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# MANAGEMENT REPORT AND COVID-19 RESPONSE

SECRETARIAT FOR ACCESS  
TO RIGHTS AND EQUITY

# 2020

## SARE

GUARANTEEING

“MORE **RIGHTS** FOR MORE **PEOPLE**”

IN THE AMERICAS



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**OAS** | More rights  
for more people

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# 01

# SARE

## SECRETARIAT FOR ACCESS TO RIGHTS AND EQUITY

Since its creation in 2015, the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity (SARE) has contributed to protecting the economic, social and cultural rights of people in the region through political dialogue, technical cooperation, monitoring of regional regulatory frameworks, and citizen participation. SARE's work has expanded opportunities to continue promoting the Organization's equity and social inclusion agenda. Since then, the Secretariat has facilitated and increased the participation of representatives from civil society and social actors in the activities of the OAS.

This report summarizes the work carried out by SARE in 2020 aimed at the fulfillment of its mission, namely "to work together with OAS member states in the construction of more inclusive and equitable societies, promoting access to rights, the empowerment of groups in situations of vulnerability,<sup>1</sup> and citizen participation".

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed major challenges at the national and regional levels. It has, for the most part, disproportionately impacted households of people in situations of vulnerability, which often do not have all the conditions to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and has resulted in the loss of jobs or increased spending on medical attention. It has also revealed the weaknesses in the public health and social protection systems and how disproportionately populations in situations of vulnerability have been affected by this pandemic.

Despite its negative impacts, the pandemic has been an opportunity to provide greater support to member states to improve social protection systems and offer solutions to national institutions in charge of social policies to implement programs. These programs were developed with an intersectional perspective to reduce the gaps and discrimination faced by groups in situations of vulnerability in terms of their access to basic rights such as the right to work, education, adequate food and health.

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<sup>1</sup> *Groups in Situations of Vulnerability* refers to the group of people who due to race, color, lineage or national or ethnic origin, cultural identity, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, migratory, refugee, returnee, stateless or internally displaced person status, disability, genetic characteristics, or bio-psycho-social conditions or any other conditions, have historically been discriminated against and have had the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of their rights denied or violated. Definition based on the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. Available at: [http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter\\_american\\_treaties\\_A-69\\_discrimination\\_intolerance.asp](http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_A-69_discrimination_intolerance.asp).

One example is the Work Plan for the implementation of the Plan of Action of Guatemala that was prepared with the authorities of the Inter-American Committee on Social Development (CIDES for its Spanish acronym). The activities contained in the Work Plan will be executed in the period 2021-2022 and its results will be presented at the V Ministerial Meeting of Social Development, in the Dominican Republic in 2022. Another example of SARE's work in 2020 is the "Practical Guide for Inclusive Responses with a Rights-Based Approach to COVID-19 in the Americas". The guide offers recommendations to member states to help them manage the COVID-19 pandemic through the promotion of the principles of equality and non-discrimination; and takes into account, not only the legal instruments of the inter-American system for the protection of human rights, but also the intersection of various demographic characteristics such as age, sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, disability, etc., that coexist and that, together, may limit or nullify the enjoyment of rights of these people.

Through this 2020 Management Report, SARE reaffirms its commitment to continue working with its partners to support member states in the development and adoption of inclusive public policies that eliminate the gaps caused by discrimination so that they may achieve the necessary conditions for the full exercise of human rights and build more just and inclusive societies together.

In 2019, the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity developed its Strategic Plan 2020-2021 to align the Secretariat's objectives with the objectives of the OAS Comprehensive Strategic Plan 2016-2020, to improve its institutional and to serve as a tool that facilitates results-based management. This plan established the following mission and vision:

## **SARE's mission:**

To work together with the OAS member states to build more inclusive and equitable societies, through the promotion of access to rights, the empowerment of groups in situations of vulnerability, and citizen participation.

## **SARE's vision:**

To be the hemispheric benchmark for dialogue, technical cooperation, design and implementation of policies and initiatives with a rights-based approach for social inclusion with equity.

## 02 | STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 To promote results-based hemispheric dialogue and technical cooperation with and among OAS member states on issues related to access to rights, social inclusion with equity, empowerment of groups in situations of vulnerability, and citizen participation, in order to strengthen the capacity of state institutions in charge of these areas.
- 2 To generate knowledge bases, build capacities, manage and disseminate information on public policies, laws, programs and good practices of the member states aimed at promoting social inclusion with equity, empowerment of groups in situations of vulnerability, citizen participation and access to justice.
- 3 To contribute to the observance of human rights in the region by monitoring the norms and standards of the inter-American system.
- 4 Strengthen the capacities of civil society and other social actors and facilitate their participation and articulation in OAS activities.
- 5 Intensify SARE's institutional strengthening efforts to ensure optimal working and budgetary conditions that enable it to effectively fulfill its mandates and responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>

To implement these objectives and continue managing for results, SARE organized its work under the strategic programs presented below. In 2020, these programs guided the work carried out by SARE to respond to the mandates established by the OAS member states and to the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has generated in the region.

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<sup>2</sup> See SARE's Strategic Plan 2020-2021 at: [http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/publicaciones/SARE\\_Strategic\\_2020\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/publicaciones/SARE_Strategic_2020_ENG.pdf)



# PROGRAMS | 03

## ❖ Promotion of Hemispheric Dialogue on access to rights, social inclusion with equity, empowerment of vulnerable groups and citizen participation

Within the framework of this program, SARE provides support to meetings of high authorities seeking to promote the exchange of information, practices and priorities for regional cooperation. It should be noted that the forums promoted by SARE focus on promoting dialogue aimed at concrete results such as the adoption of "declarations", "action plans", and "guidelines", among others. In 2020, progress was made within this program in the following processes:

### Meetings of Ministers and High Authorities on Social Development (REMDES)

Another space for dialogue that the OAS has for building regional consensus and facilitating technical cooperation among member states is the Ministerial Meetings on Social Development. In these meetings, the Ministers and High-level Authorities on Social Development of the region share information to review, design, and implement social policies and social protection and economic inclusion to overcome poverty and inequality. During the meetings, the governments of the region establish commitments to advance in the implementation of the Plan of Action of the Social Charter of the Americas, the Protocol of San Salvador and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Development Sustainable.

The Department of Social Inclusion (DSI) of SARE in its role as Technical Secretariat of REMDES, and its Inter-American Commission for Social Development (CIDES for its acronym in Spanish), supported CIDES activities for the implementation of the Plan of Action of Guatemala.<sup>3</sup>

The following are the achievements of the fourth Inter-American Ministerial Meeting on Social Development in 2020.

- Elaboration of a draft Work Plan 2020-2021 for the implementation of the Plan of Action of Guatemala (2019-2021) that includes activities related to some of the most important topics for the region such as multidimensional poverty, the strengthening of social protection systems, and the promotion of regional cooperation in social development.
- Support in the preparation of the resolution "The Challenges for Food and Nutrition Security in the Americas in the face of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the Framework of the 2019 Plan of Action of Guatemala" approved during the 50th Regular Session of the OAS General Assembly, on October 20 and 21, 2020, in which OAS member states highlighted the importance of the Plan of Action of Guatemala and called for the securing of resources for its implementation.

<sup>3</sup> See the Plan of Action of Guatemala at the following link:  
<http://www.scm.oas.org/REMDESIV/Documentos/CIDES00212E02.doc>

- First Virtual Regional Workshop "Advancing towards the Social Inclusion of Survivors of Trafficking in the Americas", on November 10 and 11, 2020, organized by the Department of Social Inclusion in conjunction with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This workshop aimed to promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences between national institutions in charge of social policies and national bodies against human trafficking to identify the particular needs, risks, and vulnerabilities faced by survivors of trafficking, and social policies and tools for their effective social inclusion.
- Preparation of a "Proposal for Regional Guidelines for the Social Inclusion of Survivors of Human Trafficking in the Americas", in conjunction with the IOM, with useful guidelines for States in the design and implementation of social policies for the care of survivors of trafficking. The proposed guidelines were presented to OAS member states for their consideration and approval.

## Plan of Action of the Decade of People of African Descent in the Americas 2016-2025

People of African Descent are one of the largest minorities in the region, numbering about 133 million people, i.e., 20% of the total population of Latin America and the Caribbean. They are among the most vulnerable groups in the hemisphere as a result of poverty, underdevelopment, social exclusion, economic inequalities, which are closely linked to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related practices of intolerance.

