



EU-LAC Women's International Network Interregional Dialogues

'Care at the centre of new development models:

Challenges and opportunities for the construction of comprehensive care systems in the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean'

- Concept note-

Dates: November 2022 – October 2023

Organisation: EU-LAC Foundation, EU-LAC Women's International Network (EU-LAC WIN), National Institute of Women of Mexico (INMUJERES), the Global Alliance for Care, UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Format: hybrid dialogues

Executive summary

The unequal distribution of care work is one of the factors that contribute to the continuation of gender inequalities and hinder the full exercise of women's rights and economic autonomy. In recent years, governments of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and of member states of the European Union (EU) have promoted care frameworks, policies and programmes that promote co-responsibility between women and men and contribute to women's autonomy and a fairer social organisation of care. Taking into account these advances, and in the framework of its mandate to facilitate the exchange between governmental and civil society authorities of the two regions (EU and LAC), the EU-LAC Foundation, in close cooperation with entities that promote the Global Partnership for Care (UN Women, INMUJERES), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will organise the **Interregional Dialogues of the EU-LAC Women's International Network 'Care at the centre of new development models'** with representatives of networks and civil society organisations, academic experts and international organisations specialised in the field, as well as governmental representatives. The purpose of the Dialogues is to provide a space to make visible policies, regulations, initiatives and actions for the construction of comprehensive care systems that promote gender equality and to identify opportunities and strategies for greater articulation between actors in both regions on the issue.

Introduction

The **EU-LAC Foundation** is an international intergovernmental body established in 2010 by the States of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the European Union (EU), as well as the EU through its institutions. Its headquarters are in Hamburg, Germany. Its mandate is to work closely with its 61 members to promote bi-regional partnership and dialogue and to facilitate the participation of civil society in it, in order to generate relevant inputs for intergovernmental processes. An essential part of this mission is to build bridges and create spaces for dialogue,

collaboration and interaction with decision-makers in thematic areas that are prominent on the agenda of the strategic partnership between the two regions, such as sustainable social and economic development, climate change, and gender relations.

The **National Institute of Women** of Mexico (INMUJERES) is the federal government entity that coordinates the implementation of the national policy on substantive equality and contributes to the eradication of violence against women. Together with **UN Women**, the UN entity for gender equality and women's empowerment, they launched the **Global Alliance for Care**, a global community based on the principles of co-creation, cooperation, collaboration, collective action and co-leadership through which its members share practices, articulate dialogues and generate advocacy and inter-institutional participation to advance the care agenda from the local to the global level.

The **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean** (ECLAC) serves as the Secretariat of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the main intergovernmental forum on women's rights and gender equality in the region. In November 2022, the Member States adopted the Buenos Aires Commitment, which establishes "Recognize care as a right of people to care, to be cared for, and to exercise self-care based on the principles of equality, universality, and social co-responsibility and and, therefore, as a responsibility that must be shared by people from all sectors of society, families, communities, companies and the State".

The **EU-LAC Women's International Network (EU-LAC WIN)** is a diverse, plural, and intergenerational informal space for connection between women from Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union. Its objective is to promote a dialogue capable of mobilising commitment, knowledge, and collective capacities to accelerate transformations in the field of gender equality. The search for synergies and complementarity between governments, civil society and academia are the factors from which the Network aspires to deepen the approach to the structural causes of gender inequalities and to offer innovative solutions to present and future challenges. The Network currently has three priority lines of action: (1) gender and climate action; (2) social development and the care economy; and (3) women's political participation. These actions of the Network are committed to multilateralism and the 2030 Agenda to contribute to an inclusive and sustainable bi-regional agenda.

Context

Care encompasses the "activities that regenerate people's physical and emotional well-being on a daily and generational basis", including the daily tasks of managing and sustaining life, maintaining domestic spaces and assets, educating and training people, among other aspects. Care work is necessary for sustaining life, reproducing the labour force and societies, and generating contributions to economic production, development and well-being¹.

¹ UN Women and ECLAC (2020). Care in Latin America and the Caribbean during the COVID-19: Towards comprehensive systems to strengthen response and recovery UN Women and ECLAC. Retrieved from: https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45917/190820_en.pdf

Care must be seen as a human right, a pillar of social protection, a public good and a job. The state must be a guarantor of the rights of both caregivers and care recipients and create frameworks for the organisation and regulation of these activities through public-private-community arrangements. Likewise, care must be recognised for its economic and social contribution, whether paid or unpaid. Specifically, the right to care has been included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, calling to "recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate" (Target 5.4).

