women, which is commonly acknowledged as the assigning of gender roles and specific tasks to women as destined by God. Society perceives that a woman's natural role is to be a mother and a good housewife. This perception, further suggests that a "good" woman is obedient, passive, and gentle, as well as self-sacrificing and nurturing. As a result, women are judged by their competence in managing the household. Similarly, doubts about men's capability as caregivers stem from traditional gender stereotypes and state gender ideology, as well as the prevailing belief that, unlike women, men are inherently unsuited to carry out caring roles (Utari and Reeves, 2015; Utari, 2018).

Furthermore, Budlender and Moussié (2013, in Morales and Thorpe, 2016) revealed that social norms determine culturally acceptable roles for men and women, and both can face backlash for contravening these norms. Criticism, shaming, and even violence are mechanisms used to enforce these "natural" gender roles. Consistent with existing literature, qualitative exploration in Gorontalo and Lombok Timur found that the patriarchal culture in these two regions continues to influence the perception of UCW activities that are deemed appropriate or inappropriate for men. For example, while sweeping is considered acceptable for men, making beds, washing women's clothes, or serving food and drinks to guests is still regarded as tasks unsuitable for men.

> A cultural problem and misinterpretation of religion have led to the traditional view that domestic work is not men's job. Consequently, when a husband is involved [in domestic work], he is often regarded as a subordinate to his wife and is associated with the concept of '*istikomah*' [which refers to the marital bond characterized by the husband's fear of his wife in the domestic environment]. (Interview, male duty bearer, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

> Boys here are used to sweeping, and it doesn't matter if they are seen by the neighbors. Because there's also a cleaning team at school, and it's not only girls who sweep, but boys too. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

Meanwhile, in the Gorontalo community, men commonly engage in culinary activities, but rarely participate in cleaning cooking utensils. In Lombok Timur, men often engage in domestic activities that are considered more physically demanding, such as lifting buckets of laundry to dry and carrying water. Furthermore, one of the male duty bearers in Lombok Timur acknowledged positive shifts in gender roles, yet noted the persistence of certain activities still regarded as masculine taboos, such as men changing diapers or washing their wives' underwear. These perceptions underscore the enduring influence of the masculine-feminine dichotomy on men's involvement in UCW.

> Initially, even these local champions experienced social stigmatization from their neighbors too [while they were drying their wives' laundry]. The neighbors or parents expressed disapproval, seeking to ascertain the nature of the offense committed by the wives and the rationale behind the champions' involvement in the activity. However, the champions demonstrated resilience in the face of these stigmas and effectively influenced their neighbors. (Interview, male duty bearer, Lombok Timur, 11 December 2024)

The social norms in the qualitative sites also represent the involvement of men in caregiving activities. The most common form of paternal engagement in caregiving activities is accompanying children during playtime, often occurring alongside with maternal engagement in domestic work. However, activities such as bathing, feeding, washing children's clothes or diapers, and assisting with school assignments are typically regarded as the domain of mothers.

We delved deeper into examining the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the households, focusing on the support wives and husbands express for men's involvement in UCW. The results show a clear and statistically significant pattern regarding age. The average age of both male and female respondents is highest in households where neither spouse supports men performing UCW; the female age is 47.8 years, while the average male age is 53.6 years. This contrasts sharply with households where both wife and husband support men performing UCW and which have the lowest average ages (female age is 42.9 years and male age is 46.9 years). This finding strongly suggests a generational shift in attitudes towards gender roles, with younger couples being far more likely to embrace and support men's participation in domestic and caregiving tasks.

A similar trend is observed in educational attainment. Households in which neither wife nor husband support men performing UCW tend to have the lowest average educational levels for both male and female respondents. Both husbands and wives in this household category are likely to be educated just slightly above the elementary school level. Conversely, educational levels are highest in households with both wife and husband

supporting men performing UCW, where both female and male respondents in this category tend to have an average education level close to junior high school. This correlation between higher education and mutual spousal support for men's UCW is highly significant ($p < .001$) and suggests that education may play a key role in fostering more equitable gender norms and practices within the household.

Table 4. Characteristics of Couples Based on Their Views on Men Performing UCW

Characteristics	Neither wife nor husband supports men performing UCW	Husband does not support men performing UCW, while wife does	Wife does not support men performing UCW, while husband does	Both wife and husband support men performing UCW	n	Sig.
Age of females	47.8	44.4	45.6	42.9	1,597	<.001
Age of males	53.6	48.6	49.6	46.9	1,589	<.001
Education of females	2.15	2.65	2.59	2.84	1,597	<.001
Education of males	2.15	2.6	2.6	2.85	1,591	<.001
Number of household members	4.4	4.2	3.8	4	1,599	0.009
Income	3,441,792	2,612,929	3,133,773	3,288,644	1,599	0.334

Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,599

Furthermore, households where couples do not support men performing UCW are more likely to have a statistically significantly larger average number of household members (4.4 persons per household), compared with other categories. This finding might suggest that in larger, possibly multigenerational households, more traditional gender roles persist, which could also be linked to the older age of these respondents. On the other hand, the data on average household income shows no statistically significant difference across the four groups ($p = .334$). This is a crucial finding, as it indicates that household income level is not a primary driver of spousal support for men's engagement in UCW. Instead, factors such as age, education, and cultural norms appear to be more influential than economic status.

To identify what factors actually influence an individual's support for men's involvement in UCW, we ran a regression incorporating variables that are expected to influence the probability of people having a positive perception. These include individual characteristics, perception of people in the neighborhood, and experiences related to childhood upbringing.

Table 5 shows the regression results, revealing what factors significantly influence people's perception of men performing UCW. We learned that the perceived norms within the

neighborhood are significant factors that influence spousal support for men performing UCW. The perception that women in the neighborhood accept men performing UCW as a normal norm has a strong positive and highly significant effect on both the husband's support and wife's support of it. This suggests that spousal attitudes heavily rely on what their female peers in the community deem acceptable and normal. Furthermore, the belief that men in the neighborhood view other men engaging in UCW as normal has a significant positive effect, especially on the support from husbands. The effect on the wife's support is weaker but still significant. The perceived attitudes of other men strongly influence a husband's support for UCW, highlighting the importance of peer validation.

Table 5. Regression of Factors Influencing Respondents' Support of Men Performing UCW

	(1)	(2)
	Probability of husband supporting men performing UCW	**Probability of wife supporting men performing UCW**
Perception on the proportion of women in the neighborhood who accept men performing UCW as normal norm	0.19***	0.20***
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Perception on the proportion of men in the neighborhood who accept men performing UCW as normal norm	0.27***	0.07*
	(0.05)	(0.04)
Perception of the proportion of men in the neighborhood who accept wives as breadwinner as a normal norm	0.03	-0.03
	(0.04)	(0.03)
Husbands' support of wives engaging in productive activities (1: Unconditional yes; 2: Conditional yes; 3: No)	-0.14*	-0.11*
	(0.08)	(0.06)
Age of wife	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age of husband	-0.01*	-0.02**
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education level of wife	-0.18	0.02
	(0.14)	(0.16)
Education level of husband	0.23*	0.03
	(0.13)	(0.16)
Number of household members	-0.17***	-0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Household income	0.00	-0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Husband works as an entrepreneur	-0.01	0.26*
	(0.26)	(0.16)

	(1)	(2)
	Probability of husband supporting men performing UCW	**Probability of wife supporting men performing UCW**
Husband works as a paid worker	-0.05 (0.22)	0.49** (0.22)
Husband works as an unpaid worker	0.72 (0.55)	-0.42 (0.56)
Wife works as an entrepreneur	-0.16 (0.29)	-0.27* (0.15)
Wife works as a paid worker	-0.01 (0.25)	-0.44** (0.21)
Wife works as an unpaid worker	-0.85 (0.56)	0.28 (0.60)
Husband taught to prepare meals during his childhood	-0.10 (0.15)	-0.01 (0.12)
Husband taught to clean house during his childhood	-0.05 (0.20)	-0.13 (0.16)
Husband taught to do laundry during his childhood	0.38** (0.17)	0.15 (0.11)
Husband taught to care for his siblings during his childhood	0.39** (0.16)	0.09 (0.13)
Household owns a house	0.03 (0.16)	-0.12 (0.11)
Household owns a car	0.08 (0.26)	-0.03 (0.22)
Household owns a motorcycle	-0.02 (0.17)	-0.05 (0.11)
Household owns another property	-0.05 (0.14)	0.11 (0.11)
Household owns at least 10 grams of gold	0.10 (0.25)	-0.07 (0.18)
Household's house is equipped with water pipeline	0.05 (0.22)	-0.12 (0.18)
Household owns a stove	0.25 (0.47)	-0.27 (0.40)
Household owns a rice cooker	0.02 (0.15)	-0.12 (0.15)
Household owns a vacuum cleaner	-0.21 (0.35)	-0.02 (0.41)
Household owns a washing machine	0.05 (0.15)	0.24*** (0.08)

	(1)	(2)
	Probability of husband supporting men performing UCW	Probability of wife supporting men performing UCW
Household has access to clean water sources	-0.43**	-0.40**
	(0.18)	(0.17)
Household has access to health facility	-0.32	-0.47*
	(0.21)	(0.26)
Wife is a member of a social organization	0.17	-0.08
	(0.14)	(0.11)
Constant	1.11	2.21***
	(0.86)	(0.82)
Observations	1588	1588
r2		

Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,599

We also observe that age is a significant predictor of support for UCW. The coefficient for husband's age is negative and significant, and for wife's age it is even more so, suggesting that older couples are less likely to support men performing UCW. This is a strong indicator of a generational shift towards more equitable gender roles. Moreover, the regression shows that the number of household members has a highly significant negative effect on the husband's support for men performing UCW. This suggests that in larger households, perhaps with extended family, husbands are less likely to support men taking on domestic responsibilities. The effect of household size on wives' support is not significant.

Regarding income and education variables, household income does not have a significant effect on either husband's or wife's support, which is a key finding. It suggests that support for men's involvement in UCW is driven by social and cultural factors rather than economic necessity. While the husband's education level has a significant positive effect on his support for UCW, its effect on the wife's support is not significant.

A husband's childhood experience of being exposed to domestic responsibilities also plays a significant role in the husband's perception of men performing UCW. Men who were taught to do laundry and to care for siblings are more likely to support men performing UCW. This reinforces the importance of early exposure to gender norms and values in shaping adult attitudes and behaviors regarding gender roles.

