

CON VOS FRAY

An initiative that promotes
community markets and
digital inclusion



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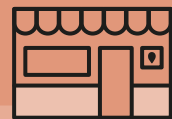
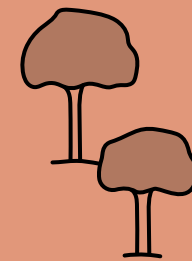
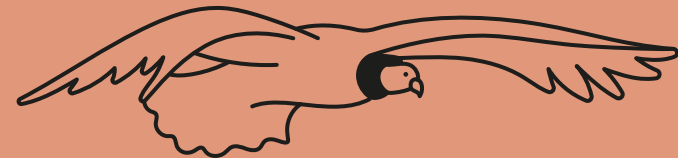
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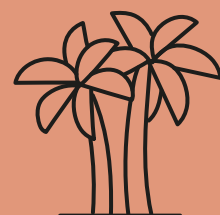
people, and those with a lower educational level are less digitally included. Finally, the Network resulted in the strengthening of community markets since, out of the total users of the Network, 27% were new customers, and more than half of them made an additional purchase along with carrying out the procedure.

This pilot test shows, once again, how an innovative grassroots solution that works has components that can be replicated in other places. This is the main result of the second experience of the *Con Vos Network*. Both in Concepción and in Fray Mamerto Esquiú, it was adopted by stores and used by neighbors. Innovative territorial solutions arise from people's creativity in a context of need and are a source of learning when it comes to addressing them. On the other hand, people take ownership of these solutions and creatively reinvent them, giving them new uses. They are also an effective tool to amplify public policies that seek to address these problems, as in this case, it expanded the scale of several digital procedures from existing government levels. In summary, *Con Vos Fray* proved to be effective in favoring decentralization, saving on traveling, facilitating digital inclusion, and strengthening community markets.

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UNDP acknowledges the relevance of inclusive language to make gender diversity visible. Thus, the generic masculine and female forms are alternately used in this report.



Introduction



It is spring in Fray, province of Catamarca, Argentina. The wind stirs up a reddish dust, and you need to cover yourself because it gets everywhere. Laura leaves her home in a small town called Las Pirquitas, walks about 4 blocks, and arrives at the 201 bus stop, which is close to the church, to travel the 30 km that separates her from the capital of the province. She has to go to the office of the National Social Security Administration (ANSES, by its Spanish acronym) to complete the paperwork she needs to qualify for a social assistance program. She waits half an hour for the bus, which takes another hour and a half to arrive at its destination. Once at the ANSES office, she must wait 40 more minutes for an available clerk to help her. Laura will spend her entire morning on this. A few weeks later, when it is time to go into town again to complete other paperwork, she learns that very close to her home, at Noemí's clothes store, the store owner helps neighbors do their paperwork online.

Noemí is not tech savvy, but she found a way to introduce her neighbors to the digital world so they can have access to social assistance or do some of their paperwork in a sustainable fashion. For Noemí, this means business because she charges a small fee for her help, attracts new customers, and makes more sales.

At the same time, she has also solved Laura's problem -and that of others near her store- who can now avoid spending a whole morning in town. Although Laura already knew that these procedures could be done online and she has a computer at home, she did not dare to do them by herself because she was afraid of making mistakes, or inadvertently paying for something extra and ending up with some unexpected debt.

Noemí is part of the *Con Vos* Network. *Con Vos* is a network of nearby stores that allows neighbors to carry out digital procedures and paperwork close to their homes. The Network is designed to help neighbors do more things online and complete their procedures while saving time and money.

It is a project that scales up, for the second time, an innovative territorial solution that connects community markets with digital inclusion.

This is an innovation, designed and deployed by people who encounter a problem and come up with a way to solve it. This is a solution that works for people, as it continually appeared, in different forms, throughout different parts of the country. The Co_Lab systematized its central elements, and developed a strategy, together with the tools and inputs to scale it up .

