

HelloTask



hellotask.app



The Care Economy
Knowledge Hub

the-care-economy-knowledge-hub.org

Profiling Businesses in the Care Economy

The care economy consists of paid and unpaid labor and services that support caregiving in all its forms. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, women spend between three to five times as many hours on unpaid care and domestic work as men. This represents 80 percent of a household's total hours devoted to unpaid care work.

Care economy businesses can help recognize, redistribute, reduce and reward – also known as the 4 Rs – unpaid and paid care and domestic work in the following ways:



Recognize: Initiatives that increase visibility and recognition of paid and unpaid care and domestic activity as "productive" work that creates real value and contributes to economies and societies.



Redistribute: Services and initiatives that redistribute care work from individuals to public and private sector entities, and redistribute care and domestic work within the household.



Reduce: Products and initiatives that reduce the time spent on and burden of unpaid care and domestic work.

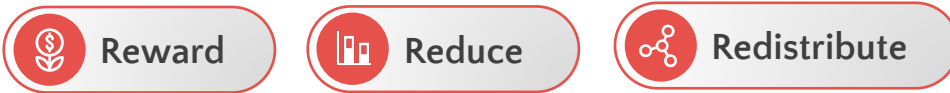


Reward: Products, services and initiatives that ensure that care and domestic workers are paid fairly and have professional growth potential. This provides them with financial reward and security.

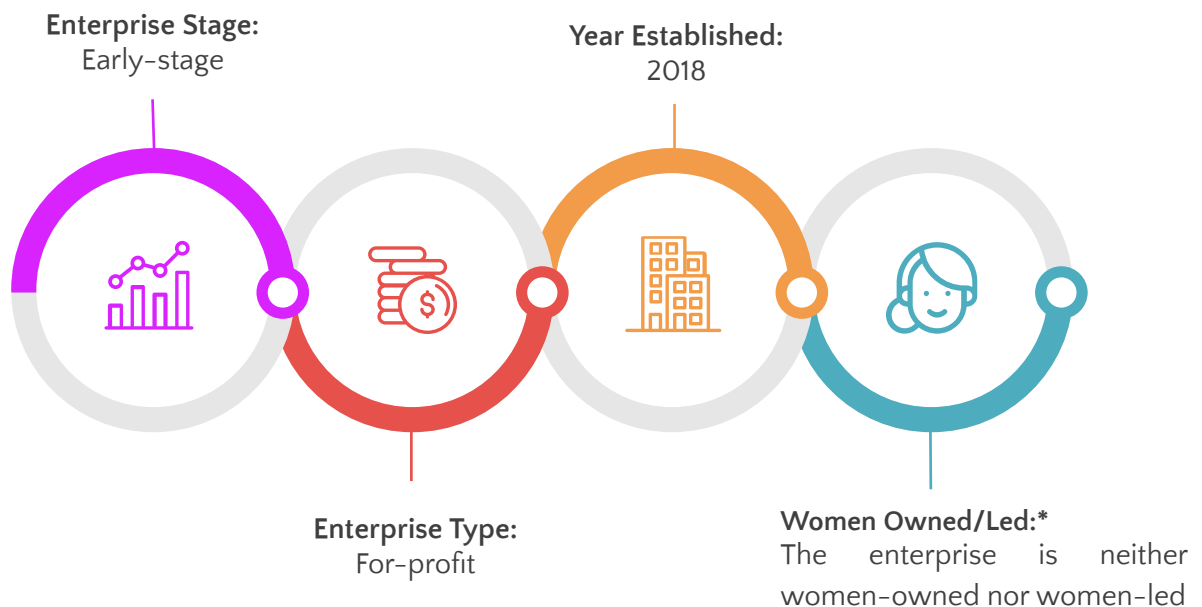
The Care Economy Knowledge Hub aims to address the knowledge gap around care businesses by showcasing various business models and creating a resource base for relevant stakeholders. It also aims to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the state of impact-driven care economy business models and attract a broad range of funders to invest in care economy solutions by showcasing opportunities. These business profiles are intended to showcase said potential investment opportunities. They have been created from information and data provided by the business itself.

This project is supported by Canada's International Development Research Center, in partnership with the Soros Economic Development Fund at the Open Society Foundations. Building on their track record and commitment to transforming the care economy and mobilizing finance for gender equality, they have jointly launched this action research program to help transform the care economy through impact business and investment.

