

PARAGUAY

METHODOLOGY AND JUSTIFICATION: WOMEN'S ONLINE RIGHTS REPORT CARD

MEASURING PROGRESS, LEADING ACTION



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TECNOLOGÍA &
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INTERNET ACCESS AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

According to the most recent official statistics, 53,27% of women have access to Internet, which is slightly more than men (52,6%). However, the number of women who use the Web to read the news, for educational purposes or to access health services remains low. There is little discussion on the need to address the gendered challenges in overcoming issues of Internet access in state programs, or on implementing gender responsive ICT policies.



THEME SCORE 6



SCORE
8

1. NATIONAL COLLECTION AND REPORTING OF SEX-DISAGGREGATED ICT DATA

The Office of Statistics (DGEEC) collected national and sex-disaggregated ICT data in 2016 (1). The survey provides information on how many households have Internet access, as well as the numbers of men and women that have used the Web, for what reasons or where they have had access most frequently. The survey is fairly representative – it covers all provinces and 13.056 households comprised the research pool.

The Ministry of ICTs (Senatics) also released the results of a 2017 survey on Internet access and use, which contains data disaggregated by sex (2). 453 women comprised the research pool. It is worth noting that the questions of the survey do not contemplate gender-related issues when it comes to Internet access and use. Also, the pool of respondents is limited (900 people were surveyed), therefore it is not necessarily representative.

(1) <http://www.dgeec.gov.py/Publicaciones/Biblioteca/PREPH2016/PRINCIPALES%20RESULTADOS%20EPH%202016.pdf>

(2) <https://www.datos.gov.py/dataset/encuesta-acceso-uso-internet-paraguay/resource/376cd9b8-aa27-4f4c-bc88-4c76c2aa3dd0>

2. EXISTENCE IN NATIONAL ICT STRATEGIES OR BROADBAND PLANS OF CLEAR TIME-BOUND TARGETS TO OVERCOME GENDER AND POVERTY DIVIDES IN INTERNET USE, AND PROVISION OF BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There is little discussion on the need to address the gendered challenges in overcoming issues of Internet access, in general, but the National Cybersecurity Plan mentions a couple of actions towards enhancing the use of ICTs by young boys and girls without clear time-bound targets (3). Specifically, it says that educational materials on ICTs for boys and girls should include digital security recommendations. The plan also suggests that the government establishes mechanisms to respond to cyber-threats that affect boys, girls and teenagers. One goal proposes to add to university curricula opportunities to train men and women in cybersecurity. Yet, these activities do not have specific targets to measure their implementation nor there is evidence of budget provision to support them.

(3) Plan Nacional de Ciberseguridad: <http://gestordocumental.senatics.gov.py/share/s/zkKW1CkK5cSvapqIB7UhNg>

3. WOMEN'S INTERNET ACCESS

In its 2016 survey, the Office of Statistics shows that 53,27% of women have used the Web in that year (4). This is more than men – 52,6 % according to the results. The ITU reported in 2015 similar numbers: 48% of men compared to 48.8% of women have access to the internet. The survey of the Ministry of ICTs also provides data about women's Internet access. Out the 453 women that took part of the survey, 384 said that they had access to the Web often, which is approximately 85% of women (5). However, since the latter is not sufficiently representative, the score on this indicator is based on the results of the 2016 survey.

(4) <http://www.dgeec.gov.py/Publicaciones/Biblioteca/PREPH2016/PRINCIPALES%20RESULTADOS%20EPH%202016.pdf>

(5) <https://www.datos.gov.py/dataset/encuesta-acceso-uso-internet-paraguay/resource/376cd9b8-aa27-4f4c-bc88-4c76c2aa3dd0>

4. EMPOWERING USE OF THE WEB

The 2016 survey by the Office of Statistics show that most women use the Internet for instant messaging (96,02%), followed by social media (89,6%). Fewer use it to access valuable information or other empowering activities. For example, 33,43% use it to read the news or download magazines, while 25,42% for educational purposes. A 24,96% use the Web for health services. A few (10,09%) use it to buy or sell products or services or to access government services (11,7%). Just 5,1% use the Internet for banking transactions (6).

