

Technological Mediation and Communication Needs in Intersectoral Networks: Costa Rica's SAIID-RISA Initiative for Childcare

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the technological mediation and communication needs of Costa Rica's intersectoral childcare networks (RISAs) within the Comprehensive and Intersectoral Care System for Childhood Development (SAIID). A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving questionnaires and interviews with participants from national, regional, and local levels of the SAIID system. Findings revealed that the desired platform should cater to multi-level needs: National (needed information access, decision-making support, and systematization); Regional (needed coordination, streamlined communication, and timely information); and Local (need user-friendliness, case management, and inter-institutional connection). The platform should prioritize user-friendliness, information access, case tracking, referral facilitation, and inter-level communication to optimize collaboration within the multilevel SAIID structure.

Keywords

Technological mediation, communication needs, intersectoral networks, childcare, SAIID-RISA Initiative, Costa Rica childcare.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing global interest in implementing intersectoral approaches to address social determinants, particularly within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, despite this momentum, there remains a scarcity of research employing policy analysis methodologies to understand the barriers hindering the adoption and effective implementation of such intersectoral approaches (Okeyo et al., 2020). The *Comprehensive and Intersectoral Care System for Childhood Development (SAIID)*¹ in Costa Rica represents a significant milestone in addressing the health and education needs of children through an integrated approach. Formally established in 2010, this initiative is based on an intersectoral and interinstitutional approach whose primary purpose is to offer comprehensive children care. The SAIID facilitates collaboration among Costa Rica's primary public entities responsible for childcare and attention, prioritizing service provision to the broader population over profit generation. This coordination is achieved through networks of professionals, known as *Integrated Care Services Networks (RISA)*², across various institutions, ensuring that children receive integrated care in a cohesive manner.

Intersectoral Networks for Childcare in Costa Rica: A Multilevel Perspective

In the SAIID childcare system in Costa Rica, a multilevel perspective is essential for comprehensively understanding how intersectoral action operates across its different organizational layers: national, regional, and local. As noted by (Super et al., 2021), intersectoral action is crucial for addressing health disparities and related social issues effectively. SAIID exemplifies this multilevel framework, with its structure extending from national institutions to regional networks and local teams. By exploring the formation and scope of these intersectoral networks across various levels, we gain valuable insights into the collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing childcare services nationwide.

At the national level, the SAIID is made up of members from key institutions in the health and education sectors, such as the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS)³, the Ministry of

¹ Sistema de Atención Integral e Intersectorial del Desarrollo de niñas y niños en Costa Rica.

² Redes Integradas de Servicios de Atención

³ Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social

Public Education (MEP)⁴, the Ministry of Health (MS)⁵, the National Directorate of Education and Nutrition Centers and Children's Comprehensive Care Centers (CEN-CINAI),⁶ and the National Network of Child Care and Development (REDCUDI)⁷. In addition, representatives of public higher education institutions participate, such as the National University of Costa Rica (UNA)⁸, the University of Costa Rica (UCR)⁹ and the Statal Distance University (UNED)¹⁰.

Figure 1

Formation of the National Intersectoral Team



Note. Adapted from Cerdas (2016).

At the regional level, eight intersectoral networks have been established throughout the country, in charge of supervising the management of regional strategic tasks. These networks have the responsibility of coordinating and executing specific actions to guarantee efficient and quality care for children in each region. Given Costa Rica's compact size, spanning only 52,000 square kilometers, its division into eight regions, mirroring the seven provinces, facilitates efficient organization within middle management institutional structures.

⁴ Ministerio de Educación Pública

⁵ Ministerio de Salud

⁶ Dirección Nacional de Centros de Educación y Nutrición y de Centros Infantiles de Atención Integral

⁷ Red Nacional de Cuido y Desarrollo Infantil

⁸ Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica

⁹ Universidad de Costa Rica

¹⁰ Universidad Estatal a Distancia

Figure 2

Formation of Regional Intersectoral Teams



Note. Adapted from Cerdas (2016). REDCUDI does not have a hierarchical organization like other institutions, so its participation does not consider regional or local levels.

