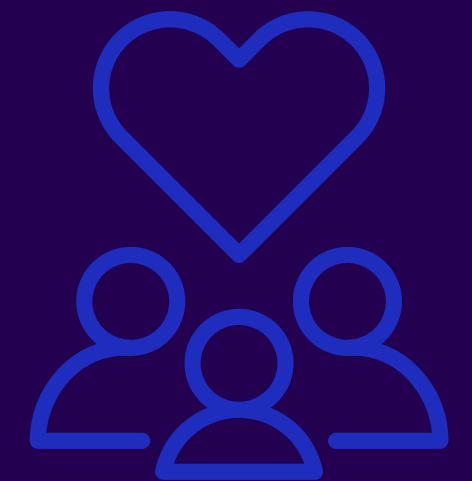


Employers

▶ Family, Personal Life, and Work Balance during COVID-19

Situation

Possible Measures to Implement



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 **winwin**
Gender equality means good business



CERALC

Conducta Empresarial Responsable
en América Latina y el Caribe

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Work for a brighter future



Consequences from the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic are unprecedented. For many people, this rapidly evolving situation equates to the disruption of education and childcare, family illnesses, and potential loss of household income. Furthermore, the increase in unpaid care work, as caused by this worldwide crisis, affects women more than men. Unpaid care work is a key factor in determining whether women remain employed, and affects the quality of the work that they complete. Without further action, women's inequality in the workplace will grow.

With this motivation in mind, the project for Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America

and the Caribbean presents this Guide, which outlines concrete actions for employers, based on **Family-Friendly Policies and Other Good Workplace Practices in the Context of COVID-19: Preliminary Recommendations that Employers Can Implement**, as developed by the ILO, UNICEF, and UN Women; as well as the ILO's Work-from-Home Guide and diverse ILO materials on work and family and care based on Convention 156.

The goal is to make it easier for companies to incorporate, to the extent of their abilities, actions aimed at improving working conditions and their worker's quality of life.

▶ Current situation

Women are disproportionately affected by the global COVID-19 health pandemic and its related socioeconomic crisis. School closures, intensive housework, and care needs are increasing the already disproportionate share of women's unpaid care, with high risks to their mental health.

The COVID-19 crisis is making clear:

- ▶ The importance of and necessity for the care of dependents.
- ▶ The conflict between combining housework with work and care for dependents.
- ▶ Care tasks are primarily, and unequally, performed by women.
- ▶ Workers are unlikely to adequately perform at their jobs while achieving caregiving activities.

School Closings in the Region, as of May 2020, According to UNICEF data

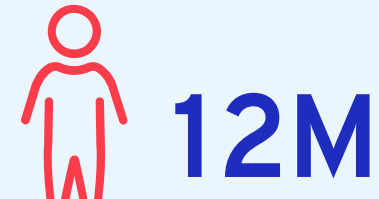
[See Source](#)



Total number of countries where schools are closed.