Analyses of the survey of the Ministry of ICTs (7) show that more women say that they always use their cellphones to access social media (254) than the amount of women that always use their cellphones to read the news (115). In fact, more women say that they never use their cellphones to read the news (137).

Both surveys could be more specific and thus shed more light about the ways that women use the Web. For example, the surveys are not specific enough to demonstrate if women use social media to read news or express their opinions.

(6) <http://www.dgeec.gov.py/Publicaciones/Biblioteca/PREPH2016/PRINCIPALES%20RESULTADOS%20EPH%202016.pdf>

(7) <https://www.datos.gov.py/dataset/encuesta-acceso-uso-internet-paraguay/resource/376cd9b8-aa27-4f4c-bc88-4c76c2aa3dd0>

5. GENDER GAP IN INTERNET ACCESS

According to the 2016 survey, more women (53,27%) have had access to the Web than men (52,6%) (8). Also, analyses of the results of the Ministry of ICTs survey show that the gender gap in Internet access is at a minimum (9).

(8) <http://www.dgeec.gov.py/Publicaciones/Biblioteca/PREPH2016/PRINCIPALES%20RESULTADOS%20EPH%202016.pdf>

(9) <https://www.datos.gov.py/dataset/encuesta-acceso-uso-internet-paraguay/resource/376cd9b8-aa27-4f4c-bc88-4c76c2aa3dd0>

AFFORDABILITY

The cost of 1GB mobile data is 1.41% of monthly GNI/capita in 2016 in Paraguay, which is in compliance with the Alliance for Affordable Internet. The Ministry of ICTs has programs to promote free Internet access. Some of them are focused on low-income communities.



THEME SCORE 8

6. EXISTENCE OF SPECIFIC POLICIES TO PROMOTE FREE OR LOW-COST PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS (SUCH AS BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR INTERNET ACCESS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY CENTERS, OR PROVISIONS FOR SPECTRUM USE BY COMMUNITY WIFI OPTIONS)

SCORE
5

The Ministry of ICTs has two programs that seek to promote free Internet access. “Servicio Internet Libre y Gratuito” (Free Internet) is available in public spaces in the capital and the surrounding area (10). A map shows forty eight sites where people can get access to wifi (11). The other program – “infocentros comunitarios” or information community centres (12) – is meant to establish spaces where people from low-income communities can have access to the Internet and learn to use ICTs effectively. The information community centres have PCs, Internet access, online courses and information guides and educational materials. Training is available to community members. The info centres are located in parks, community spaces and others.

(10) <https://www.senatics.gov.py/internetlibre>

(11) <http://mapas.paraguay.gov.py/igep.jsp>

(12) <https://www.senatics.gov.py/servicios-senatics/alfabetizacion-digital-infocentros-comunitarios>

7. INTERNET AFFORDABILITY (PRICE OF 1GB DATA / AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME)

SCORE
7

Based on the ITU’s telecoms database, the cost of 1GB mobile data is 1.41% of monthly GNI/capita in 2016 in Paraguay.

DIGITAL SKILLS AND EDUCATION

There are state programs to train teachers in ICTs, but they do not appear to be part of a larger, coordinated effort or a national state policy. Also, the lack of data on the number of teachers who have digital skills makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of these programs. Only 2 in 10 schools have Internet connectivity, which is worryingly low.



THEME SCORE 3

SCORE
3

8. PROPORTION OF ICT-QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS

In conversation with Carmen Varela, director of the digital program at the Ministry of Education until December 2017, she confirmed that there are no statistics on this topic. However, she estimates that 10% of teachers are ICT-qualified. She also mentions that there are state programs to train teachers and provide them with digital skills (13).

(13) <http://www.lanacion.com.py/pais/2017/08/24/mec-organiza-seminario-internacional-sobre-tic-en-educacion/>; <https://www.facebook.com/PROYECTOTICDELMEC/>

9. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D) FIELDS

There is no data available on the percentage of women in technology and engineering research in Paraguay. UNESCO provides some data from years 2014 and 2015 on the percentage of women in higher education: 49.5% and 48.6% respectively (14). But there are no other sources of information on this topic.

(14) <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=118&export#>

SCORE
N/A

10. INTERNET ACCESS AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

According to UNESCO, 18% of secondary schools in Paraguay have internet connectivity (15). However, data from the Education Ministry shows that 1620 schools have Internet access. This represents 20% of the total amount of schools (primary and secondary) in the country (16).