At the local level, 105 networks (RISA) have been created in communities across the country, which assume the responsibility of directing the process through activities that include early detection of developmental alterations in children, proper management of each case, and timely referral according to reference criteria, as well as case monitoring, fully optimizing resources. These local networks are led by a coordinator (Cerdas, 2016).

Figure 3

Formation of Local Intersectoral Teams (RISA)



Note. Adapted from Cerdas (2016).

The Role of the UNA and the FIAID Project

Since 2009, National University of Costa Rica (UNA) has played a pivotal role in advancing intersectoral conceptualization across all the three levels of management. Additionally, the *Intersectoral Strengthening for Comprehensive Child Development Care in Costa Rica Project* (FIAID)¹¹, conducted by UNA between 2021 and 2023, aimed to enhance the mediation and communication capabilities of RISA through the establishment of a collaborative online platform (<https://www.saiid.una.ac.cr/>). By 2022, full coverage had been achieved, with 105 local networks spanning the country, emphasizing the urgent need to manage and enhance communication within these networks.

To effectively transform the SAIID platform into a valuable tool, conducting a comprehensive diagnosis of the technological mediation and communication needs within the networks was imperative. This involved considering stakeholders at the three levels of the system: national, regional, and local.

Technological Mediation and Communication Needs in the Context of RISA

Maintaining trust within members of institutions, through compliance with commitments and open communication, helps develop credibility (Corbin et al., 2016). Intersectoral collaboration depends on the knowledge, skills, personal characteristics, and experience of individuals. Literature identifies necessary skills and competencies that reflect collegiality, such as respect, diplomacy, and appreciation for others (Koschmann et al., 2012; Burr et al., 2017). Other capabilities include the ability to think big, problem-solving skills, coordination, and participation skills (bringing people together), brokering skills (identifying what needs to happen), flexibility, and the ability to negotiate shared practices and outcomes (Wellbeing, 2022). These coordination, intermediation or negotiation skills can be enhanced through communicative exchanges using technology. Web-based collaborative platforms could combine the rich multimodality of this type of productions, with the personalization of content to promote audience participation (Baricco, 2019).

¹¹ Fortalecimiento Intersectorial para la Atención Integral del Desarrollo de niñas y niños en Costa Rica

Web-based collaborative platforms, such as the one envisioned under the FIAID project, have the potential for developing a more efficient communication, information sharing, and coordination among networks (Memon & Meyer, 2017). The SAIID platform was envisaged to serve as centralized hubs where professionals from diverse sectors and organizational levels—national, regional, and local—can converge, interact, and pool their expertise for the advancement of childcare initiatives.

In the context of virtual collaboration within RISA networks, technological mediation plays a pivotal role in facilitating effective communication and trust-building among network members. Technology serves as a conduit for exchanging information, sharing resources, and fostering collaboration in a web-based collaborative platform (Riofrío-Calderón & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). By leveraging technological tools, such as messaging systems, digital session reports, interactive maps, online course repositories, exchange spaces, real-time network data, and shared document repositories, RISA networks can overcome geographical barriers and enhance communication channels. Moreover, technological mediation provides a structured framework for organizing and managing collaborative activities, thereby optimizing the efficiency and effectiveness of virtual collaboration efforts (Riofrío-Calderón & Ramírez-Montoya, 2023). Technological mediation serves as a catalyst for promoting meaningful interactions and fostering trust among network members, ultimately contributing to the delivery of quality childcare services within RISA networks.

Hence, FIAID project endeavored to develop the SAIID platform to facilitate technological mediation and communication among childcare teams overseen by the SAIID, seeking to understand the technological and communication needs of the people within RISA networks. By comprehensively assessing these needs, the project aimed to design a platform that responded effectively to the specific requirements and challenges faced by stakeholders within the SAIID childcare ecosystem.

Methodology

Research objective

Identify the technological mediation and communication needs of RISA networks to create a web-based collaborative platform that responds to these needs.