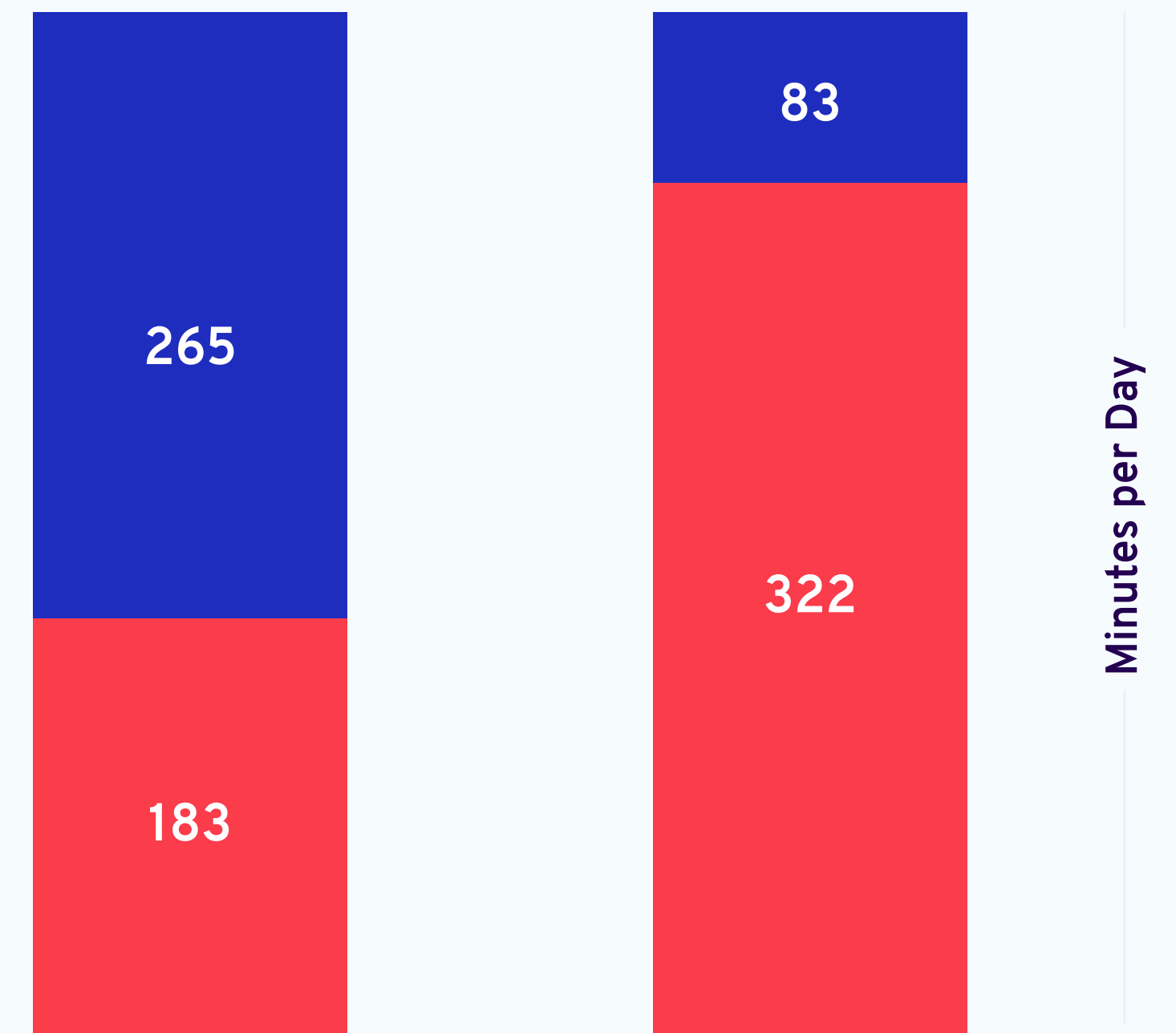
Number of affected children, from preschool to high school age



Number of children and adolescents out of school



Total population of students outside the educational system, in Latin America and the Caribbean.



♀ Women

♂ Men

● Paid work

● Unpaid care work

Gender equality is linked to the division of productive and unpaid work

[See Source](#)



Diverse players are involved in addressing this co-responsibility of care, and multiple policies can be implemented.

▶ A shared responsibility

Greater co-responsibility is required in two ways. At the societal level, a redistribution of responsibilities between families, markets, and the government is required. Likewise, between men and women, it is necessary to redistribute family responsibilities, as has already happened with productive work.

- ▶ Companies can be part of this solution, by implementing an approach of Responsible Business Conduct.
- ▶ Workers can make a huge contribution to changing attitudes and behaviors.



67.7%

Work and family responsibilities are the norm
The average worker in the world experiences this situation.

