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International Council on Social Welfare

August 2022

Working Together for a Better ICSW



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Executive Director of ICSW and Professor of Social
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Education University (UNED) (Spain)***

Dear ICSW members, friends, and interested readers,

Welcome to the August 2022 issue of our newsletter.

ICSW brings together many organizations that share a common goal: to work together to improve social welfare. As we have all experienced with the covid-19 pandemic, welfare is local and it is global. We have to address the challenges from a global perspective, and also from a local perspective. The two dimensions go hand in hand, and the successful design and delivery of covid-19 vaccines has brought our ability to work cooperatively back to the table. But at the same time, it has also highlighted the difficulties and inequalities that still today do not allow universal and affordable distribution to all the world's population.

The covid-10 pandemic, and the pandemics that will affect us in the future, forces us to reflect on

the welfare model in which we are immersed, and on the development model that guides our decisions. In this issue of the newsletter, I have the honor to present the contributions of our partners from the Latin America region. The challenges they are facing are very relevant, and the activities they are carrying out, which they describe in detail, are a good example of the commitment to social welfare that characterizes our organization. Our newsletter allows us to present to the entire organization the advances that are taking place in different parts of the world, and in this way, share best practices and learn from each other.

For almost two years now, we have been publishing in the Newsletter contributions from the different regions that make up the ICSW, in a process that is allowing us to get to know each other better and to collaborate more effectively in our projects to improve social welfare. In this regard, I would like to thank all the colleagues from the Latin American region who have sent us their contributions.

The challenges for social welfare (global and local) will be one of the key themes of the SWESD22. Now the abstract submission has ended and the result of the abstract review will be announced at the end of August. The registration has started on August 1st and everyone who register before August 31st will be applied with Early-Bird fee. There is also a discount for ICSW and IASSW members. We look forward to everyone's interest and participation in SWESD 2022. For more information about SWESD 2022, please visit <http://swesd2022.com/>

Thank you all for your commitment to ICSW.

Take care and stay healthy!

A message from the Latin America Regional President



Cristina Riscalla Madi,
President of ICSW – Latin America

We entered 2022 still feeling the impacts caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic on different aspects of social life. There were projections about a “new normal” and prospects for changes in the pathways of our common experiences as a society, including those regarding environmental issues. Despite these conjectures, the future remains uncertain, with increasing inequalities, conflicts between countries, and the escalation of intolerance in many aspects.

The latest report on economic forecasts for Latin America by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) showed that, by the end of 2022, more than 8 million people will be living under food insecurity conditions, adding up to 94.4 million Latin Americans who will not afford to have three meals a day.

Poverty is expected to increase as well. That means that 33.7 percent of the population of the region will be living in poverty by the end of the year, while 14.9 percent will be living in extreme poverty, meaning they will earn less than US\$1.90 a day to survive.

Our region faces internal contexts characterized by severe economic slowdown, rising inflation rates, and a slow and insufficient recovery of job markets.

According to the UN ECLAC, the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and high inflation rates around the world are the main factors pushing Latin Americans into poverty. The ECLAC recommends that the governments in the region should implement monetary and foreign exchange policies to control inflation, because food security should be a top priority.

There is no doubt that the upcoming times will be increasingly challenging to social workers, as they will be required to conduct urgent work defending the rights of the population to secure their access to public policies and continue to tread a path in defense of autonomy, freedom, and human rights.

Amid so many challenges facing us, we believe that, together, we can overcome them and empower our social protection network.

With this perspective in mind, this Newsletter presents some actions conducted in 2021 and 2022 by the organizations and members of the ICSW in the region.

Brazil



Social Service of Commerce – Sesc São Paulo

Urgent Winter Appeal Campaign

As winter arrived, the social inequality we witness in the city of São Paulo has become even more overt. The cold weather and destitution become increasingly apparent every day due to the economic crisis, which became graver during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this context, a significant part of the vulnerable population lives on the streets of our country and struggles to meet their basic needs to survive. Many are homeless and have no access to proper food, counting on the help of people and social organizations that are concerned about how pressing this matter is.

It is time to act, human to human. This scenario requires urgent attention supported by social protection, in which every person that can help is responsible for taking action toward others who are exposed to hunger and cold.

The Urgent Winter Appeal Campaign (*Ação Urgente Contra o Frio*) is an initiative by SESC São Paulo to help people experiencing social vulnerability or homelessness to face winter more safely and with more dignity. All SESC Branches in the city of São Paulo are prepared to receive donations of sweaters, clothes, and blankets and submit them to institutions that provide care to homeless people.



Urgent Winter Appeal Campaign

Urgent Hunger Appeal Campaign

Since May 11th, 2021, SESC and SENAC patrons across the state of São Paulo were able to donate non-perishable food items at any of their branches. The initiative is part of the Urgent Hunger Appeal Campaign (*Ação Urgente Contra a Fome*), held by SESC and SENAC and supported by Sincomércio. In addition to the donation points at their branches, the campaign also collected food items at solidarity drive-throughs in the capital city of São Paulo and across the state, where civil society could drive their cars, ride their bikes, or even walk into the locations to donate. By March 2022, 135 tons of food items had been collected.

Additionally, donations were also collected from companies through SESC São Paulo Brazil Table (*Mesa Brasil*), a program dedicated to fighting hunger and waste, which has been connecting companies and social institutions for 27 years. In 2021 alone, more than 6,500 tons of products were collected—including donations to the Urgent Hunger Appeal Campaign and from companies—, ranging from food items to personal hygiene and cleaning products. These donations were distributed to 1,300 registered social institutions, benefiting thousands of people.

This action started in a moment when hunger and food and nutrition insecurity were on the rise in the country. The 1st National Survey on Food

Insecurity in the Context the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil was published in the first half of 2021, conducted by the Brazilian Network of Research on Food and Nutrition Security and Sovereignty (PENSSAN Network), and it showed that 19 million people in Brazil did not have anything to eat, while more than half of the country's households were facing some degree of food insecurity by the end of 2020.



In this context, it was necessary to engage society as a whole in a broad solidarity mobilization, aiming to urgently increase donations and expand the forms of donations already provided within the program.

Outside these branches, employees organized solidarity drive-throughs in strategic locations in the capital, in cities across the state and the coast, where passersby could stop and donate, exercising solidarity.



