



DUAL EARNER, DUAL CARER SOCIETY AND THE QUEST FOR EQUALITY IN LABOR MARKET AND IN THE FAMILY

GENDER INEQUALITY ON THE LABOUR MARKET AND IN THE FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES



The employment rates reflect a pattern of inequality, as the percentage of employed women in the total working age population is 33.7%, while for men is 50.5%. According to the State Statistical Office (SSO), the rate of informal employment has been overall decreasing in the last 3 years (see Table 1 below). Moreover, it seems that women are less likely to be employed informally (see Table 2 below). Women's share in the informally-employed sector has been decreasing throughout the period 2015-2017, starting at a rate of 38.5% in 2013 and reaching 33.9% in 2017.

	2015			2016			2017		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total employed	705 991	423 913	282 078	723 550	439 717	283 834	740 648	450 261	290 387
Formally employed	565 349	334 599	230 750	589 774	349 646	240 128	606 363	361 512	244 851
Informally employed	140 642	89 314	51 328	133 777	90 071	43 706	134 285	88 749	45 536

Labor market data also shows persistence of gender segregation - women dominate sectors such as education, health, and judiciary, while men dominate in forestry, water supply, sewage, customs, and public transport. This has been noted in the CEDAW's concluding observations,¹ which recommend strengthening of efforts to eliminate horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value (Art 32), and to strengthen the national gender mechanism and their capacity for policy-development and monitoring of their implementation. However, data on the share of women and men in the public administration for 2016, shows significant gender balanced representation, with 50.46% men and 49.54% women². At senior level public administration posts, 46,61% are occupied by women, and 53,39% by men. Similar gender distribution is observed among non-managing positions (49,88% women and 50,12% men).

¹ (CEDAW/C/MKD/4-5), 2013, point 15, p.4, Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports, March 2013, considered positively the inclusion of discrimination and gender based discrimination in the 2010 Law on prevention and Protection from Discrimination, the clarification of reporting responsibilities of all public actors and their obligation to adopt gender-responsive strategic plans and budgets as contained in the 2012 Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the 2009 amendments to the Law on the Ombudsperson requiring the Office of the Ombudsman to establish a unit for the protection of citizens from discrimination; and the 2012 amendments to the Law on Labour Relations which prohibit discrimination against women workers during pregnancy, maternity and parenthood regardless of the type or duration of work.

² The Annual public sector employees report 2016, Ministry of information society and administration available online: http://mioa.gov.mk/files/pdf/dokumenti/Godisen_izvestaj_2016_Registar_na_vraboteni_vo_JS.pdf.



The precise prevalence of gender-based discrimination cannot be known given that cases often may not be reported. There is no harmonized data collection across institutions and the civil court system for collecting data does not register cases on the grounds of gender-based discrimination but rather as a violation of labour rights.

Gender-based discrimination at work affects women more than men. According to the study "Gender Based Discrimination and Labor" (2019)³ gender-based discrimination is more prevalent in the private sector. There is especially lack of information regarding work-related gender-based discrimination among persons with disabilities, minority ethnic groups and persons with various gender identities and sexual orientations.

Women do not report gender-based discrimination. The study "Gender Based Discrimination and Labor" (2019) depicts that there is insufficient knowledge regarding what constitutes gender-based discrimination and this explains why very few cases of gender-based discrimination against women at work have been reported to the different mechanisms available for prevention and protection from discrimination. Additional reasons are the ineffective protection, lengthy and costly proceedings.

Women spend three times more time on household activities compared to men, and have less free time. Time-use survey data indicate that the use of time hasn't improved significantly from 2009 to 2014 (when the survey was last conducted). Women bear the burden of domestic activities, spending three times more (four times more in rural areas) time on them compared to men. While women spend one hour less in paid employment compared to men, men still have one hour more free time, especially during weekends⁴, confirming the feminist argument that employed women need to work a 'second shift' at home. Having a child additionally burdens women in particular by increasing their time spent at paid employment, but also the time spent on domestic activities spent in employment; while reducing the free time. For men,

having children is only linked to increased time at paid employ. The fact that time spent by women on domestic activities starkly rises for the age group of women aged 25-44, while it reduces for men of the same age-group; paints a picture of a patriarchal family where the woman almost completely takes over the care for children, but also other family members. This indicates that the traditional gender roles are rather dominant within the society, and get strengthened with entering into partnership/marriage and especially with having children.