Study Design

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach to explore the technological mediation and communication needs of RISA networks within the SAIID childcare system in Costa Rica. As explained by [Creswell and Guetterman \(2019\)](#), a mixed-methods approach is appropriate as it allows for the triangulation of data from different sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The study involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Quantitative data were gathered through online questionnaires administered to participants at the national, regional, and local levels, while qualitative insights were obtained through interviews with key stakeholders. This combination of methods allowed for the triangulation of data and provided a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the comprehensive care system.

Techniques and Instruments

To gather both quantitative and qualitative data, a combination of techniques and instruments was employed. Online questionnaires were utilized for quantitative data collection, targeting participants across various levels of the SAIID system. These questionnaires were meticulously structured to extract detailed insights into technological mediation and communication needs, employing closed-ended questions to facilitate standardized responses amenable to quantitative analysis. In parallel, qualitative data were acquired through semi-structured interviews conducted with coordinators and team members at the local and regional levels. These interviews provided a platform for participants to articulate their perspectives and experiences in greater depth, yielding rich qualitative insights essential for a comprehensive understanding of the research focus.

Table 1

Data collection activities developed during the first half of 2021

Activity	Date	Participant's Team	# Participants
Questionnaire	18-22/2/21	National Team (SAIID)	10
Questionnaire	3/11/21	Regional Team (West)	6

Questionnaire	11-22/3/21	Local Team (West)	33
Interview	3/24/21	Local Team (Matina)	6
Questionnaire	3/25/21	Regional Team (North Central)	10
Questionnaire	3/25/21 to 4/15/21	Local Team (North Central)	64
Interview	4/20/21	Brunca Regional Team Coordinator and Central North Regional Team Member	2
Interview	4/27/21	Athlantic Huetar Regional Coordinator	1
Interview	5/11/21	North Central Regional Team Coordinator and North Central Regional Team Member	2
Interview	5/18/21	Nicoya Local Team Coordinator	1
Interview	5/25/21	Local Team Coordinator Carmen-Montes de Oca	1
Questionnaire	5/27/21	Regional Team (Chorotega)	19
Questionnaire	5/27-29/21	Local Team (Chorotega)	39
Questionnaire	10/6/21	Regional Team (North Huetar)	4
Questionnaire	10-11/6/21	Local Team (North Huetar)	15
Questionnaire	10/6/21	Regional Team (Central Pacific)	6
TOTAL			219

Participants

The participants in the study included representatives from the SAIID childcare system at various levels, namely national, regional, and local. A total of 219 participants took part in the data collection activities, contributing to the richness and diversity of perspectives. Participants were selected based on their roles and involvement in the comprehensive care system, ensuring representation from key stakeholders across different organizational levels. The distribution of participants reflected the collaborative nature of the SAIID system, with active engagement

observed at all levels. Through interviews and questionnaires, valuable insights were gathered directly from those involved in the daily operations of the system, enabling a thorough examination of technological mediation and communication needs within RISA networks.

Table 2

Participants in the online questionnaires, by institution and system level

Institution	National level	Regional Level	Local Level
Ministry of Public Education (MEP)	7	33	231
Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS)	3	7	78
National Directorate of CEN-CINAI	1	2	31
National Children's Trust (PANI)	0	1	0
Municipalities	0	0	2
Other	0	2	3
Total for level	11	45	345

The breakdown of participation by SAIID level (national, regional, local) indicates the establishment of cohesive networks. In the first half of 2021, out of a total of 14 national-level members, 11 individuals participated, representing 78.5% of the cohort. At the regional level, where an average of 93 members were present, 45 individuals contributed to the survey, constituting approximately 48% of the group. Similarly, among local teams with an average membership of 753, 345 individuals provided responses, accounting for around 46%. To streamline the analysis of the brief answers received, the data was tabulated to document the frequency of words mentioned by members across different levels (national, regional, and local). Through comparative examination of responses from each level, significant insights into the medication and communication needs of the networks emerged. The ensuing section elucidates the findings gleaned from this analysis.

