A Future with Care: Steps towards implementing long-term care systems.

September 5-7, 2023, San José, Costa Rica.

The ninth meeting of the RedCUIDAR+ network took place in San Jose, Costa Rica, on September 5–7, 2023. The meeting focused on exchanging regional experiences and best practices related to policies, programs, projects, or actions for caring for older people.

For the fourth time, RedCUIDAR+ followed a format where a member country—in this case Costa Rica—hosts the meeting and actively participates in preparing its contents. The institutions that lead the RedCUIDAR+ Network — the French Development Agency (AFD), the European Union's EUROsociAL program and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)—thank Costa Rica for its leadership and invite other countries to host future meetings.

The main topics covered by the event's panels were the right to care, services for aging in place,

> **The RedCUIDAR+ Network**
> The Long-Term Care Policy Network in Latin America and the Caribbean is an initiative promoted by the Inter-American Development Bank, the European Union's EUROsociAL+ program, and the French Development Agency. The network's main objective is to advance and facilitate exchanges of knowledge and experience, as well as to strengthen opportunities for collaboration between those who shape long-term care policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. The network thus helps develop the institutional and technical capacity of member countries, promoting good practices in the implementation of long-term care services.

caregiver training, and how to fund care systems. The event also included presentations by and interactions with local users and service providers for care-dependent people, as well as visits to day centers and residential care facilities for older people.

Tuesday, September 5

Tuesday featured a session for participants from Central America and the Dominican Republic only, focused on forming a Central American chapter of the RedCUIDAR+ Network. This initiative falls within the mandate of the Central American Social Integration Council (ministers of social development), which was established by the Secretariat for Central American Social Integration (SISCA). Participants in this session approved the proposal to create a new chapter in order to foster more dynamic networking among the region's countries on issues related to care policies through exchanges and mutual advice, and to complement the experiences of other RedCUIDAR+ member countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also created an 18-month work plan covering: 1. governance and institutional framework; 2. financing; 3. communication strategies for advocacy; and 4. training and certification for caregivers.

Following this session, the ninth meeting of the RedCUIDAR+ Network officially began with **opening remarks** by representatives of the organizing institutions: Pablo Ibarrarán, Chief of the Social Protection and Health Division at the IDB; Carlos Soto Iguarán, Task Team Leader at the Health and Social Protection Division of the AFD; and Francesco Maria Chiodi from the Italo-Latin American Institute (IILA), as Coordinator of Social Policies of the European Union's EUROsociAL Program. In their remarks, the representatives highlighted the region's progress on long-term care, while at the same time pointing out that only four RedCUIDAR+ member countries have managed to cover over five percent of their care-dependent population. They also emphasized the network's importance as a

space where countries can continue to build long-term care systems by reflecting together and exchanging ideas.

Then Marco Stampini, Social Protection Lead Specialist at the IDB, gave an "**Overview of the ninth RedCUIDAR+ Network meeting.**" He outlined the topics on the meeting's agenda and described their relevance, emphasizing how the various issues interact and complement each other.

The first panel of the event, entitled "**Challenges and progress in establishing care as a right,**" was moderated by Francesco Maria Chiodi. This panel underlined the importance of long-term care as a human rights issue involving dignity and respect for the life of each individual. Speakers on this panel included Marisol Touraine, former French Minister of Social Affairs, Health, and Women's Rights and former Member of Parliament of France; Lucia Cirmi, Undersecretary for Equality Policies at the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity of Argentina; Berny Vargas Mejía, Chief Legal Advisor at the Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social [Mixed Social Assistance Institute] of Costa Rica; and Nischma Vilarreal, Director of Social Policies at the Ministry of Social Development of Panama.

Prior to the panel, participants watched a video interview with Franca Maino, Associate Professor at the University of Milan, on the decisive role that the united and concerted efforts of Italian civil society played not only in reforming long-term care policies, but also in structuring citizen oversight and pursuing the difficult path of implementing this reform. The speakers then opened the conversation by outlining the policy objectives of long-term care systems, which include economic inclusion of women. This objective includes both unpaid caregivers, with the aim of freeing up their time, and paid caregivers, to ensure high-quality jobs. They pointed out the structural gender inequity shaped by economic inequalities, which arise from the imbalance in caregiving responsibilities. Regarding this imbalance, the panel stressed the need to transform social representations that depict caregiving exclusively as a responsibility of women.

In addition to these reflections, the panel shared experiences from specific countries. In the case of Argentina, the Ministry of Women, Genders, and Diversities has taken various steps towards creating a comprehensive care system with a gender perspective. The session touched on the Federal Care Map, which shows service coverage and gaps. It also discussed the Registradas program, which guarantees caregivers' rights, and the Caring on Equal Terms bill, which seeks to redistribute care responsibilities by including home services tailored to people's degree of care dependency in the health plan. The session also showcased private-sector involvement in Panama's Gender Parity Initiative, where private companies mapped the care services and policies they offer.