Despite the contribution of care, care responsibilities fall mainly on households and women, who mostly take on these tasks on an unpaid basis. In the case of paid jobs in the care sector, conditions are characterised by low pay and precarious working conditions². In Latin America and the Caribbean, women spend more than three times as much time on unpaid care and domestic work as men, with the burden being proportionately higher for lower-income women. This burden significantly limits their possibilities to participate fully in the labour market. According to ECLAC data, around 60% of women in households with children under the age of 15 say that they do not participate in the labour market because they have family responsibilities³.

In EU countries, 92% of women consider themselves to be regular carers, i.e. they provide unpaid care services at least several days a week, while only 68% of men report being regular caregivers. The largest differences in care responsibilities are found in Greece, Cyprus and Poland, where women spend twice as much time on unpaid care work as their male counterparts, while in Denmark, Sweden and Slovenia there is a more equal distribution⁴. In the EU, challenges to accessing care services are also evident, including lack of financial resources, lack of availability of services, inflexible opening hours and distance from the facilities where services are provided⁵.

The Covid-19 pandemic has deepened the unbalanced distribution of care responsibilities, which continues to fall mainly on women, in households and in unpaid and precarious conditions. However, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of care in the sustainability of life and the functioning of our economic system and societies and offers an opportunity to move towards building comprehensive care systems as a key element of gender-equal recovery from a holistic and systemic approach. This is especially important in the context of an ageing population where the demand for care for dependent persons is on the rise. To this end, it is

² UN Women and ECLAC (2020). Care in Latin America and the Caribbean during the COVID-19: Towards comprehensive systems to strengthen response and recovery UN Women and ECLAC. Retrieved from: https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45917/190820_en.pdf

³ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2020). Social Panorama of Latin America 2020(LC/PUB.2021/2-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2021.

⁴ European Institute for Gender Equality (2020). Beijing Platform for Action: Gender inequalities in care and pay in the EU. Recuperado de: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-inequalities-care-and-pay-eu>

⁵ European Institute for Gender Equality (2021). Gender inequalities in care and consequences for the labour market. Recuperado de: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-inequalities-care-and-consequences-labour-market>

necessary to incorporate all populations that require care and generate synergies with economic, labour, health, education and social protection policies from a gender, human rights and social co-responsibility approach.

According to the 2021 UN Women and ECLAC report, the implementation of care systems should revolve around five main components: (1) creation and expansion of public-private care services; (2) regulation of services and working conditions for workers; (3) training for people who provide paid care services; (4) actions to generate and manage data on care for the design of public policies and for public knowledge; (5) communication activities aimed at disseminating rights and promoting cultural change. On the other hand, the implementation of comprehensive care systems requires a systemic perspective that considers the following target populations: (1) children; (2) people in situations of dependency; (3) paid and unpaid care workers.

Regional background

Both the EU member states, and LAC countries have made progress in building care programmes and policies. Scandinavian countries such as Finland and Sweden are characterised by feminist welfare states, with a long tradition of social policies in the area of public early childhood care services, competitive parental leave and guaranteed care rights. Other countries such as Italy and Spain have moved from being countries marked by *familialism* and a patriarchal culture, where the responsibility for welfare falls on families and women⁶, to being countries where care is beginning to be considered on the public agenda as a necessary aspect for the development of welfare states⁷. In Latin America, feminist movements in the last decade have placed the issue of care as a priority on the public agenda. At the same time, countries such as Argentina, Chile and Uruguay began to experience the care crisis, which led to greater interest from governments in promoting actions for new forms and models of development that consider care as a central aspect.

In this sense, several Latin American and European countries are taking steps to move from programmes and policies to promote comprehensive care systems. These systems articulate a set of policies aimed at implementing a new social organisation oriented towards caring for, assisting and supporting people who require it, as well as recognising, reducing and redistributing care work - which today is mostly carried out by women - from a human rights, gender, intersectional and intercultural perspective. These policies must be implemented on the basis of inter-institutional articulation from a people-centred approach, where the state is the guarantor of access to the right to care, based on a model of social co-responsibility - with civil society, the private sector and families - and gender co-responsibility - between men and women (UN Women and ECLAC, 2021).

⁶ Domínguez, Amorós, Márius; Muñiz, Leticia and Rubilar, Gabriela (2021). Social times, reproduction and social inequality at work: contrasts and comparative perspectives between countries, in López- Roldán, Pedro and Fachelli, Sandra (2021). Towards a comparative analysis of social inequalities between Europe and Latin America. University of Barcelona.

