



IMPACT STORY



THE MENTORING NETWORK OF THE UN WOMEN'S SECOND CHANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME: WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN TO BECOME AGENTS OF CHANGE

Photography: UN Women/Fanny Peralta

“The power of helping and guiding many women on the path of empowerment from my own experience has been very enriching for me, and more and more women are joining me.” These are the words of Maricel Rivas, an entrepreneur woman from the northern region of Chile who completed the **Mentor Training Program** after participating in the UN Women’s Second Chance Education Programme. She is part of the Women Mentor Network, whose members work as volunteers advising and accompanying women to strengthen their economic empowerment.

A significant component of the UN Women’s Second Chance Education Programme in Chile is the mentoring phase, in which participants meet in small groups to discuss a topic of interest with an expert mentor. Mentoring is a practice in which one person facilitates another’s development through exchanging knowledge, values, skills, perspectives, and competencies. In a two-hour session, mentors share their success stories and provide one-to-one guidance to help women achieve their goals. This activity offers a true learning advantage and supports the work done during the workshop phase, where women participants receive technical and human support to enhance their capabilities. In general, women rate this experience highly; in the words of one, *“It helps you improve your entrepreneurship, gives you resources to develop ideas that you already had in mind and didn’t know how to implement... it motivates you to believe in yourself and your capabilities”.*

Participants strengthen and create bonds among themselves as part of the program, especially during mentoring sessions. They discover they face similar challenges and are encouraged to form a community to share experiences and support each other. *Among the graduates of the entrepreneurship path, one says, “In addition to giving us tools for improvement, the program enabled us to meet other women in the same situation, allowing us to build support networks.”*

The importance of mentorships for Maricel Rivas in her entrepreneurship journey is highlighted in her story. *“The mentors gave me insight into how to stay forward, helping me with my entrepreneurship; I learned about the Canvas model and gave my entrepreneurship another direction... the mentors were very welcoming and enthusiastic. We are still in touch.”*

The Second Chance Education Programme has a network of 126 women volunteer mentors representing a wide range of topics of significant interest to participants. The main topics include financing for entrepreneurship, e-commerce, digital marketing, entrepreneurial skills, communication and leadership, and employability strategies. To become a Second Chance Education Programme mentor, one must commit to gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, demonstrated through volunteering eight hours as a mentor, completing gender training, and receiving individual guidance the Network coordinator.

Women who graduate from the mentoring program can become mentors, an essential component of the mentoring network. Due to this, the Second Chance Education Programme has a **Mentor’s Training School**. The program consists of ten hours of synchronous training and an internship with a mentor. As a result, graduates can actively participate in the network and become agents of change in their communities.

Following her training, Maricel Rivas became a mentor and speaker for other projects in her community and other localities in her region. In addition to mentoring, the newly appointed mentor dreams of *“creating a place where women feel supported and welcomed, where they can learn, and where I can provide them with tools to develop their entrepreneurship skills.”*

Photo above: Recognition ceremony for volunteer women from Second Chance Education Programme Mentor’s Network.

Mentors can build a mutual learning and trust relationship with participants; they can gain diverse perspectives, ask relevant questions, learn about other concerns, and broaden their viewpoints for personal and professional development. As a result, both parties benefit from a virtuous cycle of learning and growth. As Gabriela Rosero, Head of the Chile Office of UN Women, points out, *“These instances impact the lives of both mentors and mentorees, helping them clarify and set their goals and projects in the personal and work spheres, and strengthening attitudes and skills for decision making, self-knowledge, social relations, and greater communication skills. They also empower participants as agents of change in their communities.”*

Women who complete the programme report the following when surveyed:

Mentoring

99%

of cases, mentoring helped them develop their projects.

93%

of them, the experience was rated as satisfactory.

Mentoring School

86%

of the participants, rate the mentoring training as good or very good and overall, it is rated 6 out of 7.

Networking

54%

Of women reported increased support networks, as a result of participating in the program.

In the three months following the program's end

35%

of the women reported staying in touch with other participants.



Photography: UN Women/CVA

Network. Furthermore, AIEP Professional Institute has over 57 years of experience training professionals and technicians nationwide through its 25 branches.

SECOND CHANCE EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMME

The UN Women’s [Second Chance Education Programme](#) in Chile has developed the Mentors’ Training methodology. The goal is to transform participants into agents of change in their communities and society. Evidence supports this method since **86%** of entrepreneurs who receive mentoring continue for more than five years, **56%** increase profits, and **74%** increase client portfolios¹. More than **650** mentoring sessions were held during program implementation in Chile. As a result, a network of **126** volunteer mentors has guided more than **2,000** women. In addition, the mentors’ school has trained over **550** women in the Second Chance Education Programme to become certified mentors and agents of change in the program and their communities.

PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

Creating the Second Chance Education Programme Mentoring Network has required considerable effort from the UN Women’s implementation team. This is due to the many mentors required to develop the program. As a result, women with experience advising and accompanying other women, particularly in their economic empowerment, were invited to join. Their backgrounds range from the private sector to government, civil society, and academia. They are examples of success in their fields of action and serve as inspiration for program participants.

AIEP is a significant partner in this initiative. This educational institution is responsible for the mentoring phase of Chile’s Second Chance Education Programme and the Mentors’ Training. In addition, it recruits and trains women from the SCE Programme Mentor’s

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1. Source: NetMentora (2021) and Mentores por Chile (2019).