



BRIEF



# DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN CHILE

Photo: UN Women/Pablo Sanhueza

## Context

Digital inclusion is a goal that must be attained urgently due to the importance acquired by the 4.0 industry. The labour market and education have undergone changes due to the incorporation of technology, especially the evolution experienced during the pandemic with the digitization of several processes that facilitate doing paperwork, work, and education, among others. Promoting the participation of women in the digital world allows them to progress in their autonomy and reduce the gender gap.

To contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to strengthen digital skills that improve the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and promote women's empowerment.

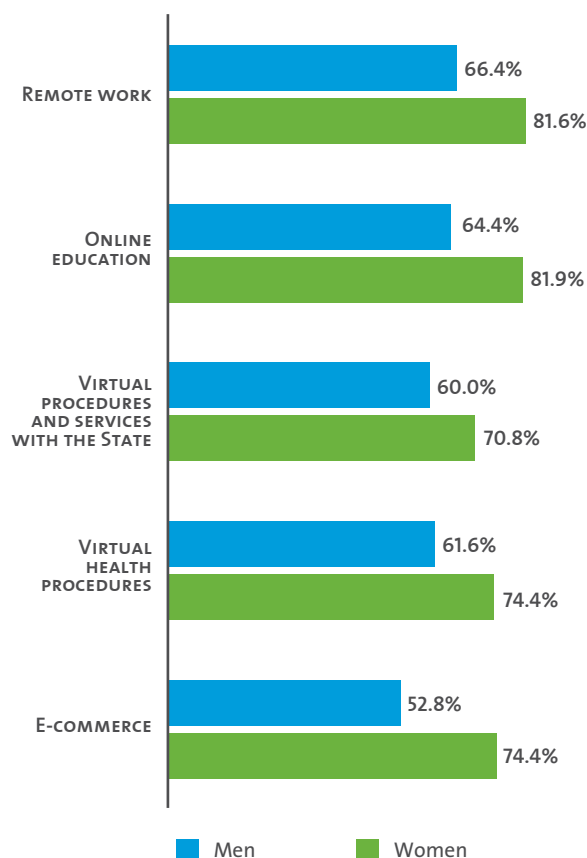
The development of basic digital skills is a contribution to women in advancing their financial autonomy by accessing financial services, accessing government transfers, increasing their possibilities to engage in e-commerce, and improving their work opportunities. Digital appropriation (the ability to extract the greatest potential from technologies) allows them to become part

of and have a greater level of participation in different domains that contribute to their autonomy, especially in communicating and creating support networks, promoting ideas and spaces for dialogue, access to banking, access to information, applying for funding, access to e-commerce, among others (ECLAC, 2022).

Similarly, the development of technologies has opened work possibilities with better salaries, better work conditions, and remote work options that lead to a better work-life balance. However, their access has been unequal and has created fewer opportunities for women due to a lower level of access and use of technologies.

There is a wide digital gap between men and women; a study conducted in Chile in 2021 stated that women face greater barriers to using digital services than men. In general, 77% of the women surveyed reported obstacles to accessing digital services. The chart shows the gender gaps regarding the different difficulties that men and women face in accessing digital services, where it is observed that women have greater difficulties in all digital services.

**Chart: Men and women’s access difficulty per digital service**



**Source:** Social Digital Divide Barometer - Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Con@cción and Undersecretariat of Telecommunications of the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications (2021)

In line with the above, only 23.2% of Chilean female entrepreneurs claim to use ICTs to promote their businesses (Sixth Microentrepreneurship Survey– INE, 2020), where there is a great opportunity to improve and strengthen their economic empowerment.

Women’s main barriers to accessing and using information technologies are sociocultural norms, lack of digital devices, time, and technology skills.

## Digital inclusion for economic empowerment

For UN Women, reducing the gaps in digital skills is a requirement to achieve gender equality and move forward towards a more fair and inclusive society.