(Note that this is based on data reported to UNESCO, it is not necessarily fully reflective of on-the-ground implementation of connectivity in schools).

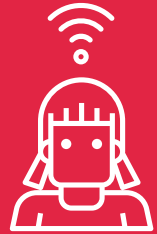
UNESCO Data on ICT infrastructure in primary and secondary educational institutions

(15) <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

(16) <http://informacionpublica.paraguay.gov.py/portal/#!/ciudadano/solicitud/4308>

RELEVANT CONTENT AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN

The gap in online available information about reproductive and sexual health rights and services from the state is partly filled with the work of some non-governmental organizations that publish about these topics. The propaganda spread by religious, conservative groups and their influence in some key institutions such as the Ministry of Education has a negative impact on girls and women's right to access to information. Official statistics indicate that 5,1% of women use the Web for banking transactions, another low number that reflects barriers of access to mobile financial services.



THEME SCORE 4

11. AVAILABILITY OF USER FRIENDLY INFORMATION VIA ICTS (INCLUDING WEB/INTERNET, IVR AND SMS) ABOUT REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH RIGHTS AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

SCORE
2

There are no state programs or campaigns that provide user friendly information via ICTs about reproductive and sexual health rights and services for women and girls. In fact, the Ministry of Education has issued a resolution whereby all educational material – printed or digital – containing “gender ideology/theory” should be banned from schools’ curricula (17). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has expressed regret over this decision (18). Also, president Horacio Cartes met with conservative groups and promised them to uphold and defend “traditional families”, raising concerns about escalating violations of gender rights (19).

There are some materials available about reproductive and sexual health rights provided by non-governmental agencies and organizations, such as the United Nations Population Fund (20) and Amnesty International (21). Also, a local organization (Centro de Documentación y Estudios) has a website with reports and data on issues related to women and gender rights. The site contains some useful information on these topics (22).

(17) <http://www.ultimahora.com/mec-prohibe-uso-materiales-ideologia-genero-n1112372.html>

(18) <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2017/208.asp>

(19) <http://www.ultimahora.com/pro-vida-piden-cartes-que-prohiba-perspectiva-genero-ministerio-la-mujer-n1115168.html>

(20) http://www.unfpa.org.py/download/pdf_folleto_dsr.pdf

(21) <http://amnesty.org.py/plataforma-e-learning-enfocada-a-derechos-humanos-y-genero/>

(22) <http://informativomujer.org.py/acerca-del-informativo-mujer/>

12. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN PERSONALLY USING MOBILE FINANCIAL SERVICES

SCORE
5

The 2016 survey by the Office of Statistics shows that only 5,1% of women use the Web for banking transactions. 6,17 % use it for the same purpose. The numbers are lower when it comes to rural areas. Only 1,15% of rural women use the Web for banking.

ONLINE SAFETY

Law enforcement agencies and the courts are not taking proper actions in cases where ICT tools are used to commit acts of gender-based violence. The evidence suggests that judicial authorities need better training in this area. The absence of a robust protection of personal data bill puts women and girls at risk. Breaches to their privacy or the mishandling of personal information are not fully considered in a legal framework.



THEME SCORE 2

13. EXTENT TO WHICH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND THE COURTS ARE TAKING ACTION IN CASES WHERE ICT TOOLS ARE USED TO COMMIT ACTS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

SCORE
1

There is no evidence that law enforcement agencies and the courts are taking proper actions in cases where ICT tools are used to commit acts of gender-based violence. The Office of the Prosecuting Authority has a special unit in charge of computer-related crimes (23). The unit promotes the protection of children and alerts about the risks of cyberbullying and others at schools. Yet, gender-related issues are not fully incorporated in their work mandate.

Some of the most remarkable cases involving gender-based violence via ICTs have shown that authorities are not well prepared to deal with them. Once, TEDIC was censored for publishing information that evidenced gender-based violence. The post included screenshots of a conversation on Facebook Messenger, whereby a group of men chat about sexually assaulting a journalist to “correct” her sexual orientation. The journalist had access to the conversation and published it on her Twitter account. TEDIC portrayed this case as an example of the type of language that perpetuates discrimination and violence against women and the LGBTQI community. One of the men involved in the conversation filed a lawsuit against the journalist and TEDIC, arguing that the post damaged his

reputation and privacy. The judge, Gizella Palumbo, agreed with the plaintiff. TEDIC was ordered to remove the screenshots from the post. TEDIC appealed the judge's decision and ultimately won the case, but a worrying precedent was set (24).