In 2016, the OAS General Assembly adopted the Plan of Action of the Decade of People of African Descent in the Americas 2016-2025 and member states committed to gradually adopt administrative, legislative, judicial and budgetary measures to ensure that People of African Descent in the Americas enjoy their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

In 2018, OAS member states created the Inter-American Network of High Authorities on Policies for Afro-descendant Populations (RIAFRO, for its acronym in Spanish). RIAFRO's mission is to promote dialogue, coordination, and permanent collaboration between national authorities, with the objective of ensuring the implementation of policies for People of African Descent, according to international and regional obligations in the Americas.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, upon witnessing the measures taken by countries and it's the disproportionate impact of the virus on people of African descent, the Department prepared Chapter 4: "COVID-19 and the population of African descent", of the Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-Based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas. The guide provides recommendations to member states in the application of measures that help manage the current pandemic, taking into account the particular circumstances of groups in situations of vulnerability.

On October 28 and 29, 2020, the II Inter-American Meeting of High Authorities in Policies for Afro descendant Populations (RIAFRO) took place to follow up on the action plan of the Decade of People of African Descent in the Americas 2016-2025, to establish its Work Plan 2020 – 2022 and to elect the authorities for its Management Committee.

The following are other activities related to People of African Descent carried out by SARE in 2020:

- Series of virtual events to celebrate the Inter-American Week of People of African Descent in the Americas.
- Issuing of a RIAFRO statement on the impact of the COVID-19 disease on the Afro-descendant population in the region.<sup>4</sup>
- Organization of the webinar "Ethnic and Racial Diversity in Multilateral Organizations". During this event, recommendations were presented to the OAS General Secretariat to promote ethnic and racial diversity at all levels of the Organization.
- Organization of the Second Inter-American Meeting of High Authorities on Policy for Afro- Descendant Populations. During the meeting the representative from Costa Rica assumed the Chair pro tempore.<sup>5</sup> Three webinars were organized in the framework of this meeting: "Economic Empowerment and the Afro-descendant Population"<sup>6</sup>; "Health and Afro-descendant Population"<sup>7</sup> and "Police Violence Afro-descendant Population".<sup>8</sup>
- Strategic Alliance with the Deutsche Welle Akademie to fight racism in social media.

**4** The RIAFRO statement on the impact of the COVID-19 disease on the Afro-descendant population in the region is available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/media\\_center/press\\_release.asp?sCodigo=E-042/20](https://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-042/20)

**5** See press release available in Spanish at: <https://www.presidencia.go.cr/comunicados/2020/10/costa-rica-asume-la-presidencia-de-la-riafro-de-la-oea/>

**6** The event "Economic Empowerment and the Afro-descendant Population": <https://m.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/webinar-ii-riafro-economic-empowerment-and-the-afro-descendant-population/808764066357329/>

**7** The event "Health and Afro-descendant Population" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/riafroredautoridades/videos/662556117960042>

**8** The event "Police Violence Afro-descendant Population" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/riafroredautoridades/videos/415775656099926/>

## Plan of Action on the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2017-2021

According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), there are between 45 and 50 million Indigenous people living in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>9</sup> Compared to non-indigenous people they have higher incidence of poverty and destitution, lower chances for upper mobility and high morbidity rates; Indigenous people are discriminated against, marginalized, and excluded from mainstream society despite legislation adopted by countries to protect their human rights.

Given this situation, in 2016, the General Assembly of the OAS approved the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples after 17 years of negotiation. The Declaration is the OAS instrument that promotes and protects the rights of indigenous peoples of the Americas.

In 2017, the OAS General Assembly adopted the Plan of Action on the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2017-2021). The main objective of the plan is to contribute to the full recognition, exercise and enjoyment of the rights of Indigenous peoples at the national and hemispheric level through the support of the OAS and other instances of the Inter-American system.

Considering the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indigenous peoples, the Department prepared Chapter 5 "Prevention, containment and mitigation of COVID-19 in Indigenous populations" of the Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas. The chapter includes recommendations for member states to design and implement responses for indigenous peoples to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other achievements related to the promotion of the rights of Indigenous peoples during 2020 were:

- Celebration of the Inter-American Week of the Indigenous Peoples with support from Indigenous organizations of civil society.
- The first Indigenous intern in the OAS Internship Program as a result of the agreement between the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) and the OAS General Secretariat.
- Publication "Learning and Teaching Our Rights: American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> ECLAC, *Indigenous Peoples in Latin America, 2014*. Available at: <https://www.cepal.org/en/infografias/los-pueblos-indigenas-en-america-latina>

<sup>10</sup> OAS, *Learning and Teaching Our Rights: American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is available in Spanish at: <https://www.oas.org/es/sadye/documentos/DADPI.pdf>

- Webinar "Indigenous Peoples in the context post COVID-19: Challenges and Recommendations" in collaboration with Amazon Conservation Team.<sup>11</sup>
- Inclusion of the category Indigenous Peoples in the Virtual Contest of Good Practices for Groups in Situations of Vulnerability in the Context of the COVID -19 Pandemic.
- Photography Contest and Virtual Exhibition "Indigenous Peoples in the Americas 360 VR" in English, Spanish and Náhuatl.<sup>12</sup>

## Committee on Migration Issues

The Committee on Migration Issues (CAM for its acronym in Spanish) is the organ of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI for its acronym in Spanish) that addresses migratory issues in the Americas in an integral manner, covering the different realities and dynamics in migration flows that occur in the hemisphere.

The Committee promotes a constructive and informed dialogue among member states on the causes of the current international migration flows, the solutions necessary to respond to the challenges of this phenomenon and how to maximize the opportunities that it generates.

Also, one of CAM mandates is to be accountable to the institutions of the inter-American system that are in charge of implementing activities related to international migration. The work of the Committee in 2020 produced the following results:

- Three CAM meetings facilitated and supported by the Technical Secretariat:
  - 1 The first one was held on January 30, 2020, and examined "Migration Challenges for the States of the Caribbean, Particularly Small Island States". Experts from the University of the West Indies in Barbados and the World Bank, as well as representatives of the Caribbean Diaspora in the United States attended the meeting. At the request of the member states, a report prepared by the Department of Social Inclusion (DSI) on activities related to international migration that are carried out within the framework of the OAS was presented to the CAM.

**11** The event "Indigenous Peoples in the context post COVID-19: Challenges and Recommendations" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/300427131047575>

**12** The event Photography Contest and Virtual Exhibition "Indigenous Peoples in the Americas 360 VR" is available in Spanish at <https://www.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/375447060188403>

**2** The meeting held on February 27, 2020, focused on analyzing various international initiatives to help the region's countries address humanitarian needs and facilitate the social integration of migrant populations in the Americas. Experts from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) attended the session. It was noted that the international community plays a critical role in providing technical and financial support to the countries of the Hemisphere in response to the increased flow of migrants and refugees from the region, especially from Venezuela, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Northern Central America.

**3** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chair of CAM found it appropriate to address the impact of the pandemic on migrants in the Americas during the fifth and final thematic meeting of the CAM. During the session, held on June 5, 2020, the Director of the Department of Social Inclusion presented the section on migrants from the "Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas," published by the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity. There were also presentations by experts from the IACHR, the Pan American Health Organization, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

- Drafting of the Report of the Chair of CAM on Follow-Up to the Inter-American Program for the Promotion of the Human Rights of Migrants, Including Migrant Workers and their Families. In keeping with its mandate to ensure that the institutions of the inter-American system meet the international migration objectives assigned to them through the Inter-American Program, the Chair of CAM called upon the IACHR, the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), and the Department of Public Security of the OAS Secretariat for Multidimensional Security to submit written reports on the work they have done over the past year to meet the Program's objectives. This information was included in the Report by the Chair, which was distributed to all the States and presented by the Chair at the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) meeting of September 29, 2020.
- The OAS member states negotiated and agreed upon various paragraphs on migration to be included in the "Fostering the Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants, Including Migrant Workers and Their Families, in accordance with the Inter-American Program on this subject to enhance their contribution to development" strategic line of the draft omnibus resolution of CIDI, which was submitted and approved during the fiftieth regular session of the OAS General Assembly, held virtually on October 20 and 21, 2020.

