



## #eSkills4Girls

### ComVoMujer – preventing violence against women and girls in Latin America

#### Smartphones become lifesavers through the Junt@s app

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations. In Latin American, where *machismo* still defines relationships between men and women, so-called femicides – the killing of women solely because they are women – occur particularly frequently. In Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru gender-based violence is also still deeply entrenched. According to estimates published by the World Health Organization (WHO), between 30 and 50 percent of women residing in these countries are subjected to physical violence by their partners. By ratifying international conventions and implementing national laws and action-plans, these South American states attempt to counter, fight and prosecute violence against women. Yet, the problem is that governmental, non-governmental and private actors don't work together or exchange experiences.

That is where the regional program ComVoMujer, initiated by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and financed by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), comes into play: to advance the exchange of successful approaches and to improve the cooperation between regional and national actors. The private sector is an important partner in this process. One particularly successful example is the collaboration with Ecuador's biggest telecom company CNT and the jointly developed smartphone app "Junt@s" (engl.: together).



Campaigns aimed at raising awareness and mobilizing action to eliminate violence against women and girls.



Within the framework of Germany's G20 presidency in 2017, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is placing the issue of **#eSkills4Girls** on the developmental agenda. The central demand of the #eSkills4Girls initiative is to improve women's access to digital technologies and to promote the acquisition of digital skills by girls and women. After all, many women and girls are denied access or the chance to use digital technologies. In fact, worldwide around 250 million fewer women have internet access than men.<sup>1</sup> **Yet, digital technologies have great potential for women's and girls' political, economic and social empowerment.**

1 ITU, ICT Facts and Figures 2016



#### Ni una menos (Not one less!)

In August 2016 ten thousands of protesters took the streets of Lima, the capital of Peru, to spread the message, in response to the high rate of femicides in the country.

With the mere touch of a button, women affected by violence can quickly send an appeal for help to their friends, family members or the emergency center. The smartphone so can become a lifesaver at the touch of a button. The highlight: everyone with a mobile phone contract with the partner institution CNT has the app preinstalled on their smartphone – eliminating the need for users to justify owning the app. Additional protection for women affected by violence is assured by the fact that the usage of the service is not recorded. The app also raises awareness by keeping users informed regularly on the topic of violence against women. An integrated test helps women and men to detect whether they are in a spiral of violence. If so, they can directly require help via the listed help centers.



The smartphone app *Junt@s* (meaning 'together') helps women in emergency situations.



In order to attract public attention for the topic, *ComVo-Mujer* utilizes new media. Via Facebook, Twitter and YouTube information material, educational documents and awareness-raising campaigns are published to enlighten the public comprehensively on violence against women and girls.

Education and awareness raising here already starts at an early age with boys and girls. By using the app *Ruta Participativa* (engl. the pathway to participation) children are able to engage in a playful way with the topic and gender roles in general.

A further program initiative encompasses online-certifications for companies: with the certificate "Safe Company, clear of Violence against Women" companies can set an example – just like CNT. To date, more than 10,000 people in 6 countries have been certified.



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