Nevertheless, we also find an unexpected result regarding the influence of types of occupation on the probability of accepting men's involvement in UCW. A husband's work status as an entrepreneur or a paid worker has a positive and significant effect on the wife's support for men performing UCW, but not on the husband's own support. This is a crucial and counterintuitive finding: wives are more likely to support men performing UCW when their husbands are employed in entrepreneurial or paid work, perhaps because

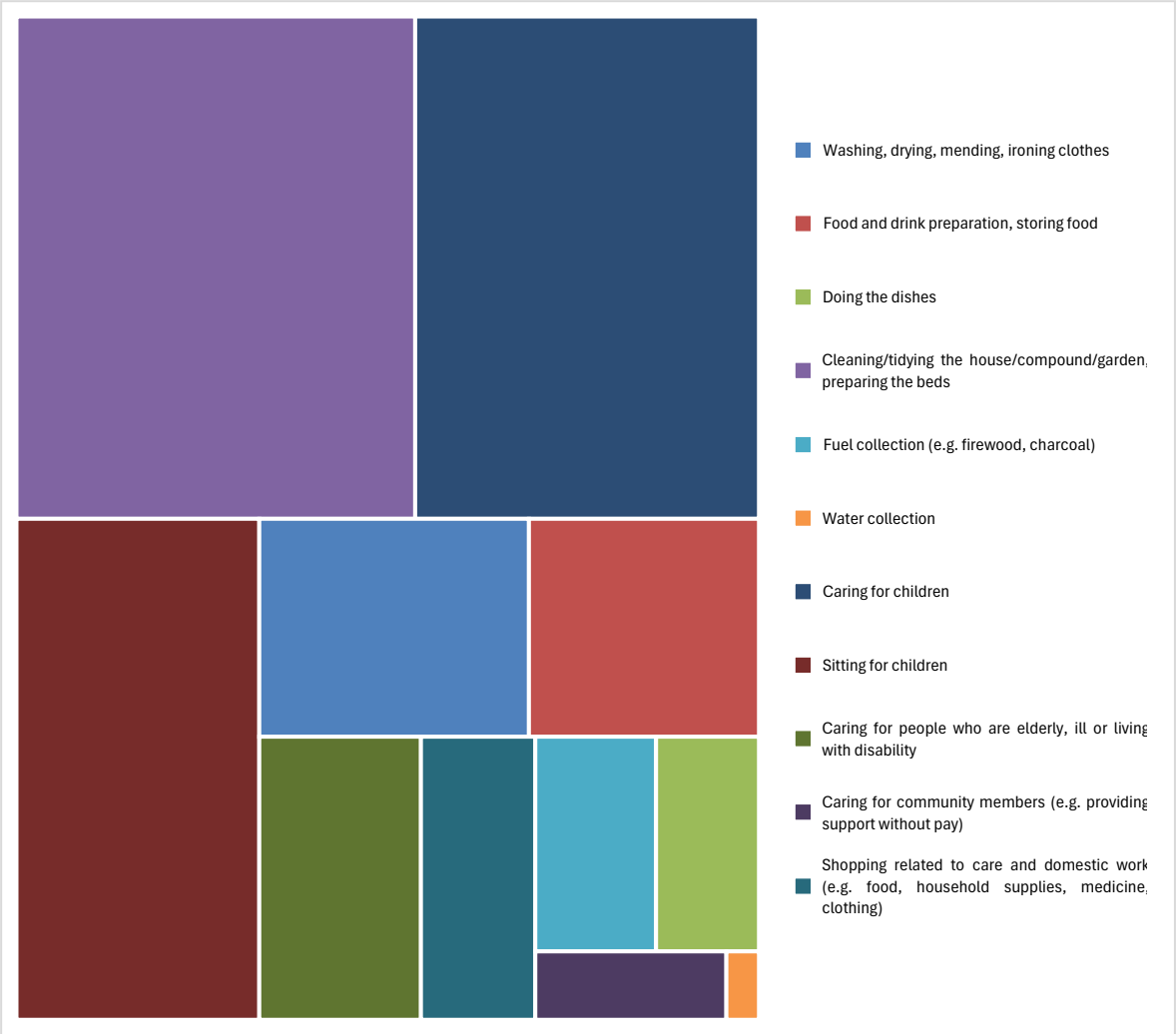
these roles give husbands a stronger position to take on domestic tasks, or because it reflects a more modern household dynamic. Conversely, a wife's work status as an entrepreneur or paid worker has a significant negative effect on her own support for men performing UCW. This unexpected result could suggest that women in the workforce may feel they must maintain traditional domestic roles to compensate, or perhaps they have a different view of the gendered division of labor.

This regression analysis demonstrates that support for men's involvement in UCW is a complex phenomenon shaped by a combination of social, demographic, and behavioral factors. Perceived community norms, which strongly influence both husbands and wives, are the most powerful drivers. There is also a clear generational shift, as younger couples are more likely to be supportive of men's involvement in UCW. While household income is not a significant factor, the work status of both husband and wife plays a complex and sometimes counterintuitive role. Most importantly, a husband's childhood learning experiences of specific domestic tasks, such as laundry and caregiving, are strong predictors of his support for men's involvement in UCW as an adult. These findings underscore that interventions aimed at promoting gender equality in the home must focus on both changing community perceptions and providing early, gender-neutral exposure for domestic and caregiving skills.

3.2 Men's Practices of Unpaid Care Work

Figure 4 presents a treemap chart that illustrates the distribution of various unpaid care and domestic work tasks performed by male respondents. The size of each rectangle represents the greater likeness of daily unpaid activities conducted by the respondent based on the time use analysis. The chart reveals that cleaning activities, including tidying the house, compound, and garden, are the most likely daily unpaid activities that men perform at home. Caring and sitting activities for children are other unpaid activities that are frequently performed by men. Additionally, there are also several other major domestic activities that men usually do, such as laundry activities and meal preparation. The chart reveals that men are also involved in other caring activities such as caring for older adults, the sick, or individuals living with a disability, alongside shopping for items related to care and domestic work (e.g., food, household supplies, medicine, and clothing).

Figure 4. Types of Unpaid Care Work Performed by Men



Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,599

Based on the survey data shown in Table 6, we observe a striking finding that, although many male respondents accept men performing UCW as a normal norm, this perspective is not translated into real practice. About 80% of men in this survey positively support men being involved in care and domestic tasks; nevertheless, their daily activities do not reflect this perception. This similar pattern is found in the households where wives believe that men should participate in UCW, but the husbands seem to have very little engagement in housework. This indicates a significant disconnect between belief and behavior. While there is broad support for men's involvement in UCW, this support does not translate into personal action for most of the population. This could be due to various factors, such as traditional gender roles still dictating who performs the work, lack of time, or the work is handled by others in the household.

A smaller, nevertheless notable, segment of male the respondents (about 11%) are consistent in their perspective and their actions, demonstrated by their active participation in UCW and favorable view of it. This study indicates that a small percentage of families in Indonesia are increasingly fostering intrahousehold gender balance by not only acknowledging the significance of men's roles in domestic matters but also men are actively participating in everyday routines.

Despite our early findings showing that Pandeglang has the largest proportion of people across the four surveyed *kabupaten* who are positive toward the idea of men performing UCW, their belief does not necessarily translate into practice. Pandeglang stands out for having the highest proportion of respondents who "support men performing UCW, but the men do not actually perform UCW" (88.97%). Conversely, Pandeglang has the lowest percentage of respondents who "both support men performing UCW and the men actually perform UCW" (7.52%). This data presents a paradox: while Pandeglang appears to have a very progressive mindset regarding men's roles in UCW, this ideal is not being translated into practice.

Meanwhile, Jakarta Barat shows a different pattern. It has a large segment of respondents who "support men performing UCW but the men do not perform UCW" (74.75%), but it also has the highest percentage of respondents who "both support men performing UCW and the men are performing UCW" (15%). This suggests that while there is still a disconnect, Jakarta Barat has a more active minority that is aligning its beliefs with practice compared with the other regions.

The data paints a complex picture of perceptions and practices surrounding UCW. The most prominent finding is the widespread verbal support for men's involvement in UCW, which, for the vast majority of the population, does not translate into personal engagement. This suggests a significant gap between societal ideals and daily realities. The *kabupaten* analysis reveals regional nuances, with Pandeglang exhibiting an extreme disconnect between positive perception and low practice. Jakarta Barat, while still having a large disparity, shows a relatively larger proportion of the population that is both supportive of men's involvement and the men are actively engaged in UCW. The small percentages of respondents who hold a negative perception of men engaging in UCW (and the men either do or do not perform it) indicate that outright opposition to men's involvement in domestic labor is a very minor viewpoint. The findings are crucial for understanding the challenges in promoting gender equality in the domestic sphere and suggest that future interventions should focus not just on changing attitudes, but on removing the barriers that prevent individuals from acting on their beliefs.

Table 6. Respondents' Perception of Men Performing UCW, by Gender and *Kabupaten*

	Neither support nor perform UCW	Support men performing UCW, but do not perform UCW	Do not support men performing UCW, but perform UCW	Both support and perform UCW
By perception of:				
Male	7%	80.43%	0.69%	11.88%
Female	11.44%	75.98%	0.69%	11.88%
By *kabupaten*:				
Jakarta Barat	8.75%	74.75%	1.50%	15%
Pandeglang	3.51%	88.97%	0.00%	7.52%
Lombok Timur	7.75%	76.50%	1.25%	14.50%

	Neither support nor perform UCW	Support men performing UCW, but do not perform UCW	Do not support men performing UCW, but perform UCW	Both support and perform UCW
Gorontalo	8%	81.50%	0.00%	10.50%

Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,599

Table 7. Characteristics of Men Based on Their Perception and Practice of UCW

Characteristics	Negative perception of men performing UCW		Positive perception of men performing UCW		Sig.
	Do not perform UCW	Perform UCW	Do not perform UCW	Perform UCW	
Age	51.12	47.72	47.71	43.92	<.001
Education level	2.42	2.27	2.77	3.18	<.001
The likelihood of working as an entrepreneur (0 = do not work as an entrepreneur; 1 = work as entrepreneur)	0.51	0.09	0.47	0.37	0.003
The likelihood of working as a paid worker (0 = do not work as a paid worker; 1 = work as paid worker)	0.35	0.72	0.42	0.46	0.060
Number of household members	4.30	4.20	3.90	4.20	0.005
Income	2,940,357	3,272,727	3,253,515	3,411,479	0.669
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to have done at least one hour of UCW per day	38.8	45.4	51.2	55.2	<.001
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to accept men performing UCW as a normal norm	35	27.2	70.2	68.6	<.001
A proportion of men in the neighborhood are assumed to accept wives as breadwinners as a normal norm	19	40	26.4	27.8	0.042

Characteristics	Negative perception of men performing UCW		Positive perception of men performing UCW		Sig.
	Do not perform UCW	Perform UCW	Do not perform UCW	Perform UCW	
The likelihood of being taught to prepare a meal during childhood	0.45	0.45	0.66	0.61	<.001
The likelihood of being taught to clean the house during childhood	0.66	0.63	0.84	0.82	<.001
The likelihood of being taught to do laundry during childhood	0.49	0.54	0.75	0.74	<.001
The likelihood of being taught to care for siblings during childhood	0.56	0.85	0.80	0.76	<.001

Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,599

Furthermore, men who align their belief with their practice seem to live in a neighborhood where the proportion of men performing UCW is relatively high (see Table 7). Men in these categories believe that, on average, about half of men in their neighborhood are also engaged in domestic tasks at least one hour a day. Conversely, this proportion is lowest among respondents who hold negative perceptions of UCW and do not perform it. This strongly suggests that individual perceptions and practices are correlated with perceived neighborhood norms regarding men's involvement in UCW. Similarly, the assumption that men in the neighborhood view men's participation in UCW as a normal behavior is strongest among respondents who have a positive perception and actively engage in UCW. This further reinforces the link between individual attitudes/behaviors and perceived community acceptance.

Qualitatively, we observed what appears to be the relaxation of norms surrounding male involvement in UCW. This is reflected in how certain tasks are deemed acceptable enough to be performed by men, including in public, all while the community is still being constrained by patriarchal cultural norms, which inhibit such involvement from becoming a habit. When a norm is "relaxed", it allows changes in the day-to-day behavior of the people despite the steadfastness of the conservative ideologies (Boudet et al., 2012).