After the campaign, SESC São Paulo Brazil Table will continue its 27-year-long work, to take food from places where there is a food surplus to places experiencing food shortages, helping reduce waste and food insecurity conditions among children, young people, adults, and older adults. The program serves registered social institutions, such as daycare centers, long-stay institutions, shelters, hospitals, and others.

Human Rights

This area is based on continuous Human Rights education, aiming to foster critical views capable of acknowledging inequality structures and rights violations that still exist in our society, to create a diverse and democratic culture of respect.

Its programs point to an active stance in protection of social equity through conviviality and promotion of dialogue. By operating across sectors, the area aims to address the main rights-related issues of contemporary times. In this sense, the Involuntary Listening (Escuta Involuntária) project stands out amid the social distancing context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which a truck drives around with loudspeakers on, playing messages addressing the topic of domestic violence, especially against women, children, and older adults.



Involuntary Listening Project

In our refugee-related work, the continuity of Portuguese courses—promoted by the institution since 1995—was combined with a number of actions that aimed to secure the effective integration of refugees, by appreciating their backgrounds and ways of thinking, as well as promoting and welcoming their cultural practices. These projects included Human Refuges (Refúgios Humanos), a partnership with the Regional Education Board, which held educational meetings with educators of the city school system, addressing educational practices targeting refugee and immigrant students.



Human Refuges

From the educational perspective of Social Service, it focused on institutional partnerships, the strengthening of social assistance networks, and the creation of environments for reflection and conversations among professionals. An example of this work was the partnership with the Brazilian Center for Social Service Cooperation and Exchange (CBCISS), the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-RIO), and the Lusophone University of Oporto (ULP) to hold the 1st International Seminar Social Service in Sports—The Work of Social Workers in Sport Education. It was an opportunity to consolidate spaces of collaboration to strengthen sports in pandemic and post-pandemic times, giving them new social meaning, setting off comprehensive human development, and making it possible to exchange information and give exposure to the work developed by social workers. Another work, the Social Issue of Drugs (Questão Social das Drogas), introduced an overview of the social

aspects related to the universe of psychoactive substance use, proposing views from social and political contexts and mental health care practices.



The Social Issue of Drugs Project

Cultural Diversity

The program carries out actions that focus on people, populations, and cultures whose rights are threatened and/or treated as “less than,” including women, LGBTQIA+ people, Black people, Indigenous people, and traditional peoples/communities.

The initiatives intend to promote cultural diversity, creating spaces of conviviality, exchanges, and discussions about prejudice and respect, aiming to acknowledge differences as a legitimate component of coexisting.

Initiatives include the actions Indigenous April (Abril Indígena), Legitimate Difference (Legítima Diferença), and Diaspora Dossier (Dossiê da Diáspora).

The network action Indigenous April, which included virtual actions, is focused on the relevance of Indigenous peoples for the existence and conservation of biodiversity in Brazil, which stands out as one of the planet’s megadiverse countries. It proposes the contact of the audience with alterity and diversity related to different peoples, demonstrating how Indigenous people play a leading role as active Brazilian citizens.



Indigenous April

Another action—Legitimate Difference—has the International Day Against LGBT-phobia as a point of reference. The network action aims to feature different realities and challenge different kinds of prejudice and stereotypes related to LGBTQIA+ people. Some of the matters addressed included processes of exclusion and social erasure, the reality of employment facing trans people, experiences in different social spaces, rights, representation in the arts, and family acceptance.



Legitimate Difference

The "Diaspora Dossier—Black Presence and Resistance in the World" project was focused on the influence of Black people from the African diaspora in science, culture, and art around the world.



Diaspora Dossier

Its activities aimed to bring the role of education to prominence in the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, in order to take part in individual and collective symbolic and concrete rebuilding processes, contributing for the reflection regarding forms of domination and exclusion.

Childhoods and Youths

Play Space

The program includes a number of actions for, with, and about babies and children up to 6 years old, their parents or tutors, pregnant people, and others who are interested in early childhood matters.



Play Space

Its continuous action provides a permanent or temporary playful environment with a setting designed to appreciate play, whether it is spontaneous, guided, or mediated. It is set to receive and promote conviviality with all kinds of bonds—family, emotional, school-related bonds, and others. The environment is prepared by educators who mobilize different possibilities of educational and recreational setups, selecting playful elements and collections to encourage a unique experience for each individual or collective.

Based on these values, playful experiences and actions are also conducted using languages such as theater, dance, music, literature, and plastic arts. Relevant network actions include the World Play Week and Caring for the Carers (*Semana Mundial do Brincar e Cuidar de Quem Cuida*).

“Trusting the Power of Play” was the theme of the World Play Week, which this year took place May 21st–29th. Its goal was to show how important it is to play and especially create opportunities for children to play. Promoted by the Alliance for Childhood as a huge social mobilization of volunteers, governments, and other actors from all parts of Brazil, the World Play Week has been happening since 2009, and SESC has joined the effort in 2013. The event is connected to the World Play Day, celebrated on May 28th, and discusses how important playing is as a foundation and genuine expression of babies, toddlers, and children.



World Play Week

Caring for the Carers is a network action that aims to raise awareness and inspire people and institutions regarding Early Childhood for, with, and about caretakers of babies, toddlers, and children up to 6 years old. It also addresses the implications of care, providing reflections on social constructs and offering new perspectives.

In this sense, the Caring for the Carers action is now at its 4th edition, which is themed Exercises of Care in Early Childhood—Public Policies. It aims to expand the reach of democratic and citizen perspectives as quality dimensions of care through cross-sectional and multidisciplinary views on public policy making.



Caring for the Carers Cycle

Curumim

Curumim is a non-formal education program aiming to contribute to the comprehensive development of 7–12 year-olds. It mostly serves children of SESC's priority beneficiaries and patrons and/or low-income groups.

Different social and educational experiences, including body, art, environment, and culture, are conducted to foster cooperation, solidarity, respect for others, and the development of autonomous, aware citizens. The Curumim program is carried out in 33 Branches and has been conducting work with family members and educators in general for 34 years.

As challenges are posed, new methodologies have been necessarily developed to continue to give priority to affection and conviviality. As part

of its educational process, a number of sustained remote actions on the bases of the program have started. Using different digital platforms and offering materials to be used during activities, several different topics have been addressed, mainly focusing on: leading roles, the expansion of repertoires, and playfulness, always with educators mediating them. In addition to this work, the emotional, social, and economic situation of children and their families have been constantly mapped to monitor this moment.