### Tu Oportunidad – Second Chance Education Programme’s Methodology

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adaptation of the virtual implementation of the programme to become a contribution in times of health and economic crises. The model, implemented by partner **AIEP**, incorporated a first phase that aimed to level basic digital skills for women. The programme also includes an individual support process where tutors assist women in using virtual communication platforms and help them overcome any difficulties they may have with the use of technology. During the asynchronous workshops and sessions, women develop skills to help them promote their employment and business opportunities, especially for applying for entrepreneurship grants, using digital marketing and social media, and accessing employment portals. At the end of the programme, the participants have e-mentoring sessions where they receive personalized assistance in different areas. The programme has proven to be an entryway for online training for women since 43% of the graduates continue with some training of this kind after completing the programme.

### Digital literacy for refugee women

A digital skills course was offered within the framework of the social and economic inclusion initiative for Afghan refugee women and in collaboration with **Microsoft**. The course focused on the development of digital competencies for employment search and employment in Chile. The participants learned basic computing concepts, using the Spanish keyboard, Microsoft Word, and PowerPoint, filling in online forms, using emails, and browsing Internet sites. This in-person course was adapted to the pace of each participant and their previous digital experience.

### Virtual space for women in “Red Tu Oportunidad”

This digital tool provides a safe place for the participants to stay in touch, strengthen their networks, communicate, and interact, regardless of geographic distance; understanding that the creation of networks and communities is vital for women’s economic empowerment. This virtual space was designed in partnership with **Laboratoria** NGO, offering more than 30 female programmers the opportunity to create prototypes for the Red Tu Oportunidad platform, making it a platform for women made by women. This tool allows programme’s participants to strengthen their support networks and facilitates connectivity through a digital community.

### Digital skills for women in vulnerable contexts

Thanks to a partnership with **CLAROVTR SA**, more than 1,000 women in the Metropolitan Region in Chile have been trained in basic and advanced digital skills. All the participants have received a computer with connectivity to complete the activities and use it as a tool to continue developing their skills. The course was taught in person and virtually and has a duration of one month. A leadership and empowerment module complements the acquisition of digital skills.

### Technological empowerment for women in the digital era

In a partnership with **Fundación NTT Data Chile**, a digital education pilot programme took place to promote women’s digital empowerment, conveying new knowledge and promoting active participation in this sector. More than 100 women joined this four-session *Speed Mentoring* virtual workshop, facilitated by the foundation’s volunteers, which consisted of reflecting and learning about the trends in the technology sector, their influence, and the value-creation potential for the participants. The topics addressed in the workshop included Trends in Technology, The Potential of AI and Chat GPT, and a Cybersecurity Workshop, among others.

### Digital citizenship

Training courses have been offered in partnership with **Fundación de las Familias** to promote the participation of women in different areas of life and their economic empowerment through digital platforms. This initiative has provided training for older women in the use of smartphones and digital citizenship, access to State proceedings and paperwork, and digital skills for women that are part of the UN Women programmes, adapting the content to the specific needs of migrant and indigenous women.



Photo: UN Women/Pablo Sanhueza

## Generating evidence



### Study - Radiography of Women in the Technology Sector in Chile: Diagnosis and Recommendations.

A study was conducted to provide relevant information on the participation of women in technology and identify the skills required in the sector. The study consisted of a

literature review, surveys of companies that use technology, and in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders. The study is an instrument that promotes hiring women in the technology industry, fosters gender policies, and reinforces the importance of gender equality in all areas.

[Read the document here](#)



### A Second Chance for Women Through Online Learning.

The document contains the lessons learned during the programme's implementation in six countries regarding inclusive practices that allow reaching women with low levels of digital literacy. Its purpose is

to contribute to actors who work in adult education and learning, especially with women in vulnerable situations, to achieve digital inclusion. This document was launched in the framework of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) in New York City in March 2023 in an event organized by the Second Chance Education Programme.

[Read the document here](#)



Photo: UN Women/CVA

## Tu Oportunidad - Second Chance Education Programme

UN Women's Tu Oportunidad - Second Chance Education Programme provides a comprehensive solution for women who, due to different reasons, have not been able to complete their formal education and are in a vulnerable situation regarding employment and work opportunities. In partnership with the BHP Foundation, UN Women implements this initiative in six countries simultaneously: Cameroon, Jordan, India, Mexico, Australia, and Chile. It develops a sustainable system of women's empowerment that promotes returning to formal education, access to work, and the development of businesses through multi-sectorial partnerships at a local, national, and global level.

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