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► Providing Care through the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)

An inclusive model for advancing decent work,
gender equality and quality care services

17 June 2025, 13:30-15:00 (CET)

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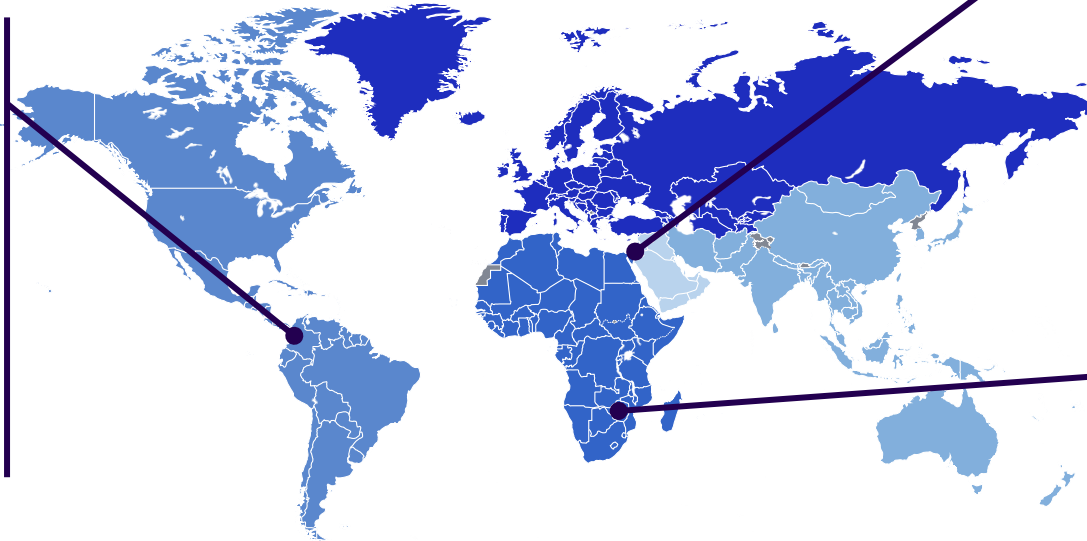
Progress updates from three country pilots

Community Care in Indigenous and Afrodescendant Territories

Colombia

2 Pilots

- 250 indigenous women
- 180 ancestral midwives



A trade-union led childcare cooperative to deliver affordable, quality Services

Occupied Palestinian Territory

Providing care through the SSE for street vendors and domestic workers

Zimbabwe



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Country experiences

► Colombia

Strengthening community care in indigenous and Afro descendant territories through the social and solidarity economy in Colombia

Carolina Pava, National Project Coordinator (pavad@ilo.org)



Why care in Colombia: Opportunities



National Care System (NCS)

National Government requested ILO to assist in the development of the NCS and the launch of 2 community-based care pilot programs.



The project supported the formulation of **Colombia's National Public Policy on care**, which culminated in the approval of **CONPES 4143** on February 14, 2025.



The **National Care System** will be implemented through a **10-year action plan**, with an **initial budget of USD 6.2 billion**.

COLOMBIA: Challenges for care workers

High **decent work deficits** were found among community care workers.

The **care work** performed mostly by **women** does not generate income.

Women who care in their community, have double and triple work shifts.

Gender division of labor is not questioned.

The **conditions** and **infrastructure** for care services are very limited and the public care services are limited and low quality

The **armed conflict** affects the dynamics and the ability to provide care under dignified conditions.





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Implementation steps

1

Assessment of Care Organizations in the territories: **Caribbean and Pacific regions**

2

Tripartite Validation of findings and strategic selection of organizations:

Josa Peace Builder Women (Indigenous community)

Asoredipar (Midwives)

3

Think.CareCoop and Start.CareCoop tailored to **Colombian context**, specifically addressing the needs and cultural background of **Indigenous & Afro-Colombian communities**.

4

Strengthening plan Strategic partners were identified under the **public policy framework**. The plan was built through a **participatory process**.