Although men's involvement in UCW is not always considered taboo, the underlying patriarchal ideology sustains the perception that husbands are not expected to engage in it on a daily basis. Men's involvement in care work tasks is framed as "just helping his wife", implying men are only involved in selected situations in which their wives are unable to perform care work (e.g. due to illness, recovering from childbirth). Similarly, research in Australia (Utari, 2018) shows that Indonesian men, when living in a comparatively less conservative environment, are more willing to share childcare and household

responsibilities in order to support their wives' education. However, unless this temporary arrangement is internalized as normative, they are likely to revert to traditional norms upon returning to a more conservative setting.

> I live with my mother and three younger siblings. My mother works as a cake seller. My grandmother and my uncle are also at home. My grandmother usually helps take care of my youngest sibling [one year old], while my uncle sometimes helps sweep, wash dishes, or cook rice, when he is not in a hurry to go to work. My uncle usually needs to be told first [by the informant's mother or grandmother] what needs to be done, and then he does it. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Gorontalo, 16 December 2024)

> Mr. Yanto [pseudonym] engages in agricultural activities, including rice farming and tobacco farming. He also assists his wife in managing a stall where they sell goods and purchase medicine for Mr. Mahsun [pseudonym;, Mr. Yanto's father, who is suffering from a stroke]. Occasionally, Mr. Yanto cooks while his wife is not at home. (FGD, male adolescents, Lombok Timur, 15 December 2024)

> My father can't cook; [well actually] he can, but he wants his meals to be adequately prepared for him and be accompanied [while dining]. We must prepare his coffee too. He only prepares it himself if there is no one at home. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

> If my mother is sick, my father cooks rice and fish. But when my mother is healthy, she cooks and does all the housework. For childcare, my parents share responsibility; usually my father takes us to the grandmother's house. (Interview of diary study, male adolescent, Gorontalo, 17 December 2024)

Additionally, we find that the perception that a proportion of men in the neighborhood assume it is a normal norm for wives to take on the role of breadwinners is highest among men who actively engage in care and domestic work, regardless of their perception of the activities. This suggests that men who perform UCW, even if they hold a negative perception of it, might be in environments where dual-earner households are more common or where wives' economic contribution is more recognized.

> For example, when my mother was not at home, my father also did the dishwashing. However, he engaged in this activity only when my mother was away for a while. (Interview, female duty bearer, Gorontalo, 11 December 2024)

The relaxation of norms was found to be consistent across generations. The results of interviews and FGDs with adolescents revealed that boys are involved in UCW that includes nonroutine activities, such as caring for and accompanying younger siblings while their mothers are working or engaged in other domestic tasks. Male adolescents generally expressed a desire to assist their mothers with domestic work in order to minimize their mothers' exhaustion. FGD participants from qualitative sites cited reasons for their participation in domestic work, including the desire to help aging parents, positive intentions, and the perception that it is a child's obligation to contribute. However, when other individuals, such as female siblings, are available to help with domestic work for their mothers, those male adolescents chose not to take on the responsibility. The predominant rationalizations given for this decision included concerns about peer ridicule and the perception that such responsibilities are inherently feminine. These FGD results support the quantitative findings that peer opinion can influence behavior. Qualitative findings

also show that peer views influence boys' decisions on whether to engage in UCW or not. These findings further suggest that boys' participation in UCW is primarily influenced by their perception of being a good child, rather than being fully internalized as a social norm.

> [The perception of boys participating in domestic tasks such as washing the dishes] is normal because it's our job as children ... [But] sometimes we also feel that washing dishes is a woman's job, so it's usually done by older or younger sisters. (FGD, male adolescents, Gorontalo, 13 December 2024)

> Vina [pseudonym of a girl] usually helps her mom clean the house, wash the clothes of all family members, bathe her grandparents who both had strokes … [Why is Vina the only one who does that?] because Vina is diligent, and she understands that her mother is tired. Vina also helps cook ... She is also the oldest child, and because it is Vina's duty as a daughter. (FGD, male adolescent, Lombok Timur, 15 December 2024)

> My older brother is rarely at home; he goes to work and then plays. If he's at home, he sleeps all day ... My younger brother sometimes helps sweep and wash the dishes. But he often complains when told to sweep and wash dishes; he says, "There is Kak Bia [the informant]. Kak Bia is a girl, [and] she used to do it. Why am I being told to do it?" But he still does it while complaining. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

> When I'm at home, I only help as much as I can, such as washing shoes, helping my mother wash the dishes, and sweeping. I rarely wash clothes, mostly by my mother … That was indeed ordered by my mother. Washing the dishes was also ordered by my mother. Sometimes my mother washes the dishes herself. So if I'm not asked to wash the dishes, I won't do it. (Interview of diary study, male adolescent, Gorontalo, 17 December 2024)

Men who engage in UCW (regardless of perception) consistently report a higher likelihood of having been taught caregiving tasks during childhood, such as preparing meals, cleaning the house, doing the laundry, and caring for siblings, compared with those who do not engage in UCW. For example, the likelihood of being taught to prepare a meal is 0.61 for positive perception/engagement vs. 0.45 for negative perception/no engagement. This pattern is highly statistically significant across all tasks (<.001), indicating that early childhood exposure and teaching of UCW skills are strong predictors of adult engagement in these tasks.

Our qualitative interviews, particularly with duty bearers who have engaged in the redistribution of care work with their partners since their early marriage, also confirm the importance of early exposure to care work involvement and having higher education. Duty bearers tend to come from a family with at least a high school education. More importantly, they grew up witnessing the involvement of both parents in UCW, encompassing domestic and caregiving responsibilities. One of the duty bearers in Gorontalo explained that she was born into a family where her father is a traditional leader, mosque imam, and the primary domestic and care worker, while her mother is employed in the formal sector. The duty bearer's family dynamic, characterized by the interplay of these diverse roles, served as a model for her efforts to promote gender equality within the family unit.

> In the past, the only thing my father didn't do was laundry. But he would clean the house, water the plants, take care of the flowers, which is his hobby, take care of the kids ... My younger brother and I see our parents, especially my father, doing these things, so we just follow [what he did]. (Interview, male duty bearer, Lombok Timur, 11 December 2024)

In addition to the aforementioned factors, qualitative exploration identified several other factors influencing men to engage in UCW. These factors include intervention by the duty bearer, the husband's occupation, and personal motivation, which drives boys to participate in care work. In certain community groups, such as cadres and program facilitators at the village/*kelurahan* level, and recipients of interventions related to gender equality advocacy, husbands' involvement in UCW is more evident compared to community groups that do not receive interventions. In the two intervention villages in Lombok Timur, for example, husbands' involvement in UCW extends beyond basic activities such as sweeping. Their participation extends to activities such as laundry and serving food to guests, which are conventionally regarded as the domain of wives and daughters. A similar case has been documented in some intervention recipient families in Gorontalo.

Meanwhile, in Gorontalo, the involvement of men in UCW can be influenced not only by the presence of interventions/advocacy from duty bearers, but also by the husband's occupation. Men whose occupations involve care-related tasks, such as cleaning and cooking, tend to take initiative and express neutral attitudes towards UCW. For example, tuna fishermen who travel for up to four days at a time are forced to cook, clean their eating utensils, and wash clothes. Upon returning home, they still engage in these activities, sharing responsibilities with their spouses. Similarly, soldiers who sometimes have to cook for their team would find cooking an acceptable task to perform.

> Men doing domestic work is a common thing. This practice is attributed to the communal nature of household responsibilities among individuals residing in the same household. (Interview, male parent, Gorontalo, 16 December 2024)

> [In the context of the tuna fishermen community] if the husband is not engaged in seafaring [and] has no other work, he can go into the kitchen to help his wife. They are not ashamed [to help their wives]. It is a common to see husbands engaged in activities such as watching over their children sea-bathing, doing the laundry, and washing dishes. (Interview, extension of duty bearer, Gorontalo, 12 December 2024)

Certain personal motivations can drive boys and male adolescents to participate in care work. Based on our interviews, they tend to start at a much later age, usually only after being explicitly asked by their parents. However, sometimes they do so for their convenience or out of the initiative to help their mother.

> Well, he [her son] would only do chores that help him. He would wash his own shoes and wash his own dishes. He would help me in washing dishes if I am sick. (Interview, female parents, Gorontalo, 16 December 2024)

> If there is a pile of laundry, I wash it, because I feel sorry for my mother, who is pregnant and sick. So, I wash all the clothes. Sometimes I ask Soni [the informant's younger brother; not his real name] to help. But he often declines, opting instead to play with his peers ... I also told Soni to wash his own plates and clothes. I remind him that our mother is pregnant

> and sick, and thus, we must collectively undertake the responsibilities of domestic tasks. I also assist in procuring clean water for cooking. Sometimes I also cook fried rice if there are no side dishes. (Interview of diary study, male adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)
>
> My mother frequently performs domestic tasks. She does everything. I only help if my mother asks me to … I choose to clean [rather than babysit and cook] as cleaning tasks, particularly sweeping, require less time. (Interview of diary study, male adolescent, Lombok Timur, 17 December 2024)

This analysis, based on both quantitative and qualitative evidence, reveals several key insights into the factors associated with men's perceptions and practices of UCW. Younger, more educated men are more likely to engage in UCW. While income does not appear to be a significant differentiating factor, entrepreneurial roles may be less associated with UCW engagement. Crucially, perceived neighborhood norms strongly align with individual perceptions and practices, highlighting the influence of the social environment. Most importantly, childhood teaching of UCW skills emerges as a powerful predictor of adult engagement, illustrating the value of early exposure in shaping gender roles within the household. These findings have a major bearing on interventions aimed at promoting greater male involvement in UCW, suggesting that efforts should focus on early education, fostering supportive community norms, and addressing traditional biases that may hinder engagement.

3.3 Intergenerational Transmission of Unpaid Care Work Norms

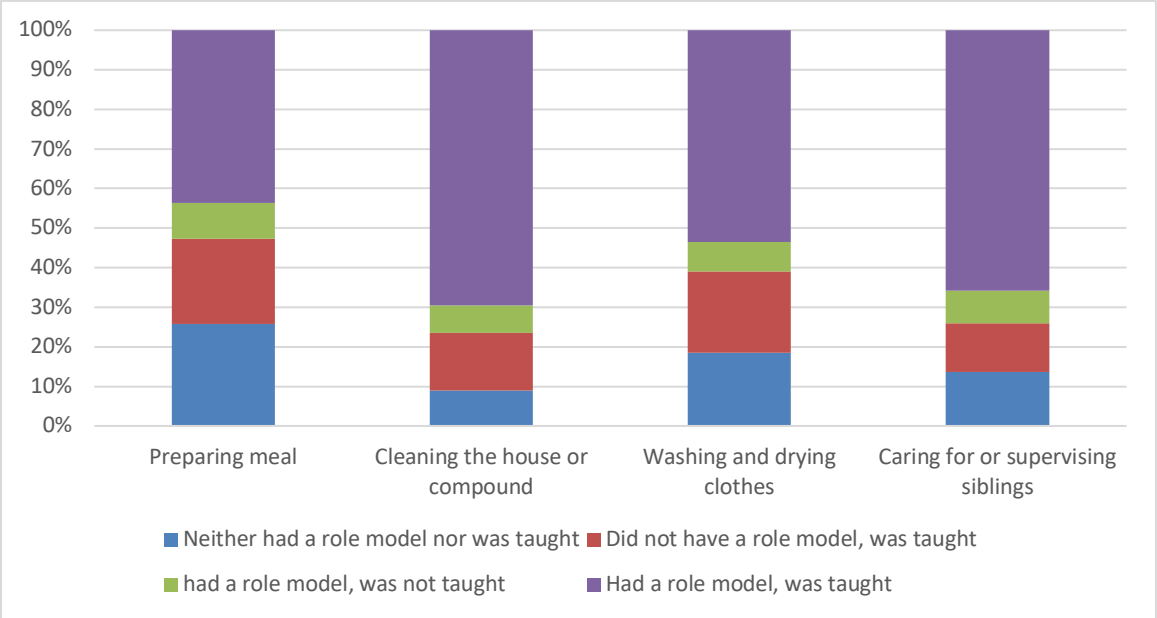
Based on the previous analysis of factors that influence men's positive perception toward UCW, we learn that exposure to these activities during their childhood will have a positive impact on their perception of their involvement in performing the tasks. Having positive experiences, either by being taught by parents or by witnessing male adults peform care and domestic work at home, would increase their acceptance of men's involvement in UCW as a normal norm.

