

**24th Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy
(OIDP)**

**"Connect, Integrate and Humanize: Cities facing the challenge of generating
Community"**

CONCEPT NOTE

Session 3

Dialogue on Caring Cities

Date: 21 May 2025

Time: 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM

Venue: UCC Auditorium, Córdoba, Argentina

Thematic Area: **Community Building**

CONTEXT

The **principles of equality and non-discrimination** are the essence of human rights and help reduce disadvantages for many reasons and in many areas. **Human rights are not restricted to special groups.**

Approaching care from a human rights and participation perspective means **placing the ownership of the right in the individual: care is a human right—individual, universal, and inalienable—that every person holds.**

Recognizing the universal right to care is the first step toward distributing it among members of society and preventing it from falling solely on women. It involves recognizing a right held by everyone that also distributes responsibilities, as it establishes a direct relationship between the right, the empowerment of rights-holders, the obligations, and the guarantees for its exercise.

Promoting **comprehensive care policies** has been a shared priority for various stakeholders committed to building fairer and more cohesive societies. In this regard, **Mercociudades**, a network of 400 cities in 12 Latin American countries, founded in 1995, has, over its 29 years of existence, placed at the center of its activities, commitments, and political positions the reflection on the role of local governments in building citizenship, development, environmental care, and the implementation of the rights agenda.

The **recent pandemic accelerated an ongoing reflection process on the need to coordinate actions aimed at promoting Care Systems**, and in this context, Mercociudades carried out a project supported by the global network United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), which included a consultancy conducted by FLACSO Chile with the aim of contributing to the advancement of Comprehensive Care Systems and moving toward a Care Society from local governments, to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Regional Gender Agenda.

Preliminary results of this consultancy contributed to the “[Commitment of Cities to Care](#)” (in spanish) declaration approved at the XXVII Mercociudades Summit in Montevideo in November 2022, and also to later actions developed with the Vice-Presidency of Social Development and Health of Mercociudades. Among these actions, the network-wide care commitment campaign stands out—currently, 22 cities have joined the commitment. A dedicated [web platform](#) on care and a publication resulting from the above-mentioned consultancy are also available.

Based on this collaboration and the strengthening of strategic alliances over the years, we identify the **24th Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy**, to be held in Córdoba, Argentina, from **May 21 to 23, 2025**, as a key opportunity to promote the **exchange of good practices and experiences in comprehensive care policies at the local level**, focusing on the value of proximity to promote policies tailored to the needs of each population and rooted in the participation of local communities.

In this context, we propose the organization of a **Dialogue on Caring Cities**, with the objective of strengthening the commitment of local and international actors to the development of equitable, sustainable, and participatory care systems.

OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate a space for exchange among local governments, international organizations, and key actors to share **experiences, challenges, and strategies** in implementing comprehensive care policies from the territorial diversity of the region.
- **Position care policies as local social cohesion policies**, emphasizing their connection with **participatory democracy, innovation, and coexistence**.

- Promote **strategic alliances and synergies** among local governments, international organizations, and research centers to **strengthen and expand** comprehensive care policies at the local level.
- Encourage more cities to join the “Caring Cities” commitment.

METHODOLOGY

This session will feature an **institutional opening** (15 min) to contextualize the event, its importance within the Forum, the framework for dialogue, and to reinforce the commitment of local governments and international organizations to care policies. The agenda will continue with a presentation by the moderator on the **Local Care Agenda** and different approaches to territorializing care. Next, **a panel (60 min) will present experiences and strategies in comprehensive care policies**: concrete examples from local governments and strategic actors on the implementation of care policies, focusing on proximity and citizen participation.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Creation of **strategic alliances** between local governments and international organizations to strengthen comprehensive care policies at the local level.
- Generation of inputs for designing **advocacy strategies** in bi-regional spaces.
- Positioning the voice of local governments within regional and international debates on care.

SPEAKERS (Preliminary)

- **Ednaldo Joaquim Da Silva Junior**, Executive Secretary of the Democratic Budget of the State of Paraíba (Brazil)

Representatives of local governments with experience in implementing care policies and innovative programs:

- Representative from the City of Córdoba (TBC)
- Representative from Buenos Aires
- Representative from Montevideo

♦ **International organizations** that have promoted public policy frameworks on care:

- UNDP
- UN Women
- CEPAL

- CAF

- ♦ **City networks and municipal associations** actively working on the development of care systems at local and regional levels:

- OIDP
- UCLG
- Mercociudades

- ♦ **Academic representatives:**

- National University of Córdoba

- ♦ **Representatives of civil society** and grassroots organizations developing care strategies in local territories:

- Lola Mora Association, Argentina – Norma Sanchís