Executive Summary



HelloTask is a for-profit online platform connecting domestic workers to potential employers in Bangladesh. The company has built an app-based platform that connects customers to the nearest, verified,¹ and skilled domestic helpers in real-time and on an on-demand basis. The helpers then carry out tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing, etc. Through this model, HelloTask improves access to opportunities for domestic workers and fulfills the demand for domestic services. Since 2018, HelloTask has on-boarded 20,000 domestic workers and 100,000 customers and completed 65,000 service requests. Currently, the enterprise has 39 full-time employees. In 2022, HelloTask reported revenue between US\$ 300,000 and US\$ 400,000.



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¹ Verification is limited to checking the domestic worker's National Identification card or birth certificate for identity. No additional background check is conducted.

*According to 2X "women entrepreneurship" and "women leadership" criteria; [2X Challenge Criteria](#)

1. About The Enterprise

1.1 Problem

In Bangladesh, the domestic help provider and caregiver industry is valued at US\$ 4 billion.² It is estimated that there are 10.5 million employed domestic workers in the country, of which 90% are women.³ Domestic work is informal and the workers are therefore largely excluded from social protection in Bangladesh. This lack of social protection and formality makes domestic workers vulnerable to exploitation, such as long working hours and low wages.⁴

Informality also results in domestic workers lacking proper channels for securing jobs. Typically, domestic workers obtain jobs by scouting neighborhoods for possible job opportunities, or through word of mouth from others in their networks. However, a lack of technical skills and limited experience in negotiating job roles and wages results in low incomes. Furthermore, women domestic workers also face safety concerns, mistreatment, verbal abuse, physical assault, and sexual harassment on the job.

The enterprise estimates that 90% of the domestic workers in Bangladesh do not have smartphones.⁵ As a result, domestic workers are unable to benefit from accessing relevant job opportunities through the internet, social media, and smartphone applications. Furthermore, these workers receive wage payments in cash, making it difficult for them to establish a credit history and get access to formal financial services.

1.2 Solution

HelloTask has developed a job platform that connects domestic workers to employers. The platform enables domestic workers who do not have a smartphone to access job opportunities. Potential employers request services through a smartphone app interface. Based on the service requested, the platform uses interactive voice response (IVR)⁶ to reach relevant domestic workers. These domestic workers therefore simply need to have a feature phone, not a smartphone, to access these job opportunities.

² B. B. (2021, August 8). Case study HelloTask. Retrieved from <https://www.sie-b.org/case-study-hellotask/>

³ Government of Canada (2022, March 29). *Shining a light on the rights of domestic workers in Bangladesh*. Stories. <https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/stories-histoires/2022/domestic-rights-droits-domestique.aspx?lang=eng>

⁴ Government of Canada. (2022, March 29). *Shining a light on the rights of domestic workers in Bangladesh*. Stories. <https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/stories-histoires/2022/domestic-rights-droits-domestique.aspx?lang=eng>

⁵ HelloTask. (2022, May). Hello Task Impact Report.

⁶ IVR is an automated interactive voice response system that allows feature phone users to interact with a computer-operated telephone system through the use of voice and their phone keyboard.

HelloTask's employees scout low-income areas to enroll domestic workers. The enterprise also connects the onboarded domestic workers to partner institutions, such as BRAC, Oxfam, and World Bank, in order to provide skills training to workers that are interested in upskilling. Furthermore, the enterprise also enrolls domestic workers that have already received this skills training from partner institutions. As part of HelloTask's model, all enrolled domestic workers are eligible for mobile financial services. For domestic workers that are not already using mobile financial services, the enterprise's employees provide them with information and mobile financial services assistance. This enables domestic workers to establish a financial profile and access other financial services, such as micro-credit, deposit schemes, and insurance. For all jobs completed, domestic workers are paid digitally.

The enterprise addresses challenges related to exploitation and abuse by providing domestic workers with a platform to give feedback on service requests. Once completed, the domestic workers can use their feature phone to rate employers. If a domestic worker reports mistreatment, the employer is blocked from the platform. Furthermore, if the domestic worker has reported that she has been sexually harassed, then HelloTask connects the domestic worker to its NGO partners that can provide the domestic worker with legal advice. Households can also report mistreatment by domestic workers. In cases of serious allegations, the domestic worker is barred from the HelloTask platform. If it is a moderate allegation, the enterprise re-trains the domestic worker before they can obtain work through the platform again. The enterprise mandates that women workers must not be sent to any household where there are no women present, in an effort to reduce the risk of physical and sexual abuse. Awareness about rights and prevention, or management of abuse, is a part of the training that domestic workers receive through HelloTask's partners.