⁷ Jarty, Julie and batthyány, Karina (2021). Chapter 12. Recent evolutions of gender, state feminism and care models in Latin America and Europe, in López- Roldán, Pedro and Fachelli, Sandra (2021). Towards a comparative analysis of social inequalities between Europe and Latin America. University of Barcelona.

The European Commission presented last September the **European Care Strategy** with specific guidelines, actions and recommendations to ensure comprehensive care services including the provision of quality, affordable and accessible early childhood and long-term care services in all EU countries. The Commission proposes that Member States set new targets up to 2030 to increase the participation of children in early childhood care services. The strategy also focuses on ensuring access to care services for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and people with special needs, reviewing the conditions of carers, paying special attention to the conditions and rights of migrant carers, and offering technical assistance to Member States in the design and implementation of reforms to integrate care as a cross-cutting theme in health, education, social protection, employment and other policies⁸. Some EU countries stand out for their care policies focused on specific populations such as dependent elderly people and early childhood care. However, this strategy is an important step in moving from sectoral policies towards the conceptualisation and design of comprehensive care systems in EU countries.

In countries such as Spain, in September 2021, the Ministry of Equality convened the Advisory Board for Care, made up of feminist experts on care policies, social agents and institutional representatives, with the aim of designing regulatory frameworks and public policies on care and creating the necessary conditions to shape the future public care system. Among the proposals, the aim is to recognise the right to care and to be cared for, to guarantee the protection of paid and unpaid caregivers, and to position the state as the guarantor of a public care system.

On the other hand, governments in the Latin American and Caribbean region have recognised care as a human right, highlighting the key social function that care plays in the production and reproduction of life and the well-being of societies. In this regard, the Montevideo Strategy adopted in 2016 urges governments to encourage the adoption of care policies and the promotion of co-responsibility between women and men that contribute to women's autonomy and a fair social organisation of care. This commitment was ratified at the XIV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in January 2020 in Santiago de Chile, through the Santiago Commitment⁹. The **Buenos Aires Commitment**¹⁰, adopted in November 2022 in the framework of the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, calls for the adoption of normative frameworks that guarantee the right to care through the implementation of comprehensive care policies and systems, from the perspectives of gender, intersectionality, interculturality and human rights. This Declaration outlines a roadmap for placing the care society at the centre of a new model of inclusive development

In addition, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) promoted, with the support of the EUROsociAL+ Programme, the **Inter-American Model Law on Care**, a legal instrument for States

⁸ European Commission Communication on a European Care Strategy. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13298-European-care-strategy_en

⁹ UN Women and ECLAC (2020). Care in Latin America and the Caribbean during the COVID-19: Towards comprehensive systems to strengthen response and recovery UN Women and ECLAC. Retrieved from: https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45917/190820_en.pdf

¹⁰ See https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/22-01138_crm.15_compromiso_de_buenos_aires.pdf

that recognises, values, redistributes and generates new forms of care, as well as unpaid domestic work¹¹. This Model Law incorporates key elements of international instruments and is based on the highest standards of rights, non-discrimination and equality, seeking to strengthen the normative frameworks of States so that they support the full exercise of women's economic rights, empowerment and autonomy.

In the Latin-American region, innovative practices in the consolidation of the concept of comprehensiveness stand out, such as the creation in 2015 of a National Integrated Care System in Uruguay and the National Network of Child Care and Development in Costa Rica since 2010. Other countries are moving forward to generate the necessary regulatory frameworks for the consolidation of comprehensive care systems, as is the case in Argentina with the presentation of a bill on "care in equality" for the creation of a comprehensive system of care policies. In Peru, the current Executive branch presented a bill for the recognition of the right to care and the creation of a national care system. In Mexico, the Chamber of Deputies approved an initiative to include care as a right in the Constitution; this bill is currently being analysed in the Mexican Senate. Another initiative has also been presented in the Mexican Senate, which foresees the issuance of the General Law of the National Care System.

Objective of the Interregional Dialogues

In this context, the EU-LAC Foundation, the National Institute of Women of Mexico (INMUJERES), UN Women and ECLAC in the framework of the Global Alliance for Care, being key actors to generate multi-stakeholder and multi-level dialogues on issues of utmost relevance for the cooperation between LAC and EU countries, propose to develop a series of inclusive interregional dialogues to identify common opportunities, make visible good practices, innovative actions and lessons learned to move towards the construction of comprehensive care systems in both regions, propose to develop a series of inclusive inter-regional dialogues to identify common opportunities, make visible good practices, innovative actions and lessons learned to advance towards the construction of comprehensive care systems in both regions.