The provisions in the Labor Law, aimed at enabling better balancing of work/family life put the 'balancing' strain only on the side of the woman (mother). In addition, the scarcity of flexible jobs at the market⁵ and the deficit of day-care centers' capacities in the larger cities reduce the possibility of working mothers to balance the work/home(care) responsibilities, resulting with employed women who in their attempt to accomplish themselves as career women struggle to maintain the image of good mothers and housewives.

Considering that the traditional expectations from men and women are difficult to be challenged and often the policies aimed at achieving gender equality prove as inefficient as a result of the society's refusal to re-examine the traditional gender-related norms, the Center for Research and Policy Making is proposing the dual earner-dual carer model to be applied in Macedonia envisioning social and economic arrangement in which men and women engage symmetrically in both paid work in the labor market and in unpaid work in the home.

The proposed model is fully aligned with the recently adopted EU Directive on parental leave 2010/18 and the new Work-Life Balance Directive (effective from July 2019).

³ Vaska Leshoska and all (2019) *GENDER-based discrimination and labour in North Macedonia, Reactor - research in action*, available online: <http://reactor.org.mk/CMS/Files/Publications/Documents/kwn-final2.pdf>

⁴ *Time-use survey 2009, State Statistical Office; Time-use survey 2014/15, State Statistical Office*

⁵ *CRPM (2018) New forms of work, a comparative report*



DUAL EARNER DUAL CARER SYSTEM

The dual earner/dual carer model appeared for the first time in the 1960s and 1970s in Sweden. The main sustainable goal of modern Swedish family policies is to encourage parental employment and thus this is the basis of the establishment of such model. The main argument in the government proposal for introducing parental leave in Sweden in 1974 is: *"the division of labor between men and women locks men as well as women into different roles and obstructs free personal development. Demands for gender equality does not only concern changes in women's circumstances but also in men's. For women the changes concern, among other things, increased employment opportunities and for men the opportunity to take greater responsibility for children. The government must, through actions in different areas of social life, change the position of men as well as women"* (author's translation, Regeringens proposition 1973:47 p. 43).⁶ The aim of this policy is to improve the position of women in society and the labor market, along with improving men in terms of their responsibility in caring for their children.

The model is operationalized with family leave to have at least four components: (i) mothers would have *maternity leave* rights and benefits that guarantee the right to take time off from work, with pay, around the time of birth or adoption; (ii) fathers would have *paternity leave* rights and wage replacement for some period around the time of the birth or adoption that is used together with the mother; (iii) following their maternity and paternity leaves, both parents would be granted longer-term *parental leave*, with both the right to be away from the workplace and cash benefits during children's early years; (iv) parents to be entitled to temporary paid leaves *leave for family reasons* - that would allow them to take brief breaks from employment to care for a sick child or to respond to other family caregiving demands such as adaptation in kindergarten or school.

The benefits of the model are the following: the fathers' involvement in childcare is expected to advance gender equality in the labour market (Connell 2003, Morgan 2009). The dual earner/dual carer family challenges the traditional, gendered parental practices and presumes a more egalitarian distribution of unpaid childcare obligations between mothers and fathers. To fulfil the conditions of the dual earner/dual carer model, developments in two directions are necessary – the movement of women into the la-

bour market to achieve the 'dual earner' component of the model, and the opposite movement of men to the family sphere and child care for fulfilling the 'dual carer' part⁷.

PROPOSED MODEL FOR MACEDONIA

Based on an overview of different models applied around Europe, the CRPM team devised 4 options for reform and conducted survey as well as focus group discussions with employed mothers, employed fathers and unemployed mothers to determine the model which would have biggest public support. On the basis of the findings from this research we propose the following model for Macedonia.