In more than three decades, the Curumim program has been propelling multiple experiences, challenges, and knowledge sharing opportunities, anchored in the appreciation of childhood, conviviality, and spontaneous play.



Youths

Dedicated to teenagers and young people aged 13–29, as well as professional workers who are interested in the discussions around this universe, the program's work is grounded in: youth diversity, social context analysis, relationship with territories, and effective youth participation. Using different artistic languages and formats, it aims to contribute to expanding cultural repertoires and encouraging conviviality, autonomy, and respect for differences.

The program's actions are developed based on the following pillars: for, with, between, and about young people and youths.



Network actions that stand out include Youths: Art and Territory (*Juventudes: Arte e Território*). To celebrate International Youth Day, it conducted activities dedicated to broadening views and discussions regarding teenagers and young people, their realities and contexts, appreciating their artistic productions. Another action was Youths in Focus (*Juventudes em Foco*), which this year was themed Communities and Connections. By acknowledging young people as unique individuals with multiple dimensions, the meetings aimed to start conversations about diverse youths and their key issues, addressing the problems regarding the aspirations and dilemmas they experience in contemporary times.

Social Work with Older Adults

The program is guided by the promotion and expansion of conversations about aging and longevity through activities involving art, reflection, and the body. It has been conducted since 1963, working from the perspective of appreciating the culture of aging and the leading role played by older adults, as well as aiming to challenge stereotypes and prejudice. Considering demographic, social, and cultural changes that affect older adults, the program formulates proposed activities and offers good opportunities for socializing, engaging in intergenerational relationships, exchanging experiences and wisdom, building knowledge, and promoting wellbeing, quality of life, and health.

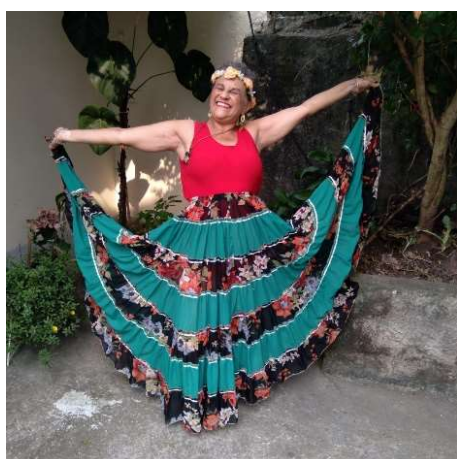
Projects in this area have introduced actions based on three action pillars: **Art and Expression, Body and Movement, and Society and Citizenship.**

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ICSW NEWS



Digital Literacy



Folk Dances

In 2022, the Elder Abuse Awareness Campaign addressed the topic of Acknowledgment and Rights. It aims to expose the main types of abuse perpetrated against older persons, so that the population can recognize them, protect themselves from them, and report cases, understanding how social service networks work and operate in tandem in a positive and social-educational way to address these situations.



Regarding publications, the magazine 60 Plus—Studies on Aging (*Mais 60 – Estudos sobre o Envelhecimento*) is published every four months and is dedicated to encouraging reflection and intellectual production in gerontology and the fields of aging and longevity.



Brazil



**Brazilian Center for Social Service
Cooperation and Exchange - CBCISS**

Management - Between Yesterday and Today: Conversations Building New Horizons

The Brazilian Center for Social Service Cooperation and Exchange (*Centro Brasileiro de Cooperação e Intercâmbio de Serviços Sociais*—CBCISS) is an organization whose mission is to develop cooperation and exchange actions and services to protect human rights. It has a long 76-year-old history continuously conducting activities, creating, and perfecting its undertakings to current times in different times throughout its existence, both from a local and national as well as international perspective.

The actions are created, carefully considered, and performed in a privileged way through partnerships and agreements that establish possibilities of fruitful conversations in the design of inputs for social and public policy making.

A valuable information to report presently is that a new board of directors took office on March 31st, 2022—"Between Yesterday and Today: Conversations Building New Horizons"—, which is proceeding with the previously planned

activities, respecting the commitments previously made with effort and perseverance, and facing the challenges of the present context.

Board of Directors "Between Yesterday and Today: Conversations Building New Horizons"

Ilda Lopes Rodrigues da Silva — President

Eliza Regina Ambrósio — Vice President

Terezinha de Carvalho Nascimento — Financial Director

Ana Maria Branco da Costa Arantes — Technical Director

Andrea Medrado Martins — Managing Director

Luciano Marcelo Vieira — Publicity Director (Institutional Relations)

Audit Committee Members

Joel Naimayer Padula

Fernando Alves da Silva.

Rosely Reis Lorenzato

Alternate Members

Inês Nascimento de Carvalho Reis

Rachel Gertner Fonseca

Vicente de Paula Faleiros

National Board

Sandra Carla Sarde Mirabelli

Thais Monteiro de Castro

In this sense, some important works developed by the institution and its partners are worth introducing.

Project: Caretaker Course

The Caretaker Course is the result of an agreement between the CBCISS and Furnas Centrais Elétricas S.A. It is free of charge and targets people with a high school degree who are living under insufficient social and economic conditions and wish to gain new knowledge and learn new skills.

The course syllabus is focused on training people to offer special care to older adults, children and youth, and people with disabilities. It includes 160 hours of in-person classes, as well as online or phone educational support.

Class number 4 graduated on May 23rd, 2022, and class number 5 graduated on May 31st, adding up to one hundred and twenty-three (123) new Caretakers—eight (8) of them are refugees.

In this context, the rich exchange established between different cultures represented by students (from Brazil, Angola, Congo, and Venezuela) should be highlighted, as well as the closer relationship established with the Diocesan Caritas of Rio de Janeiro and the Refugee Support Center.

As the course graduates its classes of new Caretakers, it fulfills its mission of training people to provide care services with technical skill and the necessary awareness to engage with another human being, whatever their unique characteristics may be.

The purpose of the CBCISS is to continue to conduct this important work and proceed with its activities, in the dialogic space of people's interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary views and wisdom.



CBCISS Archive, Caretaker Class of May 2022

Another important work is the meetings of the World of Knowledge and Society: Challenges and Possibilities. The CBCISS and SESC São Paulo organize these activities in close proximity, selecting the topics that will be addressed as well as the participating exhibitors.

The meetings are held via SESC São Paulo's YouTube channel, as part of the SESC Ideas Project, reaching thousands of views.