▶ Starting points

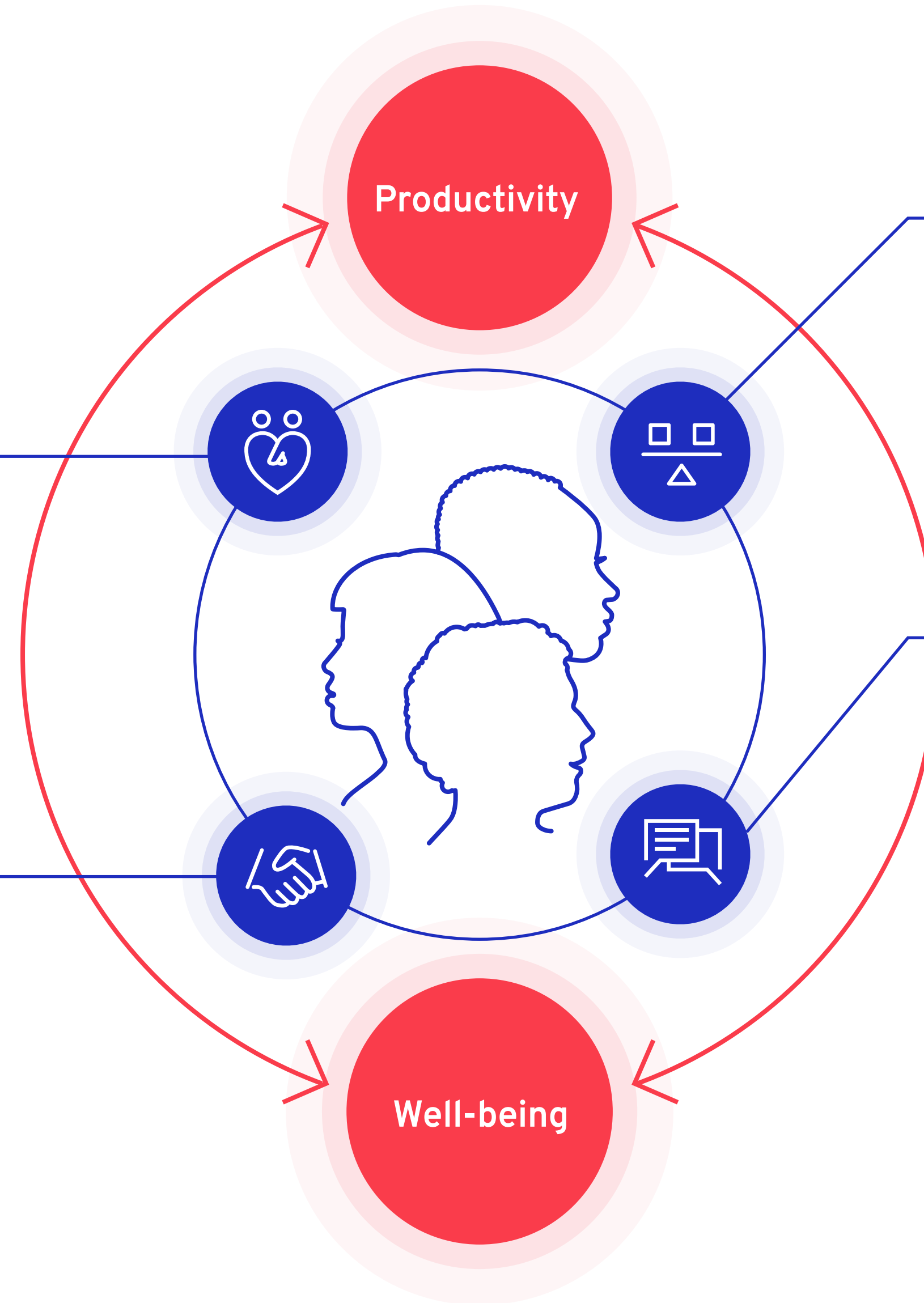
For business action

Empathy

Do not ignore the fact that, without a doubt, many of your workers are experiencing difficult times, covering many shifts and roles without having made the conscious decision to do so.

Agreed Measures

Reach agreements between both parties that allow for meeting employer expectations while carrying out workers's required care activities.



Gender Approach

Establish measures that encourage gender equality and pay attention to vulnerable groups. In other words, avoid, at all costs, taking measures that reinforce stereotypes or gender roles.

Collaborative Dialogue

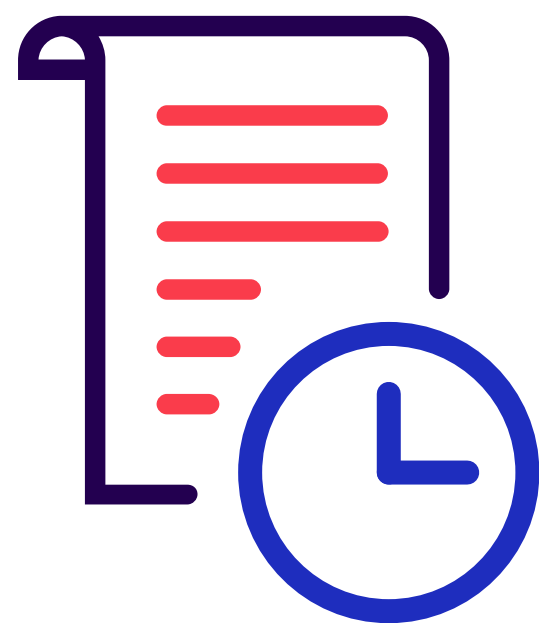
This allows employers to meet the most pressing needs of workers and their families.



"To achieve social justice, it is necessary to develop a people-centered approach to the future of work."

Action #1

▶ Implement flexible work arrangements



Characteristics

- ▶ These measures grant workers greater freedoms regarding when and where to fulfill their work obligations.
- ▶ They support workers in fulfilling personal or family needs, and achieve a better balance between work and family life.
- ▶ They improve productivity during challenging circumstances.
- ▶ They are particularly important within the context of widespread school closures and restricted childcare options.

In order to implement these measures, it is necessary to evaluate what type of flexible hours best meets the needs of workers and their families, in turn guaranteeing continuity of operations.

Examples

- Flexible conditions that allow workers with family responsibilities to work at the time and place that is most convenient for them: flexible time of entry and exit to work, possibility to choose or change shifts, possibility to shorten meal breaks and accelerate departure time, flexibility in their choice of holidays, etc.
- Support workers in their caregiving responsibilities, so they maybe as productive as possible in the event that care work and family responsibilities increase. For example, employers can be flexible in how they evaluate productivity, focusing on results rather than hours worked. Any problem regarding performance should be discussed openly between superiors and workers.
- Ensure that parents have enough time to support their children's learning and development, and to dedicate time to stress management.

