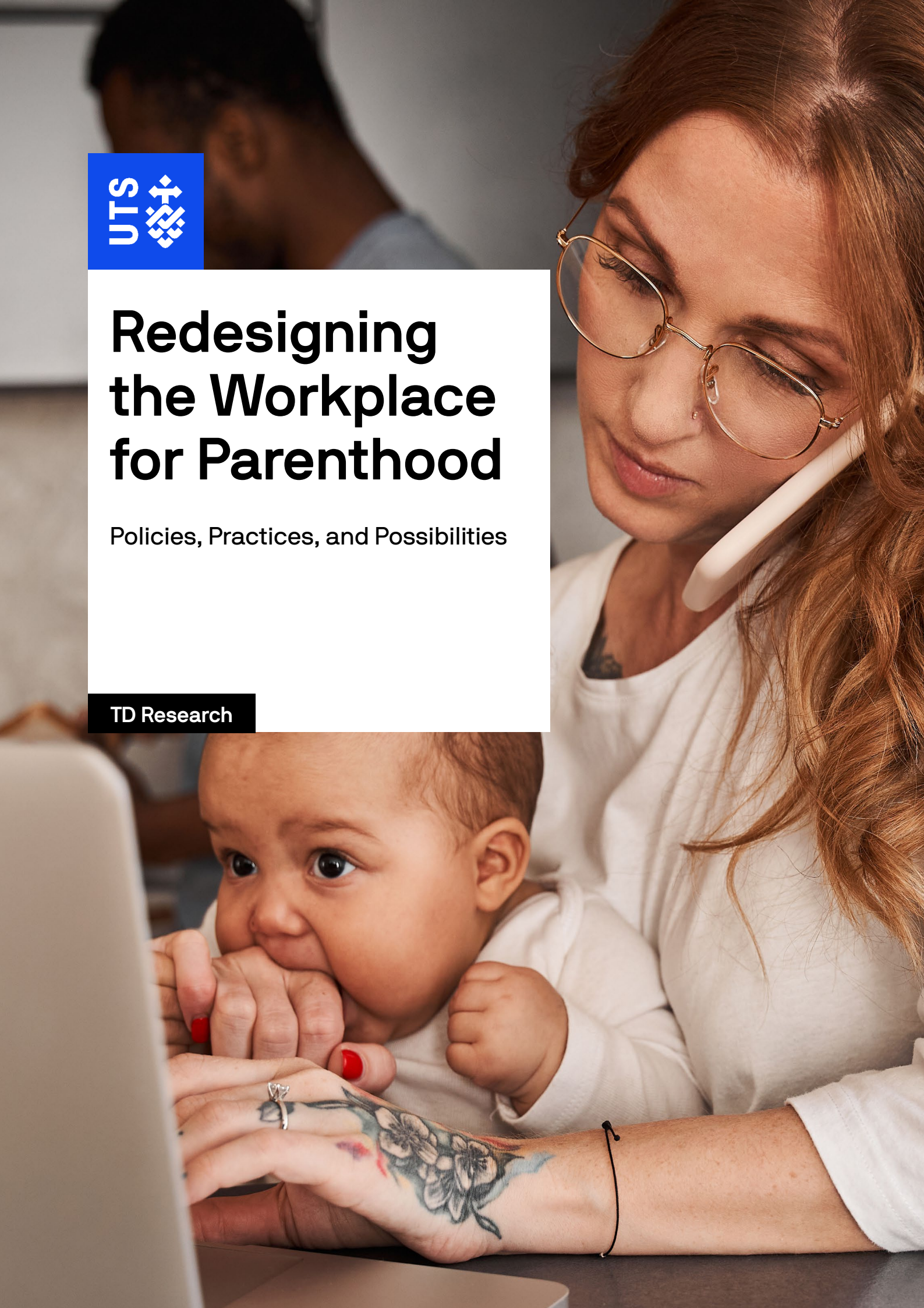




Redesigning the Workplace for Parenthood

Policies, Practices, and Possibilities

TD Research



Across industries and societies, rethinking how work and care fit together is essential to unlocking gender equality and building sustainable, thriving workforces for the future. Despite decades of progress, parents returning from parental leave often face systemic obstacles—rigid workplace norms, inflexible policies, and cultural expectations that undermine careers, limit economic participation, and perpetuate inequality. These issues are not confined to just a few industries; they ripple across sectors, shaping organisational performance, talent retention, national productivity and fertility trends.

So, how can we create workplaces that enable parents to thrive professionally while caring for their families—driving equity, innovation, and impact across sectors worldwide?

Project Overview

This research tackles a global challenge: how can society and workplaces truly support parents returning from leave while sustaining careers and care? We aim to catalyse systemic change by uncovering the hidden “rules-in-use”—the formal and informal norms shaping workplace experiences—and designing solutions that work in practice.

By following parents' return-to-work journeys, starting in Australia, France, and the UK, this project partners with organisations and community stakeholders to rethink how workplaces support care and career. Utilising a range of different research methods and working closely with participants, the team will create practical, evidence-based resources—from innovative frameworks to practical tools, including a world-first monitoring and benchmarking model—that will help organisations create more supportive and equitable environments.

Our Impact

This project is more than research—it is a blueprint for transformation. By addressing the critical transition period after parental leave, this research will:

- **Advance gender equality globally** by dismantling systemic barriers that limit career progression for parents.
- **Strengthen workforce sustainability** by helping organisations retain skilled talent and foster inclusive cultures.
- **Influence policy and practice** through evidence-based recommendations that shape national and organisational frameworks.
- **Improve societal well-being** by enabling parents to balance career and family without compromise—benefiting mental health, child development, and economic stability.

The team will develop a new way for organisations to assess how well they support the intersection of parental care and career. This approach will give workplaces clear insight into what is working, where gaps remain, and how they compare across sectors and countries—driving accountability and inspiring innovation. By enabling shared learning and scaling of effective practices, the research will help elevate global conversations about care and career, empowering workplaces to value both and, in doing so, unlock human potential and contribute to a more equitable, sustainable future.

Work with us

We deliver a wide range of research projects for public and private sector partners seeking research expertise and support in overcoming their complex challenges using our unique transdisciplinary (TD) methodology. To find out how TD Research can help you and your organisation, please email -

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PROJECT PARTNERS

The Council for the Advancement of Career-Parental Care Integration and UTS Transdisciplinary School.

RESEARCH TEAM

Fanny Salignac (research lead) and colleagues from The Council for the Advancement of Career-Parental Care Integration.



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