5

Results

1. **Arhuaco Ancestral Care House**, for **250** women weavers
2. **Midwifery House in Quibdó** will be established, supported for **180 midwives**

COLOMBIA: Partnerships

National Government

- National Women's Fund Program promoted by the Ministry of Equity and Equality.
- SENA (National Learning Service)
- ICBF ((Colombian Institute for Family Welfare)
- DNP (National Planning Department)

Local key stakeholders

- Indigenous authorities
- Local municipalities and regional governments
- Private Sector
- Chocó Care Alliance (UN Agencies and governments)

Other partnerships

- Trade Unions - ISP
- International Cooperation: FESCOL (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Colombia) CARE
- Intersectoral Working Group on the Care Economy and Feminist Economy Coalition



COLOMBIA: Reflections



To be highlighted

- Development of confidence with communities.
- Team building for trainings (SSE and Decent Work).
- ILO, 5Rs and Decent work for care workers.
- By reducing unpaid care responsibilities, care services empower women to pursue productive projects and build economic autonomy.



Challenges

- Deteriorating situation of armed conflict.
- Absence of state and basic public services such as education, housing, care services.
- Language access barriers (low literacy and indigenous languages).
- The regulatory framework specific to cooperatives in Colombia presents a barrier, other SSE is an alternative.

COLOMBIA: Next steps and future plans

Support the implementation of the strengthening plans jointly developed by the organizations and the ILO.

Seed funding provided by the ILO, which helped leverage additional resources from the national “Women’s Fund” national program.

Initial assessment served as a key foundation for the development of the national care system policy in Colombia, contributing to the mapping of care needs, including the decent work deficit in the Community Care Services.

Experience to be systematized, and results to be presented to the Colombian government, with the aim of using it as a baseline to expand the range of these programs, using the CareCoop methodologies.

Exchange of experiences, good practices, and lessons learned between Colombia and Honduras, with a similar exchange planned with Bolivia.

Josa Constructoras de Paz "International Conference on Cooperatives: Productivity and Territorial Development
"Cooperatives of the Americas – ECLAC and ILO

► Country experiences

Occupied Palestinian Territory

Establishing a childcare cooperative to deliver affordable, quality services: a trade union-led initiative in the OPT

Younis Sbeih, National Project Officer (sbeih@ilo.org)

War's Impact on Cooperatives and Childcare in Palestine

1. 50,000+ killed, 11,000 missing, 110,000+ injured, 1.9M displaced (90% of population)
2. Severe food insecurity, child deaths from malnutrition. 155,000 jobs lost,
3. 80%+ of commercial facilities and most agricultural assets destroyed
4. Most schools, hospitals, and training centres damaged or destroyed
5. 80% of cooperatives in Gaza damaged. Destruction of production lines, assets, and services.
6. Damages to the cooperative sector estimated at USD 29 million (CWA, 2025).



Current Childcare Modalities in OPT

1. Home care within extended families (low/no cost).
2. Home care nurseries, which account for 60% of childcare services, are low-cost but poorly regulated.
3. Privately owned nurseries (regulated but not standardized).
4. Complete absence of public childcare nurseries
5. Only 284 licensed nurseries in the West Bank.



Key challenges in the Current Landscape

Lack of effective supervision and monitoring.

Poor quality programmes, especially for children with disabilities.

Insufficient specialized training for care workers.

High costs limit accessibility for low-income families.

Expansion of unlicensed nurseries.

Why childcare cooperatives?

By providing reliable childcare, women can re-enter or remain in the workforce, reducing economic disparities and empowering them socially and economically.



Enhance Childcare Quality: Through professionalized and regulated care services.



Create Employment Opportunities: By formalizing the childcare sector, the initiative creates jobs with fair wages and decent working conditions, predominantly benefiting women.



Foster Children's Development: High-quality childcare positively impacts children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, laying a strong foundation for their future.

Steps Taken by the ILO for Establishing a New Modality for Childcare Provision

1

Conducted an **assessment on the care and cooperative landscape** which recommended the establishment of childcare cooperative.

2

Developed a **feasibility study** which confirmed the viability of successfully implementing a childcare cooperative

3

Prepared a **business plan** that outlined the mission, services, target market, operational structure, financial projections, and strategies for sustainability.

4

Delivered **professionalization training to 18 young women** to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills for a **care worker**.