Social Service and the Land Issue:
Social Struggles and Marks of Exclusion



Aversion to the Poor:
A Big Challenge in Brazil



Facing Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
of Children and Teenagers

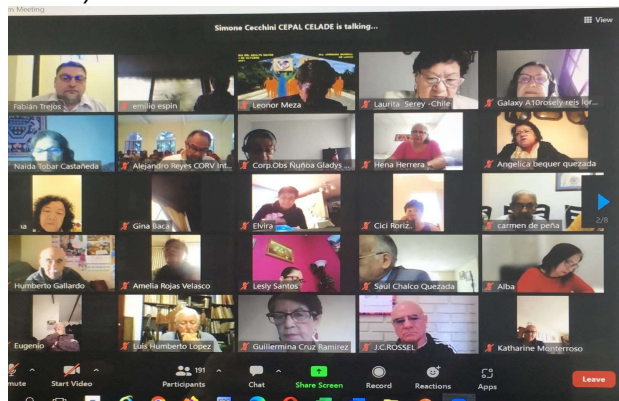


Hunger Doesn't Wait: Reflections
on Food Sovereignty and Security

In addition to conducting this work, the CBCISS has a long tradition of participating in Councils on the Rights of Older Persons and Social Service.

In matters regarding older adults, the social worker Rosely Reis Lorenzato is the CBCISS representative in the Rio de Janeiro State Council for the Rights of Older Persons (*Conselho Estadual de Defesa dos Direitos da Pessoa Idosa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro—CEDEPI*) as a member of the Public Policy Committee; in the Permanent National and State Forum on Older Persons in the State of Rio de Janeiro (*Fórum Permanente da Política Nacional e Estadual do Idoso no Estado do Rio de Janeiro—PNEIRJ*) as deputy secretary; and in the Permanent Forums on the Rights of Older Persons as a member of the national coordinating board.

Similarly, the CBCISS has been actively attending events of the Regional Coordination of Civil Society Organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean on Aging (*Coordinación Regional de Organismos de la Sociedad Civil de América Latina y el Caribe Sobre Envejecimiento y Vejez—CORV*).



In matters regarding social service, the social worker Maria Helena de Souza Barros takes part in the Committee on Rules of the City Social Service Council (*Conselho Municipal de Assistência Social—CMAS*).

The Council is the collective body where government and civil society have equal participation, with the power to define rules, make decisions, and control the Social Service Policy. It is connected to the city's Social Service Policy managing structure.

Current times have required special attention in the sense of continuing to protect the rights of the users of the Unified Social Assistance System.

The CBCISS understands that its work and activities are part of a whole in which everyone makes a contribution to the “common work” of co-responsibility in promoting human rights and respect for the environment.

Uruguay



Uruguayan Council on Social Welfare (CUBS)

Who Are We?

The Uruguayan Council on Social Welfare (*Consejo Uruguayo de Bienestar Social—CUBS*) is a mixed-type organization, as it is officially part of the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the Public Health Ministry, the Montevideo city government, the National Food Institute, and the National Institute for Children and Adolescents of Uruguay. Its private stakeholders include nongovernmental organizations specializing in different social work areas, professional associations, education centers, and social philanthropy organizations that have been a part of the CUBS since it was first established.

Board of Directors

- President: Soc. Mirtha Sosa Crevoisier
— Uruguayan League Against Tuberculosis
- Vice President: Mr. Edgardo Ramos Verde
— AAU
- Dep. Vice President: Mr. Santiago González
— ICCA
- Secretary: Dr. Jenny Read Member
- Pro Secretary: Psy. Rosario Lemus Member
- Treasurer: Cel. Orosmán Martínez
— Cristóbal Colón Philanthropic Soc.
- Dep. Treasurer: Dr. Paola Maeso — AUDAS
- Spokespersons: Soc. Vivian Alsina Member
- Spokespersons: Samuel Diogo, BSW
— Uruguay Children's Villages

- Spokespersons: Mrs. Gisele Mosegui — Uruguay Diabetes Foundation



CUBS Authorities

Relevant work conducted by the CUBS and its members from September 2021 to April 2022.



Activities carried out in tandem with the Uruguayan Association of Alzheimer's and Similar Conditions (*Asociación Uruguaya de Alzheimer y Similares*—AUDAS), conducted by the psychologist and CUBS member Rosario Lemus.

These workshops introduce several topics related to the lives of families living with cognitive impairment and dementia and offer a space for exchanges.

They are held with the Uruguayan Alzheimer's Association (*Asociación Uruguaya de Alzheimer*) and represent an inter-institutional work to address a reality that must be discussed in a comprehensive manner.

The community has been very active in this. Because these are virtual activities, people from other parts of the country and the world are able to participate, so it becomes a space of debate with associations from other countries.



Zoom Workshops

Support to Activities by the University of the Republic

The "Use of Everyday Objects and Adapting Them to People with Rheumatic Conditions Project," conducted by a team of faculty and students of the Occupational Therapy Course. Four

workshops were held in four different neighborhoods in the city of Montevideo, collecting stories about the needs of and troubles faced by people with rheumatic conditions and providing tools to make activities easier in their everyday lives.



Psy. Rosario Lemus and Soc. Mirtha Sosa
Crevoisier

Grandchildren Group

Grandchildren (*Grupo Nietos*) was conceived by Psy. Rosario Lemus with the support and approval of the CUBS, targeting young people whose grandparents are people with cognitive impairment or people who have suffered the effects of the pandemic—whether they already had a condition, had their quality of life reduced, or saw their movement problems increase.

The group also aims to help young people process these moments, turning anxiety and concern into actions that can improve their family members' quality of life while also helping them develop their psycho-emotional skills.

The group's work methodology includes monthly meetings and engagement through social networking sites.

The monthly meetings work as a therapeutic group that helps facilitate catharsis and reflection through dynamic group activities.

Their purpose is to create a sense of belonging and commitment with the group. The online meetings encourage commitment and belonging, meeting the Uruguayan Council on Social Welfare's goal of conducting work dedicated to the wellbeing and health of the population—in this case, promoting inter-generation integration.

GRUPO NIETOS

Nietos es un grupo para quienes quieren apoyar a sus abuelos ayudándolos a mantener autonomía y calidad de vida en este tiempo de pandemia.



Cómo funciona: reuniones virtuales, frecuencia mensual.
Actividad sin costo.
Facilita: Psic. Rosario Lemus

Cómo participar:
enviar mensaje al (+598) 097701114 para obtener link.