Our survey reveals a predominant trend across all tasks that are commonly delegated to younger males, which are meal preparation, cleaning, laundry, and caring for siblings. A significant proportion of respondents who perform these tasks are those who had a role model and were taught to perform these tasks during their childhood. This suggests that for many, learning household tasks is a combination of observational learning and explicit instruction, reinforcing both knowledge and practical skills. This pathway is most dominant in tasks such as "washing and drying clothes" and "caring for or supervising siblings," where it accounts for the largest share of how these skills were acquired. Conversely, the smallest segment across all tasks consistently comprises the group of males who neither had a role model nor were taught these skills. This indicates that very few individuals acquired these essential skills without any form of guidance or observation, highlighting the importance of social learning in domestic skill acquisition.

The survey, presented in Figure 5, also reveals that in the case of meal preparation, while a the significant proportion of males both observed a role model and were taught the task,

a substantial proportion (around 20–25%) either only had a role model and were not explicitly taught or had been taught but without the presence of a specific role model. This suggests that meal preparation skills can be acquired through various pathways, including more informal observation or structured teaching. Furthermore, the proportion of males who neither had a role model nor were taught is relatively larger here compared to other tasks. Similar to the meal preparation task, the proportion of men who had no exposure to doing laundry is slightly higher than the proportion in cleaning and sibling caring tasks. This pattern is likely due to the prevailing societal perception that washing and drying clothes is more associated with female responsibilities.

Figure 5. Men's Exposure to UCW Throughout Childhood



Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation
n: 1,010

Regarding cleaning, we find that compared with other tasks, this task has the largest proportion of men who reported that they had been taught by their parents and had a role model when learning this task during childhood. Conversely, only a small proportion of males reported to neither observed examples of male adults performing the cleaning tasks nor were trained by their parents in their childhood. This evidence suggests that cleaning activities, compared with the others, tend to be more gender neutral and are very likely taught to boys. We also learn that many males had been exposed to caring for and supervising other children since they were children. The data shows that it is quite common for men in their childhood to see male adults caring for children and to be trained to care for their siblings.

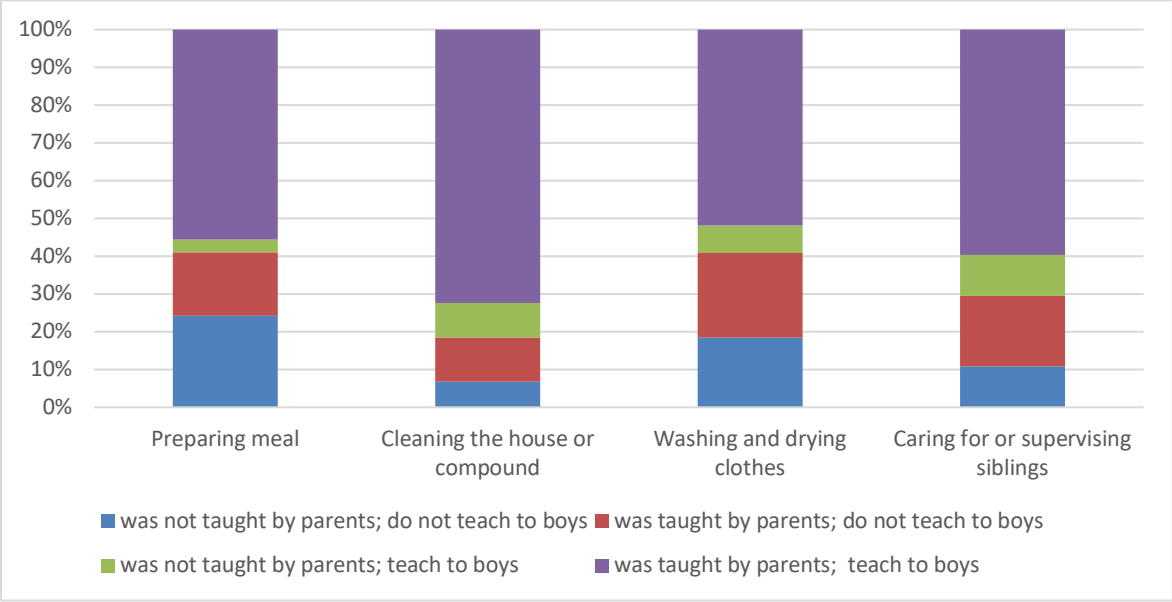
These quantitative data are supported by qualitative findings from Lombok Timur and Gorontalo indicating that the transfer of norms within members of the household occurs through everyday interactions and social expectations. Internalization occurs through family dynamics—whether in the form of an explicit request commonly directed toward female household members or indirect silences, where male members of the household are present but not asked to participate in certain tasks. Our findings show how male

adolescents shared their observations related to adult interactions within their families, as well as the types of care work activities performed by male adults.

> Faza's father [pseudonym] does not contribute to domestic tasks such as laundry or meal preparation. But he is frequently entrusted with cleaning the house [sweeping], a task assigned to him by Faza's mother. (FGD, male adolescents, Lombok Timur, 15 December 2024)

> When he's not working selling chickens, sometimes my father helps clean the house and accompanies Alam [the informant's youngest brother; not his real name] to play while my mother prepares meals … My father also likes to help sweep the yard and cook rice using a magic com [rice cooker]. (Interview of diary study, male adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

Figure 6. Intergenerational Transfer of UCW among Males



Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,010

Across all four unpaid care tasks that are commonly taught to boys (see Figure 6), we found a significant proportion of men who were taught these tasks throughout their childhood also teach their sons. This indicates a strong intergenerational transfer of these skills and, more significantly, a prevalent practice of teaching them to boys. This is a crucial finding, suggesting a potential shift towards a more equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities.

However, we also find a proportion of men who never learned to perform domestic tasks and never taught their sons to do them as well. While smaller than the primary category, its presence across all tasks, particularly in meal preparation and laundry tasks, indicates a segment of the population where these skills were not learned from parents and, consequently, are not being passed on to boys. This could represent individuals who learned these skills outside the traditional parental teaching dynamic, or perhaps where the specific task is less relevant to their current household structure.

Moreover, our qualitative interviews with youth and their mothers indicate that children are generally beginning to be involved in care work between the 4th and 5th grade. Nevertheless, there are patterns indicating that girls are being asked to be involved at a much younger age, especially when they have siblings. Initial tasks in which they are usually asked to do are observing or accompanying their younger siblings while their mothers are performing other duties. Other chores, such as cleaning, cooking, collecting water, or buying groceries, tend to occur at a much later age.

> I feel bad for my mother. My sister is still young, so she can't do anything. Father does the weeding in front of the house, and then he eats and sleeps. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

As elaborated in the section above, Gorontalo has a more relaxed approach to male involvement. Parents in Gorontalo reflect this in their aspirations for their children's future. Compared with parents in Lombok Timur, parents in Gorontalo conveyed their aspiration to have their child take up equal responsibility within their future household. As parents in Gorontalo reported that they have been observing an equal division of labor in the household since they were young, they would hope to model such behavior for their children's future family. Parents in Lombok Timur are less salient about their aspirations on how care work is supposed to be implemented in their child's future household and focus more on achieving a harmonious marriage.

> But I don't want to be too tough on my son. He will be able to do [care work] on his own time. But daughters, they tend to be aware of the responsibility on their own. They [daughters] would wash their own clothes … For my sons, I hope he can understand his wife. You don't necessarily need to talk about what each of them need to do [regarding care work]. I tell my son, "If you can't do the washing, at least just bring your dirty clothes to the laundry." (Interview, female parent, Lombok Timur, 12 December 2024)

> I hope that my son will become a good husband in the future. He should be able to do the domestic work, do all the work that needs to be done around the house, care for his spouse, and be responsible. (Interview, male parent, Gorontalo, 16 December 2024)

There are also other forms of motivation that encourage children to be involved in care work. Most distinctly, however, is the difference in the sense of obligation between male and female adolescents. Based on our interview with girls, their motivation to be involved in care work come from observing their mothers and developing a sense of obligation to assist their mothers in cleaning, cooking, and taking care of their siblings. Meanwhile, boys tend to be involved at a much later age after being explicitly asked by their parents in relation to their own comfort, such as cleaning their own room and washing their own dishes.

> I need to help Mom clean around the house because [I] have siblings, so it would be too much. Brother will be put here; if he isn't watched, he will splash water around, so he has to be watched. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

> I want to help Mother as much as possible after school. Every day after school I would clean the house, sweep the terrace. Then I would wash the dishes after lunch and help Mom in

> making sure our siblings take a nap. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

Tasks in which youth were involved were also different concurring with the gender norms within the community. Therefore, there is a different pattern in which boys and girls are involved between Gorontalo and Lombok Timur. In Gorontalo, where norms on male involvement are more relaxed compared with Lombok Timur, boys are also involved in a wider range of care work activities. As evident in the interviews, both boys and girls in Gorontalo reported being involved in, as well as being taught, cooking, cleaning of the house, washing clothes, supervising siblings, and washing dishes. Although it is also important to note that some of them reported on performing some of those tasks for themselves, unlike girls who are commonly performing those tasks for other members of the house as well.

> There is no difference between what boys and girls do. I see my father doing them [care work] too. Like my father, I clean and cook as well. If Father cannot do the cooking for us, then I would do the cooking. There is no division of labor. I just see what happens at home once at home. (Interview of diary study, male adolescent, Gorontalo, 13 December 2024)

On the other hand, there is a clear differentiation in the types of tasks conducted by boys and girls due to gender norms and beliefs associated with specific tasks. In Lombok Timur, both parents and boys reported that they are likely to be involved in tasks that are physical and manual labor, such as getting water from a well, shopping for grocery, or sweeping. If washing clothes is required outside their home, parents will ask boys to participate. Girls, however, reported being involved in a more extensive list of tasks encompassing cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes as well.