The "**Care Library**" was the last session on Tuesday. In this activity, twelve members of local long-term care organizations shared their experiences and practices. It featured presentations by people who depend on long-term care, their family members, and those who manage and provide the service.

Wednesday, September 6

Wednesday began with speeches by distinguished authorities from the institutions that organized the event. Speakers included Francisco Javier Urra, IDB Country Representative in Costa Rica; Matteo Banti, Head of Cooperation at the European Union in Costa Rica; Alexandra Bellayer-Roille, French Ambassador to Costa Rica; Yorleny León Marchena, Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica; and Mary Munive Angermüller, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica and Minister of Health.

The speakers emphasized the concerning accelerated aging trend in the region, as well as gender disparities and the precariousness of care-related jobs. They also underscored the modest progress

made in recent years, despite persistent financial constraints. They highlighted the importance of the network as a means to continue building systems by passing on knowledge and exchanging lessons learned. As examples, they mentioned the European programs Next Generation EU and European Care Strategy, while also pointing out that Latin America and the Caribbean have the opportunity to avoid Europe's mistakes and adopt good practices from the outset.

Wednesday's first panel, entitled "**Services for aging in place,**" was moderated by Patricia Jara Maleš, Social Protection Lead Specialist at the IDB. Prior to the panel, attendees watched a video in which gerontological planning expert Mayte Sancho described the shift towards home-based services taking place in Europe, as well as the importance of respecting the desire of most older people to age in their own communities. The panel consisted of government representatives, including Colleen Walcott, Director of the Barbados National Assistance Board; Florencia Krall, Director of Care at the Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay; Héctor Robles Peiro, Head of the Social Benefits Unit at the Mexican Social Security Institute; and Mariana Borges, Assistant Coordinator of Home Care at the Ministry of Health of Brazil.

Panel members shared experiences related to home care by personal assistants, home health services, and day centers. They covered a broad range of experiences, from countries implementing their first care programs to those with more advanced systems in the region. Speakers highlighted the importance of integrating health and social services, describing the task as one of the central challenges of continuing to develop care systems. The panel also underscored how essential it is to avoid medicalizing care services and to develop a humanized model, under which services are centered on the person receiving them and are developed using a community approach that takes citizens' preferences into account. Another challenge that the panel highlighted is establishing the care agenda in society by developing strategies to communicate with potential users of community services, among other steps.

Following this panel, Alfonso Martinez-Saenz, Head of the VITAL Project at Expertise France, moderated a "**Group activity on services for aging in place.**" The activity emphasized the uniqueness of the context of each country in the region, despite their similarities. Government representatives shared ways in which the care services presented in the "Services for aging in place" panel differ from those offered in their countries. They described differences in the level of cooperation between the sectors involved in coordinating long-term care services, especially between the social sector and the health sector. Participants also cited differences in how countries define the target population for services, especially whether they include socioeconomically vulnerable groups.

The activity also featured a discussion on countries' main challenges in implementing long-term care services. Participants mentioned transitioning from merely regulating care systems to creating a well-established system and addressing issues like financing, coverage, user identification, and raising the political profile of the issue.

Wednesday's second panel, "**Training for caregivers**," was moderated by Fiorella Benedetti, consultant to the IDB's Health and Social Protection Division. She highlighted the direct relationship between caregiver training and the quality of services. She also presented the positive effects of training on the quality of life of both caregivers and care recipients. The panel then addressed the session's five guiding questions: Why provide training? For what skills? With what methodologies? What are the challenges? How many hours?

The panel featured Erkuden Aldaz, Co-Director of the Matia Institute; Mónica Roque, Secretary of Human Rights, Community Gerontology, Gender, and Care Policies at Argentina's Comprehensive

Medical Care Program (PAMI); and Ruth Rojas, educator and head of curriculum design at France's National Agency for Adult Vocational Training. The session stressed how essential it is for training to focus on respecting and valuing the needs of older people, taking into account their dignity and autonomy. In other words, training should not provide protocols for caregiving tasks, but should prepare caregivers to help care recipients carry out these tasks on their own. Training should provide technical, emotional, and self-care skills.

The panel also shared training experiences from Argentina and France. In Argentina, PAMI caregivers are required to receive a minimum number of hours of training. The country has a scholarship system to enable caregivers to participate in training programs. The session emphasized how important it is for caregivers to have the skill of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries without dispensing with empathy.