Themes of the Interregional Dialogues

The dialogues will be articulated around the following topics:

1. Towards the construction of comprehensive care systems: Experiences from Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. Inclusion of people with disabilities in comprehensive care systems with a gender perspective: good practices and challenges in the EU and LAC.
3. Long-term care: good practices and challenges in the construction of comprehensive care systems with a gender perspective in the EU and LAC.
4. Childcare in the EU and LAC: good practices and challenges in the construction of comprehensive care systems with a gender perspective in the EU and LAC.

¹¹ Inter-American Model Law on Care (2022). Inter-American Commission of Women (ICW). Retrieved from <https://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/LeyModeloCuidados-EN.pdf>

5. Workers in care sectors: good practices and challenges in protection and decent conditions in the EU and LAC.

Each of the dialogues will address, across both regions, the opportunities, good practices, challenges and recommendations for an **effective inter-institutional articulation** in the construction of comprehensive care systems centred on people.

Format of the Interregional Dialogues

Each dialogue will have the participation of women leaders and representatives of civil society organisations, academia and public institutions from LAC and the EU with relevant expertise and who have been designing and implementing exemplary projects, initiatives and/or policies that have the potential to contribute to and strengthen bi-regional cooperation on care issues.

Each of these five dialogues will last about two hours and will be conducted in a hybrid format. Each dialogue will follow the following format: (1) welcoming remarks by the promoters of the EU-LAC Women's International Network; (2) brief presentation of studies, experiences or good practices in correspondence to the specific theme of the dialogue; (3) panel discussion with experts from different sectors (governments, civil society, academia) with up to 2 rounds of questions and answers. The objective of this part of the dialogue will be to identify good practices and lessons learned and to identify similarities and differences between the two regions. The experts will be provided in advance with guiding questions to focus their interventions; (4) interactive dialogue with the participants. The aim is to dedicate a part of the dialogues to an exchange with the audience through an interactive platform that allows the participants to answer the guiding questions as well. They will also be able to turn on their microphones to intervene; (5) closing remarks.

At the end of the dialogue series, a guiding document will be produced with key recommendations for building comprehensive systems of care and successful strategies for inter-agency articulation. This document will be an opportunity to identify more efficiently the policies, regulations, initiatives and actions that are being developed in both regions on the issue of care.

Expected outcomes

- Exchange between representatives of networks, civil society organisations, academia and public institutions in LAC and the EU promoted about common challenges and opportunities as well as innovative practices in the creation of comprehensive care systems;
- A policy note elaborated with recommendations for the design of comprehensive care systems and strategies for inter-institutional articulation in the EU and LAC.
- Usage of this document to collectively advocate with decision-makers in LAC and the EU in the realm of bi-regional cooperation on the design and implementation of policies, regulations, initiatives and actions for the construction of comprehensive care systems that promote gender equality.

Languages

The dialogues will be conducted in the two working languages of the EU-LAC Foundation - Spanish and English- for which simultaneous interpretation services will be provided.

Tentative schedule

Dialogue	Details	Tentative date	Duration	Moderation (2 people)	Opening/Closing remarks
1	Dialogue 1: Towards the construction of comprehensive care systems: Experiences from Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.	07.11.2022	2 hours	_____	_____
2	Dialogue 2: Persons with disabilities in gender-sensitive comprehensive care systems: good practices and challenges in the EU and LAC	28.02.23	2 hours	EU-LAC Foundation (general) GAC (panel)	UN Women (opening) EU- LAC Foundation (closing)
3	Dialogue 3: Long-term care: good practices and challenges in building comprehensive gender-sensitive care systems in the EU and LAC.	13.04.23	2 hours	GAC (general) UN Women (Panel)	EU- LAC Foundation (opening) ECLAC (closing)
4	Dialogue 4: Childcare in the EU and LAC: good practices and challenges in building comprehensive gender-sensitive care systems in the EU and LAC.	08.06.23	2 hours	UN Women EU-LAC Foundation (Panel)	ECLAC (opening) GAC (closing)
5	Dialogue 5: Workers in care sectors: good practices and challenges in protection and decent conditions in the EU and LAC.	07.09.23	2 hours	EU-LAC Foundation (general) ECLAC (Panel)	GAC (opening) UN Women (closing)
6	Presentation of the document with recommendations and strategies for the construction of comprehensive care systems and inter-institutional articulation.	29.10.23 (Global Action Day for Care) <u>or</u> 10.12.23 (Human Rights Day)			