## ❖ Promotion of Technical Cooperation

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SARE's initiatives under this program have focused on supporting member states in implementing technical cooperation activities among countries, facilitating dialogue and the exchange of knowledge and experiences, with a human rights, inclusion, and intersectionality perspective. Also, in 2020, these initiatives included the use of a differentiated approach in member state responses to the COVID-19 pandemic by vulnerable group: people with disabilities, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, LGBTI people, Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, youth, and older adults.

SARE's initiatives that correspond to this program are the following:

### **Program to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Regional Framework for Protection and Solutions (GS/OAS-UNHCR Joint Unit)**

In 2018, the OAS-UNHCR Joint Coordination Unit was created in the Department of Social Inclusion (DIS), which acts as the Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Regional Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS for its acronym in Spanish). This Framework was established in the Declaration of San Pedro Sula, in 2017, by the governments of Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, to work together in the implementation of the Comprehensive Response Framework for Refugees as regional contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees approved in 2018 during the United Nations General Assembly.

This regional framework of cooperation among the participating countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama) promotes mechanisms of shared responsibility regarding the prevention, protection and solutions for refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and returnees with protection needs. It also reflects a clear expression of collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, regional and international organizations, and development banks. The MIRPS serves as a practical tool to mobilize support from international cooperation.

In 2020, the OAS-UNHCR Joint Coordination Unit achieved the following results:

- Seven bilateral meetings with the technical teams and six plenary meetings in support of the pro tempore presidency of the MIRPS in the implementation of its Work Plan. During these sessions, participants discussed topics such as the impact of COVID-19 on forced displacement in Central America and Mexico, responses and strategies to face the crisis, progress in the implementation of the National Work Plans and the Pro Tempore Presidency, the specific approach of internal displacement in certain countries of the MIRPS and the involvement of the countries of the Support Platform and the Private Sector, among others.
- Creation of the specific Fund for voluntary contributions for MIRPS activities as approved by the Permanent Council in its session of May 27, 2020<sup>13</sup>. For the countries that make up this regional framework, the MIRPS Fund is an instrumental step in having a mechanism that enables them to raise funds to implement concrete projects and actions and respond to the specific challenges and vulnerabilities faced by asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees with protection needs, whose situation of vulnerability has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Commemorative event within the framework of World Refugee Day, held on June 23, 2020, together with Rotary International in which MIRPS was presented as a regional initiative seeking solutions for migrants and refugees in Central America and Mexico.
- High-level virtual event held on June 29, 2020, in which the government of Spain officially assumed the leadership of the MIRPS Support Platform. The event was attended by Arancha González, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Spain, Alexandra Hill, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of El Salvador, Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of the American States.

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**13** *The resolution on the establishment of the MIRPS Fund is available at:*  
[http://scm.oas.org/doc\\_public/english/hist\\_20/cp42435e03.docx](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/english/hist_20/cp42435e03.docx)



- Event "The Global Compact on Refugees and Forced Displacement in Central America: Regional Cooperation and the MIRPS as a Solution" held on 23 September 2020, during the high-level meetings of the General Assembly of the United Nations. This event was organized by the Presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform in collaboration with El Salvador (as pro tempore Presidency of the MIRPS), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the OAS (through the SARE) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- The pro tempore Presidency of MIRPS, with the support of the Department of External and Institutional Relations of the OAS, held eight meetings with unions, entrepreneurs and business leaders in the region to include them in generating solutions for the local integration of refugees and asylum seekers, and returnees, and developing a culture of hospitality and integration. As a result of this exchange, 15 private sector organizations, representing a broad group of companies and organizations, have shown interest in contributing to the regional response to the forced displacement crisis.
- Establishment of the Working Group on internal displacement of the MIRPS, comprising technical teams from three countries: Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras. The main objective of this Working Group is to provide a platform through which government officials can share their experiences and knowledge in the prevention of and approach to internal displacement within their contexts that are in line with international standards. In particular, the working group seeks to facilitate the sharing of good practices between participating MIRPS countries and other countries with experience in the prevention of and response to internal displacement. The work of this group was supported by a panel of internationally recognized experts from Colombia and Italy. The Technical Secretariat facilitated four sessions of the of the Working Group that resulted in a report with recommendations and good practices on the issue of internal displacement based on the experiences from Colombia and other countries, which will be incorporated into global processes and relevant regional governments, including the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.

- First "Course on Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returned and Deported Persons" in collaboration with UNHCR with a wide participation of representatives from Permanent Missions and Observer States to the OAS, as well as officials at the national level of the member states of the OAS.
- Presentation of the Annual Report of the MIRPS during the Third Annual Meeting held on December 8, 2020. This report provides important advances in the implementation of the national commitments of Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and El Salvador during 2020. It also presents the proactive measures taken by MIRPS countries to include people who were forced to flee and those at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as social support programs to alleviate the economic impact of the pandemic and containment measures.
- Approval of the Declaration of San Salvador during the Third Annual Meeting on responses to the needs of international protection for refugees, applicants for the status of refugees and displaced people in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Preparation and presentation of the Annual Report on the progress in the implementation of the MIRPS that reports on national and regional progress and identifies priorities to address the common challenges of forced displacement in Central America and Mexico.

The achievements made under this framework show that it is possible to work in a collaborative way to address migration-related issues and strengthen the capacities of countries of transit and destination of the region. The following project is an example of how cooperation can facilitate the integration of migrants in host communities:



*MIRPS Third Annual Meeting*

## Project: Strengthening the Capacities of the Government of Costa Rica and Host communities for the reception of Nicaraguan migrants and refugees

The main objective of this project is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the government of Costa Rica and host communities to facilitate the successful reception and integration of Nicaraguan migrant and refugee populations. During the first stage of implementation of the project, the OAS provided the government of Costa Rica with:

- 1 Recommendations to national and sub-national authorities regarding the reception and integration of migrants and refugees;
- 2 Training in matters of reception and integration of migrants and refugees for government officials and members of host communities; and
- 3 Alternatives for socioeconomic integration;

The project management team carried out the following activities in 2020:

- Presentation of the report "Costa Rica: Characterization and analysis of policies on international migration and refugees" to the high authorities of Costa Rica. The report systematizes recommendations made by government institutions, organizations from civil society, academia and international organizations to the Costa Rican State in migration and international protection issues based on field work. It also provides guidelines for the government of Costa Rica to address the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in the context of COVID-19.

- Establishment of the Group of Experts on Migration and International Protection Matters in Costa Rica. The objective of this multidisciplinary and inter-institutional group is to make contributions and provide feedback on the project. The group is made up of senior representatives of the Costa Rican government, academia, civil society, and includes representatives of the Vice Ministry of the Interior and Police; the Directorate of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship; the Directorate of the International Cooperation Area of Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN); the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs; the Vice Ministry of Labor and Social Security; Distance State University; the Jesuit Migration Service; the center of Information and Services in Health Counseling; the Migration Policy Institute; and the University of Navarra.
- First meeting of the Group of Experts on Migration and International Protection Matters held in Costa Rica on October 16, 2020. During this meeting, the experts approved the content of the Report "Costa Rica: Characterization and Analysis of Policies in matter of International Migration and Refugees" and the Work Plan of the project.



*First meeting of the Group of Experts on Migration and International Protection Matters*

## Project: Strengthening the Capacities of Local Authorities in the Reception and Integration of Migrants and Refugees in the Americas

This project seeks to strengthen the institutional capacity of local authorities in the reception, assistance, protection, and socio-economic and cultural integration of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the main cities of the region that have been affected by recent arrivals of migrants and refugees.

This initiative is led by SARE, in conjunction with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR - Team of Migration), UN Women, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration at the University of Ryerson, and the Club of Madrid.

The main achievements of this project in 2020 were:

- Virtual Launch Event held on August 31, 2020, directed at officials of national and local governments of the Americas, including those who work in the areas of foreign relations, health, work, education, national security, as well as donors, civil society organizations, academia, think tanks and media. During the event, the main objectives of the project, the work plan with the various milestones as well as the group of experts that will be carrying out the project research were presented. Representatives of the Mayor's Office of New York City, the Deputy Municipal Secretary for Human Rights and Citizenship of Sao Paulo, Brazil; and the Mayor's Office of Bucaramanga, Colombia, shared experiences, and the challenges that migrants face in accessing assistance.
- Presentation of the project for the strengthening the capacities of local authorities in the reception and integration of migrants and refugees in the Americas to OAS member states and permanent observers on September 25, 2020.

## Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN)

The IASPN was established to strengthen cooperation among national development and social inclusion ministries and agencies to develop strategies to combat poverty and inequality through technical assistance programs and the exchange of policy practices, programs, and initiatives on social development.

In 2020, within the IASPN framework, DSI carried out a technical cooperation project on inclusive communities in Paraguay and began preparations to execute a second technical cooperation project in 2021 in Guatemala on the population's access to social programs. The methodology of the Inter-American Cooperation Mechanism for Effective Public Management (MECIGEP)<sup>14</sup> has been used during the implementation of these projects.

SARE's achievements related to technical cooperation in the area of social protection are presented below:

- MECIGEP cooperation round in Paraguay from February 19 to 21, 2020, to support the design and implementation of a social program called "Inclusive Communities" that seeks to ensure and facilitate people's access to public services that currently are not offered in their communities. The cooperation included the participation of an expert from the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion of Peru and an expert from the Ministry of Citizenship of Brazil.

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**14** MECIGEP aims to create a space for dialogue and learning among member countries through an Inter-American forum in which countries will share and exchange perspectives and opinions on their public sector institutional reforms with the objective of enhancing the effectiveness of public management for development.

*OAS specialists in the MECIGEP round meeting in Asunción, Paraguay with the Vice-Minister, the Director of the International Relations and Cooperation and other officials of the Ministry of Social Development of Paraguay*



*OAS' specialist and government officials from Brazil and Peru meet with Asentamiento Divino Niño (Luque, Paraguay) community representatives.*

- Planning of a MECIGEP cooperation round in Guatemala for the design and implementation of a single household registry to facilitate the population's access to Guatemala's social programs. Due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the cooperation visit will take place in 2021.
- Draft proposal for the reactivation of the IASPN (and its mechanism for cooperation between countries). This cooperation mechanism between countries will make it possible to expand the rounds for technical collaboration on social protection to respond to the worsening poverty and inequality in the region caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, among the achievements of the Program for the Promotion of Equity, are the recommendations made to the member states regarding the particular vulnerabilities of persons living in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty as a result of the impact of COVID-19. These recommendations can be found in Chapter 9 "Prevention, containment and mitigation of COVID-19 in people living in poverty and extreme poverty" of the Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-Based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas.

## Consumer Safety and Health Network (CSHN)

The CSHN, created in 2010 by OAS member states, is the inter-American interdisciplinary mechanism, specialized in promoting at a national and hemispheric level, consumer health and safety policies and programs, and the impact they can have on consumers' health and wellbeing.

The Network strives to achieve its objective through the strengthening of national consumer protection agencies and facilitating regional cooperation in order to contribute to the early detection of dangerous consumer products and avoid their circulation in the markets of the hemisphere.

COVID-19 has completely and suddenly transformed the way people live; including how they shop for consumer products. For years now, e-commerce had been growing throughout the Americas. However, the rest of the region was lagging far behind the USA and Canada that rank number 1 and 7 respectively in terms of the size of their e-commerce markets according to the World Retail Congress Report's Global E-Commerce Market Ranking 2019.<sup>15</sup> Since the pandemic began, while most of the global market growth has taken place in countries where e-commerce has already been thriving, there is evidence that an increasing number of consumers within the region are doing online shopping, and therefore, there is an increasing need to ensure that they are educated consumers.

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**15** World Retail Congress, *Global E-Commerce Market Ranking, 2019*. Available at: [https://www.worldretailcongress.com/\\_media/Global\\_ecommerce\\_Market\\_Ranking\\_2019\\_001.pdf](https://www.worldretailcongress.com/_media/Global_ecommerce_Market_Ranking_2019_001.pdf)



In 2020, the Consumer Safety and Health Network achieved these results:

- As the technical Secretariat for the CSHN, DSI worked with the Management Committee to plan the Virtual Discussion: Challenges of Product Safety in E-Commerce in the Context of COVID-19 which took place on July 20th, 2020. During this meeting, the national consumer protection authorities, multilateral organizations, private sector, civil society and academia, shared the challenges they face in protecting and empowering consumers when they buy products online during the pandemic, as well as some of the good practices that they have seen.
- Also, during the month of July 2020, to raise consumer awareness on the importance of protecting themselves in the context of the pandemic, the Management Committee of the CSHN organized a campaign on the importance of proper mask wearing, importance of frequent handwashing and guidelines on using hand sanitizers.
- On July 31, 2020, Jamaica became the fourth Caribbean country to join the Network. Now, the Network Membership stands at 21 member states working together to protect consumer rights (Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Uruguay).
- Preparation of the seventh annual regular meeting of the CSHN held virtually on November 18-19, 2020, with the participation of 19 out of the 21 member states that are part of the network. During the meeting member states agreed on their work plan and elected a Management Committee for 2020-2021: Uruguay (Chair), Dominican Republic (First Vice President) Colombia (Second Vice President), Jamaica (Delegate Member), Chile (Delegate Member), Costa Rica (Collaborating Member), Peru (Collaborating Member). The Management Committee will serve for a one-year period: 2020-2021.
- Organization of the international workshop "Consumer Product Safety in E-Commerce during COVID-19" held virtually in the framework of the seventh annual regular meeting of the CSHN. Representatives from private sector, civil society organizations, international and national agencies and academia shared their ideas on consumer safety in e-commerce in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Inter-American Program of Judicial Facilitators (IPJF)

The objective of the Inter-American Program of Judicial Facilitators (IPJF) is to offer access to justice to populations and communities in situations of vulnerability with limited or no access to the existing judicial institutions. It had its origins in the framework of the peace accords in Nicaragua in the 1990s and supports the four pillars of the OAS: democracy, human rights, integral development, and multidimensional security.

The OAS Judicial Facilitators Program is present in eight countries (Argentina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Paraguay). The Facilitators are community leaders that work on a voluntary basis in and around their communities, offering mediation and services advisory and the dissemination of information on rights and obligations. The leaders act as mediators and conciliators, lessening the workload and the costs of the justice system.

SARE, with the support of the Secretariat for Strengthening of Democracy has drafted and requested comments on national reports that include recommendations and suggestions for the relaunching of the Program. In collaboration with the authorities of the Province of Formosa, Argentina, the Secretariats are organizing a virtual training on the elimination of violence against women. Additionally, the organization offers support to those who seek assistance from the National Services of Judicial Facilitators to achieve the institution of the service and is working in the identification of needs of each country.

## ❖ Systematization and Generation of Information and Knowledge

Under this strategic program, SARE provides OAS member states with information that may be key when reviewing, designing, and implementing public policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at guaranteeing greater equity and the full realization of human rights in OAS member states.

In 2020, SARE prepared and disseminated two guides that include recommendations for member states which focus especially on groups in situations of vulnerability and promoting economic, social, cultural and environmental rights (ESCR).

### Guidebook for the Operationalization of the Indicators of the Protocol of San Salvador from a Cross-Cutting LGBTI Perspective



The Working Group for the Analysis of National Reports provided for in the Protocol of San Salvador (WGPSS) prepared and published the "Guidebook for the Operationalization of the Indicators of the Protocol of San Salvador from a Cross-cutting LGBTI Perspective" with the support of the DIS of the SARE. This guidebook is the first technical tool with recommendations on how to collect disaggregated data on the exercise of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights of LGBTI persons using the 714 progress indicators for measuring rights under the Protocol of San Salvador.<sup>16</sup>

During the launching event on February 10, 2020, participants learned about the importance of guaranteeing ESCR in the LGBTI population<sup>17</sup>. The event

was attended by the experts that make up the Working Group and the United Nations Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Also participating were representatives of the CIM, of the IACHR, civil society organizations and members of the LGBTI Core Group at the OAS, who highlighted the usefulness of this guide and the need to advance in the collection of disaggregated information on the exercise of ESCR by LGBTI people.