France has an educational system that prepares caregivers to help care-dependent people be able to do household chores and remain autonomous. This training includes both theory and practice, and its curriculum is updated every five years. Knowledge gained in the theoretical module is assessed by exam, while the practical module includes courses with role-playing activities for personal services in the home—such as assistance with feeding, grooming, and mobility—as well as on-the-job practice. Certification requires 700 hours of training, although this requirement can be adjusted based on each person's level of experience. Additionally, part-time training is available for those who work.

The last activity on Wednesday consisted of a "**Group activity on training for caregivers**," moderated by Virginia Tedeschi, Coordinator of Expertise France's VITAL Project. During this exercise, country representatives answered the following questions: Is there an official training curriculum and qualification framework for caregivers in your country? Is training mandatory in order to work? If official training does exist, do you have any good practices to share? What elements from the previous panel could be useful for your country?

Thursday, September 7

On Thursday, participants visited **seven day centers and residential care facilities for older people**. The visits allowed participants to learn about some of the services offered in Costa Rica. Staff and users shared information about their institution's organizational structure, services, staff availability, and challenges in providing long-term care.

Thursday's first session, entitled "**Investing in care systems**," was moderated by Carlos Soto Iguarán, Task Team Leader at AFD's Health and Social Protection Division. Beatrice Fabiani—consultant to the IDB's Health and Social Protection Division—posed two questions that are central to this issue: How much does a system cost in the region? How should it be financed? Her presentation had two fundamental messages. First, population aging will lead to a significant increase in spending on long-term care, so the system's coverage has to be defined based on its sustainability in 2050. Second, each country will have to choose a combination of general taxation, social insurance, and co-payments as funding sources, based on its political and socioeconomic context. As a starting point, people who are severely dependent on long-term care could be covered with resources from a combination of different sources, such as general taxation and the health sector budget.

Next, Mauricio Matus-Lopez, from Universidad Pablo de Olavide, expanded on the discussion of the cost of care systems. In his presentation, he illustrated how the cost of a system depends on the speed of aging, epidemiological conditions, changes in the labor market, services included, coverage selected, and how costs evolve in the future. These factors vary significantly based on the model

adopted by each country. To estimate the costs of a system, it is best to start with a base model and then adjust it using the parameters mentioned above.

The panel concluded with a conversation with government representatives, including Yorleny León Marchena, Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica; Gloria Reyes Gómez, General Director of the Supérate Program of the Dominican Republic; Rosa Cañete Alonso, Director of Poverty, Inequality, and Democratic Culture at the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development of the Dominican Republic; and Florencia Krall, Director of Care at the Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay. The speakers shared information on how much long-term care services cost and how they are funded in their respective countries, as well as on how to coordinate different sectors and institutions.

The panel was followed by a "**Group activity on next steps for care systems.**" Participants explored two questions about the care systems in their respective countries. The first was, "What is the greatest strength of your country's long-term care system?" The main strengths mentioned were the integration of health and social services and the existence of a law governing the care system.

The second question was, "What is the most strategically important next step that needs to be taken?" Representatives mentioned defining which services the system will provide, mapping existing services and coverage, operationalizing existing laws, creating a national care policy, and forming a care roundtable.

The second question was further explored in the panel entitled "**Next steps for serving care-dependent older people**," moderated by Pablo Ibarrarán, Chief of the IDB's Social Protection and Health Division. This panel included Yorleny León Marchena, Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica; Amar Ramadhin, Minister of Health of Suriname; and Elvia Vega-Samos, Minister of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous Peoples of Belize.

The panel emphasized three key strategic focuses for Costa Rica as it continues to develop its care system: training caregivers; defining how the system will be financed; and improving integration with the health system. For Suriname, panelists highlighted the need for a plan to address dementia, as well as low awareness of the importance of caregiving, which should be addressed by organizing a communication campaign to promote healthy aging. They also stressed the need for research and greater statistical capacity to measure the needs of older people. Finally, for Belize, the panel talked about formalizing a scale to measure the needs of older people and developing the formal care system as important next steps.

The **event's closing remarks** were delivered by representatives from the three organizations that coordinate RedCUIDAR+. Francesco Maria Chiodi, from the European Union's EUROsociAL Program, presented three challenges in the care agenda. First, he highlighted the urgency of responding to the looming pressures of women's empowerment and population aging. Second, he identified five key institutions that should be involved in coordinating care systems: the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Women, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance. Third, he stressed how essential it is to increase citizen awareness in order to develop care systems. Finally, he emphasized the importance of providing more spaces for exchanges between countries at future RedCUIDAR+ meetings.

