

## The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of technology by 10 years, but just a few people may have access to it

Low economic resources are the main reason why 45 percent of the Mexican students dropped their studies during the pandemic, as they had neither access to the internet or technology devices such as computers, tablets, smart televisions and smartphones

Due to online classes and home office, the internet became essential, however, just a few people have access to that, and the ones who have it use to complain of the quality of that service. For that reason, Congregación Mariana Trinitaria promotes programs for students, teachers, and employees to have access to that service, which is currently considered a human right in Mexico.



In Mexico and around the world, the problems and social shortages were highlighted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of them became even more evident like poor connectivity and unavailability of devices to get connected.

As we faced a highly contagious disease, the government decided that most jobs moved to home office, and that classes will be online using the internet, radio, and television.

Nonetheless, 28 percent of the Mexican population do not have access to the internet, as mentioned on the National Survey on Availability and Use of Information Technologies at Home (ENDUTIH) 2020. In the meantime, there are 84.1 million internet users over 6 years in the country, which represents 72 percent of the population.

In 2020, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) increased 1.9 percentage points compared to the 70.1 percent we had in 2019.

The three most popular devices to get connected to the internet in 2020 were: smartphones 96 percent, laptops 33.7 percent, and SmartTVs 22.2 percent.

“ We must become more competent in digital issues in order to become more proactive.”

Guillermo Rodríguez Abitia, the UNAM researcher.

Rodríguez Abitia mentions that in the year 2000 the penetration of ICTs was 5.1 percent, and a decade later it was 31 percent. In 2015 it was 57.4 percent, and nowadays the number is more than 70 percent. “It is likely that in two years’ time we might get a full coverage”.

## COVID-19 accelerated the use of technology

The Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM) mentions in the research “The pandemic accelerated the use of digital technologies by 10 years” that the internet is one of the most valuable tools to develop technology in the society, and after the sanitary contingency, it became even more relevant and meaningful.

### To take into consideration

According to UNAM, Information and Communication Technologies had 5.1 percent of penetration in Mexico in the year 2000.

31 percent in 2010.

70 percent in 2015.



### In numbers

58 percent out of 738.4 thousand students could not complete their studies in the school year 2019 - 2020 as they lacked devices and connection to the internet.

28.8 percent of them could not communicate with their teachers, and they were not able to do any homework because they did not have connection to the internet.

2.1 percent of them had to rent a device for their online classes.

17.7 percent of the students do not have computers or devices to get connected to their classes.

The report also reveals that the digital gap exists because having access to the internet does not mean that people use it properly. “We do have a digital gap, which is caused not only by the high percentage of people who have access to that tool, but also for the kinds of devices we use to get connected” is mentioned in the report.

Five out of ten families with access to the Internet mention that the service is slow, unstable, and that connection is lost frequently; that is the reason why this country is among the last positions in speed tests developed worldwide.

## Improving the access to internet connection in the country

Congregación Mariana Trinitaria A.C., (CMT) promotes programs aimed at decreasing the impact of the low penetration of the internet and the lack of devices to get connected. Through its Welfare Ecosystem Model and its different networks, thousands of people got benefits and we expect to multiply those benefits before the year 2021 ends.

One of the problems that affects children and teenagers in order to have access to education is the lack of economic resources, which has a negative impact on students in vulnerable families. Something similar happens to teachers and employees who currently work from home.

Among our most popular cases, we find the one that we developed with local authorities in the municipality of Durango: the program “Conéctate” (Get connected), which gives benefits to dozens of students by providing tablets, computers, and connectivity plans for phone calls and internet service.

Currently, CMT collaborates with some financial institutions in the country to develop strategies to provide devices (computers and tablets) to students, teachers, and employees to improve on their studies and labor conditions.

In CMT we are certain that if any kind of shortage is found anywhere in the Mexican society, our activities will continue.

Guillermo Rodríguez Abitia, Director of the Department of Innovation and Development of Technology, part of the Direction in charge of computer classes and use of information and communication technologies (DGTIC) at UNAM, mentioned that the pandemic accelerated our processes to get used to technology by 10 years, which means that society learnt how to use that tool as online classes and jobs were not optional activities.