Drawing from interviews and group meetings in seven diverse countries – India, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, the UK and USA – this book explores the multiple difficulties in combining paid work with other parts of life and the frustrations people experience in diverse settings.

Profits and short term efficiency gains are often placed before social issues of care or human dignity. But what about the impact this has on men and women’s well being, or the long-term sustainability of people, families, society or even the economy?

There is a myth that ‘work-life balance’ can be achieved through quick fixes rather than challenging the place of paid work in people's lives and the way work actually gets done. As well as exploring contemporary problems, this book attempts to seed hope and new ways of thinking about one of the key challenges of our time.