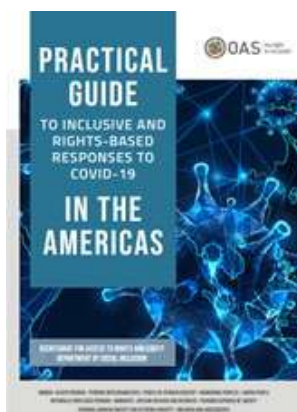
**16** The Guidebook for the Operationalization of the Indicators of the Protocol of San Salvador from a Cross-cutting LGBTI Perspective is available in Spanish here: [http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/Guia\\_Operacionalizacion\\_Indicadores.pdf](http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/Guia_Operacionalizacion_Indicadores.pdf)

**17** OAS, Press Release. OAS Launches Guidebook to Facilitate Access of LGBTI Persons in the Americas to their Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights. Available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/media\\_center/press\\_release.asp?sCodigo=E-007/20](https://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-007/20)



*Launching of the Guidebook for the Operationalization of the Indicators of the Protocol of San Salvador from a Cross-cutting LGBTI Perspective*

## **Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-Based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas**



*In April 2020, the DSI of SARE prepared and published the “Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-Based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas” in English and Spanish, in order to support member states in their efforts to respond to the pandemic by offering tools to decision-makers that take into account the specific needs of groups in situations of vulnerability. While taking into account intersectionality as a cross-cutting perspective and the principles of equality and non-discrimination, the guide systematizes tools, references and recommendations for decision making in response to the COVID-19 emergency, considering the particular circumstances of groups in situations of vulnerability.*<sup>18</sup>

## **Continuous System of Reports on International Migration in the Americas (SICREMI)**

The SICREMI responds to a mandate by the OAS member states to develop an instrument that facilitates the access and analysis of international migration trends in the Americas and that can provide support in the achievement of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the 17.18 target of goal 17 on data disaggregation, as mandated in different resolutions by the Permanent Council and the General Assembly since 2007.<sup>19</sup>

**18** OAS, Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-Based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas, 2020. Available at: [http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/publicaciones/GUIDE\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/publicaciones/GUIDE_ENG.pdf)

**19** On October 24th, 2007 the Permanent Council of the OAS established the Committee for Migratory Affairs with the mandate of, among others, develop a data matrix for the analysis of international migration flows in the Americas. The result was the creation of SICREMI two years later.

In the pursuit of this mandate the SICREMI has facilitated the collection and processing of data related to international migration flows in the Americas. Data collection has been done by adopting the methodology of the Continuous Reporting System on Migration known under its French acronym as SOPEMI, originally developed by the Secretariat of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)<sup>20</sup>. This methodology, however, has been adapted to the realities of countries of the Americas where there has not been a systematic collection of data on international migration and where data collection practices may differ from those of the OECD members.

The SICREMI operates through a Network of National Correspondents that are designated by the member states participating in the report including. Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

The main product of SICREMI is the biannual preparation of the report on International Migration in the Americas that is published every two years. So far there have been four reports (2011, 2012, 2015 and 2017).

In one of the paragraphs presented by CAM, included in CIDI's omnibus resolution and approved by the General Assembly, the importance of the SICREMI was highlighted, and the General Secretariat was instructed, in keeping with the availability of resources, to coordinate with other agencies of the inter-American system and other strategic partners, to produce the next edition of the SICREMI Report.

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**20** OECD, International Migration and the SOPEMI, 2011, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/migration/48342373.pdf>

## ❖ Strengthening of Specialized Bodies that Support the Follow Up of Resolutions, Declarations and Conventions

The objective of this program is to strengthen the capacities of the technical bodies that follow-up the implementation of resolutions, declarations and conventions of the Inter-American Human Rights System. To this end, SARE promotes the expansion of the activities of these bodies and their cooperation with other political bodies of the OAS, the member states, and other international organizations. In addition, SARE supports dialogue among these technical bodies in order to promote cooperation among them and to establish a more intersectional and cross-cutting working methodology.

### Mechanism for Monitoring and Compliance of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights



OAS

WGPSS

The Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Protocol of San Salvador) is a binding legal instrument that has been signed by 20 states and ratified by 16: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Uruguay. The DSI plays the role of Technical Secretariat of the Working Group for the Analysis of National Reports provided for in the Protocol (WGPSS).

The main functions of the WGPSS include providing inputs to promote the equity agenda in the region and the discussions on economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (ESCR), and providing concrete tools for the monitoring and improvement of public policies in this area. It is composed of four government experts, two independent experts, and the Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

The main achievements of the Working Group for the Analysis of National Reports provided for in the Protocol during 2020 were:

- Participation on March 24, 2020, in the webinar "The Exercise of the Right to Health during the Coronavirus Pandemic" conducted by the DSI and the O'Neill Institute for Health and National and Global Law of Georgetown University.<sup>21</sup>
- The presentation of observations<sup>22</sup> to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights regarding Request for Advisory Opinion No. 27 on Trade Union Freedom and the participation of experts from the Group in the public hearing held by the Court on this matter.<sup>23</sup>
- The evaluation of the consolidated national reports of El Salvador<sup>24</sup> and Mexico.<sup>25</sup> These reports correspond to the third evaluation cycle and allow the WGPSS to measure the progressiveness in the implementation and exercise of ESCR in these States by comparing the information from the consolidated reports with the two national reports presented by these States in the past regarding the first and second cycle of national reports.<sup>26</sup>
- Technical assistance provided: i) to the State of Colombia to train and support its officials in the preparation of the consolidated national report of Colombia corresponding to the third cycle of national reports; and ii) to the government of Jalisco to train its officials on the concepts and use of the Guidebook for the Operationalization of the Indicators of the Protocol of San Salvador from a Cross-cutting LGBTI Perspective.<sup>27</sup>
- Consolidation of the leadership of the Working Group of the Protocol of San Salvador with the election of a new Presidency<sup>28</sup> that for the first time has filled the position of vice president.

21 The event "The Exercise of the Right to Health during the Coronavirus Pandemic" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RACz0hleNgk>

22 Observations of the WGPSS to the Advisory Opinion No. 27 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is available in Spanish at: [http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/Contribucion\\_GTPSS\\_Libertad\\_Sindical.pdf](http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/Contribucion_GTPSS_Libertad_Sindical.pdf)

23 WGPSS experts addressing the public hearing is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/CortelDH/videos/330374491332650> (Intervention that starts at 3:00:00).

24 Consolidated report of El Salvador is available in Spanish at: <http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/InformeConsolidadoElSalvador.pdf> Report of observations and recommendations of the WGPSS is available in Spanish at: <http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/InformeObservacionesRecomendacionesElSalvador%203ciclo.pdf>

25 Consolidated report of Mexico is available in Spanish at: <http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/InformeConsolidadoMexico.pdf>. WGPSS observations and recommendations report is available in Spanish at: [http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/InformeObservacionesRecomendacionesMexico\\_3ciclo.pdf](http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/InformeObservacionesRecomendacionesMexico_3ciclo.pdf)

26 The national reports of El Salvador and Mexico regarding the first and second group of rights, as well as the report of observations and recommendations of the WGPSS in relation to these reports are available at in Spanish at: <http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/>

27 The recording of the workshop on the concepts and use of the Guidebook for the Operationalization of the Indicators of the Protocol of San Salvador from a Cross-cutting LGBTI Perspective is available in Spanish at: <https://youtu.be/ApqqyNAIKG8>

28 Note about the election is available in Spanish at: [http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/GTPSS\\_Nota\\_oficial\\_eleccion\\_Presidencia.pdf](http://www.oas.org/es/sadye/inclusion-social/protocolo-ssv/docs/GTPSS_Nota_oficial_eleccion_Presidencia.pdf)

## Committee for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CEDDIS for its acronym in Spanish)

The Inter-American Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CIADDIS for its acronym in Spanish) and the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2026 (PAD) are the main legal instruments in the Inter-American System to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in the region. These legal frameworks encourage member states to gradually establishing administrative, legislative, judicial, and public policies needed to promote the social inclusion and exercise of rights of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society.

To support member states in the implementation of these instruments, the Department of Social Inclusion (DSI) of SARE, has established two lines of action: a) monitoring-process of the implementation of regulatory frameworks, and b) promoting the exercise of rights of persons with disabilities.