HelloTask enables customers (households) to easily secure the services of domestic workers through an app. The customers can specify the type of service needed, such as cooking, cleaning, and/or washing. The customers have the option to request services by the hour (one-off request) or opt for a monthly subscription plan. The enterprise receives a commission for each service request. The monthly subscription model has an advance payment cycle. The platform has an easy-to-use payment gateway and operates in Bangla (the local language) to provide ease of navigation to its customers. The enterprise vets all onboarded domestic workers through an in-person interview and validation of their National Identification information. The enterprise is currently working on developing mechanisms to vet employers. Furthermore, the enterprise has an insurance policy that protects employers on the platform from damages caused by domestic workers. Employers can claim up to US\$ 195 in case of any damages. IVR is an automated interactive voice response system that allows feature phone users to interact with a computer-operated telephone system through the use of voice and their phone keyboard.

1.3 Customer Segment

Customer Segment	Product / Service Provided	Paid / Unpaid
Domestic workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HelloTask connects domestic workers to households that require their services. All onboarded domestic workers must set up a mobile banking account to receive payments. Domestic workers who are interested in upskilling are connected to skill development partners, such as BRAC and Oxfam. 	<p>Unpaid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no fee for helping domestic workers establish a mobile banking account. Domestic workers are currently not charged a fee for the connection to skill development partners.
Households ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hourly booking services through an app, such as washing, cleaning, cooking, etc. Monthly subscription services for domestic work, such as cleaning, washing, and cooking. 	<p>Paid</p> <p>HelloTask charges a commission for the hourly booking service and the monthly subscription plan. For the hourly booking service, HelloTask charges 20–25% of the billed amount and the remaining amount is transferred by HelloTask to the domestic worker. For monthly subscription services, HelloTask charges 13% of the billed amount and the remaining amount is transferred to the domestic worker. All payments are made by the customers to HelloTask.</p>

1.4 Team And Governance Structure

HelloTask has 39 full-time employees, 30% of whom are women. The team is led by 2 male co-founders. There are 6 employees who work in the technology and app development team, 8 field executives who work as brand promoters (to engage domestic workers), and 15 customer support executives (who engage with household customers). The enterprise's engagement with partner organizations, such as skill development institutions and NGOs, is managed by 3 liaison officers. There are 2 employees in operations and 3 employees in the finance department. The enterprise's board consists of the 2 co-founders. The enterprise has an advisory board with 4 members, one of whom is a woman.

⁷ HelloTask caters to households that have an annual income of at least US\$ 4,608.

1.5 Enterprise Policies

Policy	Yes / No
Overall HR Policy	Yes
Equal pay for equivalent work policy	Yes
Non-discrimination / Equal employment opportunity / Diversity and inclusion policy (gender, LGBTQ, PWD, etc.)	Yes
Anti bullying and sexual harassment policy / Respectful workplaces	Yes
Whistleblower policy / Employee grievance mechanism	No
Maternity / Paternity leave policy	No
Safeguarding policies for vulnerable groups (children, elderly, PWDs)	Yes
Safeguarding policies for the environment or to reduce detrimental impact on the environment (covers reducing carbon footprint, reduced water consumption etc.)	No

2. Impact

2.1 Mission Statement

HelloTask's mission is to build an ecosystem where every family employs trained, skilled, and verified domestic helpers. They also aim to provide a secure workplace for millions and establish domestic work as a dignified profession.

2.2 Intended Impact

HelloTask's model has benefits for domestic workers and households:

- The enterprise **rewards** domestic workers by providing them with opportunities to find jobs. It also improves their access to financial services, by making it mandatory for workers to establish mobile banking accounts and by providing all payments digitally. It also connects workers to up-skilling partners, to improve their skills and abilities.

- It **redistributes** unpaid household domestic work to domestic workers, who are paid for the work.
- HelloTask's services **reduce** the time household members spend on unpaid domestic work.

2.3 Monitoring And Measurement

HelloTask monitors its service reach through the following indicators on a monthly basis:

- Number of onboarded domestic workers
- Number of registered customers (households)
- Number of service requests completed⁸
- Value of employment generated (US\$)

The enterprise has also commenced assessing the impact of its services on domestic workers' and employers' lives by conducting baseline and endline surveys.⁹ These surveys aimed to understand changes in domestic workers' and employers' lives in terms of their ease of finding jobs, increased income, financial inclusion, perception of safety, dignity of work, and instances of abuse.