Exhibition on Resilience and Older Adults on Newsletter No. 25 of the Ibero-American Social Security Organization on the situation of Older Adults in Ibero-America.

<https://oiss.org/boletin-no-25-programa-iberoamericano-de-cooperacion-sobre-la-situacion-de-las-personas-adultas-mayores/>



Psychologist Rosario Lemus



Participation in the Seminar: Art, Culture, and Inclusion in Media Outlets. A seminar on culture and people with disabilities organized by: Mercocieties-South-South Cooperation (*Mercociudades-Cooperación Sur Sur*), City of Montevideo, University of the Republic, Uruguayan Press Association, and the Office of the President of the Republic of Uruguay.



2021 Activities of the Uruguay Diabetes Foundation, FDU, Active CUBS member

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=LR5dPoP4NY8&feature=share&t=53>



Participation in the online course "Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, Implementation at the Municipal Level." This course is organized by the Institute for the Elderly and Social Services of Spain (IMSERSO) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).



Gisele Monseguí, President of the FDU

Dominican Republic



Directorate of Information and Defense of the Social Security Beneficiaries (DIDA)

Who are we?

The Directorate of Information and Defense of the Social Security Beneficiaries (*Dirección General de Información y Defensa de los Afiliados a la Seguridad Social—DIDA*) is a device of the Dominican Social Security System (*Sistema Dominicano de Seguridad Social—SDSS*). It serves all Dominicans and legal residents in the country free of charge, offering them the necessary services to effectively protect their right to social security, complying with Law 87-01.

The DIDA promotes, educates, informs, and guides on the SDSS. It also advises, defends, and follows up on members until the final resolution of their cases.

Mission

To safeguard people's right to Social Security in all stages of their lives, promoting, informing, educating, monitoring, guiding, and defending the members of the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS).

Vision

To be a point of reference developing a comprehensive model of citizen, cultural, and educational care in Social Security, to acknowledge and provide access to the universal and constitutional right of the Dominican population.

Values

Quality, Transparency, Equity, Commitment, Solidarity, and Integrity.

Mensagem da Diretora Geral, Carolina Serrata Méndez



Carolina Serrata Méndez
Director General

"Establishing a culture of social security and social protection in the Dominican

Republic is a top priority of our administration. Therefore, promoting the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS), educating the population on their rights and duties, monitoring the quality of the information and benefits provided to our citizens, and defending their rights against cases of violations are the driving forces moving us every day at the Directorate of Information and Defense of the Social Security Beneficiaries (DIDA), a point of reference in the region for its unique nature dedicated to securing fundamental rights such as Social Security."

Advances and Challenges Facing the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS) – Summary



The Dominican Republic is located in the Greater Antilles in the Caribbean, with a population of more than 10.74 million living across a 48,670-square-kilometer land area.

The history of social protection in the country dates back to the 18th century, when the first law on pension benefits and funding for military officers and their families was passed. After that, all sectors, especially workers, devoted efforts to establish what is now the Dominican Social Security System, established in 2001 through Law 87-01.

It has been more than 100 years of struggles, strikes, demands, and social and political agreements to establish a universal and protectionist model supported by the **Dominican Constitution** as a way to enshrine the mutual rights and duties of state and citizens, in terms of funding the protection of the population against the risks posed to them throughout their lives.

The Dominican Social Security System (SDSS) has three forms of insurance with different forms of funding: Family Health Insurance (SFS), Labor Risk Insurance (SRL), and Old-Age, Disability, and Survivors Insurance (SVDS), based on one technological platform that records employers and workers as beneficiaries entitled to benefits. Entities specializing in risk management have

also been established.

A unique feature of this System is that all organized sectors are integrated into one management council: the **National Social Security Council (Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Social—CNSS)**, overcoming the traditional government-workers-employers tripartite model. Moreover, it has representatives of medical doctors, health care professionals and technicians, nursing unions, people with disabilities, homeless people, unemployed people, and small business workers, providing plural knowledge and social policy decision making for the benefit of the population.

In February 2020, **Law 13-20** was enacted, strengthening the role and the managerial and operational capacity of the DIDA.

Presently, the president of the Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader, introduced a bill to Congress to amend Law 87-01, which establishes the Dominican Security System, the terms of which are being discussed by a Social Security Themed Panel coordinated by the Social Economic Council, in which all segments of the nation are represented, including the DIDA director general, **Carolina Serrata Méndez**.

Actions to Establish a Social Security Culture in the Dominican Republic



The Dominican population resorts to DIDA offices across the country to address situations regarding the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS). It is a challenge for the institution to be able to educate, foster, resolve conflicts and disputes, and exhaust the due process within its structure, significantly reducing the number of cases that need to be taken to court.

The DIDA has been playing a key part in positioning a culture of rights in social security for the very roles it is required to perform according to the law.

To illustrate the DIDA's role in the SDSS, we should highlight that, by October 2021, 14,975,767 cases had been attended to and 327,145 complaints and claims had been managed, and more than 80 percent of the cases reported by the population had been solved at the social security administration level, without having to take them to the courts of general jurisdiction.

The projects the DIDA is currently developing include norms and procedures to secure resources to the population, not only regarding regulatory, legal, and human resources aspects to meet citizens' demands, but also to train and educate the population toward a culture of demanding their social security rights.

Defender's Office:

The Defender's Office dedicated to beneficiaries is one of the institution's responsibilities set forth by Law 87-01. Complying with the legislation, from **September 2021** to **March 2022**, 17,972 requests were received and addressed, including claims, complaints, and reports of denials of benefits to SDSS beneficiaries.



Medical advisory services were provided to 8,652 beneficiaries of the Family Health Insurance (SFS) under the Contributory or Subsidized Regime who, for some reason, were not aware of what services their insurance covered and had been recommended by their doctors. In addition to these services, the Social Pension Treasury Office (*Tesorería de la Seguridad Social*—TSS) received more than 50,000 certificates of history of deductions, non-coverage letters, and certificates of contribution.

From its establishment in 2002 to November 2021, the DIDA has addressed 239,940 claims and complaints, and more than 80 percent of the cases filed by the population were solved at the social security administration level, without having to take them to courts of general jurisdiction. Moreover, we assisted 15,111,604 cases—2,134,378 in one year alone.

Since 2021, 875,159 SDSS beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries have been provided legal aid and information services through several means at 18 offices and counters across the Greater Santo Domingo and provinces in the country.

