

My Care Biography Reflection Guide

The approach and movement Economy is Care are based on the understanding that we all depend on the care of others, but that essential care work is neglected by politics, research and business.

Care activities are wide-ranging and include the nurturing of children, looking after the elderly, supporting people with disabilities, maintaining the household, caring for the environment, community engagement, and many other tasks. In the traditional, male-dominated worldview most of these tasks are assigned to women, but it is clear that a healthy, resilient society requires care from all of us.

The following questions can be used to stimulate your thinking about care in your life now and over time. You can complete it alone, or in pairs or small groups. You can also adapt it if there are additional or different questions you want to explore about care in your life and in the lives of those close to you.

1. The generation of my grandparents and other ancestors

1.1 What important memories and stories do my grandparents or other ancestors have related to care?

1.2 How did my grandparents or other ancestors organize their care tasks?

1.3 What social and economic conditions impacted care work for my grandparents or other ancestors (financial hardship or security, social norms, migration, war, housing, education, role of the state, etc).

2. The generation of my parents

2.1 What social or economic conditions changed from the grandparents' generation to the parents'/guardians' generation (role of the state, education, social norms, financial hardship or security, education, housing, etc.)? How did these conditions affect my parents and their care relationships?

2.2 How did my parents/guardians organise care work? If there are two parents, how was care work divided, how was that division decided, and were both parents satisfied with the arrangement? If there was one parent, was there help from others? If so, from whom and how much?

2.3 How was I raised in this care context? What do I remember about care as I was growing up? To what extent was I raised to learn about and practice caring for others? How was I taught to value care work relative to other types of work in the economy?

3. My own generation

3.1 What social or economic conditions changed from your parents' generation to your generation (role of the state, education, social norms, financial hardship or security, education, housing, etc.)? How do current social and economic conditions affect your family and care relationships?

3.2 How do I divide care work with others in my life? How was this distribution of care decided? Am I happy with the amount and type of care work I am doing in my life, and with the balance between care and non-care work? If not, what can I do to change the situation or what barriers do I need to overcome?

3.3 How has my family history shaped the way I think about and carry out care? How have social norms or other influences shaped the way I think about and carry out care? What do I strongly believe about care? What contradictions, if any, do I see between my values and how I carry out care in my life? What care relationships am I proud of?

4. The next generation

4.1 If I have children around me / live with children / am responsible for children, what do I want to teach children about care? How can I support them to become caring members of their family and community? What barriers do I face in teaching them the values I hope they learn?

4.2 What messages about care are children receiving from society? Do these messages align with my own values?

5. Summary

What insights about care do I have after this reflection that I didn't have before? Have I changed my mind about anything? Do I feel inspired to take more or other caring actions in my life?