> Sometimes, [her son] would help in getting water from the drilled well from the village over there. There is a drilled well in this village, but it smells of sulfur and lime. (Interview, female parents, Lombok Timur, 13 December 2024)

> Boys help in sweeping here. It is not shameful for them to be involved because they do it at school as well. When they are in charge, they have to sweep at school as well. (Interview, female parents, Lombok Timur, 13 December 2024)

> Mom does care work very often, such as cleaning. Mom does everything. I would like to help, but I am scared. Like helping Mom with cooking, I am scared that I wouldn't do so well, and Mom would scold me. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

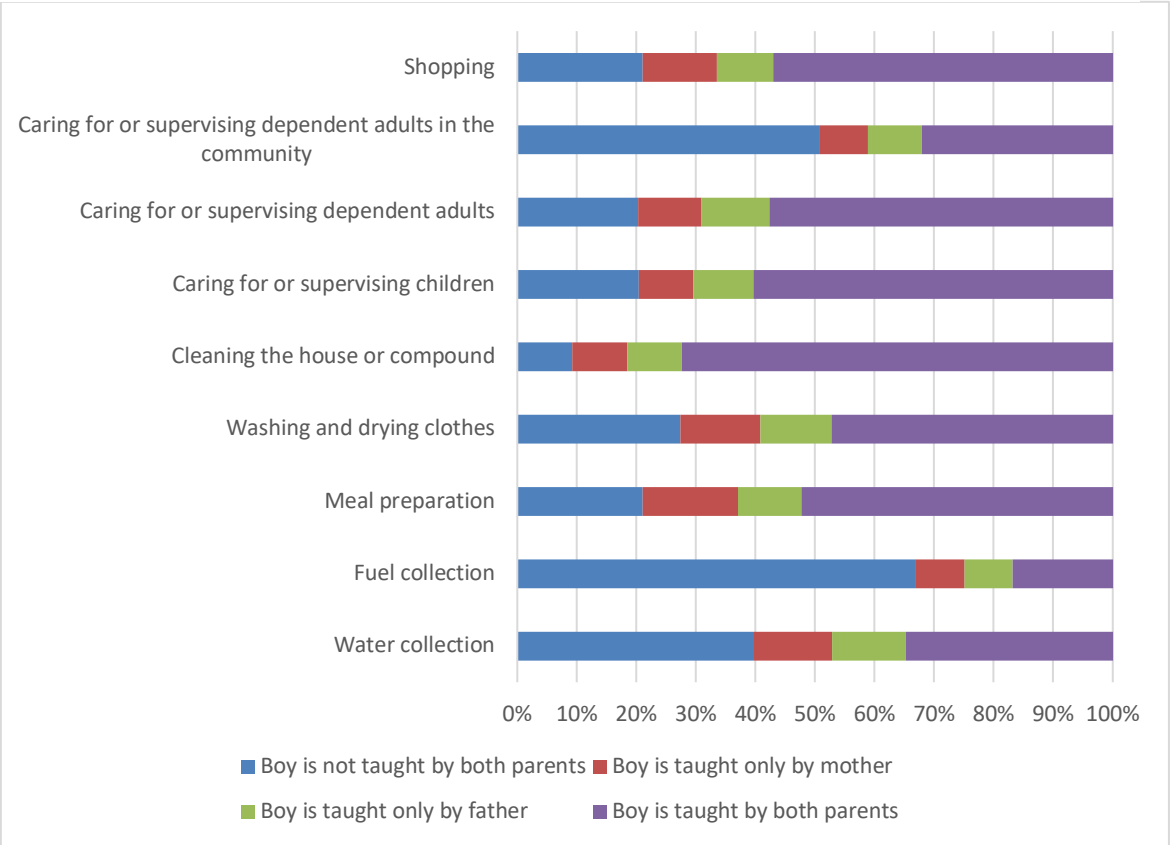
> The one who gives the housework is my mother. In cases when she is not at home, such as when she is training in Mataram for two days and staying at a hotel, I do all the housework. I have been able to cook since elementary school, such as cooking rice, and have been skilled in cooking since junior high school. (Interview of diary study, female adolescent, Lombok Timur, 16 December 2024)

Our findings provide encouraging evidence of a widespread practice where men who were taught UCW skills by their parents are, in turn, teaching these skills to boys. This suggests a positive trajectory towards greater gender equity in domestic responsibilities. However, the presence of individuals, who—despite having been taught care works skills by their parents—do not pass these skills on to boys, or where such skills are neither learned nor

taught to boys, highlights persistent gaps and the enduring influence of traditional gender roles. These findings underscore the ongoing need for interventions and societal discussions to ensure that boys are systematically equipped with the skills necessary for shared care work, thereby contributing to more balanced and equitable households in the future.

Nevertheless, educating children, including boys, to actively engage in domestic tasks should be the responsibility of both parents. By consistently setting examples and teaching the children, it is expected that children, both boys and girls, will develop an awareness of the sharing of domestic responsibilities across gender. Both parents, or one of them, introduces domestic tasks to boys, as shown in Figure 7. We observe that both parents typically teach boys the majority of tasks. This indicates a shared responsibility in imparting essential life skills related to household and care work. This pattern is particularly pronounced in tasks such as caring for or supervising children, supporting dependent adults, shopping, and preparing meals. This suggests that these types of activities are more socially acceptable for male involvement, or perhaps these are tasks where both parents are regularly involved in the learning process due to their shared participation. Conversely, many parents no longer teach their sons to perform tasks such as collecting fuel and water. This is probably due to the condition that the water pipeline infrastructure in Indonesia in general is quite sufficient, and that the majority of households already use liquid petroleum gas for cooking.

Figure 7. Parents' Involvement in Teaching Boys UCW



Source: survey on people's perception of men's involvement in UCW, authors' calculation

n: 1,010

While both parents play a significant role overall, there are instances where the mother is the primary or sole teacher. This is most noticeable in meal preparation and laundry tasks. This reinforces traditional gender roles where mothers are often considered the primary educators for tasks typically associated with female domestic responsibilities.

Meanwhile, the father's role as the sole teacher consistently represents the smallest proportion of involvement across all tasks. However, it is slightly more visible in caring for or supervising children and cleaning the house or compound. This suggests that although fathers are less frequently the sole educators, they still contribute independently to teaching boys specific skills related to caregiving and household management.

The data highlights a positive trend towards shared parental responsibility in teaching boys UCW skills, particularly for tasks related to caregiving (children, adults) and daily household management (shopping, meal preparation, cleaning). This suggests a gradual erosion of rigid gender roles in the transmission of domestic knowledge. However, traditional patterns persist, with mothers still playing a more prominent sole teaching role in tasks such as meal preparation and laundry. The significant proportion of boys who are not taught fuel and water collection by either parent warrants further investigation into how these skills are acquired, or whether their relevance is diminishing. These findings are crucial for understanding the ongoing evolution of gender roles within households and informing interventions aimed at promoting a more equitable distribution of domestic labor by ensuring boys are comprehensively equipped with essential life skills.

IV. Advocacy Strategies to Promote Male Involvement in Unpaid Care Work in Indonesia

As mentioned earlier, promoting male involvement in UCW in Indonesia is a niche topic. Therefore, there was a significant challenge in identifying duty bearers who focus on the topic. Given such challenges, duty bearers in this study were purposively selected as those who promote gender equality through issues of parenting and fatherhood, women's participation in the public sphere, preventing violence against women and domestic violence, and migrant workers' rights. They have not conducted specific advocacy to promote men's involvement in UCW in Indonesia. However, we found that their advocacy efforts address men's involvement in UCW to some extent, whether directly or indirectly.

4.1 Different Existing Strategies Implemented to Promote Male Involvement in Unpaid Care Work

This study identified five strategies or approaches that duty bearers implement in advocating gender equality. In the context of this study, we examine these strategies/approaches more broadly and present them as attributable to promoting male involvement in UCW. The five advocacy strategies/approaches are (i) media, (ii) religious sermon, (iii) political, (iv) grassroots or community organization, and (v) program-based or village-level mentoring program.

4.1.1 Media

One of the mediums used by our duty bearers to campaign on the issue of UCW is social media, whether in the form of alternative media or a personal account. Magdalene as an alternative media is a women-focused publication to provide content and perspectives that are inclusive, critical, empowering, and entertaining. It channels the voices of feminists, pluralists, and progressive groups. Meanwhile, in Gorontalo, the duty bearer leveraged the use of social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, to tell her personal stories, which reflect on family inequality and issues associated with unequal distribution of UCW.

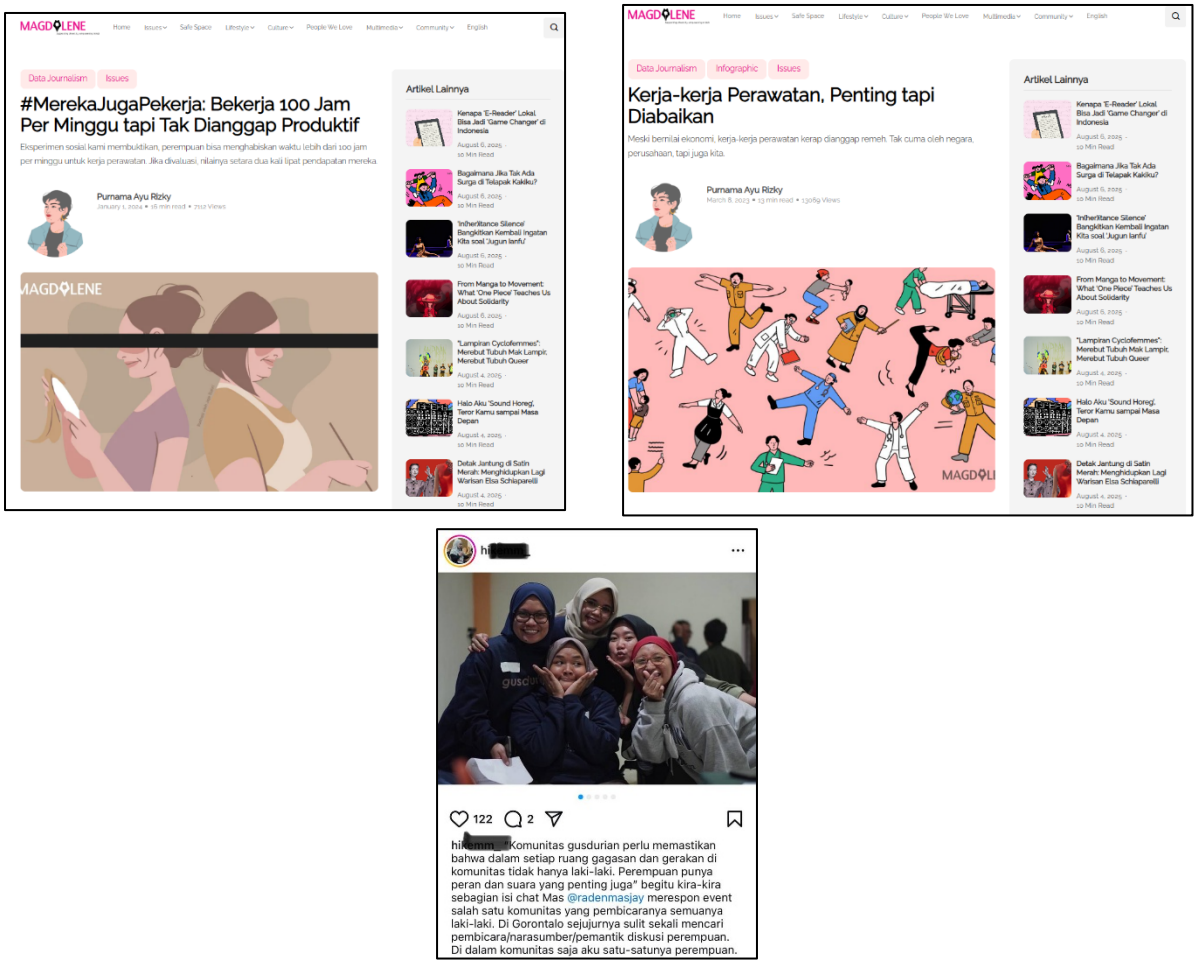
Alternative media offers a platform for discussing issues related to diversity, minority representation, and gender, as well as for challenging government policies from a community-based perspective, unlike mainstream mass media. Alternative media promotes access for all citizens within their reach, with media literacy education serving an integral part of this goal. While discussing UCW issues, Magdalene explored these topics in greater depth and examined them from a structural perspective. Magdalene actively seeks grants to support its research on UCW, with results shared through its websites and

social media. Their social media content, in particular, serves to spark discussion with subscribers.