Another case relates to a university student who claimed that her professor harassed her via text messages. She took the issue to the courts, providing evidence of her claims. The professor had sent 1600 text messages asking her out and requesting intimate pictures of her, among other things. An attorney judged that the messages did not constitute harassment. They were evidence of courtship, therefore he dismissed the case (25). The student could not finish her studies at the university due to the pressure and the stress she had to deal for speaking up against harassment.

(23) <http://www.ministeriopublico.gov.py/delitos-informaticos-i242>

(24) <https://monitor.civicus.org/newsfeed/2017/03/22/paraguay-rights-organisation-censored/>

(25) <https://globalvoices.org/2017/07/13/the-powerful-groups-enabling-sexual-harassment-of-paraguayan-university-students/>

14. EXISTENCE AND ROBUSTNESS OF NATIONAL DATA PROTECTION LAWS

SCORE
2

Paraguay has no robust data protection law (26). There is a Personal Data Protection Law covering data from public and private sectors: Act 1682/2001 (27) which was modified by Act 1969/2002 (28). One of the main flaws of this Act is that it has a purely economic approach. In the first article, it declares that Data Protection Law is not applicable to databases. Article four regulates sensible personal information, stating that it cannot be published. Article number five establishes the way informed consent applies to patrimonial data and economic solvency, but does not provide the mechanisms to do the same with personal data. Article 7 also mentions the right to access and/or correct one's personal data. Another problem with this law, is that there are no guarantees that personal data provided will be used only for the purposes that were provided. The problem of a brief law like this is that it is not useful for providing "effective protection" – meaning the state is committed to monitoring the processing of citizen information through a proper agency. This would penalize public or private entities in the case of

breaches of sensitive data or have shekels used for purposes other than those established. Currently, there is no way to safeguard the information of citizens by the state, nor contemplations treating large databases generated in Paraguay but are housed in servers outside the country either by the State or any company. Instead, a “habeas data” concept exists in the National Constitution (29), but it is an individual approach that does not make State responsible about guardianship mentioned above. Finally, this law is difficult to apply, since no Data Protection Authority has been created.

(26) Acuña et al. Protection of personal data in public databases in Paraguay. TEDIC, 2017.

(27) <http://www.bacn.gov.py/MTc2MA==&ley-n-1682> Accessed 20th July 2015

(28) <http://www.bacn.gov.py/MjiUzOQ==&ley-n-1969> Accessed 20th July 2015

(29) http://www.bacn.gov.py/CONSTITUCION_ORIGINAL_FIRMADA.pdf

5 POINT ACTION PLAN

- 1. Conduct a nationwide representative study focused on gendered access and use of the Web.** Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data in order to identify barriers to women's digital equality and to promote informed-strategies that tackle gender gaps in ICT.
- 2. Define a national strategy to address gender based violence online.** Establish a multi-stakeholder working group that can guide a dialogue and outline possible strategies in the short and long-run to end online gender violence. Consider the effects of all different forms of violence on the digital experience of girls and women when developing these strategies. Provide training courses to justice authorities and law enforcement in these issues.
- 3. Include a gender focus approach to existing digital government programmes.** Review programmes such as Agenda Digital and the Cybersecurity Plan to ensure they address the barriers to digital inclusion and online security that girls and women face. Implement specific policies to overcome these barriers.
- 4. Develop a clear strategy to promote the inclusion of girls and women in ICT.** Review educational curricula at all levels to promote the inclusion of girls and women in ICT fields. Propose and establish positive incentives aimed at increasing the number of women that work in the technology sector. Set up specific targets to measure the impact of these policies.
- 5. Advance a protection of personal data bill.** Establish a multi-stakeholder working group to develop a protection of personal data bill initiative following the highest standards of protection. Propose to Congress the approval of such a bill, one with a human rights approach, which is critical to ensuring that the Web is a safe and secure space for men and women alike.



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