

# Cuidarlos

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The Care Economy  
Knowledge Hub

[the-care-economy-knowledge-hub.org](https://the-care-economy-knowledge-hub.org)

# Profiling Businesses in the Care Economy

The care economy consists of paid and unpaid labor and services that support caregiving in all its forms. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, women spend between three to five times as many hours on unpaid care and domestic work as men. This represents 80 percent of a household's total hours devoted to unpaid care work.

Care economy businesses can help recognize, redistribute, reduce and reward – also known as the 4 Rs – unpaid and paid care and domestic work in the following ways:



**Recognize:** Initiatives that increase visibility and recognition of paid and unpaid care and domestic activity as "productive" work that creates real value and contributes to economies and societies.



**Redistribute:** Services and initiatives that redistribute care work from individuals to public and private sector entities, and redistribute care and domestic work within the household.



**Reduce:** Products and initiatives that reduce the time spent on and burden of unpaid care and domestic work.

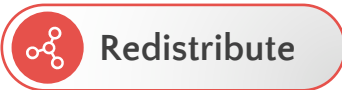


**Reward:** Products, services and initiatives that ensure that care and domestic workers are paid fairly and have professional growth potential. This provides them with financial reward and security.

The Care Economy Knowledge Hub aims to address the knowledge gap around care businesses by showcasing various business models and creating a resource base for relevant stakeholders. It also aims to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the state of impact-driven care economy business models and attract a broad range of funders to invest in care economy solutions by showcasing opportunities. These business profiles are intended to showcase said potential investment opportunities. They have been created from information and data provided by the business itself.

This project is supported by Canada's International Development Research Center, in partnership with the Soros Economic Development Fund at the Open Society Foundations. Building on their track record and commitment to transforming the care economy and mobilizing finance for gender equality, they have jointly launched this action research program to help transform the care economy through impact business and investment.

## Executive Summary

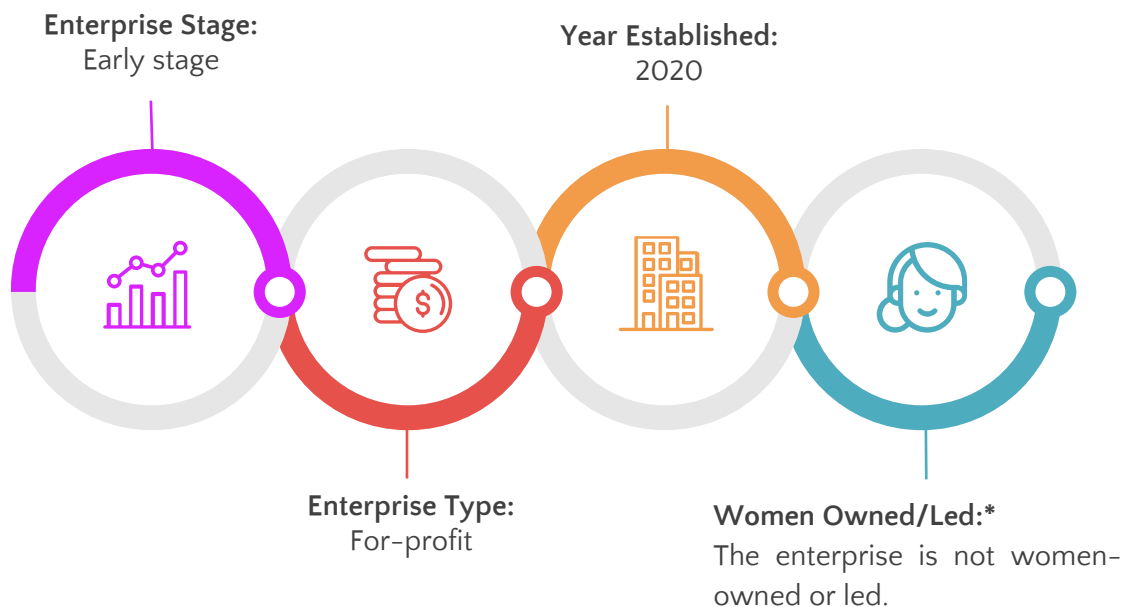


Redistribute



Reduce

Cuidarlos is an Argentinian app that connects persons who require in-home care services to qualified care workers based on location, expertise, and availability. The app has an extensive directory where users can search for care services for the elderly, chronic illnesses, and disabilities. So far, it has served nearly 2,600 households. Cuidarlos has over 5,600 care workers (the majority of whom are women) registered with its app. The app also employs 8 administrative staff. As of November 2022, Cuidarlos does not charge families or care workers to use the app. However, it plans to generate revenue in the second quarter of 2023 by offering specialized courses to care workers for a fee (offered directly through the app), as well as by charging families who use the app a monthly subscription fee. The projected revenue for 2023 is US\$ 181,000.