> We use the European approach on our approach to journalism, known as constructive journalism. Using this approach, when we bring up certain issues, we engaged with the netizens as a friendly discussion as we come together to find a solution. This is a new approach that we are trying to implement. (Interview, female duty bearer, Jakarta, 3 December 2024)

Magdalene used the care economy framework in their campaign by posting articles and social media posts that attempt to quantify the cost of each care work activity—such as cleaning, cooking, and caring for family members—to engage the audience in dialogue and shift public perception toward greater recognition and reward for UCW.

Figure 8. Sample of Articles and Social Media Post



Meanwhile, the duty bearer in Gorontalo optimized her personal social media account to disseminate information on the issue of care work and actively engage her audience. Through her social media account, she would talk about her family life, equality in the distribution of housework, issues on domestic violence, and women's empowerment. Nevertheless, throughout the advocacy journey, those various forms of media have faced challenges and resource constraints, while also navigating their weaknesses and strengths in efforts to advocate for UCW and change social norms.

a) Challenges

One of the most persistent challenges in using alternative media and personal social media accounts as advocacy tools for UCW in Indonesia is ensuring sustainability, especially in the face of limited resources. Unlike mainstream journalists backed by large media institutions, independent journalists and advocates often work alone or in small collectives without the support of editors, fact checkers, or legal teams (Yeo, 2007). Time, funding, and human resources constraints—as resources are often stretched thin in grassroots activism—hampers their ability to produce consistent, high-quality content. With minimal institutional support, these actors must rely heavily on informal networks, voluntary contributions, and personal labor, making long-term and strategic engagement challenging to maintain.

> We don't have many people working for us [Magdalene]. We only have three reporters, so we constantly have to think about how to strategize and maximize our resources. (Interview, female duty bearers, Jakarta, 3 December 2024)

In addition to resource constraints, alternative media faces difficulty in gaining and sustaining public attention amid a saturated digital landscape. Competing with larger media organizations that can dominate social media algorithms through volume and promotion budgets, personal and independent platforms often struggle to break through the noise.

> But unfortunately, sometimes my posts are misinterpreted. While I am talking about meeting someone with the same value as myself, it was interpreted as seeking a wealthy husband. They would romanticize my post. I am talking about equality. I am talking about acceptance of our spouse as they are. (Interview, female duty bearer, Gorontalo, 11 December 2024)

It is particularly difficult for topics like UCW, which already faces societal resistance. Strong cultural denial toward gendered caregiving roles leads to public disengagement or even hostility, making healthy discourse difficult. Moreover, content shared through personal accounts is vulnerable to misinterpretation; advocates cannot control their audience, and messages are sometimes cherry-picked or taken out of context to reinforce conservative narratives. These circumstances do not only undermine advocacy but can further marginalize those championing care equality.

b) Resources

Initially, donor-funded financial support enabled Magdalene to take its first step in advocating for UCW. However, after the donor-funded program ended, Magdalene continued to advocate for the care economy, using its resources as a step to change the social norm that household chores are a basic life skill that should be done by both men and women. Magdalene still considers UCW an important issue that should be recognized in society. Different from Magdalene, Nurhikmah H. Biga, as a Gusdurian coordinator in Gorontalo, uses her own financial resources, such as internet data packages.

Both Magdalene and Gusdurian use websites and social media (video reels) as part of their campaign strategy. Magdalene said that the target viewers are Generation Z, who are not

yet aware of the importance of the care economy. Magdalene advocates the issue through an approach using Instagram and a website. It employs accessible language to help the target audience understand the issue of UCW. Meanwhile, Nurhikmah H. Biga often uses Facebook and Instagram to reach her target audience, who are mostly adult females. Using an Islamic approach, she often writes on Facebook and creates videos on Instagram to raise awareness about equality in the family and UCW.

4.1.2 Religious Sermon

Our qualitative interviews with various duty bearers revealed that different forms of religious sermons are being used as a vehicle to disseminate knowledge regarding equality within marriage. Religious sermons in general refer to preaching activities conducted by renowned religious figures—male (*kiai*) or female (*ustazah*). Based on the interviews, duty bearers often hold regular religious study groups to discuss everyday issues, including the division of labor in care work, marital relationships, and gender roles within the household.

Taklim (Islamic study group) are commonly arranged by a particular and homogenous group of people, such as in Gorontalo, in which members of weekly *taklim* are part of the same community. Therefore, this enables members of the *taklim* to engage in interactive discussion. Meanwhile, national-level duty bearers often engage through invitation-based *taklim*, in which the preachers are given autonomy to discuss various matters they deem important.

The use of religious sermons as a tool for influencing gender norms hinges on a culturally and theologically informed approach. The approach is being favored by duty bearers because it allows them to engage directly with people and gradually and consistently influence them. This approach is also deemed less hostile, as the objective is to provide space for interactive discussion between scholars and laypeople who are motivated to learn about religion.

> I still use the traditional strategy of preaching. Try to tell the story in a gentle way. The most important thing is to deliver knowledge. (Interview, male duty bearer, Cirebon, 9 January 2025)

To emphasize the value of the messages conveyed that address real-life social challenges, these sermons are being supplemented by concrete solutions. This is the case particularly with sermon lessons that can be implemented. For example, religious sermons in Gorontalo are being supported by organizing women-based economic cooperation to develop products from their seafood products.

> Just telling them about the knowledge, solution, and theories is not enough. We know the problem in marriage is often related to economic issues … We have to create a solution that will address economic issues. (Interview, female facilitator to duty bearer, Gorontalo, 12 December 2024)

a) Challenges

Despite being promising, this strategy faces several challenges. The interpretation of religious texts remains contested, particularly among conservative clerics who may oppose gender-equal readings of scripture. As evidenced in the document, the speaker faced a trial by over 300 *kiai* in Lirboyo for advocating progressive religious views.

Another obstacle is the legal and cultural reinforcement of patriarchal norms, such as Indonesia's Marriage Law of 1974, which institutionalizes the male as the head of the household. These legal frameworks often legitimize unequal divisions of labor at home and hinder reformative discourse.

Lastly, the challenge of capacity and scale remains. Not all religious leaders have the training or willingness to engage with gender-sensitive theology. Further, such sermons must compete with deeply embedded social expectations and media that may perpetuate traditional gender roles.

b) Resources

To perform a religious sermon that supports equality within marital relationships, duty bearers must expand their resources. Firstly, they increase their access to literary materials, experts, and scholars, as well as further networks, to reinterpret classical texts such as Kitab Kuning[2] in relation to equality and justice in domestic roles.

Institutions like RAHIMA, Fahmina, and Puan Amal Hayati provide foundational frameworks for gender-aware Islamic discourse. These organizations not only train religious leaders but also produce accessible interpretations of classical texts relevant to contemporary gender issues. Networks like Salam Puan and Kitab Kuning Study Forum (FK3) offer forums for female scholars and activists to participate in critical discussions. Through their affiliation with gender-aware Islamic discourse and feminist networks, duty bearers are introduced to various gender-sensitive issues on the ground, coupled with training, enabling them to consistently be exposed to recent gender issues and their solutions.

4.1.3 Political

Policy and regulation are often perceived as the foundation for the ecosystem that promotes male involvement. However, in the Indonesian political and policy landscape, there has been little momentum in advancing this agenda. Despite increasing awareness of gender inequality and global conversations on care work, the issue remains marginalized in Indonesian politics. Cultural norms and few advocacy networks within the policy landscape hinders political efforts to promote shared domestic responsibilities between men and women.

[2]traditional Islamic texts or classical works on various Islamic disciplines studied in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools)

a) Challenges

Deep-rooted cultural perceptions of gender roles in Indonesia pose a significant barrier to advocacy efforts within the national political landscape. The concept of UCW is still associated with being "too Western" and is perceived to be incompatible with Indonesian values, which are centered around *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and a strong sense of familial duty. Such a norm is then translated into the fact that care responsibilities are viewed as a shared familial obligation rather than an economic or political issue.

> We [Indonesian] are a community-based culture, *gotong royong*, with a deep sense of "with the people". We are not like the people abroad [Western]. We help each other; family is core … There is yet a widespread movement promoting unpaid care work for men. I don't believe there will be a movement here and if there is, it will be very small because it clashes with our culture. (Interview, female duty bearer, Jakarta, 31 January 2025)

This cultural divide presents a significant strategic challenge. Efforts to introduce care economy frameworks or UCW policies must confront the perception that such initiatives are "Western imports" and thus incompatible with local traditions. This perception has contributed to the lack of interest of political figures to advocate for the issue, which is reflected in the scale of the UCW movement.

The political cycle in Indonesia led to the common populist approach of politicians determining key issues by politician. Currently, care work is not seen as a critical or pressing issue among the people, as mentioned by one of our respondents regarding her constituents. UCW does not receive substantial attention in her political agenda, primarily because it lacks resonance with voter concerns. Instead, the issues most relevant to her voters are closely tied to her position in Commission VII, which focuses on industrial development, MSMEs (UMKM), the creative economy, tourism, and public infrastructure. These sectors reflect her voters' practical needs and economic priorities. As such, policy advocacy around care work is overshadowed by more immediate economic issues that dominate the political landscape in her electoral district.

b) Resources

Political lobbying and networking emerge as key resources in advocating for gender-responsive policies, with duty bearers claiming "network is the biggest asset" in politics. Whether through alliances with like-minded legislators or through strategic engagement with party ideologies, political actors must navigate complex terrains to effect change.

> To advocate in politics is to network or have a network. Having a network is the biggest asset. For example, if there is a massive protest, you do not have anyone inside the assembly listening to the protest. What are you going to do? There must be lobbying. Lobbying can be in many forms, through relations, or through a think-tank. Even inside [member of representatives] each has their own way to lobby their interest. (Interview, female duty bearer, Jakarta, 31 January 2025)

The role of political party plays a significant part in shaping the priorities and limitations of a legislator's advocacy work. In other words, a political party can be seen as either an asset

or a challenge. As elaborated, politicians' political stance and legislative focus are influenced by the party's broader ideology and platform. As emphasized by one duty bearer:

> Who I am is not separate from my party. I am a member of a political party. I am a representative of my party's vision and mission. My party focuses on a cooperation-based economy and infrastructure over social welfare. So unpaid care work is not an issue we would exhaust resources to lobby. (Interview, female duty bearer, Jakarta, 31 January 2025)

While duty bearers are allowed to express personal commitment to women's empowerment, their ability to advance certain gender-related issues is shaped by party direction. This underscores a broader structural limitation in the policy process—individual legislators may have progressive views, but their room to maneuver is often constrained by the ideological stance and strategic goals of their political party.

In Indonesian politics, advocacy strategies are significantly shaped by a figure-based approach, where political influence and policy direction are closely tied to individual leaders rather than institutions. By leveraging influential political figures—particularly those who are already vocal on gender issues—as role models and champions, advocates can personalize and humanize the issue of UCW.