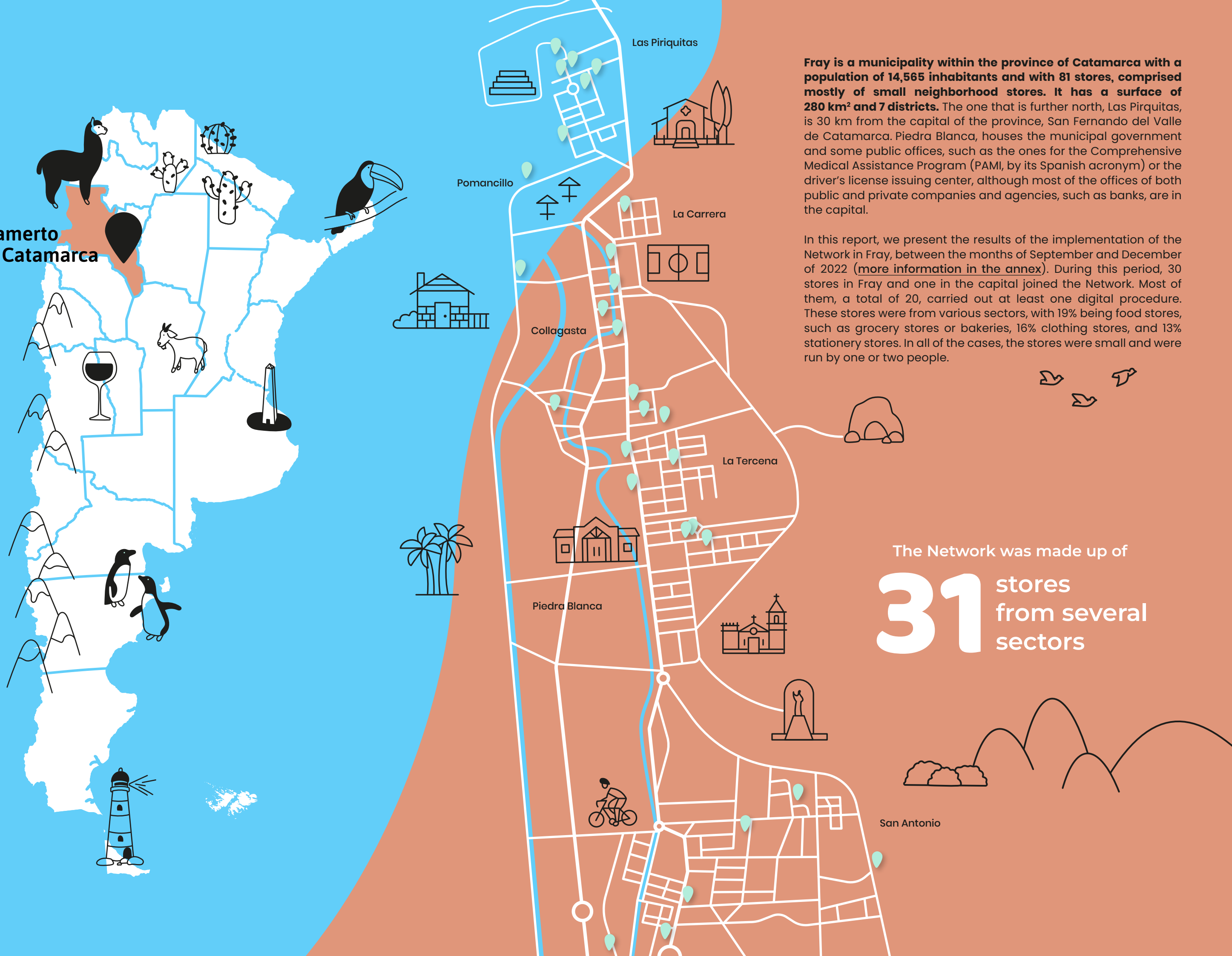
Nearby stores play a fundamental role in bringing products and services closer to everyone, regardless of their access to urban centers. Moreover, they are a means for innovation when they bring new technologies that become essential on a small scale. In the recent past, these included public telephones, photocopy machines, printers, topping up cell phone credit, and all the things to which people can have access to in a neighborhood a few blocks away from their homes through people they trust.

With the lessons learned from the first experience in 2021 in Concepción del Uruguay, Entre Rios, on this occasion, **the Accelerator Lab of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Argentina implemented the Network in Fray Mamerto Esquiú (hereafter, Fray), in the province of Catamarca, in partnership with the Municipal Government and the Undersecretariat of Administrative Innovation of the Chief of the National Cabinet of Ministers.**

For the Network to be possible it must offer products or services that are relevant for the population and that can be dealt with online. The Network could be scaled up and grew thanks to the large number of procedures that were already digitized at the municipal, provincial, and national levels. The grassroots solutions mapped and scaled up complement and help to spread the channels for managing government policies, thus facilitating the access to services from different levels of government.