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\*According to 2X "women entrepreneurship" and "women leadership" criteria; [2X Challenge Criteria](#)

# 1. About The Enterprise

## 1.1 Problem

In Argentina, estimates suggest that the elderly population (60+ years of age) will increase from 15.7% in 2020 to 22% by 2050.<sup>1</sup> Further, more than 30% of people over the age of 65 (and 47% over the age of 80) have a disability.<sup>2</sup> Of those reporting a disability, women are more likely to be dependent than men when performing basic daily functions, such as eating, bathing, using the toilet, taking medications, using the telephone, or doing housework.<sup>3</sup>

Alongside accelerated aging, an increase in diseases such as cancer, hypertension, diabetes, and chronic respiratory conditions contribute to the likelihood that the population will need assistance to perform basic and instrumental daily activities.<sup>4</sup> This adds pressure to the national healthcare system, as the demand for specialized and qualified in-home care services and physical assistance grows. In the meantime, the supply of private, high-quality, in-home, care services is limited in Argentina. There is also no regulatory and supervisory system, thus private care is often reserved for high-income households. Currently, only 3.4% of adults over 60 who require specialized in-home care are able to access services.<sup>5</sup>

Traditionally, women are more likely to provide unpaid elderly care. Argentinian women spend an average of 6 hours per day on care activities, compared to only 3.8 hours for men.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the primary sources of assistance for the elderly in Argentina are relatives, particularly daughters (38.2%). This is followed by grandchildren and neighbors (22.8%).<sup>7</sup> Thus, if the supply of care workers does not grow alongside the increasing demand, women will most likely be expected to fill the gap by assuming care responsibilities for relatives. This responsibility exposes women to physical and psychological burnout and can force them to turn down income-generating opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Inter-American Development Bank. (2020). Panorama of Aging and Long-Term Care: Summary Argentina. <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Panorama-of-Aging-and-Long-Term-Care-Summary-Argentina.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Inter-American Development Bank. (2020). Panorama of Aging and Long-Term Care: Summary Argentina. <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Panorama-of-Aging-and-Long-Term-Care-Summary-Argentina.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida de los Adultos Mayores* (2012), 12.2% of women and 5.9% of men over 60 were dependent. These proportions increased for adults over 75 years old: 25.2% for women and 13.2% for men. Retrieved from: [https://www.indec.gov.ar/ftp/cuadros/menusuperior/encaviam/doc\\_utilizacion\\_ENCaViAM%202012.pdf](https://www.indec.gov.ar/ftp/cuadros/menusuperior/encaviam/doc_utilizacion_ENCaViAM%202012.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos. (2012). *Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida de los Adultos Mayores*. [https://www.indec.gov.ar/ftp/cuadros/menusuperior/encaviam/doc\\_utilizacion\\_ENCaViAM%202012.pdf](https://www.indec.gov.ar/ftp/cuadros/menusuperior/encaviam/doc_utilizacion_ENCaViAM%202012.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Inter-American Development Bank. (2020). *Envejecimiento y Atención a la Dependencia en Argentina*. p. 7. <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Envejecimiento-y-atencion-a-la-dependencia-en-Argentina.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Economy Argentina. (2020). *The Value of Care: A Strategic Economic Sector. A measurement of unpaid care and domestic work in the Argentine GDP*. [https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/the\\_value\\_of\\_care.pdf](https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/the_value_of_care.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Inter-American Development Bank (2020). Panorama of Aging and Long-Term Care: Summary Argentina. <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Panorama-of-Aging-and-Long-Term-Care-Summary-Argentina.pdf>

Although some households can afford to hire external care services, they often refrain due to a lack of trust in care workers' skills. In addition, there is no formal way to post their vacancy (or a central directory of care workers seeking employment opportunities). This is detrimental, as care workers interested in occasional or self-employment must pay fees to job agencies to connect them with families, as well as sacrifice flexible time arrangements and compensation. Meanwhile, full-time care workers struggle to take a leave of absence, or vacation time, as they cannot find substitutes to cover their hours.