Ethical considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. For the questionnaires, invitations to participate were extended to all members of the national, regional, and local teams within the SAIID system. Regarding the interviews, the national coordinator recommended certain informants, while additional interviewees were suggested by individuals who had been previously interviewed, thereby ensuring a diverse range of perspectives and experiences were captured throughout the data collection process. All participants were of legal age at the time of providing information for this study, and confidentiality in the use of the information was assured.

Study Limitations

Given the methodological decisions adopted, including population, design, sample, and type of analysis, the study is not generalizable. Data on the validity and reliability of the instrument were not applied in this study as they were exploratory in nature, and no analysis requiring demonstration of these statistical criteria was conducted.

Results

Objective of the platform and main function of the RISA

The first question posed to the participants was what should be the objective of an information platform that contributes to the work of the RISA teams. At the national level, participants prioritize decision-making support, management, and network strengthening, intersectoral work visibility, team integration, and systematization, as seen in table 3:

Table 3

Objectives of the platform, according to national level participants

Participant	Clustered Answers
1	Record and evidence of work based on decision making
2	Articulation and management effective
3, 4, 8	Strengthening network management and intersectoral work through the recording of lessons learned
5, 6	Integration of equipment and knowledge for the best care of children
9	Recover experiences and evidence of how RISA teams are progressing at the national level
10	Systematize the information generated at the regional and local level to offer efficient care

At the regional level, the platform should facilitate coordination, support local RISAs, improve management processes, and provide timely information, as shown in the following table:

Table 4

Objectives of the platform, according to the participants at the regional level

Participant	Clustered Answers
2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 19, 32	Articulation, coordination, and support of local RISA
7, 16, 23, 24, 25, 18, 22, 26, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43	Obtaining timely and agile information to improve service times and streamline procedures and processes
14, 15, 21, 28, 30, 31	Communication, collaboration, and exchange of experiences between teams
12, 17, 29, and 44	Focus on comprehensive care and support for teachers
41	Source for training, updating strategies, and socialization of relevant information.

In general, participants at the regional level see the platform as an essential tool for coordination, communication, obtaining timely information, continuous training, socialization of information and improvement of processes in the context of comprehensive care for children.

At the local level, they were asked what they considered their main function as a local RISA. Due to the number of responses obtained, the information was systematized by identifying the frequencies of appearance of keywords, as shown in the following table.

Table 5

Main function of the local RISA, according to local level participants

Frequency of occurrence of words	Central Pacific	North Huetar	Huetar Atlantica	Chorotega	Central South East	North Central	Brunca	West

5	To coordin ate	Provide information- advice	To collaborate	To coordinate	Link	Intermediar y-nexus- link	To coordinate	To coordinat e
4	Speed up	Half-link	Link	Collaborate- link	Support	Joint	Support	Divulge
3	Refer	Follow-up	Attention	Communicat ion	Coordinato r	Rating- reference	Link	Support
2	Attentio n	Collaborate- support	Refer	Follow-up	References	Coordinator	References	Referenc e analysis
1	Teamw ork	Manage	Organizatio n	References	Communic ate	Socializer	Joint	Link

Note. 5 represents the highest frequency of appearance and 1 the lowest frequency of appearance.

According to the information provided in Table 5, the functions of the local networks most frequently mentioned are:

1. **Coordination and Liaison:** The most mentioned function in all regions is coordination (Central Pacific, North Huetar, Atlantic Huetar, Chorotega, Central Southeast, Central North, Brunca, and West). This suggests that the local RISA is perceived as a coordinating entity to facilitate communication and collaboration between various entities.
2. **Collaboration and Support:** Collaboration and support is highlighted in several regions, such as Atlantic Huetar, Chorotega, Central Southeast, Central North, and West. This indicates that local RISAs not only coordinate, but also play an active role in supporting and collaborating with other entities.
3. **Streamlining and Referrals:** Process streamlining, and referrals are functions mentioned in Central Pacific, Atlantic Huetar, Chorotega, and Brunca. This reflects the importance of a local RISA in facilitating processes and referring cases efficiently.
4. **Attention and Communication:** Direct attention and communication are prominent functions in North Huetar and Chorotega, which suggests a specific focus on attention to the needs of the population and effective communication.
5. **Teamwork and Socialization:** The importance of teamwork and socialization is mentioned in Central Pacific, Chorotega, Central Southeast, and West. This indicates that

local RISAs are perceived as entities that promote collaborative work and the dissemination of information.