When a respected leader speaks out about caregiving roles or visibly engages in them, it sends a powerful message that caregiving is valuable and worthy of recognition, regardless of gender. This approach has shown to influence public perception and normalize shared caregiving responsibilities.

4.1.4 Grassroots or Community Organization

Our qualitative interviews suggest that another strategy employed by duty bearers is the use of informal channels to expose the community to progressive gender norms. These channels are driven by grassroots initiatives, community-based networks, and volunteer-led collectives, rather than formal institutional programs. The movement are particularly active in urban areas, where the rapid growth of diverse communities as well as exposure to feminist norms and values are more rampant. Against this backdrop, organizations like Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru (ALB) and community leaders in places such as Gorontalo have been instrumental in challenging traditional gender roles and promoting caregiving as a shared responsibility.

> Because the recruitment of members is voluntary-based, their spirit is still intact. What we touch is the heart and values that can be internalized ... ALB is not a project but rather a way of approaching men's involvement in women's issues, including domestic work. If ALB were a project, it would be finished or over. (Interview, male duty bearer, Jakarta, 29 November 2024)

A core strategy employed by these organizations involves shifting the conversation away from "women's issues" and toward more universally relatable entry points, particularly parenting and the role of fathers. As one informant from ALB explained:

> The issue of parenting is easier for men to understand because firstly they are blind about the issue, and also, they can immediately see the consequences to the child if they are fatherless—not having a father during their development. So that is why we framed the issue of gender and equality of marriage within parenting issues. (Interview, male duty bearer, Jakarta, 29 November 2024)

By focusing on fatherhood and child development, organizations create an emotional and personal appeal that resonates with men, inviting them into care work from a position of responsibility rather than obligation.

Another key approach is the use of role models as tools for social learning and transformation. These organizations leverage local leaders, community influencers, and even sports peers to demonstrate alternative forms of masculinity. This kind of peer-to-peer modeling, particularly in male-dominated social spaces, has proven effective in initiating critical reflection and behavior change.

> Our approach is becoming a model, and we think it is the most effective in deconstructing the male paradigm. For example, if there is a woman walking by and we are playing basketball, I would talk to them about catcalling and have a discussion with them so we can reflect on the action together. (Interview, male duty bearer, Jakarta, 29 November 2024)

a) Challenges

Despite these promising strategies, organizations face substantial challenges, both structural and cultural. Deeply rooted patriarchal norms and religious interpretations continue to reinforce the idea that care work is inherently feminine. This often hinders efforts to redistribute domestic roles. Moreover, the absence of strong government policies on male involvement in domestic work further compounds the difficulty.

> In Gorontalo, society is still patriarchal. The religious perspective that is being used as reference for the daily life of the people here still considers men to be the leaders and women to be the citizens. (Interview, male duty bearer, Gorontalo, 28 November 2024)

> The problem is, we do not have the regulation that can be used as a reference to promote equality within marriage. The regulation always misses such things. (Interview, male duty bearer, Jakarta, 29 November 2024)

At the community level, sustainability remains a major hurdle, especially when projects are short-term or donor driven. Without ongoing support, the shift in mindsets and behaviors often regresses. This highlights the need for a long-term investment in capacity building and institutional support to consolidate gains.

> Naturally, the main challenge is the cycle of the project. If the organization or the community is unable to search for funding, then all our efforts and strategy will be halted. The project ends there. (Interview, male duty bearer, Jakarta, 29 November 2024)

b) Resources

In terms of resources, the majority of initiatives rely heavily on volunteerism and passion-driven activism. ALB, for example, is not a legally registered body and operates without formal funding. Nevertheless, its members show extraordinary commitment. The group's

structure—free from bureaucratic obligations—allows its members flexibility in collaborating with feminist movements and shaping ALB's agenda based on shared values.

> Actually, we are not that financially strong. But what we have is commitment. Members of ALB have other jobs. This is our side activity, but it is our passion. ALB is our passion. (Interview, male duty bearer, Jakarta, 29 November 2024)

Training and education also form a foundational resource. Many activists trace their involvement back to feminist advocacy and human rights training. These formative experiences equip activists with the frameworks and language necessary to challenge social norms and educate others.

> I was invited to join a training on advocacy in 2005. That is where I was exposed to issues regarding equal access to natural resources in consideration of gender disparity. I joined other training sessions afterward. […] I keep up with different gender issues until now through training and communities. (Interview, male duty bearer, Gorontalo, 8 December 2024)

Finally, strategic engagement with institutions and younger generations is crucial. Several informants described themselves as mentors, helping younger activists bridge generational gaps and adapt advocacy to evolving societal challenges.

4.1.5 Program-Based or Village-Level Mentoring

The last type of intervention or advocacy strategy is a program-based approach or village-level mentoring. According to program requirements, a number of people/groups follow this strategy for a specific period of time. This strategy typically employs advocacy materials that are disseminated within the period of time, which serve as a reference while accompanied by mentors or facilitators during the program.

Strategies with a program-based or village-level mentoring approach are implemented by duty bearers and their affiliates in Lombok Timur (including Gema Alam—the Equality School/Sekolah Setara program, Akademi Paradigta—the Family Reform/Keluarga Pembaharu program, and Advocacy for Indonesian Migrant Workers/ADBMI—the Dream Man Award/Pemilihan Laki-Laki Idaman program). These programs serve as an educational platform for facilitated groups or program recipients, particularly on environmental issues, gender equality, and migrant workers. Although UCW is not a priority issue and is not specifically advocated for, duty bearers generally include it in their advocacy materials, either directly or indirectly. For example, ADBMI—a partner of ALB in Lombok Timur—created the Dream Man Award program to promote a change in the image of men in society, especially among the groups of migrant workers they facilitate. In this program, wives, children, and neighbors rate men based on their involvement in domestic work and care. This rating system directly or indirectly creates social incentives for men to become more actively involved in UCW.

a) Challenges

A major challenge to the program's sustainability is the limited duration of the interventions. On the other hand, changing social norms requires a long process and time.

Without ongoing support, especially continuous facilitation, program participants tend to discontinue the practices of gender equality, including promoting men's involvement in UCW, as they have learned during the intervention program.

Additionally, cultural and religious resistance, which views men as the primary breadwinners, complicates efforts to encourage men's participation in UCW. Despite emerging support from various religious leaders, there are still individuals who strongly reject the idea of men participating in UCW. Traditional views, ingrained over many years, require a sustained and persuasive process to change. As a result, while there have been many positive developments in men's participation in UCW, this engagement remains affected by the dichotomy of male and female roles. Some communities still view certain domestic tasks as off-limits for husbands.

Another challenge is limited human resources. From a supply-side perspective, this constraint is related to the number of mentors/facilitators who can serve as an extension of the duty bearer in delivering interventions at the village level. In certain conditions, this limitation can result in mentors/facilitators facing internal consequences or pressure from family and community due to their involvement in the program. For example, one of the facilitators had to end her marriage because she demands participation in the program, which resulted in conflicting perspectives with her spouse regarding gender equality in the household.

Meanwhile, from a demand-side perspective, the number of program participants is limited by budgetary constraints, with an average of 10 to 20 individuals per village. Compared to a village's population, this number is relatively small, which limits the impact of the intervention's reach. Therefore, one of the main limitations of the program-based strategy is its reach, both in terms of the number of participants and the distribution of coverage, which is still limited to certain areas, depending on the availability of funds. The sustainability of the program continues to depend on external funding. In the event of an unstable or reduced funding source, there is a high risk that the program will be discontinued before the expected impact is achieved. To mitigate these internal financial challenges, duty bearers and their program administrators or associated entities must prioritize increasing the autonomy of the program through its integration into village policies or community-based initiatives.

Resistance within the family also affects the effectiveness of the program. Not all program participants who receive intervention are able to immediately apply the understanding gained during the intervention program in their daily lives. Participants continue to face challenges within their family environment, particularly from spouses or parents who may hold traditional views about the division of household chores.

b) Resources

As a program-based strategy, the allocation of financial resources from various donors plays a key role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the program. This financial support facilitates activities, including the development of educational modules and social campaigns that focus on changing gender norms. The long-term viability of intervention

programs is achieved through budget sustainability, which allows them to run longer and reach more communities.

Collaboration with local governments, especially village governments, is also an important element in the implementation of these programs. The role of the village head, traditional leaders, and religious leaders is particularly important in strengthening program acceptance at the community level. In addition to providing space for activities, village governments also help integrate programs into village policies. For example, in one of Akademi Paradigta's intervention villages, the village government allocated the budget from the Village Fund (Dana Desa) to finance additional program participants. Furthermore, the Kabupaten Government of Lombok Timur has expressed its intention to collaborate with Akademi Paradigta to replicate the program in several villages. Additionally, networking and collaboration with other entities, such as women's and environmental organizations, directly or indirectly, facilitate the expansion of the intervention's scope. Collaboration within these broader networks offers the potential for duty bearers to gain greater support and access to more substantial resources.

The presence of mentors/facilitators from the community is another crucial resource for the effectiveness of the program. These individuals, who are considered to have undergone a transformation in their understanding and practice of gender equality, are expected to act as agents of change within their respective communities. With the involvement of mentors/facilitators from the local community, the dissemination of gender equality messages can be executed with a more contextualized approach, which is expected to be more easily accepted by the community.

Thus, access to information from duty bearers regarding external funding for the program, the establishment of collaborative relationships with various entities, and the involvement of mentors/facilitators have become strengths for the sustainability of the program. The facilitated group mentoring model has also proven to be a particularly beneficial approach, fostering the emergence of local champions, or individuals who have become prominent advocates for gender equality in their respective communities. These individuals serve as living role models, demonstrating the potential for changing social norms and inspiring their communities to follow suit.

Religious leaders' support further strengthens the program's effectiveness. According to duty bearers, dissemination or campaigns conducted through Friday sermons and Quran recitation groups have been successful in reducing community resistance to men's involvement in UCW. The integration of gender equality principles into religious teachings in these programs was identified as a key factor in their increased acceptance by communities with strong religious values.

4.2 Learning from Existing Strategies to Promote Male Involvement in Unpaid Care Work

The different advocacy strategies/approaches outlined above have been implemented over several years, and to some extent, some appear to have effectively increased men's involvement in UCW. These strategies adopted by different duty bearers capitalize on

fostering deep emotional commitment and intrinsic motivation, enabling them to persist despite social stigma or resistance from their own families and communities. However, personal conviction alone is insufficient; supportive networks, access to platforms, and alignment with culturally resonant narratives are needed to sustain effective advocacy. This study pinpoints the lessons that each of these strategies can impart.

The media, particularly alternative media such as Magdalene and personal social media accounts used by activists, are important channels to talk about UCW issues. The media has a role in shaping public opinion and revealing the reality of unequal relations at the domestic level. The use of familiar language, visual approaches such as short videos, and the integration of issues into everyday narratives (economic, religious, and cultural) can help people understand the importance of equality in domestic work. These culturally embedded approaches help duty bearers navigate resistance by legitimizing care work advocacy through familiar, trusted narratives.

Religious sermons conducted by progressive religious leaders have become a relatively more accommodating way to encourage social change. Preachers try to connect religious texts with the reality of inequality in household relationships by inserting messages about gender equality into their recitations and sermons. This strategy shows that a religious approach that considers a culture's specific characteristics can reduce cultural resistance and create opportunities for dialogue within religious communities. However, challenges still arise from conservative interpretations and from many religious leaders or preachers in relation to their understanding and communication of gender equality values.