## 1.2 Solution

Cuidarlos matches older adults and persons with physical disabilities or chronic illnesses with qualified care workers that provide in-home services. Care workers' services range from long-term care for individuals who require specific treatments or medications, to companionship services (which include physical assistance with daily activities and household tasks). The Cuidarlos app enables clients to access the largest open directory of active care workers in Argentina, aiming to fulfill the increasing demand for in-home care services.

Cuidarlos' app allows individuals who require in-home care services (and their families) to contact qualified care workers who meet their specific requirements (specialization, geographic location, and availability). Through the app, families are able to learn about care workers' basic information, training, and experience. They may then conduct either in-person or virtual interviews, set a work contract, and establish service fees. Cuidarlos encourages (but does not obligate) employers to register care workers on the national social security system and to sign formal labor contracts. The app also allows individuals who require in-home care services to set up care workers' tasks, visualize the health progress of patients, track care workers' performance, and enable care workers to access articles and videos to improve the physical and emotional well-being of the individuals who receive their care. The app's directory also allows both families and care workers to easily find replacements in the case that a care worker requests to take a leave of absence.

Cuidarlos enables care workers to register on its app to access part or full-time job opportunities, without intermediaries. Care workers (mainly women) register by filling in their personal information, including proof of ID, as well as adding job references, and certificates, and completing a criminal record check. They may advance their profiles by indicating their strengths and experience in providing care for specific health conditions and physical disabilities. The app rates each care worker based on the legitimacy<sup>8</sup> of the information provided, the care workers' quality of service, their achievement of assigned tasks, their completion of app-based training courses, and customer reviews and ratings. If a care worker's average rating is below a specific threshold, they are not visible to potential customers and are unable to receive service requests.

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<sup>8</sup> Cuidarlos verifies the authenticity of the care workers' ID, criminal record check, and personal information.

To improve the quality of care services, Cuidarlos offers free digital courses on care services and recommended practices to address specific needs. The content of the courses is endorsed by the Buenos Aires City Government and the Ineco Foundation.<sup>9</sup> The app also enables care workers to manage their work schedules and service fees.

### 1.3 Customer Segment

Currently, Cuidarlos’ main customers are older adults (mainly women) and their families. Since the company is in its pre-revenue phase, Cuidarlos is not yet charging households for the hiring of care workers.

Customer Segment	Product / Service Provided	Paid / Unpaid
<p>Individuals who require in-home care and their families (middle and high-income households)</p>	<p><b>Care workers directory:</b> Cuidarlos’ app exhibits an open directory of nearly 5,600 care workers. This allows individuals receiving care (and their families) to directly hire qualified care workers, according to their specific needs and schedules. Families can hire more than one care worker to cover several shifts and services can be requested for different periods of time (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.).</p> <p>The app also has a tracking feature, allowing individuals who require in-home care services to set up care workers’ tasks, visualize the patient’s health progress, and track care workers’ performance.</p> <p>The app has articles and interactive activities for individuals receiving care, as well as for their families. These are aimed at improving their emotional and physical well-being.</p>	<p><b>Unpaid:</b> Currently, the app’s services are provided free of charge. Families will be charged commissions starting Q2 2023. Additionally, individuals receiving care (or their families) pay fees<sup>10</sup> to care workers. This amount is agreed upon ahead of time, according to services required.</p>

<sup>9</sup> Ineco is a non-profit organization that supports research programs concerning brain function and the detection, prevention and treatment of neurological disorders. Retrieved from: <https://www.fundacionineco.org/fundacion-ineco-en-pocas-palabras/>

<sup>10</sup> Care workers’ services fees are agreed upon by both the care worker and the patient or their family.