In summary, the functions of local RISAs vary in different regions, but communication, collaboration, support, and exchange of experiences are common elements. Adaptation to local needs and flexibility in functions are key aspects for the success of these networks.

Characteristics of an information platform that contributes to the work of the teams.

The next question that was posed to the teams at all levels was what characteristics they considered an information platform should have that contributes to the work of the RISA teams.

Table 6

Characteristics of the platform to contribute to the work of the teams, according to the participants at the national and regional level.

Frequency of occurrence of words	Words	
	National level	Regional Level
5	Accessible	To coordinate
4	Friendly	Articulate
3	Interactive	Accompany/track
2	Data Protection	Updated information
1	Generate reports	Speed up

Note. 5 represents the highest frequency of appearance and 1 the lowest frequency of appearance.

This table reveals interesting similarities and differences in priorities between national and regional RISA networks. Both levels prioritize user-friendliness (Accessible, Friendly) but with a twist. National teams focus more on interactivity for collaboration, while regional teams emphasize coordination, likely due to the need for seamless communication across geographically dispersed networks. Data security is a top concern nationally (Data Protection), while regional teams prioritize access to up-to-date information for real-time decision making. Reporting is important nationally for data analysis, while streamlining processes is a regional focus for operational efficiency.

From table 6, the following characteristics stand out as the most important to facilitate the work of the teams:

1. **Accessibility and friendliness:** Both characteristics, "Accessible" and "Friendly", are mentioned as priorities both at the national and regional level. This highlights the importance of the platform being easy to use and accessible to all users, facilitating its adoption and effective use.
2. **Interactivity and coordination:** Interactivity is highlighted at the national level, suggesting the need for a platform that allows participation and collaboration between users. On the other hand, "Coordination" is mentioned at the regional level, highlighting the importance of a platform that facilitates effective coordination between teams.
3. **Data protection and up-to-date information:** "Data protection" is highlighted as an important feature at the national level, indicating concern for information privacy and security. In contrast, at the regional level, the need for "up-to-date information" is emphasized, suggesting the importance of accurate, real-time data for decision-making.
4. **Reporting and Streamlining:** The ability to "generate reports" is mentioned at the national level, suggesting the importance of a platform that facilitates reporting and analysis. In comparison, at the regional level, the need to "streamline" processes stand out, indicating the importance of a platform that optimizes operational efficiency.

In summary, while some characteristics are shared between both levels, there are certain priorities that vary. The ideal platform should be easy to use, secure, interactive, and capable of meeting the specific needs of coordination, reporting and streamlining processes at the national and regional levels.

The responses from the local level are presented below in table 7.

Table 7

Characteristics of the platform to contribute to the work of the teams, according to the participants at the local level.

Frequency of occurrence of words	Cent ral Pacific	North Huetar	Atlantic Huetar	Choroteg a	Central South East	North Central	Brunca	West
5	Easy	Easy to use	Easy to use	Easy to use	Easy	Accessible	Easy access	Access
4	Frien dly	Friendly	Accessible	Accessible	Simple	Easy to use	Database	Communicati on
3	Acce ssibl e	Information	Support	Link to care services	Agile	Articulated with other institutions	Informatio n	Interinstitutio nal
2	Agile	Follow-up	Follow-up	Case tracking	Speed	Follow-up-advance cases	Simple	Follow-up
1	Pract ice	Interinstitution al	Data	Manageme nt	Accessi ble	Informatio n	Friendly	References

Note. 5 represents the highest frequency of appearance and 1 the lowest frequency of appearance.

