

# Internet for 500,000 disadvantaged Colombians

Regarding internet access, many countries in the Global South lag significantly behind, as the connectivity of the population is very low. Where there are investments in information technology, they regularly do not address the inclusion of vulnerable groups. In Colombia, this is different.

## PLAN VIVE DIGITAL: TECHNOLOGY IN THE LIFE OF EVERY COLOMBIAN

<b>Year of existence:</b>	2010 - 2014
<b>Country/region of origin:</b>	Colombia
<b>Beneficiaries targeted:</b>	All people
<b>Responsible body:</b>	Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies
<b>Stakeholders:</b>	Public and private sector

### FACTS & FIGURES

- More than 1.2 million people with disabilities have multiple opportunities for the use of ICTs.
- In 2014 more than 800 centres will provide tools promoting accessibility.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

#### Mainstreaming persons with disabilities

The Plan pays special attention to people with disabilities, looking ahead to increase their capacities and opportunities through fostering their access to ICTs.

#### ICTs & education and employment

The Plan clearly links the education and employment outcomes of people with disabilities with the access to information and communication, i.e. the internet and ICTs.

#### Availability and affordability

The Plan works to increase availability and affordability of assistive technologies, such as screen readers, Braille printers, loops and internet access centers with accessible design.

### IN BRIEF

The strategy Plan Vive Digital: Technology in the Life of Each Colombian for the years 2010-2014 works through the creation of a digital ecosystem that fosters infrastructure, services, applications and users. The Plan aims to increase both the availability of and demand for ICTs in a parallel way. Based on the fact that through accessing the digital environment the capacities of people will improve and foster their human development, the plan mainstreams accessibility of information and communication technologies, especially for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

### HISTORY

Regarding internet access, Colombia was significantly lagging behind other countries. There were few investments into information technologies, and connectivity amongst the population was low. However, Colombia is the online government leader in Latin America. In order to use its potential and to catch up with other countries, it is important to increase high speed internet access, building capacities and empowering people. To make this happen, the idea for a national plan to increase internet access was proposed in October 2010, which then resulted in the strategy Plan Vive Digital: Technology in the life of each Colombian for the years 2010-2014. Plan Vive Digital is currently being implemented and is fostering the development of the whole country through the access of ICTs, building infrastructure, creating services, developing apps and fostering capacities among Colombian society by equally developing the offer of and the demand for Information and Communication Technologies.

### KEY FEATURES

Plan Vive Digital aims to set in motion the participatory and responsible use of the ecosystem of digital accessibility. Among its specific objectives is to enhance universal access to information and communication technologies through more than 80 initiatives that proactively link to vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, in order to promote their

*«Plan Vive Digital has considerably promoted an inclusive and participatory digital accessible environment fostering capacities on Colombian population for their development»*

Diego Molano Vega, Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies, Colombia

educational, labour and social inclusion. One of the goals is to create face-to-face and virtual learning spaces for ICT competencies that benefit more than 500,000 people with low income, victims of violence, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities by 2015. A transparent, high quality regime, technical centres, internet access centres and training programs are established that especially include people with disabilities. Particular measures benefitting people with disabilities include online help services, enabling public access to websites, assistance and compliance of public websites with accessibility norms, an expansion in assistance for and usage of screen reader software for blind people, strengthening the public online interpretation service for deaf people and promoting the development of accessibility conditions according to a national standard.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Colombia's Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is responsible for the Plan's implementation, which began in 2011. As one of its key elements is the creation of public-private partnerships, the Plan strengthens collaborations between decision-makers, local governments, academics, civil society and especially people with disabilities and representative disabled people's organisations at different stages. Under the Plan, the Ministry has implemented projects aimed to promote access to ICTs for people with disabilities, respecting their right to access to information and communications, bridging the digital divide and promoting educational inclusion and social work.

### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Currently, the Ministry is working on the purchase of the license for the screen reader software in order to make it available for free all around the country. This tool will allow visually impaired people to access content and information, while its use will contribute to the processes of inclusive education as well as to social and labour inclusion.



Sala Conectando Sentidos. Specialized public technical center for people with visual disabilities (© MINTIC 2013)

**CONTACT** Jorge Restrepo MUNERA  
 Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Carrera 8 between Calles 12 - 13 Building Manuel Murillo Toro, Bogotá D.C., Colombia  
 jorge.restrepo@mintic.gov.co  
 +57 1 3443 460 2242  
 www.mintic.gov.co

**SOURCES** Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies, Plan Vive Digital (in Spanish): <http://bit.ly/18YzbnN>

Nominated by: David A. ROJAS MEIJA, Trust for the Americas