This job is also carried out in scenarios in which situations affecting beneficiaries are exposed, discussed, or analyzed regarding the granting of their rights, in which cases the DIDA intercedes in reported cases and processes them with different levels until their resolution.



Creating a Social Security Culture for the Dominican Republic

Education as a major pillar is what the DIDA director, **Carolina Serrata Méndez**, pledged to develop during her administration. The goal is that every citizen can be aware of their rights and duties regarding social security.



In 2021, Serrata Méndez visited Colombia with a work team to coordinate and design the reaches of a project of **pension education and the creation of a Social Security School** that the DIDA will hold with the Ibero-American Social Security Organization (OISS) and the Ibero-American Center of Social Studies and Education in the city of Cartagena.

The meetings were held with Mr. **Juan Carlos Cortés**, director of the Center, where they discussed important details of the project, which aims to **promote a culture and a sense of owning for Social Protection in the Dominican Republic**.



International Seminar: Social Protection Challenges in a Post-COVID-19 Era.

The 17th Ibero-American Social Security Congress was held in December 2021 in the Dominican Republic, coordinated by the Ibero-American Social Security Organization (OISS) and different levels of the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS).



Carolina Serrata Méndez, the DIDA director general, spoke at the **International Seminar: Social Protection Challenges in a Post-COVID-19 Era in Ibero-America** about **"The management of DIDA Defender's Offices in the Dominican Social Security System and its fundamental role."**

She pointed out that **"social protection in the Dominican Republic is the result of a combination**

of contributory and non-contributory programs managed by the Dominican Social Security System and other non-contributory programs processed in the government's Social Cabinet, including the President's Office's Social Plan, *Supérate*, and the Social Subsidy Administrator (*Administradora de Subsidios Sociales*—ADESS). These programs are guided by focused social intervention by integrating conditional cash transfers, social and educational work, and connections with state programs and services."

The Congress was held as a hybrid event and was attended by representatives of the 22 Ibero-American countries and 150 members of the Ibero-American Social Security Organization (OISS).

Campaign: DIDA promotes SDSS benefits at a national level

Training: DIDA develops Social Security training program

The DIDA is focused on carrying out training activities such as lectures, workshops, conferences, conversations, and meetings where the population learns about their rights and duties as set forth by Law 87-01, which establishes the Dominican Social Security System.



As part of the work the Directorate of Information and Defense of the Social Security Beneficiaries (DIDA) had planned for the first quarter of the year, hundreds of beneficiaries of the Family Health Insurance (SFS) under the Contributory or Subsidized regime of the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS) at a national level have received training, guidance, and information on their features, benefits, and the roles of the areas that are part of it.

Successful activities were held in the South, North, East, and West of the country, where the DIDA has offices in places including Azua, Barahona, Santiago, La Vega, Valverde, Samaná, La Romana, and more.

They included areas such as campaigns, guidance, overseeing, and promotion of information so that the beneficiaries from these provinces could learn about their rights, insurance schemes, and benefits granted by the SDSS.



Training: DIDA develops Social Security training program

The social security training program started in compliance with an agreement entered into between the DIDA and the Ministry of Public

Administration (MAP) to establish a culture of social security rights across the country, as instructed by the DIDA Director General, Carolina Serrata Méndez.



Training workshops were offered to lawyers, final-year students, human resources officers, employees of the regional office of the National Institute for Early Childhood Care (*Instituto Nacional de Atención a la Primera Infancia—INAUPI*), headquartered in La Romana, and others. Topics included the role of the DIDA, a general overview of the benefits granted through old-age, disability, and survivors insurance; Labor Risk Insurance, and Family Health Insurance.



"The purpose of the Family Health Insurance is to comprehensively protect the physical and mental health of beneficiaries and their families,

by offering universal coverage with no exclusion. It includes maternity and breastfeeding subsidies. Also, the goal of Law 87-01 includes protecting the population from risks associated to aging, disabilities, maternity, labor, and childhood protection".

Monitoring the quality of benefits and SDSS-related information delivered to the Dominican population

Law 13-20, which strengthens the DIDA's roles, sets forth in its Art. 05-F that the DIDA must monitor the quality and promptness of services and information delivered to the beneficiaries of the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS). This is conducted through the DIDA Investigation and Monitoring Directorate.



Defenders and technicians visit the First Level Service Centers (*Centros de Asistencia de Primer Nivel—CAP*) on a regular basis, organizing community meetings with beneficiaries and representatives of different levels of the System and of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Service (*Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social—MISPAS*).

By monitoring Health Care Providers' Service Centers (*Centros de Atención en Prestadores de Servicios de Salud—CPNA*), hospitals, private health care centers, community meetings, and similar activities, the DIDA aims to contribute to improve the health care provided to the

beneficiaries under the Contributory or Subsidized Regimes of the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS).

DIDA celebrates 20th anniversary



Carolina Serrata Méndez dedicated the 20th anniversary of the Directorate of Information and Defense of the Social Security Beneficiaries (DIDA) to the promotion and alignment of the work conducted across the System's levels with the public social security policies of the Luis Abinader administration, aiming to **strengthen and expand the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS)**.

Several activities were conducted as part of its 20th anniversary celebrations, with the participation of personalities of the social security sector and similar areas, as well as DIDA workers and others.



Forum: Social Security in the Dominican Republic, a New Vision for the People.

The Forum "Social Security in the Dominican Republic: A New Vision for the People" took place at the Crowne Hotel and was attended by the First Lady of the Dominican Republic, all actors and sectors connected to the Dominican Social Security System (SDSS), representatives of government agencies, businesses, health care professionals, and others.



Speakers included the minister of Public Health, the superintendent of the Department of Health and Labor Risks (*Superintendencia de Salud y Riesgos Laborales—SISALRIL*); the Director General of the State Directorate of Pensions and Retirement Plans (*Dirección General de Pensiones y Jubilaciones del Estado—DGJP*), the Social Security treasurer (TSS), and others.

Social Responsibility

As part of the DIDA's social responsibility roles, spaces of awareness raising are available for employees, encouraging healthy habits among them through group walks, providing COVID-19 prevention measures, and offering information on special dates, Holy Week, the environment, and others.

Health Walks



Carolina Serrata Méndez and health authorities joined the "Health Road" walk in the province of **Monte Cristi**, in the Northwest of the country.

The First Lady, Raquel Arbaje, the Health minister, Daniel Rivera, and other health authorities in the region also joined.

