TACKLING CHILDCARE:
The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare in Myanmar
Research participants

1,064 employees from 11 businesses
794 employees for an online survey
243 employees in focus group discussions
27 interviews with senior personnel

19% have preschool-age children

Female 63%
Male 37%
Research Aims

To identify childcare arrangements, needs and preferences for employees working in the private sector in Myanmar.

- What current arrangements?
- What concerns?
- What support?

To explore the costs to businesses in Myanmar due to employees’ childcare responsibilities.

- What impacts on work productivity?
- What impacts on business performance?
To better support working parents

### Parental leave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid leave before birth of child</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid leave after birth of child</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>15 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All leave entitlements are paid at 70% of the ordinary wage of the employee (based on a 12 month average).*

*In the case of the birth of twins, the mother is entitled to an additional 4 weeks of paid leave after the birth of the children.*

### Maternity expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One child</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin birth</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triplet or more</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Maternity expense entitlements are calculated as a one-off payment based on a percentage of the ordinary monthly wage of the employee.*
Key findings

• **Nine in ten** employees with children said their childcare responsibilities impact their work.

• **More than half** of parents with preschool age children reported being absent from work for at least one day during the past month because of their childcare responsibilities.

• **37 percent** of parents with preschool children said they do not use a childcare center because there is no such facility near their home.

• A significant proportion of female and male employees in the private sector are delaying having children so that they can continue their career.

• There continues to be pressure on women to exit the workforce after having children.

• A clear and consistent policy for flexible working arrangements was the number one benefit employees said would help working parents better manage their childcare responsibilities.
Current childcare arrangements

Social norms

“It is because of the culture that family members who are not working take care of the children.”

Trust

“Grandparents are reliable.”

“It is unsafe to leave children with strangers.”
Common concerns working parents have about childcare

- Other: 3%
- Price is too high: 12%
- Challenges with breastfeeding: 16%
- Child’s use of internet and social media: 19%
- Child watching TV: 29%
- Child’s education: 39%
- Child’s nutrition: 46%
- Child’s health: 56%
- Safety of the child: 61%
Shifting attitudes

**Age**
“Grandparents usually take a nap in the afternoon.”

**Inadequate nutrition for the child**
“Grandparents don’t have up-to-date knowledge about effective nutrition and supplementary food, and they don’t want to accept our suggestions, so we worry about the children’s nutrition.”

**Lack of attention**
“Grandparents allow to watch cartoons and movies for hours instead of interacting with them.”

**Inappropriate discipline**
“Beating and comparing with other children should not be done. I have to reduce anger. I told the family member not to beat the child very strictly.”

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Childcare support working parents would like

- Emergency / back-up childcare support: 21%
- Transportation to a childcare center: 23%
- A breastfeeding room: 27%
- Parenting information sessions: 31%
- Job-sharing: 34%
- Health support (e.g., immunizations for children): 35%
- An on-site childcare center: 42%
- Subsidy for childcare fees: 49%
- Flexible working hours for parents: 56%
Absenteeism

In the past month, how many times have you taken time off work due to your childcare responsibilities?
Lateness and leaving early

In the past month, how many times have you been late for work or left work early due to childcare responsibilities?
Presenteeism

In the past month, how many times have you felt distracted at work due to your childcare responsibilities?
Quit a job

Percent of respondents and their partners who have ever quit a job due to child care responsibilities.

Women 26%

Men 13%
How do these responsibilities and concerns affect business performance?

15.5 days of work time lost for each employee with preschool age children every year.

- 1.5 days due to the employee being **distracted**
- 2 days due to the employee leaving early or starting late
- 12 days due to the employee being **absent from work**
Some ideas for business

- Create a return to work program
- Offer flexible work arrangements
- Ensure the company training schedule considers the childcare responsibilities of employees
- Train managers and Human Resources to understand the business’ childcare support and maximize its effectiveness
Some ideas for other organizations

- Address the maternity leave and childcare eligibility gap
- Develop a Myanmar specific guidance note for childcare service providers
- Further research is needed to explore the childcare needs of workers not included in this research – remote workers / manual laborers
- More support is needed for parents of children with disabilities, single parents and same-sex parents
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Question Time