5

Identified potential sites and partners.

Who are the key stakeholders and contributors to the childcare cooperative?

Diverse Membership & Core Group of Member-Owners:

- Working women and families from sectors like electricity, Nablus governorate municipality, and agriculture/food unions.
- Includes employees from the electricity company, Nablus Municipality, PGFTU, and agriculture/food industries.

Support Organizations:

- PGFTU provides childcare facility for free, while the ILO will contribute initial operational support, start-up costs, technical assistance, and capacity-building to pilot the model.

Founders' Interest:

- Confirmed by trade unions and PGFTU representatives, focusing on improving working conditions, especially for women.



Current Implementation Status

Cooperative registration is in progress, with official approval expected by **June 2025**.

Cooperative board is formed

Nursery licensing is ongoing; documents are ready and renovation works to meet Ministry of Social Development standards are underway

Website (www.kidsspace.ps) is live, providing information and registration

Awareness campaigns are active

Capacity-building training is pending

Staff hiring and onboarding have not yet started

Key Challenges Faced

- **Official registration and licensing are taking longer than expected** due to the uniqueness of the cooperative model and complex legal requirements.
- **Recent unrest in the OPT** has disrupted coordination, delayed meetings, and slowed progress on site selection, staff hiring, and community outreach.
- The **licensing process is expected to take more time as the nursery must comply with requirements from three authorities** (Ministry of Social Development, Civil Defence, and Health).
- The proposed site is an older building **requiring significant rehabilitation** to meet standards.



Next Steps & Path to Sustainability

Next steps

Complete **registration and licensing** in coordination with relevant ministries

Fast-track
site renovations

Start **recruitment and board/staff training**

Monitor effectiveness in supporting women's workforce participation

Strategic Partnerships

- **Private Sector:** Involve companies through CSR to support and scale the model
- Form a steering committee for oversight and sustainability





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Country experiences

► ZIMBABWE

Providing care through the social and solidarity economy for street vendors and domestic workers

Audrey Charamba, National Project Officer
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Challenges and Opportunities for Care Work in Zimbabwe

Care work is largely unpaid, carried by women, and unsupported by public services—making it essential yet invisible and unprotected.

SSE is deeply rooted in Zimbabwean traditions: cooperatives, self help groups and associations work based on values of mutual aid, collective ownership for communal resilience.

Lower labour force participation, higher unemployment and concentration in informal employment among women.

As more women engage in informal economy, **demand for affordable, accessible & inclusive care solutions grows** -- need to **support both paid work and care responsibilities**.

Care cooperative assessment in Harare: FINDINGS

Care opportunities: Safe markets for street vendors and improving working conditions for domestic workers

Supportive legal framework for cooperative

Limited formal care provision with a **gap for quality, affordable care services**

Need for **capacity building and awareness raising** on both care needs and cooperative model

Need for **multi-stakeholder involvement:** government, workers' unions, informal economy networks, CSOs financial cooperatives

Need for **scoping missions** to identify care cooperative piloting opportunities

Scoping mission 1: Learning from Chesvingo Safe Market

Located in **Masvingo Province**

Infrastructure in place
– market, ECD centre,
police post and GBV
response centre

Capacity: **80 vendors,
50 learners in ECD
centre**

Availability of WASH
facilities

Local authority
provision of security

Vendors focus on
business

Scoping Mission 2: Piloting care through cooperatives in different regions



- Multi-purpose cooperatives **mix agriculture & OVC care**
- Women-led initiatives providing **creches & home-based elderly care**
- **Traditional networks complemented by SSE models**
- **Integrated care and livelihood models** piloted by different actors in the communities, forming care-related ISALCs

Next steps

Inclusivity

Strengthening Partnerships

MWACSMED; Local
Authorities; ZCIEA, DWAU,
StreetNet International

Feasibility study for care coops

Replication of Safe Market Initiative to address provision of care through ECD centres

Capacity Building: Think.CareCoop and Start.CareCoop tools

Formalisation of existing cooperatives to deliver care services

Infrastructure development for care needs (care spaces, breastfeeding stations, learning centres)

Financing for care cooperatives



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