OAXACA, OAX., DECEMBER 2021.

Most elderly people are

disconnected from the digital world

In Mexico there are 84.1 million internet users, but only 8.8 million users are aged 55 or more.

According to the National Survey on Availability and Use of Information Technology at Home (ENDUTIH) 2020, in México only 8.8 million elderly people have access to the internet, which represents 56.41% of the total number of people in that sector. Based on the results of the last survey performed by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), we are able to know that there are approximately 15.4 million elderly people in the country.

In the current environment where reality is gradually being developed and based on technology and connectivity, it is important to perform actions to keep elderly people active in the context of the "new normal".
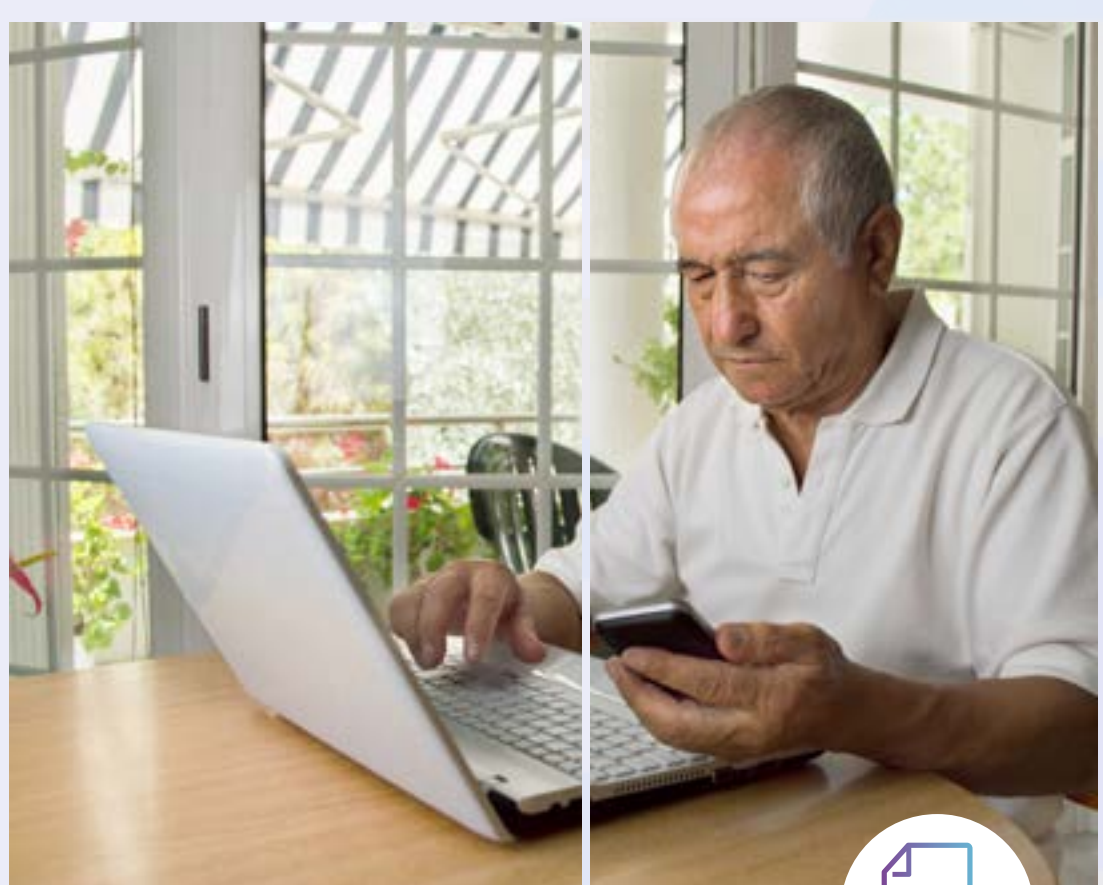
SUMARY

In environments where the reality is gradually moving to the technological and interconnected context, it is important to keep elderly people "online".

In Mexico there are 84.1 million internet users, but only 8.8 million of them are aged 55 or more.

Disconnected and isolated due to the pandemic

As a result of the actions we had to take due to COVID-19 in the country, the use of the Technologies of Information and Communication (TIC's) became fundamental in the life of every person, either in productive or social matters.

Elderly people suffered the biggest impact of the lockdown because their public activities were stopped due to the biggest priority, which was to avoid infections and stay safe.

Obviously that fact caused that elderly people started using smartphones and the internet, however, it was not so easy. The place they lived in, their educational background, and most especially, their economic conditions were fundamental factors for them when they decided to move to an interconnected reality.

Among the current number of elderly people who are active internet users, 54.9% are women and 45.1% are men

Benefits of digital inclusion for elderly people:

More communication

It reduces isolation and improves their state of mind, and it also reduces the feeling of being lonely.

Development of autonomy

Once they start using technology, they will be able to perform online activities.

Their lives will develop quicker

Paperwork and online procedures will be available for them to be developed at home.

Establishing relationships regardless of the decade of origin

As they interact in the digital world, they are able to get access to more information, and age will not become an obstacle for their inclusion on public matters.

Entertainment for them

By having access to multiple contents on the internet, they will be able to choose among different options.

Digital immigrants looking for inclusion

We call digital immigrants to the people who were born before the development of TIC's, and also to the people who were born during the development of it, but still unable to adapt. That concept was developed by Mark Prensky in his article "Digital natives, digital immigrants", published in 2001.

One of the biggest problems detected through different studies performed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations (UN) consisted on the obstacle for elderly people to get familiar with technology since they do not trust on it as a result of the weak campaigns of awareness-raising in those matters.

Despite that fact, and considering some studies developed by the Mexican Association of the Internet, there is an increase in the use of technologies and the internet among elderly people of approximately 2.5% and 3% every year. However, it is complicated to get updated hard numbers because most analyses do not give reliable information on that sector.

They all also surf the web

The approach of developing digital inclusion for elderly people must be a priority to increase the welfare levels in order to provide them with more and better tools when they decide to get into cyberspace.

It is not a coincidence that municipalities, towns, and cities currently have more internet services available for their population, and the services were also improved. Additionally, by having better conditions available for elderly people to surf the internet and to have access to new online platforms, it would be easier to measure more accurately their specific needs, and then we will be able to find solutions that work more efficiently.

The internet is an important tool to get information, but it also allows providing information in order to have a more independent life. For that reason, Congregación Mariana Trinitaria developed the program "CMT Supportive Contribution to Technology and Connectivity", whose purpose is providing that service, as well as the devices people need to surf the web in order to encourage the promotion of the welfare of the families who need support.