2.4 Results To Date

As of December 2022, HelloTask has achieved the following results:

- Number of onboarded domestic workers: 20,000
- Number of registered customers (households): 110,000
- Number of service requests completed: 85,000
- Value of employment generated: US\$ 1,000,000
- Results from the baseline and endline surveys demonstrate the following:
 - Ease of finding jobs: 79% of domestic workers find it easy to get jobs via the HelloTask platform.
 - Increase in income: 71% of domestic workers report their income increased compared to before joining HelloTask and 80% report being able to more adequately take care of their families.
 - Financial inclusion: 100% of the domestic workers surveyed reported that they used mobile financial services after joining HelloTask. Prior to joining HelloTask, only 22% of surveyed domestic workers had used mobile financial services.

⁸ This refers to the number of monthly subscriptions and one-off service requests that have been completed through the platform.

⁹ The baseline survey was conducted in August 2021 and the endline survey was conducted 6 months later, in April 2022.

- Perception of safety (household customers): 91% of customers reported feeling safe while hiring domestic workers through the HelloTask app, in contrast, 48% of customers felt unsafe when hiring through word-of-mouth.
- Abuse: Around 1.5% of the domestic workers experienced physical assault while using HelloTask, compared to 12% prior to joining HelloTask.
- Dignity of work: 95% of workers feel dignified working through HelloTask and feel their employers respect them more if they work through the platform.

HelloTask's work is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



3. Financials

3.1 Financial Status

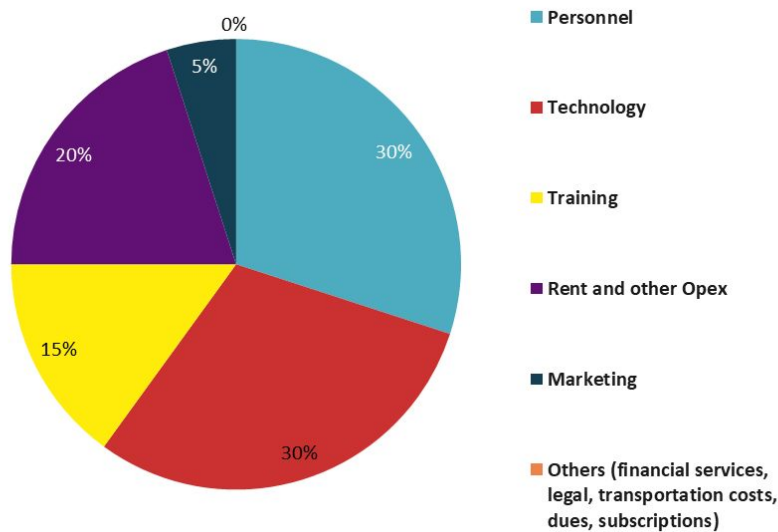
In 2022, HelloTask reported revenue between US\$ 300,000 and US\$ 400,000. It aims to be financially profitable in the next 3 years. The company may be contacted directly for further information.

3.1.1 Revenue Streams

The key revenue streams for HelloTask are the sale of its services and its grants. In 2021, 40% of its revenue was obtained from the sale of services and 60% was from grants. A review of revenue from the sale of services shows that 70% of the revenue was obtained from monthly subscriptions and 30% was obtained from one-off service requests. The company may be contacted directly for further information.

3.1.2 Expenses

The following pie chart provides details of the key areas of expenditure for the enterprise in the year 2021.



3.2 External Funding Sources (Past and Current)

The enterprise has received funds from various sources. All funding received was used to meet working capital needs and platform development costs. Details on recent funds are as follows:

- In 2022, the enterprise received undisclosed equity funding from Startup Bangladesh.
- In 2022, the enterprise received an undisclosed simple agreement for future equity (SAFE)¹⁰ funding from the Bangladesh Angels Network.
- In 2022, the enterprise received SAFE funding of US\$ 50,000 from WP Ventures.
- In 2022, the enterprise received a grant of US\$ 50,000 from the World Bank.
- For the period 2021–2022, the enterprise received a grant of US\$ 100,000 from Roots of Impact.
- For the period 2019–2024, the enterprise received a grant of US\$ 220,000 from Oxfam GB.
- In 2020, the enterprise received US\$ 200,000 through equity and SAFE from individual investors. Simple agreement for future equity (SAFE) is a financing contract that may be used by a startup company to raise capital in its seed financing rounds.