Customer Segment	Product / Service Provided	Paid / Unpaid
Care workers	<b>Employment opportunities:</b> Cuidarlos allows care workers to find either full or part-time jobs (without intermediaries or fees). Through the app, care workers can manage their schedules and update their profiles based on their track record (performance on assigned tasks, completed training courses, reviews, and ratings).	<b>Unpaid:</b> Any verified care worker registered on the app can access job vacancies posted free of charge.
	<b>Training:</b> Cuidarlos offers free digital training courses to care workers and families on topics such as care practices for older adults and care protocols to manage viruses, such as COVID-19. The company has partnerships with the Ineko Foundation and the Buenos Aires city government, to ensure the quality and timeliness of training content.	<b>Unpaid:</b> Care workers registered on the app can access the introductory training courses for free. However, Cuidarlos will start offering more specialized courses in 2023, which will be fee-based.

## 1.4 Team And Governance Structure

Cuidarlos' Board of Directors consists of 5 male co-founders, including the CEO. The CEO leads the technology, management, business development, and branding of the company. The company also employs 3 men as software developers, 3 women as part-time advisors (specialized in family counseling and gerontology), 1 man specialized in database software, and 1 man responsible for marketing. The company also has an external advisory board of healthcare professionals and technology experts.

## 1.5 Enterprise Policies

Policy	Yes / No
Overall HR Policy	No
Equal pay for equivalent work policy	No

Policy	Yes / No
Non-discrimination / Equal employment opportunity / Diversity and inclusion policy (gender, LGBTQ, PWD, etc.)	No <sup>11</sup>
Anti bullying and sexual harassment policy / Respectful workplaces	No
Whistleblower policy / Employee grievance mechanism	Yes
Maternity / Paternity leave policy	No
Safeguarding policies for vulnerable groups (children, elderly, PWDs)	No <sup>12</sup>
Safeguarding policies for the environment or to reduce detrimental impact on the environment (covers reducing carbon footprint, reduced water consumption etc.)	No

## 2. Impact

### 2.1 Mission Statement

Cuidarlos' mission is to provide safe care solutions for individuals who require in-home care, by directly connecting them with qualified care workers. It aims to create an ecosystem that guarantees access to high-quality care. This will significantly enhance the physical and emotional well-being of older persons and persons with illnesses or disabilities, therefore improving their quality of life.

### 2.2 Intended Impact

By providing its services, Cuidarlos impacts the following Rs:

- It **redistributes** care work for the elderly, which is generally performed by women within households, to a private third party.
- It **reduces** the amount of time unpaid caregivers, especially women, spend on care work.

<sup>11</sup> Even though (in practice) Cuidarlos' operations and management are handled according to inclusive and ethical practices, the company does not have written policies of non-discrimination, equal employment opportunities, or diversity and inclusion, due to its early stage.

<sup>12</sup> Due to Cuidarlos' early stage, the company does not have a formal written policy related to safeguarding vulnerable groups, although its mission consists of protecting and supporting older persons and PWDs.



## 2.3 Monitoring And Measurement

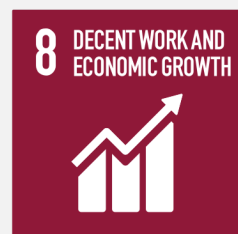
To monitor the quality of its services and the efficiency of the app, Cuidarlos captures the following indicators:

- Number of registered care workers on the app
- Number of services performed
- Customer satisfaction, captured through digital surveys upon service completion
- Customer perception of care workers' performance and quality of services provided
- App usage metrics (to improve efficiency), such as active users, usage frequency, feature usage, and connectivity quality

## 2.4 Results To Date

Cuidarlos has served 2,671 households through its app. Of these, 67% of clients are women, 25% are between 40-50 years old, and 34% are between 50-60 years old. Currently, Cuidarlos has 5,620 care workers registered on its app, 65% of whom are active.<sup>13</sup> Of the active care workers, 90% are women, 45% are between the ages of 30-50, and 26% are below 30 years old. In addition, 21% of registered care workers have completed training courses through the app.

Cuidarlos' work is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



<sup>13</sup>Active care workers are those who have provided a service within the last month.

## 3. Financials

### 3.1 Financial Status

Cuidarlos is currently a pre-revenue enterprise, but aims to be financially profitable in the next 3 years. The majority of Cuidarlos' expenses have been covered through investments made by its founders (60%) and angel investors (40%).