### A. Monitoring-process of the implementation of regulatory frameworks

Article VI of the CIADDIS ratified by 19 States, established the Committee for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CEDDIS) Convention. To follow-up on the commitments made by the States Party to the convention<sup>29</sup>, the DSI of SARE, provides Technical Secretariat services to the Committee to support the review of the progress made in the implementation of the Convention and to promote the exchange of experiences among States Party.

On September 30, 2020, CEDDIS held its seventh special meeting to adopt the methodology for the evaluation of the Third National Report on the implementation of CIADDIS and PAD presented by 15 OAS member States in 2020. According to the methodology 15 evaluator groups were created to complete the evaluations during the second quarter of 2021.

Likewise, the DSI participates in the monitoring and implementation of the PAD and acts as the Technical Secretariat in charge of coordinating the activities of the Program.

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<sup>29</sup> Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.



## B. Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities

According to the World Bank, there are approximately 85 million people living with a disability in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>30</sup>. Persons with disabilities are more likely to experience lower levels of education, poorer health outcomes, higher poverty rates and are more likely to be unemployed than persons without disabilities.

The line of action for the promotion of rights of persons with disabilities is oriented towards social awareness and the generation or strengthening of capacities. It focuses on government authorities or entities, judicial operators, legislators, civil society organizations, the business sector and areas of the OAS General Secretariat in general in order to adopt inclusive public policies, mainstream the disability perspective and eliminate the gaps caused by discrimination. The objectives of this line of action are: 1) to train the different public and private actors and decision-makers within the member states regarding the rights and dignity of Persons with Disabilities, social inclusion and intersectionality, as well as, the Inter-American Disability Rights' regulatory framework, and 2) to provide technical support and advice to government authorities regarding public policies and legal reforms related to the rights of Persons with Disabilities among member states.

In 2020, the following activities under this line of action were carried out:

**1** The DSI of SARE prepared Chapter 3 "Towards an inclusive response for people with disabilities in the face of the COVID-19 emergency" of the Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas to raise awareness about the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities. This Chapter includes recommendations to member states to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

This chapter of the Practical Guide, in collaboration with the NGO "Comparlante", has been translated into a plain and understandable language, including infographics and accessible videos. A Chilean organization for Deaf Women also translated chapter III of the Guide to Chilean Sign Language and infographics.<sup>31</sup>

**30** World Bank, 85 Million Reasons to Prioritize Persons With Disabilities During Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2019, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/12/03/85-million-reasons-to-prioritize-persons-with-disabilities-during-disasters-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>

**31** See examples here: <https://www.fnzchile.cl/derechosocovid19/> The adapted and accessible version of the chapter III elaborated by "Comparlante" will be available soon at the SARE website.

## 2 Meeting of National Authorities on Disability in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic:

The Department of Social Inclusion organized two meetings for the Directors, policymakers and/or decision-makers in charge of the national agenda of persons with disabilities: one for the authorities of Latin American countries held in May, and one for the authorities from the Caribbean, United States and Canada, held on June. The purpose of these meeting was to provide some contextual data on the status of persons with disabilities regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and generate a space for the exchange of information on the measures that are being applied by the participating States. Participants shared inputs to facilitate planning/implementing public policies or actions in health, education, labor, social protection and emergency protocols, to ensure that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against in the exercise of their rights during the pandemic and are fully included in the political responses to confront it. As a result of the meeting, DSI prepared a compendium of good practices for the attention of persons with disabilities during the pandemic, based on the information exchanged among countries.

## 3 Webinar: The post COVID-19 new "normal" and persons with disabilities: towards disability-inclusive responses, May 14, 2020.

During this event the experts on Disability Rights discussed the issues member states should prioritize in the care of persons with disabilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the scope of the pandemic beyond health issues, from a perspective of indivisibility and interdependence of rights It also analyzed the new political, social, economic and cultural contexts, with an emphasis on collaborative, intersectional, and inclusive responses. The webinar was broadcast on the OAS Official Facebook page.<sup>32</sup>

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**32** The webinar "The post COVID-19 new "normal" and persons with disabilities: towards disability-inclusive responses" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/159949940724598/videos/2610149699089014>

## 4 Webinar on Women with Disabilities, Sexual and Reproductive Rights, and their participation in gender struggles in the Americas, September 17, 2020.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, approximately 85 million people live with a disability, and 60% are women and girls. There are very few spaces that promote women's participation and empowerment, and far less that include and incorporate the perspective of women and girls with disabilities. Many of the barriers these women face are linked to stigmas and social myths that drive the lack of inclusive public policies, inclusive services at all levels, and inclusive feminist advocacy. Discrimination against women and girls with disabilities and the denial of their rights is evidenced in constant infantilization, excessive protection, a vision of them as asexual, obstetric violence, domestic violence, abuse, and isolation, among others.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the structural inequality and discrimination that women and girls with disabilities face when they need to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. These rights have historically been denied to this population, as well as their right to motherhood. This regional dialogue's objective was to highlight the situation of women and girls with disabilities when exercising and protecting their rights and their participation in the struggles for gender equality. The event also aimed to disseminate some public policies that are being executed in favor of women with disabilities and their transversal inclusion in gender policies while identifying existing barriers and strategies to face/minimize or eliminate them.<sup>33</sup>

## 5 Series of webinars on Risk Management, Disaster Reduction and Persons with Disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean Region, September 24, October 8 and 22, 2020.

These three webinars were implemented: "Health, Disability, and COVID-19,"<sup>34</sup>; "COVID-19, Disability and other Emergencies"<sup>35</sup>, and "Inclusive Response and Recovery to the Socioeconomic consequences of the Pandemic".<sup>36</sup> The events were held in English and Spanish, with subtitles and International Sign Language Interpretation. The dialogues were also broadcast simultaneously on three Facebook pages: OAS-INCLUSION, RIADIS, and Partnership for Inclusive Disasters Strategies.

**33** The webinar Women with Disabilities, Sexual and Reproductive Rights, and their participation in gender struggles in the Americas is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/107130097690231/videos/672871196921299>

**34** The webinar "Health, Disability, and COVID-19" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/36704584118822>

**35** The webinar "COVID-19, Disability and other Emergencies" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/1026274471127368>

**36** The webinar "Inclusive Response and Recovery to the Socioeconomic consequences of the Pandemic" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/2079378628858700>

**6** Virtual Regular Meeting of the OAS Permanent Council on December 2, 2020, to commemorate the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This meeting was organized by the DSI of SARE with the support of the OAS Group of Friends of Persons with Disabilities. A panel of experts discussed the "Disability-inclusive responses to COVID-19 at the institutional and governmental level" .<sup>37</sup>

**7** Webinar "Accessibility as a human right and a cross-cutting element for inclusion", December 4, 2020.

The event was one of the activities to commemorate the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities which happens on December 3. Among the participants were government authorities, the private/business sector, civil society organizations representing persons with disabilities and their families, students, academic staff, and the general public. The purpose of this meeting was to raise awareness about the importance of digital accessibility for persons with disabilities to fully participate in education, employment, access to information, culture, among other areas, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, and guide measures that must be adopted by the member states to eliminate barriers that obstruct the exercise of these rights. It was organized by the DSI of SARE and the Trust for the Americas. It was supported by the OAS Group of Friends of Persons with Disabilities.<sup>38</sup>

**8** Roundtable on migrants with disabilities, December 4, 2020.

This roundtable was also one of the activities to commemorate the United Nation's International Day of Persons with Disabilities and was intended for government authorities, Permanent Missions to the OAS, civil society organizations representing persons with disabilities migrants, and the general public. The participants learned about the main challenges faced by migrants with disabilities and the recommendations for measures with a differentiated and human rights-based approach to address their particular situation of vulnerability. It was organized by the DSI of SARE and the Trust for the Americas. It was supported by the OAS Group of Friends of Persons with Disabilities.<sup>39</sup>

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**37** Regular Meeting of the OAS Permanent Council and the panel "Disability-inclusive responses to COVID-19 at the institutional and governmental level" are available in Spanish at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K30B3deMS00>

**38** The webinar "Accessibility as a human right and a cross-cutting element for inclusion" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/170911141411360>  
Roundtable on migrants with disabilities is available in Spanish at:

**39** Roundtable on migrants with disabilities is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/404868130661384>

**9** Webinar "Persons with Disabilities and Independent Living", December 16, 2020.

The webinar was organized by the DSI of SARE and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). During this event, public policies and initiatives related to the right of persons with disabilities to live independently implemented by the States Parties to the Inter-American Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CIADDIS) were presented. Also, participants shared experiences and good practices from civil society organizations for persons with disabilities with the creation of the first Latin American Network for Independent Living, RELAVIN, and good practices from public policies implemented by the National Disability Service of Panama.<sup>40</sup>

## Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons

In the Americas, according to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), it is estimated that by 2050 the number of older persons in Latin America and the Caribbean, will more than double, reaching approximately 196 million<sup>41</sup>. Given this situation, the OAS General Assembly adopted the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons. The Convention is the first regional instrument that specifically protects the rights of older people and aims to promote, protect and ensure the recognition and full enjoyment and exercise, on equal terms, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons, in order to contribute to their full inclusion, integration and participation in society.

