



BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GENDER DIVIDE

Introduction

CITIC, International Center for Scientific Research in Telecommunications, Information and Communication Technologies, Center of Excellence and Member of the International Union of Telecommunications ITU, is an institution of Scientific and Technological Research with social and environmental awareness to incorporate knowledge in the development of society at national and international level and promote Scientific Tourism.

Telecommunication, ICT sector is one of the lowest participation of women and it is for this reason that we have a special interest in joining the objective of ITU to create an environment that empowers girls, young women and women with the use and appropriation of ICT. A sample of this commitment is that 70% of CITIC research staff are women.

Questions

- 1. What approaches and examples of good practices are available to increase Internet access and digital literacy of women and girls, including in decision-making processes on Internet public policy?**

In Latin America, several initiatives are being carried out that seek to increase access to the internet in a safe and autonomous way, and that women not only access the Internet but also use it to support their personal and professional education and as part of their activism.

Here are some of these projects that are an example:

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy for women and girls can have several approaches, all of which are very necessary. Below are different initiatives that seek by different ways to empower girls, young people and women with the use of the internet.



Literacy about digital gender violence

A good practice to encourage safe access to the Internet is through literacy training for women and girls about digital gender violence.

It is important that from an early age, women know the types of violence to which they can be exposed through the use of ICT, what they can do to prevent them and how to deal with them once they occur.

An example of initiatives is the work done by the Karisma Foundation with the guide *Security, protection and privacy on Twitter. A guide for survivors of harassment and digital abuse*¹, which is the translation and adaptation for Latin America of the recommendations given by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) and Twitter to build an secure account in Twitter and protecting privacy.

Another initiative that stands out is Ciberseguras, which as they narrate on their website ciberseguras.org is "a space that brings together many resources and tools so that we can learn more about the Internet and digital security. We seek to share reflections on how technology transforms us, crosses us and offers us new possibilities and experiences ". According to Glimpse (2017)², as part of learning, cybersecurity hosts their website in an autonomous server and managed by the same women in search of strengthening knowledge. They also hold workshops, talks, laboratories and meetings between women to discuss their relationship with technology.

Literacy about women's rights through ICT

The District Secretariat for Women in Bogotá, Colombia, has the Digital Inclusion Centers for Women. This is an initiative to carry out training processes on women's rights through access, use and appropriation of Information and Communication Technologies, within the framework of the implementation of the Women's Public Policy and Gender Equity - PPMYEG. Currently it has 15 centers distributed throughout the city and its training process is aimed at women with different profiles, as indicated by the Secretariat³:

¹ Karisma. (2016). Seguridad, Protección y Privacidad de Twitter. Una guía para personas sobrevivientes de acoso y abuso. Retrieved from: <https://karisma.org.co/descargar/manualeseguridadtw/>

² Derechos digitales. (2017). Latin America in a Glimpse. Retrieved from: <https://www.derechosdigitales.org/publicaciones/latin-america-in-a-glimpse-2017/>

³ District Secretariat for Women. Cursos Mujeres Tic Secretaría Distrital de la Mujer: Formación Presencial. Bogotá, Colombia. Retrieved from: <http://cursosmujerestic.sdmuje.gov.co/course/index.php?categoryid=9&lang=en>
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Basic: Aimed at Women without information, with scarce or basic information on Women's Rights and ICT

Intermediate: Directed to Organizations, groups and groups of women. With themes that help their strengthening through the use of ICT tools in relation to the exercise of their rights.

Deepening: Directed to Women who are linked to the participation and representation spaces of the. Its objective is to provide tools that allow them to use ICT to strengthen their work.

Literacy for use, appropriation and creation of technology

Geek Girls Latam is defined on its website <http://geekgirlslatam.org> as a technology sisterhood that inspires, empowers and connects girls, youth and women with the use, appropriation and creation of technology. It has nodes in Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Panama and El Salvador. GGL makes technology laboratories for girls, with which it is awakened their interest so that in the future they study related careers; technology fairs to connect girls, teenagers and young people with technology; and carry out workshops and trainings for girls, young people and women to learn ICTs have opportunities for personal and professional development.

We are also part of these projects, CITIC, celebrated every year together with ITU, the International Girls in ICT Day, which is *an initiative backed by all ITU Member States in ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 70 (Rev. Busan, 2014), aims to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in the growing field of ICT, enabling both girls and technology companies to reap the benefits of greater female participation in the ICT sector. International Girls in ICT Day is celebrated on the 4th Thursday in April every year⁴.*

A part of the technology that is sometimes forgotten is related to the impact it has on the environment and that is why CITIC is interested in investigating the role of women in the life cycle of technology including management of electrical and electronic waste. For this reason, CITIC participated actively in the 7th Week of the Green Standards of the ITU in Manizales, Colombia, 3-5 April 2017, in the

⁴ International Telecommunications Union. Girls in ICT Portal. Retrieved from: <https://www.itu.int/es/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Women-and-Girls/Girls-in-ICT-Portal/Pages/Portal.aspx>

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Forum "The gender dimension in ICT and the environment through innovation and entrepreneurship.

Feminist infrastructure

Gaining knowledge about networks and security allows women to achieve technological autonomy. Some Latin American women have come together to set up their own servers, create autonomous and secure networks and train other women on information security.