Based on what is evident in Table 7, the following are the characteristics most valued by local teams for a platform that contributes to their work.

1. **Ease of use and accessibility:** “Ease of use” and “accessibility” are common characteristics across regions. This indicates that, at the local level, a platform that is easy to use and accessible to all users is valued.
2. **Friendliness and interconnectedness:** “Friendliness” is a prominent feature in several regions, suggesting the importance of a platform that provides a user-friendly experience. Additionally, "interconnection" is mentioned in several regions, highlighting the need for a platform that integrates well with other institutions and care services.
3. **Tracking and speed:** The "tracking" function is a priority in multiple regions, indicating the need for a platform that allows effective tracking of cases. "Speed" is also highlighted, emphasizing the importance of quick and efficient responses in platform management.

4. **Information and interinstitutionality:** "Information" is a characteristic mentioned in several regions, highlighting the importance of a platform that provides useful and relevant data. " Interinstitutionality " is highlighted in some regions, indicating the need for a platform that facilitates collaboration and coordination between different institutions.
5. **Support and management:** "Support" and "management" are mentioned in different regions, pointing out the importance of a platform that supports daily activities and facilitates efficient information management.

In general, the most valued characteristics at the local level are ease of use, friendliness, effective follow-up of cases and speed of responses, as well as the importance of interconnection and inter-institutional collaboration. A locally relevant platform should respond to these region-specific needs.

Expectations about the information platform

Teams at all levels were then asked the following question: What would you like to see/see/do as a member of the [National, Regional, Local] Team on an information platform that contributes to the work of the RISA teams? Table 8 below summarizes the words most frequently mentioned when this question was asked to the national team and regional teams.

Table 8

Things they want to see/consult/do on an information platform, according to participants at the national and regional level.

Frequency of occurrence of words	Words	
	National level	Regional Level
5	Information/resources	Reference and counterreference
4	LAUGHTER places/map	Case tracking
3	RISAS Member Officers and Contacts	LAUGHTER Information
2	Results/analysis	Links/coordination
1	Work plans	Communication

Note. 5 represents the highest frequency of appearance and 1 the lowest frequency of appearance.

From the information provided by Table 8, it can be deduced that the expectations for the use of the platform revolve around the following potential, according to the criteria of the participants at the national and regional level:

1. **Information and resources:** At the national and regional level, the highest priority is access to "information and resources." This suggests a shared need for a platform that provides valuable data and resources relevant to everyday activities.
2. **Reference and counter-reference:** "Reference and counter-reference" is an important aspect both at the national and regional level. This indicates the importance of a platform that facilitates case referral and communication between different levels and teams.
3. **Case Tracking:** The "case tracking" feature is highlighted, especially at the regional level. This underlines the need for a platform that allows effective and continuous monitoring of the cases attended.
4. **LAUGHTER Information:** Getting "LAUGHTER information" is crucial at both the national and regional levels. This includes data about the networks, their members and any relevant information related to the work of RISAS.
5. **Linkages and coordination:** The need for "linkages and coordination" is highlighted at the regional level. This indicates the importance of a platform that facilitates collaboration and coordination between different institutions and regional teams.
6. **Communication:** Although it appears less frequently, "communication" is a priority at both levels. This points out the importance of a platform that facilitates effective communication between participants.
7. **Work plans:** The query for "work plans" appears less frequently, but is still prominent, especially at the regional level. This suggests interest in accessing detailed information about work plans and strategies.

In summary, the expected platform should provide easy access to valuable information and resources, facilitate referral and counter-referral, enable effective follow-up of cases, provide

details on RISAS, and encourage coordination and communication between participants at regional and national levels.

Regarding the participants at the local level, table 9

Table 9

Things they want to see/consult/do on an information platform, according to local level participants.