The political strategy shows that it is not enough to change norms through community programs. Advocating through public policy is also necessary. This strategy requires political networks and favorable political figures. Even at the lowest administrative unit, for example, collaboration with local authorities—as seen in the Akademi Paradigta initiative in Lombok Timur—can provide critical financial and symbolic backing, such as by the allocation of the Village Fund (Dana Desa) for care-related programs. Institutional endorsement boosts legitimacy and enhances the reach of campaigns.

However, advocacy for UCW in the Indonesian political context faces many challenges. Some legislators continue to perceive the issue of UCW as being too “Western” and incompatible with the local values of mutual cooperation. Given the significant role of individual figures in shaping advocacy within the policy process, the lack of political champions for the issue of UCW resulted in the absence of political networks and the limited capacity of legislators to make the issue a priority. Thus, the issue of UCW is often overshadowed by party affiliation and pressure from constituents.

Organizations such as ALB and ADBMI demonstrate that change can begin at the community level through emotional and relational approaches. ALB and ADBMI's grassroots/community organization strategy suggests that social change is more likely to emerge through horizontal approaches with peer and community involvement. For grassroots movements, personal networks of duty bearers or initiators are key to the sustainability of their movement. These networks offer emotional solidarity, operational support, and pathways to engage key decision-makers.

Meanwhile, strategies with program-based intervention models—such as Sekolah Setara, Keluarga Pembaharu, and Pemilihan Laki-Laki Idaman—require a structured curriculum and consistent assistance from facilitators. Facilitators' support at the village level cultivates local champions who serve as agents of change. However, program-based or village-level mentoring strategies have their challenges. These challenges include program sustainability, limited funding, as well as internal resistance from families and communities toward facilitators and program participants.

It can be concluded that the media plays an important role in creating different narratives. However, it has yet to shift dominant perceptions of UCW, as the issue continues to be considered a feminist issue or "women's issue." Religious sermons effectively introduce new ideas, such as UCW, to communities that uphold spiritual values, but the impact depends on the competence and stance of the preacher. The lack of institutional and public support limits the formal space that political strategies can create through policy. Grassroots/local communities can shift the concept of masculinity, such as what it means to be a man, by encouraging men to talk to each other through peer-to-peer approaches and by making fatherhood more personal. However, these communities often do not have the long-term support they need to make real change. Meanwhile, limited reach and low program sustainability constrain the intensity and depth of program-based or mentoring interventions.

Based on the mapping of the five advocacy strategies/approaches taken by duty bearers, there is one thing in common: changes in social norms—especially related to men's involvement in domestic work—take place slowly and are based on individual experiences and local contexts. The mapping of these strategies also shows that we need a personalized, emotional, and contextual approach to encourage slow changes in social norms. Whether through media, religious sermons, communities, or programs, the most impactful strategies are those that touch people's personal lives and build awareness through values and realities that people already experience in their daily lives. However, all strategies have challenges in terms of sustainability, implementation, and cultural and political resistance.

This study, in particular, found that grassroots/community organizations are more likely to advocate for changes in norms related to men's participation in UCW. By starting with fatherhood and caregiving roles as the entry point, ALB and ADBMI focus on values that already shape men's experience in their daily lives. This approach can reduce resistance because it does not feel like it is judging or breaking down norms directly, but rather through personal reflection. ALB and ADBMI also use a peer-to-peer approach that allows men to learn from other men who have experienced role transformation in the household. This approach creates emotional closeness and increases empathy among men. Through community dialogue and role models, the strategy encourages change in the way men perceive masculinity, family, and their role in domestic work. This is also in line with the quantitative results that identified peer effects and the role of community in influencing men's perceptions and actions regarding UCW. Furthermore, grassroots/community organization strategies, as implemented by ALB and ADBMI, tend to be flexible and adaptive, as they can adjust to local realities and culture. This is important given Indonesia's diverse social context.

However, since these strategies are community-based and often voluntary or semi-formal, they are limited to certain communities. To make a wider impact, grassroots/community organizations need support from the government and other institutions. This support should also include empowering local facilitators and communities to continue advocacy independently after the program ends. As changes in social norms require time and continuity, the strategies need to be integrated into village programs or local government funding to ensure sustainable financing. Meanwhile, to be scaled up and replicated, community activities need to measure their impact by improving documentation and developing indicators of social change (e.g., changes in men's perspectives, attitudes, and involvement in UCW).

By referring to Sumner's (1906) four categories of social norms, analysis of the five duty bearers' strategies shows that changes in social norms in Gorontalo and Lombok Timur are more likely to be at the level of individual behavior and daily routines (usage) than at the level of changes that produce new social norms that have collective legitimacy (folkways, mores, or customs). Likewise, the strategies analyzed have not yet reached the point of creating new norms, as indicated by the concept of norm relaxing (Boudet et al., 2012). The situation which has developed reflects a shift toward a relaxed norm. Men start performing housework, but this is not yet considered a new social norm. To put it simply, men engaging in housework is still considered unusual.

Learning from existing strategies, we find that the transformation of social norms related to men's involvement in UCW should be a gradual process. We use Sumner's (1906) four categories of social norms to explain this process. Social norms start changing at the level of usage. Then, they are internalized in folkways. Finally, they are recognized by society and culture in the form of customs and mores. The quantitative findings indicate that respondents who acquired various UCW skills (preparing meals, cleaning, washing clothes, and caring for siblings) from their parents tend to teach these skills to their sons. It shows that unpaid care tasks are passed down from one generation to the next, and it is common to teach these skills to boys. This suggests that it is possible to shift gendered divisions of labor across generations, which could lead to an equitable distribution of household responsibilities. However, to establish a new social norm, we need to formalize gender equality in domestic work through progressive policies and an educational curriculum. Sweden, Iceland, and Norway are some examples of countries that have included gender equality issues in their national education curriculum as well as paternity leave policies to promote male involvement in childcare (Rocha, 2021; Rege and Solli, 2013).

Integrating gender equality education into the formal education system is a long-term and systematic way of promoting changes in social norms related to UCW. This strategy targets adults and also reshapes perceptions rooted in childhood and adolescence. This makes it more likely that new social norms will form (beyond *usage*—referring to Sumner's four categories of social norms), enabling gender equality norms in households to become part of the values that are accepted and practiced by Indonesian society.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

In conclusion, findings from our study illustrated a nuanced landscape regarding gender norms and male involvement in UCW within households, suggesting the complex relationship between norms and behavior. Based on our household survey, the majority of both men and women tend to have a positive perception toward male involvement in UCW. However, despite community acceptance of male involvement in UCW, it did not translate into more equity in household responsibilities. Household chores and care activities are still largely performed by the women of the household.

Men who accept the progressive norms of male involvement in UCW and are performing care work in their household tend to be younger and educated. Men's behavior is also shaped by their surroundings and upbringing. As evident in our findings, men who are involved in their household's care work, were exposed to care work from childhood and perceive that other men in their surroundings share the same progressive views on male involvement in care work. These men are also likely to hold jobs with regular working hours.

With the progressive shift of social norms, there is potential for continued advancement, which can be amplified through community-based initiatives. As suggested, men who hold progressive views on care work and engage in it tend to have been exposed to caregiving tasks since childhood. These men are also more likely to teach their sons care work tasks, particularly related to cleaning and caring for family members. Furthermore, among male youth, UCW is perceived more as a responsibility and life skill, rather than as a gender-based division of labor.

Initiatives rooted within the community are likely to be most effective in shifting social norms as they engage directly with people through broader outreach and leverage existing informal channels, groups, and platforms within the community. Advocacy regarding male involvement in UCW was found to be framed within other gender issues—issues that have more prominent and immediate consequences, such as domestic violence and parenting. Our study identified five advocacy strategies commonly used by duty-bearers to promote the issue of UCW, namely (i) media—publication of campaigns, articles, and opinion pieces to spark discussion among its subscribers (ii) religious sermon—discussion with participants about equality within the household from a religious perspective, including the division of labor regarding UCW; (iii) Political—lobby by parliament members to promote the issue of UCW; (iv) grassroots or community organization—use of informal channels initiated by grassroots actors or community groups to expose the community to progressive gender norms; and lastly, through (v) program-based/mentoring intervention—implementation of designated interventions to encourage behavioral changes among its recipients. Given the complexity in shifting social norms, particularly those that intertwined with cultural and religious beliefs, advocacy

approaches need to cultivate emotional, contextual, and relational proximity to the communities.

5.2 Recommendations

a) Broaden the development of "organic communities" by engaging in informal advocacy within male communities.

In order to expand the formation of "organic communities" that promote male engagement in UCW, it is important to conduct informal advocacy within male communities using a peer-to-peer approach. These organic communities grow naturally—but they must be maintained—with members connecting and interacting on their own, not because of outside pressure or strict rules. This creates a more relaxed and open space to share ideas and experiences. To make it easier to join these communities, the agent of change (or partner of the duty bearer) should also be male. This helps build trust and reduces resistance, especially since some men may feel uncomfortable hearing messages about gender roles from women. Using a peer-to-peer approach makes the message easier to accept. Instead of giving orders, this approach allows for mutual learning and reflection. Men can talk openly without feeling judged and relate better to each other's experiences. It's also important to show, not just talk about, how to perform UCW. This allows others to see how it is done, discuss it, and be inspired to do the same at home. The main goal is to encourage adult men to share UCW responsibilities as well as to teach male adolescents and boys these responsibilities from an early age in order to foster long-term shifts in gender norms.

b) Encourage the government to support the normalization of male involvement in UCW by using public service announcements and media.

To promote gender equality and shared responsibility within households, it is essential that the government actively support the normalization of male involvement in UCW. One effective approach is by using public service announcements (PSAs). These messages—shared through television, radio, social media, digital out-of-home (e.g., Videotron and Megatron), and other platforms—can challenge traditional gender roles and reshape public perceptions of UCW tasks. PSAs help change the stereotype that UCW is solely a woman's duty. The government can play a pivotal role in legitimizing and spreading this message. Through collaborations with media agencies, influencers, and community leaders, PSAs can reach diverse audiences. These campaigns can also highlight the emotional, developmental, economic, and societal benefits of shared UCW responsibilities. Policies that encourage men's active participation, such as paternity leave, can complement these campaigns. Government messages can encourage cultural change and help create a more equitable and balanced distribution of domestic responsibilities.

c) Integrate gender equality education and normalization of male involvement in UCW into the educational curriculum from elementary school onwards through formal approaches.

Changing social norms, such as gender roles, requires significant time as these norms are deeply tied to cultural values and passed down over many generations. The first and second recommendations—along with the ongoing advocacy by duty bearers—aim to bring about changes in the present day and current generation. To normalize male involvement in UCW for future generations, more progressive measures are needed. Drawing on practices from Sweden, Iceland, and Norway, formal approaches can facilitate the transformation of UCW practices in Indonesia. We can integrate gender equality education and the normalization of male involvement in UCW into the educational curriculum as early as possible, starting from the elementary school level. With the rollout of the 13-Year Compulsory Education policy this year, gender equality education can begin even earlier at preschool/kindergarten levels. This integration can be achieved by providing examples of male and female characters sharing responsibilities for various UCW tasks within the family context. Textbooks, teaching and learning processes, role-playing activities, and exam questions can provide these examples. Instilling the value of male involvement in UCW from an early age not only fosters acceptance but also accelerates the formation of new social norms in which such involvement is viewed as normal.

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