Workers with several organizations also attended the walk, starting at the Duarte Park, also known as the Clock Park.

Campaign offers PCR tests to employees and their families, coordinated with the Ministry of Public Health.

The DIDA and the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) are working together in regular COVID-19 testing campaigns, offering polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests to protect the health of all its employees and their families.

Periodic testing efforts are helpful to detect cases of the virus in the institution in a timely manner, to isolate those who are infected and avoid



further spreading it to other employees.

Vaccine Rollout: COVID-19 / INFLUENZA



Following the vaccine rollout plan proposed by the Government in tandem with the country's health authorities, and with the best efforts to maintain the wellbeing of the DIDA team, the director general instructed the institution to execute three COVID-19 vaccine operations.

As of now, most DIDA employees have taken the three shots recommended by the Ministry of Public Health and the WHO.

There was also an Influenza vaccine operation for those among the team of the headquarters who wished to take it.



DIDA plants trees in joint effort with the Ministry of Environment

Proceeding with the social responsibility program that the DIDA has been conducting, a tree-planting campaign was conducted with the Ministry of Environment and the Los Botados Organic Producers' Association (*Asociación de Productores Orgánicos Los Botados—APROGLOBO*) in the province of Monte Plata, in Pradera del Bosque.

Approximately 1,000 cedar seedlings were planted. Cedar is good for water maintenance, protecting other plants, controlling pests, and contributing to an overall healthy environment.

The activity was led by director general Carolina Serrata Méndez and attended by DIDA employees, with the motto: **It's everyone's responsibility to take care of the environment!**



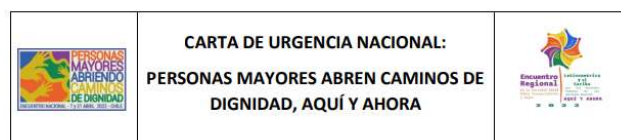
Chile

En National Older Persons Meeting, 20 Years of the International Madrid Plan of Action on Aging, 2022.



Lucio Diaz Dumenez, Chilean-born, director of the NGO Training and Development Center CEC (Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo CEC), a

private entity providing public services. He is the Regional Coordinator of RED CORV in Latin America and the Caribbean, which brings together civil society organizations and is dedicated to promoting Human Rights of Older Persons in the Region. <http://www.corporacioncec.cl>



This is a summary of the Final Document of the Meeting OLDER PERSONS OPENING ROADS OF DIGNITY, held between April 7th and 21st, 2022, as part of the Regional Meeting organized by RED CORV on May 25th, 26th, 27th, and June 3rd.

Our country has aged, yet it has not been able to establish an appropriate national policy for the nearly 20 percent of its population who are now 60 or older—who are diverse, plural, heterogenous, impoverished, and whose face is that of a woman. Nevertheless, the Chilean civil society, and especially older persons who organize or not, continue to insist and demand

respect and the promotion and protection of our human rights in compliance with the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, ratified by the Chilean state in 2017.

Twenty years have passed since the Political Declaration and the International Plan of Action on Aging were agreed upon and signed (at the 2nd World Assembly on Aging, Madrid-Spain, April 2002). The governments in the region will meet again this year to assess the Madrid 2002 INTERNATIONAL PLAN. For the fifth time, they will submit their national reports and assessments, which largely do not reflect the reality of their countries. This is why it is a pressing matter to make an effort and raise our voices from our realities to continue to build from the bottom up, as people entitled to rights.

Since the 2019 protests, our country has been witnessing different political expressions that aim to change underlying conditions, which have been imposed by a Constitution that put the market before people, imposed individualism, and eliminated the participation and leading role played by the men and women of our country. **We acknowledge that the most important event of recent decades is the draft of a New Constitution**, under the responsibility of the Constitutional Convention, an instrument that represents the national life, with gender parity and seats reserved for Indigenous peoples.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to meet online, where we participated remotely from our geographic locations. We were able to connect leaders from all regions of the country, with local, regional, and national representatives. Moreover, observers from seven Latin American and Caribbean countries attended the meetings. On April 7th, 2022, 176 older persons met to introduce,

discuss, and reflect on our situations and realities and present our demands, commitments, and requirements to decision makers and those responsible for pushing national laws, programs, and budgets.

The health emergency revealed and aggravated the cases of discrimination and abuse against older persons. We were scattered and atomized, and organizations were weak and afraid to resume in-person meetings. When our fundamental rights are not respected, our ability to decide is not acknowledged, under the pretext that we are mere users, beneficiaries, or subjected to protection and care.

Considering what has been addressed above, **it is our responsibility to make public:**

1.- The Madrid International Plan. While it is a non-binding document, it establishes that ***older persons must be full participants in the development process and also share in its benefits.*** Our reality shows a lack of fundamental, cross-sectional, and inclusive public policies. Participation is nothing more than “cosmetic” and it is not focused on rights.

It is imperative to encourage active, productive, and full participation that allows us to create and strengthen new effective mechanisms that foster inter-generation activities, with the comprehensive exercise of rights in public management and community development. This is the only way to achieve binding participation, one that can secure the right to health, decent pensions, and non-discrimination due to age.

2.- Inter-American Convention. **The ratification of the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons by the state of Chile in 2017 was an**

achievement and a commitment. The Convention *consolidates the fundamental rights of older persons to eliminate all forms of discrimination, especially discrimination for reasons of age.*

Two main elements make the **application of this instrument insufficient**: the state takes on a role in which it fosters some aspects of the Convention, without making all rights effective and feasible, thus simply taking some general political responsibility that alludes to its legal responsibility. Secondly, the Convention does not have promotion channels, as there are no educational spaces dedicated to addressing its true content and its implications in favor of older persons.

Right now, we are facing two great social and political opportunities. On the one hand, to move forward so that the right to decent aging is guaranteed by the New Constitution; on the other, to start a serious discussion process on the implementation of an independent and autonomous Defender's Office for Older Persons.

3.- Neoliberal model. The imposition of the neoliberal model and its effects on the climate environmental crisis has increased the levels of inequality and poverty among vast sectors of the population. Its most devastating effects are felt by small and medium farming sectors, areas facing youth migration to populous centers. For this reason, the rates of older adults in these areas have increased, where they lack water for their basic needs and farming activities. Adding to that is the lack of credit and training, production counselling, and other deficiencies in the sector.