Frequency of occurrence of words	Central Pacific	North Huetar	Atlantic Huetar	Chorotega	Central South East	North Central	Brunca	West
5	Easy	Easy to use	Easy to use	Easy to use	Easy	Accessible	Easy access	Access
4	Friendly	Friendly	Accessible	Accessible	Simple	Easy to use	Database	Communication
3	Accessible	Information	Support	Link to care services	Agile	Articulated with other institutions	Information	Interinstitutional
2	Agile	Follow-up	Follow-up	Case tracking	Speed	Follow-up-advance cases	Simple	Follow-up
1	Practice	Interinstitutional	Data	Management	Accessible	Information	Friendly	References

Note. 5 represents the highest frequency of appearance and 1 the lowest frequency of appearance.

Discussion

The development of the RISA platform, aimed at enhancing childcare services across Costa Rica, is significantly informed by the theoretical framework presented and the empirical findings derived from the analysis of team responses regarding the platform’s desired characteristics and

functionalities. This discussion integrates these two dimensions to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the RISA platform could be optimized to meet the needs of its users at national, regional, and local levels, within the context of the SAIID childcare system.

Theoretical Underpinning: A Multilevel Perspective on Intersectoral Action

The theoretical framework provided by Super et al. (2021) underscores the importance of intersectoral action in addressing health disparities and social issues, which is particularly pertinent in the context of childcare. The multilevel structure of SAIID, extending from national institutions down to regional networks and local teams, exemplifies the complex ecosystem within which the RISA platform operates. This framework highlights the necessity for a platform that not only supports the operational needs at each level but also facilitates intersectoral collaboration and communication, thereby reinforcing the foundational premise of the FIAID project.

Empirical Insights: Tailoring the Platform to Multi-Level Needs

The empirical analysis pointed to specific functionalities and characteristics desired by the RISA teams. At the national level, there is a clear preference for features that support strategic decision-making and the systematization of information. Regional teams emphasize the need for enhanced coordination and streamlined communication processes. At the local level, priorities include user-friendliness and effective case management functionalities. These insights align with the theoretical emphasis on intersectoral action, suggesting that the platform should serve as a bridge connecting the different levels of the SAIID system, enabling effective communication and collaboration across the board.

Integrating Theory and Practice: Optimizing the RISA Platform

To reconcile the theoretical framework with the practical needs identified through empirical analysis, the development of the RISA platform must focus on creating a user-centric tool that facilitates intersectoral collaboration and communication at all levels. This involves:

Strategic Decision-Making and Information Systematization: Incorporating data analysis, reporting tools, and visualization features to aid in strategic decision-making at the national level, while also serving as a knowledge repository for best practices and lessons learned.

Enhanced Coordination and Communication: Developing functionalities that support real-time information exchange and streamlined communication processes at the regional level, thereby ensuring efficient coordination among the regional networks and with local RISAs.

User-Centric Design and Case Management: Prioritizing a user-friendly interface that is accessible and intuitive, coupled with case management functionalities that allow for effective tracking, follow-up, and referral of cases at the local level.

Technological Mediation and Trust-Building: Leveraging technology to facilitate communication and trust-building among network members, as highlighted in the theoretical framework. This includes implementing features like messaging systems, digital session reports, interactive maps, and shared document repositories to enhance collaboration and information sharing.

Conclusion: A Synergistic Approach to Platform Development

The development of the RISA platform, informed by both the theoretical insights and the empirical findings from the analysis of team responses, represents a synergistic approach to addressing the complex needs of the SAIID childcare system. By integrating these perspectives, the platform can be tailored to effectively support the intersectoral action required at national, regional, and local levels, thereby contributing to the overall enhancement of childcare services in Costa Rica. This holistic approach ensures that the platform not only meets the operational needs of its users but also embodies the principles of collaboration and communication that are central to the success of intersectoral networks.

Final note

This research project investigated the needs and priorities of RISA teams at all levels. The goal was to optimize the design of the SAIID Platform. The findings from this study have been instrumental in developing a comprehensive guide for the platform's design. The SAIID Platform itself can be accessed by authorized members of the SAIID network at <https://www.saiid.una.ac.cr/>

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