The model includes:

- **Maternity leave** – the right to take leave from work one week (in multiple births 3 weeks) prior to birth and 6 weeks after birth (40 days) which is required due to the medical condition a woman is in after birth '*leunstvo*'. The maternity includes benefits 100% of salary compensation paid from the health insurance fund.
- **Paternity leave** – the right to take leave from work 5 weeks (10 for multiple births) after the birth, and in the first six months of the life of the child/ren together with the mother. The paternity includes benefits: 100% of salary compensation paid from taxes.
- **Parental leave** – the right to take leave from work because of caregiving demands for newly born child/ren in the first year of their life, divided between mother and father and used separately without an option to be transferred to any of the parents and if not used to be lost as a right. The right to leave from work for the mother of a single child is 28 weeks (due to best practices for breast feeding until 6-9 months) and 12 weeks for the father of single child. Amounting to 10 months in total and receiving benefit of 100% of salary compensation, paid from the taxes. In the case of multiple births/children the right is totaling 40 weeks for the mother and 20 weeks for the father or 12 months of parental leave after the maternity and paternity leave is used.
- **Carer leave** – is the right to take leave from work (brief breaks) to respond to family responsibilities (such as taking care for a sick child, adaptation in school or kindergarten, providing support in dealing with a specific situation related to physical or mental health of the child and etc.). The total amount of time

⁶ Anita Nyberg (Swedish National Institute for Working Life) – *Parental Leave, Public Childcare and the Dual Earner/ Dual Carer-Model in Sweden, Discussion Paper*

⁷ Marre Karu* & Kairi Kasearu, **Slow Steps Towards Dual Earner/Dual Carer Family Model: Why Fathers do not Take Parental Leave**, Vol 3 / Issue 1, Studies of Transition States and Societies



is 2 weeks for single birth and 3 weeks for multiple births. The leave is equally shared between the mother and father and is non transferable (lost if not used) and can be taken until the children become adults. The benefits are 80% salary compensation paid through taxes.

In case of giving a birth to one child the total leave from work will amount to 12 months. The distribution among the different types of leave and payment method will be the following.

Table 1: Dual earner, dual carer model for single birth

Type of leave	Duration	Paid from
Maternity leave	1 week prior to birth and 6 weeks after birth	Health insurance 100%
Paternity leave	5 weeks together with the mother in the first six months since the child is born / adopted	Taxes 100%
Parental leave	28 weeks (mother) and 12 weeks (father) non transferrable	Taxes 100%
Carer's leave	2 weeks shared equally between mother and father and non-transferable	Taxes 80%

In case of giving a birth to one child the total leave from work will amount to 12 months. The distribution among the different types of leave and payment method will be the following.

Table 2: Dual earner, dual carer model for multiple births

Type of leave	Duration	Paid from
Maternity leave	3 weeks prior to birth and 6 weeks after birth	Health insurance
Paternity leave	10 weeks together with the mother in the first six months	Taxes
Parental leave	40 weeks (mother) and 20 weeks (father) non transferrable	Taxes
Carer's leave	3 weeks shared equally between mother and father and non-transferable	Taxes

REINTEGRATION TO WORK AND FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

This to encourage fathers to make use of their right to such leave and promotes and facilitates the reintegration of mothers in the labour market after they have taken a period of maternity and parental leave. "The termination of pa-

*rental leave should and must be an option. Reintegration in the workplace is as important as maternity leave and it must not be seen as a negative trend, but as a developmentally positive trend: greater economic activity of women will lead to greater economic independence of women, greater consumption will lead to greater economic development of the country.*⁸ The Macedonian Labour Law hence, strengthened the reintegration of working mothers, by allowing female employees to return to work before the expiry of the maternal leave with a possibility to receive 50% of the welfare benefit for the remnant period of the maternity leave. Paragraph 3, of Article 166, further regulates guarantee for the woman to retain the same employment position after maternity leave, or if that is not possible to return to an appropriate job in accordance with the conditions of the employment contract. Besides, the Labor law is in accord with the Council Directive 96/34/EC and the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC as it provisions that "at the end of parental leave, workers shall have the right to return to the same job or, if that is not possible, to an equivalent or similar job consistent with their employment contract or employment relationship". However, intervention in the regulation must be made to approximate with the Directive 2010/18/EU which provisions that Member States should provide for effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties in the event of any breach of the obligations under this Directive. This should apply to all workers and taking into account the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (Court of Justice) these include workers who have employment contracts or other employment relationships, including contracts relating to the employment or the employment relationships of part-time workers, fixed-term contract workers or persons with a contract of employment or employment relationship with a temporary agency. "Accordingly, the models that enable balance between parenting and work, such as part time work, work from home, telecommuting etc., should not be forgotten."⁹ In this way the main factor for gender discrimination of women on labor market will be annulled, while the burden of care in the family will be shared among the two parents contributing to enhancement of gender equality in Macedonian society.

⁸ Voices from focus group discussions organized by CRPM for the purpose of this policy analysis.
⁹ Ibid