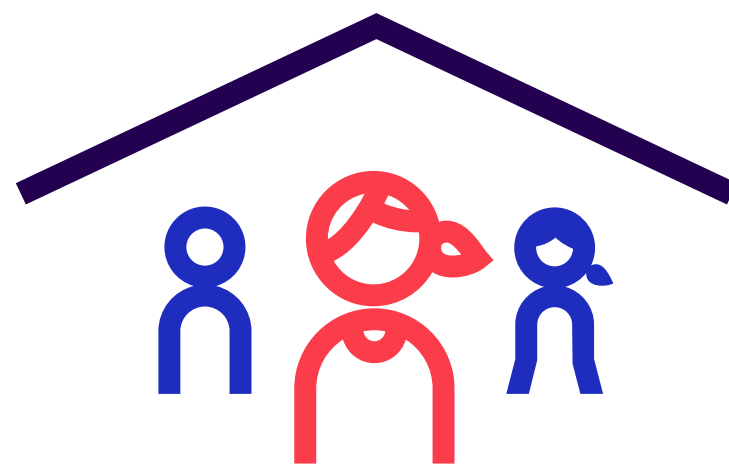
Action #2

▶ Support working parents via safe and appropriate childcare options, within the context of COVID-19 and the barriers to accessing childcare

- ▶ Provide information on the availability of childcare services, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Consider a combination of support measures that reflect the needs of workers and their children.

These may include:

- On-site childcare centers (as appropriate in the context of COVID-19)
- Emergency childcare
- Facilitate or resolve schooling issues for the children of frontline workers (including janitorial workers and other sanitary workers).
- Subsidies for childcare and adolescent care
- Collaborations with external childcare providers during emergencies (private or public)



Action #3

▶ Allow workers to take time off from work to attend family members' care needs

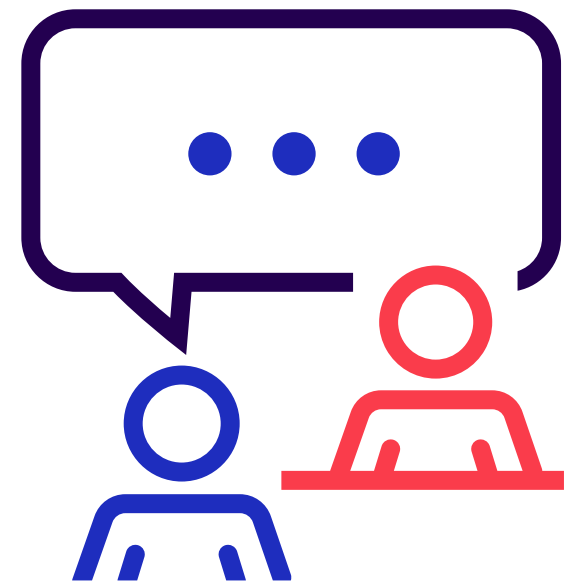


Characteristics

- ▶ These represent additional permits to those already included in current legislation; they facilitate that workers with a dependent family member may attend to their family member's care needs.
- ▶ Allows workers to take care of family members without risking their jobs
- ▶ Includes the use of paid vacations or unpaid leave to care for family members.

Action #4

▶ Support and counseling measures



Characteristics

- ▶ Consists of giving advice and support so that workers can balance work and family.
- ▶ Seeks a cultural change that allows for a healthier distribution of tasks, by strengthening positive masculinity and responsible fatherhood in workers.

Examples of these Measures

- Offer personal and family counseling, in both social and psychological terms.
- Provide information on the distribution of domestic and care roles.
- Ensure that training is given during hours convenient to the all workers.

▶ Summary

Diagnostic

- ▶ Understand the needs of workers and do not implement measures without consulting them. One way to do this is to establish procedures for consultation, demands, and claims related to care work.

Coherence

- ▶ React coherently; that is, design measures that respond to a common logic, aimed at achieving a shared objective. Avoid gender stereotypes, maternal bias, or indirect discrimination based on family composition.

Communicate

- Guarantee that the entire workforce has the right to these the measures implemented, and that they are aware of them, understand them, and feel comfortable making use of.
- Ensure that all persons with supervisory responsibilities are flexible, and provide them guidance on how to handle periods of absence or the flexible conditions that have been granted.
- Direct measures towards workers, promoting responsible masculinity.

Supervise

- ▶ Propose indicators and evaluation tools on the implementation of policies, in a disaggregated manner that allows for assessing the effectiveness of these implemented measures and that guarantees equal and inclusive access.



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