In our country's urban centers, we find unbridled industrial development, which emits greenhouse

gas and carbon dioxide, affecting the poor, especially older persons. The state does not invest in new technologies or in the development of an ability to assess, control, and prevent the creation of "sacrifice zones."

We must break the chain of impunity enjoyed by those responsible for these sacrifice zones and stop the increase of catastrophic and deadly diseases and the death of the population.

As a commitment, we, older persons, express our desire to learn, have relationships, and organize in an inter-generational manner, establishing neighborhood committees and environmental and productive organizations in our territories as well as organizations to restore the territories we inhabit.

4.- Mental Health. While it is consolidated that **older persons have the right to physical and mental health, without experiencing any kind of discrimination**, the COVID-19 health emergency has exposed the deficiencies in state response, in terms of availability of professional, technical, and material resources to serve the older population. More than 83 percent of the people who have died in the pandemic were 60 or older, especially men and women living in poverty. If we consider the increase in mortality above the historical death rate and exclude pandemic-related deaths, it is clear how much the population has endured for not being provided appropriate health care because the services were dedicated to the health emergency.

The social and physical isolation the older population was forced to endure has severely affected their mental and physical health. Loneliness, anxiety, fear for what could happen, insecurity, sadness, and other symptoms—these are all factors that have violated their rights as

people, discriminating against them and forcing them to live under lockdown, without being heard or having their opinions considered.

Based on all this, this situation needs to be addressed and protocols must be designed to guarantee priority attention to them in health care programs from a gerontological approach. Mental health public policies must be pushed from a rights perspective to require the state to comply with these norms. This policy must be built with the participation of older men and women, considering their social, economic, and cultural characteristics, and not be based solely on medications.

Mental health is key to overcome and survive the effects of the pandemic, and a national strategy needs to be developed to tackle this challenge.

5.- Digital Gap. Communication in times of pandemic has widened another gap—extreme social and physical isolation, the ignorance about how to use new technologies, the lack of appropriate technological equipment, and the lack of knowledge to use it have further aggravated situations of depression, boredom, disorientation, loneliness, and lack of offers and initiatives to spend our free time.

Addressing the digital gap that affects older persons is relevant with and in public policies, establishing enforceability mechanisms that enable us to access and use the current necessary means of communications to integrate ourselves in the society that once again marginalizes us; as well as designing and implementing inclusive digital literacy programs and the access to these means of communications.

As a pressing matter, we need the central support of the state, regional governments, city

governments, and private institutions to formulate these proposals. To learn and formulate plans regarding the needs of different territories, design and formulate clear and accurate methodologies addressing generational and digital aspects, thus eliminating prejudicial views regarding older persons in face of technological advances.

We take on the commitment to make Digital Education a fundamental right, the main purpose and challenge of which is to provide clear, practical, and accurate knowledge about these new technological tools to be able to use them in the many different situations where they are necessary, applying them in everyday activities such as: doing administrative procedures; shopping; accessing basic services and benefits; filing complaints; making payments; sharing knowledge; connecting to social media; accessing qualification and training; investing in seed capital; and others.

6.- Binding Participation. Community participation and integration must be active, productive, full, and effective within the family, the community, and society, developing capacities and potentials, as set forth in the Inter-American Convention. Our country has Law 20,500, which does not provide mechanisms for binding participation across different levels—it only establishes mechanisms for consultative participation, which may not effectively influence decision making, relegating participation to the discretion of the authorities in office.

We demand that binding participation be a principle and a right consolidated in national regulations and the implementation of mechanisms to make them effective, expanding the influence of territorial, labor, and grassroots organizations, considering older persons as social actors.

We are committed to using the existing mechanisms, complying with agreements, contributing to promote information and transparency, and fostering social organizations and the defense of older adults, along with training in these topics.

7. Remote and Rural Areas. Considering that aging is different under different conditions, in different territories, and rural aspects, we denounce that the social rights and the access to basic services are not secured across the national territory, especially regarding supply, health care, connectivity, and mobilization—which reduces the real possibilities of development of older persons in these contexts.

Moreover, the wisdom and knowledge of older persons from different Indigenous, migrant, and ancestral territories are not acknowledged.

Adding to that is the continuous violation of environmental rights, which directly impacts the rural environment and extractivism, reducing small family and community farming.

Demands and Commitments

We demand that the state secure fundamental rights such as the access to basic services across territories, the acknowledgment of environmental rights and ancestral wisdom, and the implementation of dialogue mechanisms between local governments and representatives of different territories to approach these matters in a participatory and joint manner.

We are committed to continuing to promote the different realities of different territories and our knowledge, as well as to participate in and co-manage workshops aiming to

provide better quality of life HERE and NOW.

We are also committed to submitting the NATIONAL EMERGENCY LETTER, as a Declaration of Reality and Commitment, to national authorities and the organization of the 2022 Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Civil Society Meeting on Aging, to be held on May 25th, 26th, 27th and June 3rd. It will also be submitted to the Regional Conference on Population and Development (Montevideo Consensus), between June 28th and 30th this year, as well as the 5th Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Aging and the Rights of Older Persons, which will be presided in Chile and held in November this year, date to be defined (Madrid+20).

This is declared and signed by 176 older persons, organized or not, from the sixteen regions of Chile, who represent Local, Metropolitan, and National Older Persons Associations, Retirees and Pensioners' Associations, NGOs, Universities and Technical Education Centers, Older Women's Organizations, Neighborhood Committees, Citizens' Observatories on Abuse and Mistreatment, and other organizations, who have met online and self-convened on April 7th and 21st, 2022.

**More Activity at ICSW
- Save the Date!**

SWESD 2022

Title: Redefining Social Policy and Social Work Practice in a Post-Pandemic Society – Social Welfare Programs and Social Work Education at Crossroads

Date : 26th to 28th October 2022

Organized by IASSW, ICSW and KNCSW

Register on the official website!

<http://swesd2022.com/>

Please save the dates for the Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development in October! It will be held from 26th to 28th October, 2022 in Seoul, Korea in a hybrid format of both online and offline sessions.

Now the abstract submission has ended and the result of the abstract review have been announced at the end of August. The registration has started on August 1st and there is also a discount for ICSW and IASSW members.

We look forward to everyone's interest and participation in SWESD 2022. For more information about SWESD 2022, please visit <http://swesd2022.com/>

And for any inquiry regarding SWESD 2022, please contact kyunji@icsw.org or swesd2022@gmail.com

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Contributions to the newsletter are welcome!