Pablo Ibarrarán underscored that it is the member countries that set the agenda's priorities. During the event, network members brought up several themes, including the role of families (and especially women) in long-term care, the relevance of caring for both care-dependent people and caregivers, the need to invest to achieve concrete goals, the consensus on the practical importance of person-

centered care, the wide variety of services available, and the challenge of properly integrating health and social services. He reminded attendees that perfection can be the enemy of the good, and that progress on building a care systems is made by taking a first step, even on a small scale, with projects that can later be scaled up.

Carlos Soto Iguarán, Task Team Leader at AFD's Health and Social Protection Division, highlighted the dignity that care can bring to people who need it, a fact that was evident from the visits to service providers in Costa Rica. He also emphasized the importance of decision-makers and the impact of financing. He called for RedCUIDAR+ member countries to build a regional strategy and continue strengthening the network in the future.

Link to event materials

https://cursos.iadb.org/en/future_with_care

Participants

#	Country	Name
1	Argentina	Lucía Cirmi Obón
2	Argentina	Monica Laura Roqué
3	Barbados	Colleen Walcott
4	Barbados	Rean Charmian Roshanna Gibson
5	Belize	Elvia Lilia Vega Samos
6	Bolivia	Alejandra Gutierrez Pinaya
7	Brazil	Alexandre da Silva
8	Brazil	Mariana Borges Dias
9	Brazil	Mirian Lima
10	Costa Rica	Diana Valverde Chacón
11	Costa Rica	Leonardo Obando
12	Costa Rica	Lisseth Maria Rodriguez Garita
13	Costa Rica	Luis Felipe Barrantes Arias
14	Costa Rica	Paola Barquero Araya
15	Costa Rica	Yorleni Leon Marchena
16	Dominican Republic	Gloria Roely Reyes Gomez
17	Dominican Republic	Kaly Peña Nunez
18	Dominican Republic	Rosa Maria Cañete Alonso
19	Ecuador	Maria de Lourdes Muñoz Astudillo
20	Ecuador	María Gabriela Dávila Cueva
21	El Salvador	Irma Yolanda Núñez Mancía
22	El Salvador	Yanci Yanet Salmerón de Artiga
23	EUROsociAL	Fausto Petrarchi
24	EUROsociAL	Francesco Chiodi
25	French Development Agency	Alfonso Martínez Saenz
26	French Development Agency	Carlos Soto
27	French Development Agency	Ivanna Moreira Bernal

28	French Development Agency	Marina Avdibegovic
29	French Development Agency	Merwan Matti
30	French Development Agency	Ruth Rojas
31	French Development Agency	Virginia Tedeschi
32	Guyana	Leslie Ramsammy
33	Honduras	Lidice Isabel Ortega Reyes
34	Honduras	Sara Emilia Ney Simons
35	IDB	Adrián Moreira Muñoz
36	IDB	Alexander Chaverri
37	IDB	Alexandre Bagolle
38	IDB	Ana Mylena Aguilar Rivera
39	IDB	Angelica Mendez
40	IDB	Beatrice Fabiani
41	IDB	Carina Lupica
42	IDB	Carolina Gonzalez Acero
43	IDB	Diego Wachs
44	IDB	Fiorella Benedetti
45	IDB	Francisco Ochoa
46	IDB	Jose Luis Ortiz Hoyos
47	IDB	Leonardo Pinzon
48	IDB	Lesley O'Connell
49	IDB	Luis Tejerina
50	IDB	Marcia Rocha
51	IDB	Marco Stampini
52	IDB	Maria Deni Sanchez
53	IDB	Narumi Akita
54	IDB	Natalia Aranco
55	IDB	Nicolette Odella Henry
56	IDB	Pablo Ibarraran
57	IDB	Patricia Jara Males
58	IDB	Rebeca Solano
59	IDB	Rita Elizabeth Sorio
60	IDB	Santiago Leon
61	IDB	Silvia Elena Moron
62	IDB	Virna Queirolo
63	IDB	Wagner Rech
64	Matia Institute	Erkuden Aldaz
65	Mexico	Brenda Emilia Chino Hernandez
66	Mexico	Héctor Robles Peiro
67	Mexico	Maria del Carmen García Peña
68	Nicaragua	Carold Del Socorro Herrera Mejia

69	Pablo de Olavide University	Mauricio Matus-Lopez
70	PAHO	Enrique Vega
71	Panama	Irasema Rosas de Ahumada
72	Panama	Nischma Villarreal
73	Peru	Martha Marlene Moquillaza Risco
74	SISCA	Anita Zetina
75	SISCA	Gabriela Ramirez
76	SISCA	Yanira Quiteño
77	Suriname	Amar Nookhradj Ramadhin
78	Trinidad and Tobago	Maryam Richards
79	Uruguay	Florencia Krall Curuchaga