In Brazil, there are Vedetas. Through the website vedetas.org you can access a feminist server that helps feminist groups to carry out their activities on the internet in a safe and autonomous way. Vedetas also offers online collaborative tools for text documents and spreadsheets and information security materials for activists and autonomous networks.

Another initiative in the learning of free technologies, web development and security is offered by Kéfir. On their website they kefir.red present themselves as *a feminist cooperative of free technologies for activists, human rights defenders, journalists, social organizations, collectives, artists ... Bet on creating community digital neighborhoods where we can feel confident, express ourselves and act without fear . (...) The cooperative is formed by activists immersed in social struggles of software and free culture, feminisms, critical social economy and movements of self-management.*

Cl4ndestina (clandestina.io) is an initiative in Brazil that offers accommodation for websites of collectives, organizations and feminist social movements. The hosting includes support, security and backup. As they explain on their website, this is a way to make resistance and create their own networks where technology is not denied to women.

Use of open data

One way to increase access to the internet is for women to find appropriate use of technologies and part of this is to know that there is open data that they can access and that they can use for example in the creation of Apps or as sources for data journalism.



Chicas Poderosas (www.facebook.com/PoderosasVE/) in Venezuela is a movement that unites women around activities in which they promote the use of open data. In 2017 they made the Editaton #ChicasWiki and the Hackaton of public data.

In Bogota, Colombia, there is the District Observatory of Women and Gender Equity, belonging to the District Secretary of Women of the Mayor's Office of Bogotá. The Observatory *is a strategic tool to collect, organize, analyze, and interpret and disseminate information concerning the situation of women living in the Capital District*⁵. Through the use of open data, the Observatory has about 111 indicators that provide information on the situation of women in the capital of the country. These indicators are grouped into: Sociodemographic context, Peace and coexistence with gender equality, Life free of violence, Participation and representation with equity, Job under conditions of equality and dignity, Full health, Education with equity, Culture free of sexism, Habitat and decent housing, and well-being and quality of life. You can access the indicators of the SISDMujer in the following link <http://omeg.sdmujer.gov.co/SisDMujer/views/>

2. What approaches and examples of good practices are available to promote the access and use of ICTs by SMEs in developing and least-developed countries, particularly those owned/managed by women, in order to achieve greater participation in the digital economy?

Because working environments in technology areas are mostly made up of men and sometimes it is not so easy for women to occupy leadership positions or have equality at work, initiatives have been created that seek to create work environments for web development and development. apps for women.

One example is the Costa Rican TIC-as program, which, as explained in tic-as.com, is an incubator of ventures that promotes women's leadership in the technology sector and the creation of ventures where

⁵ District Observatory of Women and Gender Equity. ¿Qué es el OMEG?. Retrieved from: <http://omeg.sdmujer.gov.co/OMEG/quienes-somos>



only women are involved. For this, they carry out entrepreneurial camps, business leadership training, offer advice from experts in the creation of their own companies and the accompaniment to find sources of financing and registration of companies.

3. Which are the available sources and mechanisms for measuring women's participation in the digital economy with focus on SME's and micro-enterprises?

There is a need for mechanisms to measure the participation of women in the digital economy. Data on the presence of women in different economic sectors and the role they play in them are scarce, and the data that exists are not global.

4. What measures/policies could be envisioned in order to foster the role of women as entrepreneurs and managers of SMEs, specifically in developing and least-developed countries?

To promote the role of women as entrepreneurs and managers of SMEs, in the case of the telecommunications sector, it is necessary to implement policies that encourage women as young girls and adolescents to take an interest in technology. Make visible women who have stood out for their contributions in this area will also contribute to more professional women in the future, with whom all professional spaces in an organization are occupied.

5. What are the gaps in addressing these challenges? How can they be addressed and what is the role of governments?

Some of the main problems that women must face to reduce the digital divide are among others:



Infraestructure

In rural areas there are connectivity problems in the last mile since in most Latin American countries, topography makes access difficult and makes it very expensive to carry infrastructure to cover the need for a small population.

Internet use

According to ECLAC⁶, by 2015 the number of households in Latin America and the Caribbean connected to the Internet reached 43.4%.

According to data from the National Survey of Quality of Life of DANE⁷, in Colombia, only 12.6% of households in dispersed rural and population centers have access to the internet compared to 54.6% of households in the headers.

According to this same survey, the main reasons for not having an Internet connection are that it is very expensive (46.3%) and they do not consider it necessary (33.7%).

These data, although they do not show specific information on women, allow us to show that rural areas have little access to the Internet, and that in general, if we do not show women Internet uses as a tool for their formation, for the defense of their rights, for your venture, they will not be interested in accessing this.

Digital Literacy

Although digital literacy initiatives exist both from the government and from private organizations, it is important to bear in mind that access to such training can be truncated by several factors, for example, a large number of women perform care and service activities and this it prevents them from being absent for several hours from home. Also the scarce disclosure of the existence of these spaces, or the little funding for those projects of non-profit organizations.

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⁶ Eclac. (2016). Estado de la banda ancha en América Latina y el Caribe 2016. Retrieved from:

http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40528/6/S1601049_es.pdf

⁷ National Department of Statistics (DANE, for initials in spanish). (2016). Indicadores básicos de TIC en Hogares.

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