¹⁰ Simple agreement for future equity (SAFE) is a financing contract that may be used by a startup company to raise capital in its seed financing rounds.



3.3 Challenges Faced In Accessing Capital

- **Limited access to capital from mainstream investors:** The enterprise has observed that mainstream investors are hesitant to invest in HelloTask, as they have seen few examples of successful businesses/startups that connect domestic workers to employers.
- **Limited access to capital from mainstream capital providers:** As a result of the enterprise's model, it has limited tangible assets to use as collateral. This makes it difficult to obtain loans from mainstream capital providers, such as banks.
- **Inability to access other sources of capital:** The enterprise faces challenges in obtaining funds from philanthropic investors, as the entity is registered as a for-profit enterprise. This limits the ability of the enterprise to receive capital other than grant capital.

4. Path To Scalability

4.1 Potential Avenues For Growth

The enterprise has identified the following avenues for growth:

- **Increase the number of domestic workers onboarded:** The enterprise aims to increase the number of domestic workers onboarded to its platform in Bangladesh from 20,000 domestic workers in 2022 to 100,000 by 2025.
- **Expand the services provided to customers:** The enterprise aims to expand the range of services provided to customers by introducing care services such as nannies for childcare and homecare nurses/aides for the elderly. This is expected to commence in 2024.
- **Expand customer base in Bangladesh:** The enterprise aims to support businesses to access various types of blue-collar workers, such as office cleaners, garment factory workers, and construction site workers via its existing platform. This is expected to commence in 2024.
- **Expand services to other countries:** The enterprise aims to replicate its model in other countries such as India, Indonesia, and countries in the Middle East. This is expected to commence in 2025.

4.2 Risks And Challenges

Financing challenges

- **Limited access to capital from investors:** Investors perceive that (compared to other start-ups), there are limited exit opportunities available through investment in HelloTask. This has made it difficult for the enterprise to obtain capital from investors.
- **Limited access to capital from mainstream capital providers:** As a result of the enterprise's model, it has limited tangible assets and collateral. This makes it difficult to obtain loans from mainstream capital providers, such as banks.

Operational challenges

- **Personnel:** The enterprise faces challenges in onboarding experienced personnel to support its operations and expansion plans. The enterprise needs personnel with expertise in IT development and user testing. Given the recent increase in demand for personnel with IT and software skills, the enterprise has faced difficulty in retaining personnel, as other entities offer higher salaries. The enterprise has likewise faced challenges in onboarding personnel that are interested in outreach to low-income areas.
- **Customer retention (domestic workers):** The enterprise faces some challenges in retaining domestic workers on its platform. This is because domestic workers move seasonally in order to obtain employment in other locations.
- **Operations (domestic workers):** The enterprise faces some challenges in ensuring that the onboarded domestic workers conduct themselves professionally. The enterprise has observed that some domestic workers employed through its subscription services leave their contracted job to pursue better prospects, or they take leave without acceptable prior notice. Consequently, the enterprise's operations are unfavorably impacted.
- **Customer retention (households):** The enterprise faces some challenges in retaining customers. Some customers cease using the enterprise's services as they have obtained a domestic worker from another source and no longer need the services.

Norms

- **Customers (domestic workers):** The enterprise has observed that there is some resistance among domestic workers to using technology to obtain employment.

4.3 COVID-19 Impact On The Enterprise

Due to mobility restrictions during COVID-19, HelloTask was forced to pause its operations for a period of 6 months. The enterprise was able to commence operations once residential complexes resumed permitting the entry of domestic workers.

4.4 Support Received To Date

The enterprise has received support from the following institutions:

- In 2022, the enterprise received training from the World Bank on conducting randomized control trials for impact evaluations of the enterprise's services.
- In 2021, the enterprise received support from Roots of Impact GmbH to develop its theory of change and impact measurement frameworks.
- From 2019 onwards, the enterprise has been receiving quarterly training on Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment, and Learning (MEAL) from Oxfam GB.

4.5 Inputs Required For Growth

Financial

- In 2023, HelloTask is seeking US\$ 1,000,000 in grant funding. This funding will be used for platform enhancements (40%), acquisition and retention of domestic workers (30%), and working capital needs of the enterprise (30%).

Non-financial

- **Personnel:** The enterprise seeks experienced personnel to support and scale up its operations. It specifically needs personnel with experience in working with domestic workers in low-income areas. It also seeks personnel with technical experience, in order to support platform enhancements and testing.