#### 3.1.1 Revenue Streams

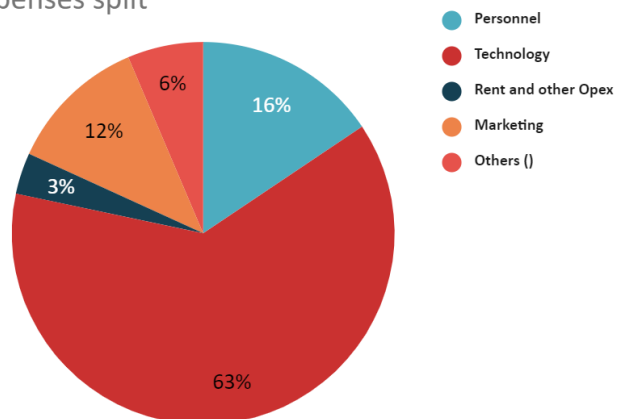
Since its launch in 2020, Cuidarlos has been piloting the app. Thus, the enterprise has not generated any revenue, as it does not charge customers or care workers for use. However, from the second quarter of 2023, the company will begin charging a monthly fee to families using the app and will offer paid courses for care workers aiming to improve their knowledge and skills. The projected revenue for 2023 is US\$ 181,000.

#### 3.1.2 Expenses

The following pie chart presents key past expenditure areas for Cuidarlos, between 2020 and 2021.

- Personnel: 15.6%
- Technology: 62.7%
- Rent and other opex: 3.5%
- Marketing: 11.8%
- Other (app's contents): 6.4%

Expenses split



### 3.2 External Funding Sources (Past and Current)

Since its foundation in 2020, Cuidarlos' co-founders have invested US\$ 500,000 to develop and pilot the app. Its co-founders are retired men with experience in app creation and development, communications, and elderly care services. In addition, in 2020 an angel investor contributed nearly US\$ 10,000.

### 3.3 Challenges Faced In Accessing Capital

Aside from initial support by an angel investor (totaling 2% of total investment), the company has not attempted to raise external capital. The CEO reports that traditional investors are reluctant to invest in businesses that do not have an explicit revenue generation model, which has been the case for Cuidarlos. The company's next step is to introduce a monetization strategy for the app, which will make it more likely to attract investors and external capital.<sup>14</sup>

## 4. Path To Scalability

### 4.1 Potential Avenues For Growth

Cuidarlos has identified the following avenues for growth:

- **Monetization strategy introduction:** The new monetization strategy (to be introduced by Q2 of 2023) will consist of launching subscription fees for both care workers and employers. Employers will be charged a monthly fee for app use and care workers will be offered access to fee-based training courses and activities.
- **Geographical expansion:** Cuidarlos intends to consolidate its market share in Argentina. From 2024, it plans to expand across Latin America, starting with Mexico and Brazil.
- **Customer segment increase:** Despite its focus on elderly persons' needs during its launch, Cuidarlos has been broadening its scope and target population by serving individuals with chronic illnesses and physical disabilities. The enterprise's next step will be to expand into offering childcare services.
- **Marketplace:** The company plans to launch a digital marketplace to provide specialized care products, such as food items, medications, and hygiene items.
- **Technology integration:** Cuidarlos aims to integrate new technologies into the app to remotely monitor individuals' healthcare indicators.

### 4.2 Risks And Challenges

Cuidarlos has identified the following challenges:

- **Operational challenges:** Initially, care workers were reluctant to engage with the app, as similar companies have charged care workers a fee for job placement. In addition, as the app does not generate any income, important investments are still required to launch and validate its monetization model.

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<sup>14</sup>No fees are currently charged for using the app services.

### 4.3 COVID-19 Impact On The Enterprise

Since Cuidarlos launched its operations in 2020, it has struggled to recruit care workers and attract customers (due to COVID-19 lockdowns and sanitary measures). The pandemic likewise severely hindered demand for in-home care services. As a result, during its first year of operation, Cuidarlos focused its efforts on publicity and the introduction and validation of training courses for care workers. In 2021, app traffic started to increase, alongside the volume of its operations.

### 4.4 Support Received To Date

Cuidarlos has not received any technical assistance from external organizations.

### 4.5 Inputs Required For Growth

- **Financial:** Cuidarlos is currently seeking US\$ 1,000,000, preferably in the form of equity. Such capital will be used to validate the company's monetization strategy, expand its operations outside Argentina, launch its digital marketplace, and integrate new technologies (to remotely monitor patients' healthcare indicators).
- **Non-financial:** The company is seeking support in accessing international networks, expanding its operations to new markets, and integrating new features into the app.