SARE carries out the agenda of rights and social inclusion of older persons, with the Convention as a framework for action and under its strategic program 4: Strengthening of Specialized Bodies that Support the Follow Up of Resolutions, Declarations and Conventions.

**40** The webinar "Persons with Disabilities and Independent Living" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/OEAInclusion/videos/182031946972813>

**41** PAHO, Envejecimiento y cambios demográficos, 2017, only available in Spanish at: [https://www.paho.org/salud-en-las-americas-2017/?post\\_type=post\\_t\\_es&p=314&lang=fr](https://www.paho.org/salud-en-las-americas-2017/?post_type=post_t_es&p=314&lang=fr)

In 2020, given the serious impact of COVID-19 on the physical and psychological health of older persons, SARE prepared Chapter 2: "Considerations for an inclusive response for older people to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Americas" of the *Practical Guide to Inclusive and Rights-based Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas* and included recommendations for member states to protect the rights of older persons during and after the COVID-19 emergency.

Other results achieved by SARE in 2020 related to the social inclusion of older persons are the following:

- Strategic alliance with the Ombudsman's Office of Peru to promote the ratification of the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons.
- Support to the Campaign of the Ombudsman's Office of Peru: "Stand Up for the Older Persons".<sup>42</sup>
- Webinar "Inter-American Convention as an instrument for the protection of the older persons" in collaboration with the Ombudsman's Office of Peru, on October 9, 2020.<sup>43</sup>
- Inclusion of the category Older Persons in the Photography Contest "Indigenous Peoples in the Americas" and in the Contest of Good Practices for Groups in Situations of Vulnerability in the Context of the COVID -19 Pandemic.

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**42** "La OEA y la Defensoría del Pueblo del Perú unidas en campaña "Súmate por las Personas Mayores" 3 de marzo de 2020. Disponible en:  
<https://www.radionacional.com.pe/noticias/polit-la-oea-y-la-defensoria-del-pueblo-del-peru-unidas-en-campana-sumate-por-las-personas-mayores>

**43** El evento "Convención Interamericana: Instrumento de Protección para las Personas Mayores" está disponible en el siguiente enlace: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwFJkgx6DWO>

# Youth

According to the World Youth Report of 2018, the proportion of the youth in Latin America and the Caribbean is 17%, and 10% of the working youth of the region are living in poverty.<sup>44</sup> Youth experience higher unemployment rates and lower wages than older generations which affects the exercise of their rights. In 2016, the OAS General Assembly, approved resolution AG/RES. 2887 (XLVI-O / 16) "Promotion and Protection of Human Rights", in which member states called for the strengthening of protection systems to guarantee the full exercise of the rights of children and adolescents and promote universal and inclusive public policies with special attention to traditionally excluded groups.

SARE, through its Department of Social Inclusion (DSI), works towards the social inclusion of the youth by working with member states to strengthen social protection systems and promote inclusive policies to reduce the vulnerability of the youth. In 2019, the OAS General Secretariat and JA Worldwide Inc. (JAWW), a 100 year-old nonprofit organization committed to preparing young people for employment and entrepreneurship, signed an agreement to establish cooperation mechanisms to coordinate activities on the social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations.

The impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on youth is more long term in nature. Young people are not generally considered high risk in terms of their susceptibility to the virus as a cohort, but it is important to note that young people who come from groups in situations of vulnerability such as poor urban and rural youth, youth with disabilities, indigenous youth, youth of African descent and LGBTI youth are at risk due to systemic discrimination in terms of health access and access to products and information to protect themselves from the virus. Generally speaking, within the context of the pandemic, youth are being impacted in terms of their access to education and jobs due to social distancing measures in place to combat the spread of the virus. Young people without access to ICT and the Internet are particularly at risk because they are unable to keep up with their education as their peers who do have access and are likely to fall further behind which puts them at a disadvantage in the future.

On June 8, 2020, DIS coordinated in collaboration with the Trust for the Americas, PADF and YABT and others, the Virtual Discussion "Youth for an Inclusive Future Post COVID-19" which brought together young people from various groups in situations of vulnerability to speak with the Secretary General of the OAS about their concerns and proposals in relation to the future post pandemic. The event was broadcast on the OAS-OFFICIAL's Facebook page.<sup>45</sup>

**44** United Nations (2018). World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development p. 13 Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>

**45** The webinar Youth for an Inclusive Future Post COVID-19 is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/159949940724598/videos/703610360430125>

## LGBTI Persons

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) persons are also in a particularly vulnerable situation as they face discrimination, stigmatization and intimidation because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In 2013, the OAS General Assembly adopted the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, which is the first inter-American legal instrument and the only one at the global level that includes LGBTI persons as subjects of international protection. In 2016, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, United States and Uruguay, created the OAS LGBTI Core Group. The objective of this group is to promote collaboration and the exchange of practices among countries to protect the rights of LGBTI persons. Currently, the group is composed by the following member states Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, México, United States and Uruguay.

The current pandemic has drawn attention to the health inequalities that LGBTI persons have always experienced which have been accentuated due to the pandemic. Many countries in the region have limited resources and public health systems; and as a result of this scarcity, social inequalities impact the lives of LGBTI persons due to discrimination based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The following are the main achievements during 2020 related to the social inclusion of LGBTI persons:

- Organization of the virtual meeting "Economic Empowerment and Employability of Trans Persons" with the OAS LGBTI Core Group and the support of the Permanent Mission of Brazil in commemoration of the International Day of Transsexual Memory, on November 20, 2020.<sup>46</sup> This event provided an opportunity to exchange recommendations, guidelines and good practices to improve the employability of Trans Persons.
- Inclusion of the category of LGBTI persons in the Photography Contest "Indigenous Peoples in the Americas" and in the Contest of Good Practices for Groups in Situations of Vulnerability in the Context of the COVID -19 Pandemic.

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**46** The webinar "Economic Empowerment and Employability of Trans Persons" is available in Spanish at: <https://www.facebook.com/107130097690231/videos/770999253630141>



## ❖ Program for the promotion and expansion of civil society and social actor participation in OAS activities

Civil society organizations and other social actors have a key role in supporting OAS objectives. The presence of civil society, including local organizations and vast networks of non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and social actors has contributed to the achievement of hemispheric objectives through the strengthening of democracy, the protection of human rights, the promotion of integral development and multidimensional security, as well as other ongoing initiatives of the OAS, which are part of the Inter-American Agenda. Mutual trust and understanding between civil society organizations (CSO), social actors and the OAS have significantly progressed over the years, resulting in an increase in the level of participation of CSO and social actors in initiatives, projects and activities which the organization carries forth.

To date, 606 CSO have registered with the OAS, and some 600 cooperation agreements have been signed with different Organizations. During the period covered by this report, the work of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity (SARE) focused on four points: facilitating interactions between civil society and the candidates for the offices of Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General; guaranteeing the conditions for the participation of civil society in the fiftieth regular session of the OAS General Assembly; managing the registration of civil society organizations with the OAS; and lastly, generating an expansion of civil society participation in OAS activities.

It should be noted that the programming was carried out in a complex context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought new challenges to adapt a traditionally face-to-face participation of civil society in the Organization's activities to the virtual environment.

### Elections of OAS authorities

In view of the elections for the posts of Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General, 2 Dialogues were organized with civil society organizations registered with the OAS, on March 5, 2020: one with the candidates for the post of Secretary General, and one with candidates for the post of Assistant Secretary General.

