

## IMPACT STORY



# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: REINTEGRATION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

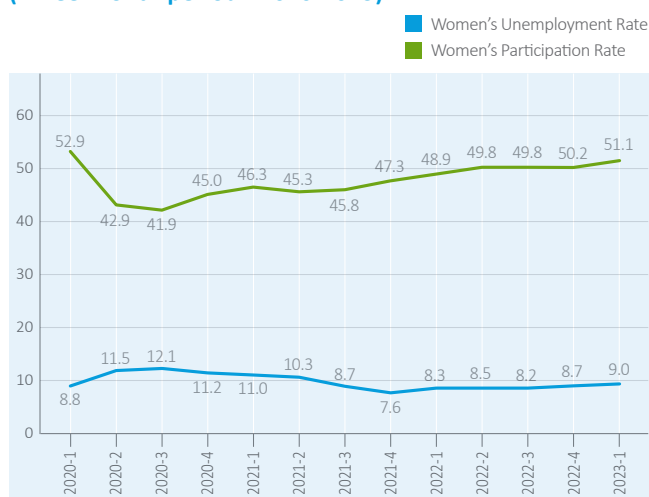
Photography: Alejandra Pizarro

*“(The Programme) helped me get to where I am now, I also obtained support, motivation, empowerment, and it made me believe in myself.”* These are the words of Alejandra Pizarro, a participant in the employability pathway of the UN Women Tu Oportunidad programme in Chile.

The purpose of the initiative, promoted by UN Women and implemented in coordination with Fundación Emplea, is to promote women’s economic empowerment through formal employment, strengthening skills, providing support in job search, and accompanying them to adapt to their new jobs in the first months of employment.

The pandemic significantly impacted women’s participation in the labour market and unemployment due to the high rate of employment loss caused by lockdown measures. As seen in this chart, at the worst moment of the crisis, the employment participation rate of women decreased to 41.9%, and the unemployment rate increased to 12.1%. This situation reflects the need to help women return to the labour market.

### Women’s labour participation and unemployment rates (Three-month period - 2020-2023)



Source: 2023 INE Database - National Survey on Employment

After more than two years unemployed, Alejandra decided to become part of the programme, hoping to find new job opportunities that fit her new motivations. The first phase of the initiative consisted of a socio-labour diagnosis for each participant to collect information on their experiences, interests, and personal and labour motivations. After completing this phase, Alejandra decided she *“wanted to work on gender equality.”* The second phase of training for employability consists of taking 5 online workshops focused on labour motivation, work training, labour law and social security, effective communication and teamwork, and autonomous employability. The third stage is a personalized labour enablement process where CVs are adjusted, identifying labour skills based on the resignification of life experiences and including women’s interests in specific work areas. In the case of Alejandra, it was gender issues.

During this process, Alejandra managed to turn around her work experience. Before becoming part of the programme, she had worked as a bilingual assistant; however, after taking the workshops, she claims to have *“believed that I could achieve my dream of working with and for women, adjusting my work profile to what I wanted.”*

The support of the tutors considers: signing up in job portals to promote autonomous employability, working on motivation and self-esteem to strengthen their confidence and empowerment, and a job interview simulation process to add experience and to be better prepared for the staff selection process.

Finally, women are part of the labour management process, receiving job offers that adjust to their profile. Alejandra

**Photo above:** Alejandra Pizarro, a participant in the employability pathway of the UN Women Tu Oportunidad – Second Chance Education programme in Chile.

reveals that this process was very important for her *“My tutor saw a job offer that had to do with gender issues, and she shared it with me immediately and said, “I am sure that you will get it.” This is how after completing the programme, Alejandra started her new job in the Municipality of Cerrillos as the person in charge of the Gender Issues Office.*

The success of the process is due to the personalized support provided by a tutor during the entire programme, establishing a relationship with each participant and keeping ongoing and fluent communication. This was vital for Alejandra, and she said at the end of the process that *“I am very grateful to the tutor of Fundación Emplea; she did not only give me advice but provided me with emotional support when I was very unmotivated looking for a job.”*



Photography: UN Women / Pablo Sanhueza

## PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

The comprehensive focus of the Tu Oportunidad programme has led to the creation of a network of institutions that work on complementary issues that respond to the needs of the participants. The creation of partnerships has promoted the programme and achieved better results.

One of these partnerships is Fundación Emplea, which has implemented the employability initiatives of the Tu Oportunidad programme with UN Women. On the one hand, the programme has worked with private sector partners to create new employment opportunities and, on the other, with public and civil society institutions to offer the participants technical training and psychosocial support.

Another partnership is with Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, an institution expert in working with migrant persons. It has supported the programme offering Spanish courses and providing legal counseling to migrant women. To date, the programme has 21% migrant women.

The Santiago Library and Biblioredes have facilitated areas and infrastructure in their facilities for the participants to attend the programme. They have also offered training and online courses in digital literacy.

A network with Women’s Centres has been established with different entities in the country to refer the women participating in the programme who have experienced gender violence to receive free psychological, social, and legal support near their homes.


## TU OPORTUNIDAD – SECOND CHANCE EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

UN Women, in partnership with BHP Foundation, implement the [Second Chance Education Programme](#) in six countries: Cameroon, Jordan, India, Mexico, Australia, and Chile. Through multi-sectoral alliances, it promotes women’s empowerment at the local, national, and international levels by promoting formal education, employment, and entrepreneurship development.

This employability programme takes place in a context of economic recovery, encouraging women to reintegrate into the labour market, find better employment opportunities, and improve their income and quality of life.

390 women were part of this initiative, and 20% found a job after completing the programme. Currently, according to a follow-up survey, it was informed that 34% of the participants are employed. Out of those, 64% increased their income, and 71% believe that it was thanks to the tools provided by the programme.

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