These Dialogues respond to mandates established in Resolution AG / RES. 2103 (XXXV-O / 05) "Public Presentation of Proposed Candidates for Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States".

Along with the convocation, the General Secretariat sent a form to civil society organizations to formulate questions.

The questions from civil society had to be related to the four pillars of the OAS: Democracy, Human Rights, Integral Development and Multidimensional Security and were directed to all candidates.

On the day of the Dialogues, the civil society participants deposited their questions in the boxes corresponding to each of the pillars of the OAS.

Likewise, an email address managed directly by the Department of Information and Technology Services was provided to receive questions from civil society organizations of the member states registered with the OAS that could not participate in loco in the Dialogue.

The Dialogue was moderated by the President of the Permanent Council, H.E. Ryad Insanally, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the OAS.

In total, 49 representatives of 26 civil society organizations registered with the OAS participated in the events in person. The Dialogues were also broadcast live for those participants who could not be present.

The summary of participation by country is presented below.

COUNTRY	OSC
ARGENTINA	3
COLOMBIA	3
ECUADOR	2
EL SALVADOR	1
GUATEMALA	1
MEXICO	2
PANAMA	1
UNITED STATES	15
VENEZUELA	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>

*Source: own elaboration for this report.*

### **Participation of civil society in the 50th General Assembly of the OAS**

SARE facilitated the participation of more than 700 representatives of civil society organizations in the 50th Regular Session of the OAS General Assembly, on October 20 and 21, 2020. The participation was carried out in virtual format, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Main activities:

- Organization of the Dialogue of Heads of Delegation, with the participation of Secretary General Luis Almagro, Assistant Secretary General Néstor Méndez, and representatives of civil society and other social actors, following the format of thematic coalitions launched for the first time in the framework of the 50th General Assembly of the OAS.
- In the Dialogue spoke representatives of 31 civil society Coalitions, 2 representatives of Workers, 2 of the Private Sector and a Representative of the youth.
- Likewise, virtual access was provided to 2 representatives per Coalition to the General Committee.

**Participating countries, civil society organizations and social actors represented at the 50th General Assembly of the OAS:**

COUNTRY	TOTAL OSC	TOTAL PERSONS	PARTICIPANT PERCENTAGE
ARGENTINA	52	92	11.90%
BAHAMAS	1	2	0.26%
BELIZE	2	4	0.52%
BOLIVIA	11	21	2.72%
BRAZIL	8	13	1.68%
CANADA	5	10	1.29%
CHILE	8	13	1.68%
COLOMBIA	67	130	16.82%
COSTA RICA	12	23	2.98%
CURACAO	1	2	0.26%
ECUADOR	12	23	2.98%
EL SALVADOR	14	26	3.36%
SPAIN	2	3	0.39%
UNITED STATES	45	85	11.00%

Source: own elaboration for this report.

COUNTRY	TOTAL OSC	TOTAL PERSONS	PARTICIPANT PERCENTAGE
GUATEMALA	12	22	2.85%
HONDURAS	6	12	1.55%
JAMAICA	1	1	0.13%
MEXICO	67	119	15.39%
NICARAGUA	6	11	1.42%
PANAMA	19	37	4.79%
PARAGUAY	11	18	2.33%
PERU	17	33	4.27%
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	7	14	1.81%
SAINT LUCIA	1	2	0.26%
SURINAME	1	2	0.26%
T. & TOBAGO	2	4	0.52%
URUGUAY	10	16	2.07%
VENEZUELA	18	35	4.53%
<b>TOTAL 28 COUNTRIES</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: own elaboration for this report.

### Participation of Representatives of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant Communities in the 50th General Assembly of the OAS:

COUNTRY	INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND AFRO-DESCENDANT COMMUNITIES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	%
BOLIVIA	2	2	08%
BRAZIL	1	1	04%
CANADA	2	2	08%
COLOMBIA	7	9	35%
HONDURAS	1	2	08%
MEXICO	2	3	12%
NICARAGUA	2	4	15%
PERU	1	2	08%
URUGUAY	1	1	04%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: own elaboration for this report.

## Registration of civil society organizations with the OAS

In 2020, 38 new organizations were added to the OAS Permanent Registry of civil society organizations and 25 additional requests are being processed.

COUNTRY	CSO
ARGENTINA	6
BELGIUM	1
BRAZIL	2
CANADA	3
CHILE	3
COLOMBIA	8
UNITED STATES	6
JAMAICA	1
MEXICO	2
PERU	2
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	3
VENEZUELA	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38</b>

Source: own elaboration for this report.

### Other activities carried out in 2020 under the “Program for the Promotion and Increase of Civil Society in OAS Activities” included:

- Support to the Technical Secretariat of the Follow-up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC) for consultations with civil society organizations of Bolivia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru, regarding the Questionnaire in relation to the follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations made and the provisions analyzed in the Third Round, as well as with respect to the provisions of the Convention selected for the Sixth Round.
- In conjunction with the Department of Social Inclusion, development and implementation of the Virtual Consultation: Groups in Situation of Vulnerability in the Post-COVID-19 Context.

# 04

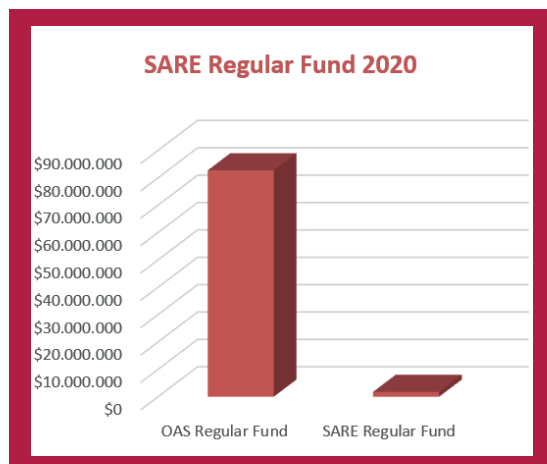
# FINANCIAL RESOURCES

SARE has been able to achieve the results presented in this report by using its budget allocations efficiently.

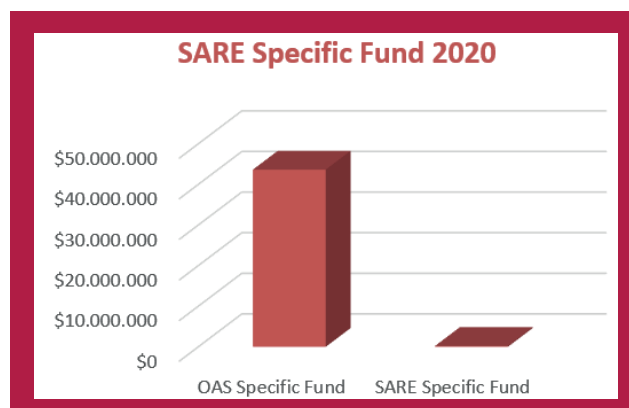
In 2020, SARE received 2.1% (US\$1,731,500) of the total Regular Fund budget of the OAS (US\$82,700,000), and 0.33% (US\$) of the total amount of specific funds of the Organization

With regards to specific funds, SARE received 1.33% (US\$580,000) of the total specific funds received by the GS/OAS (US\$ 43,638,588).

### SARE Regular Fund 2020



### SARE Specific Fund 2020



Source: own elaboration for this report.

# PARTNERS | 05



# MEMBER STATES

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Antigua and Barbuda  
Argentina  
Las Bahamas  
Barbados  
Belize  
Bolivia Guyana  
Brazil Haiti  
Canada Honduras  
Chile Jamaica  
Colombia Mexico  
Costa Rica Nicaragua  
Cuba<sup>1</sup> Panama  
Dominica Paraguay  
Dominican Republic Peru  
Ecuador Saint Kitts and Nevis  
El Salvador Saint Lucia  
Grenada Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  
Guatemala Suriname  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Uruguay  
United States  
Venezuela

<sup>1</sup> On June 3, 2009, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Americas adopted Resolution AG/RES.2438 (XXXIX-0/09) which resolves that the 1962 Resolution that excluded the Government of Cuba from its participation in the Inter-American system, ceases to have effect in the Organization of American States (OAS). The 2009 resolution states that the participation of the Republic of Cuba in the OAS will be the result of a process of dialogue initiated at the request of the Government of Cuba, and in accordance with the practices, purposes, and principles of the OAS.



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