Fray Mamerto Esquiú, Catamarca



Fray is a municipality within the province of Catamarca with a population of 14,565 inhabitants and with 81 stores, comprised mostly of small neighborhood stores. It has a surface of 280 km² and 7 districts. The one that is further north, Las Piriquitas, is 30 km from the capital of the province, San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca. Piedra Blanca, houses the municipal government and some public offices, such as the ones for the Comprehensive Medical Assistance Program (PAMI, by its Spanish acronym) or the driver's license issuing center, although most of the offices of both public and private companies and agencies, such as banks, are in the capital.

In this report, we present the results of the implementation of the Network in Fray, between the months of September and December of 2022 (**more information in the annex**). During this period, 30 stores in Fray and one in the capital joined the Network. Most of them, a total of 20, carried out at least one digital procedure. These stores were from various sectors, with 19% being food stores, such as grocery stores or bakeries, 16% clothing stores, and 13% stationery stores. In all of the cases, the stores were small and were run by one or two people.

The Network was made up of

31 stores
from several
sectors



Who approached the stores of the Con Vos Network?

381

people accessed the Network

60%

were women

531

digital procedures were carried out

55%

were CUIL and negative ANSES certificate requests

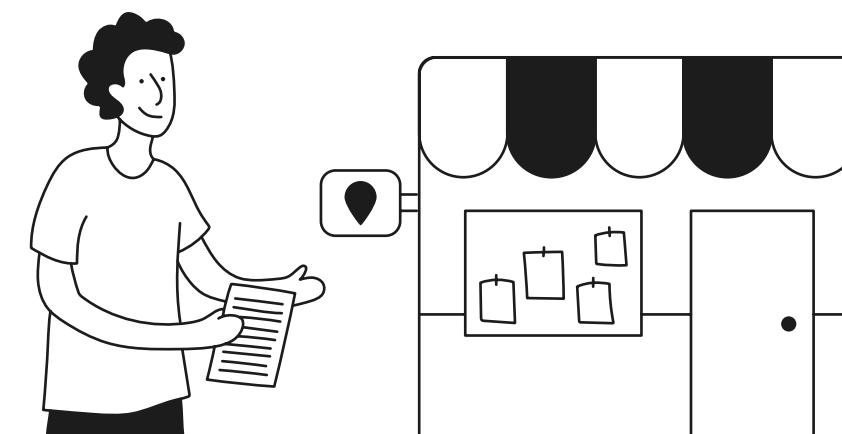
The Con Vos Network was accessed by 381 people and, through it, carried out 531 digital procedures. These procedures were very diverse. The neighbors requested appointments to apply for loans, topped up their phones or transportation cards (like the SUBE card), accessed the municipal program that provides glasses, inquired about debts in relation to real estate, and applied for pregnancy or unemployment benefits. In short, they were able to present inquiries and requests, make payments and recharges, and carry out procedures at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government and, to a lesser extent, with private companies such as banks and cell phone, satellite TV, and credit card companies. **The two most common procedures were requests for a Unique Identification Code for Work (CUIL, by its Spanish acronym) and for a negative ANSES certificate, a document that proves that a person does not receive any kind of social assistance, and which is a requirement to apply for different types of government assistance (both requests accounted for 55% of the procedures).**

The request for a CUIL is a procedure that is mostly done online and is very simple. This fact highlights the importance of the Network, as it shows that help and assistance are necessary even for the simplest operations.

As in the previous edition, most users were women, representing 60% of the people who accessed the Network. 68% of users were between 25 and 64 years old, and 22% were in their early working years (between 15 and 24 years old). This result is consistent with the demand for procedures from economically active individuals who need to complete different kinds of procedures for themselves, and from young people who are responsible for completing procedures for others in their care, whether younger or older. Women are typically the ones responsible for caregiving duties, explaining why they made up most of the Network users (see below). For

example, women may be responsible for completing the necessary paperwork to enroll their children in school, such as requesting a CUIL certificate.

While 64% of users had completed their secondary education, 23% had some level of education lower than that (either complete primary education or incomplete primary and secondary education). That is to say, only 13% had some form of higher education (whether complete or incomplete). As we will see below, the level of education is directly related to digital inclusion and the possibility of performing tasks online without relying on the help of others.



Why do people use the Con Vos Network?

To evaluate the results of the Network, it was important to understand why people chose to use its services to carry out their procedures instead of using other means (whether online through other platforms or in person at the corresponding offices). **Residents chose among the following four options: convenience, proximity, lack of tools, or lack of knowledge to perform tasks online by themselves.** If there was any other reason not included among these options, they had the opportunity to bring it up. In practice, the new reasons offered aligned with these options.

The Network is designed to promote digital inclusion in its simplest form, by allowing people to do more things online, even with support from other people. This assistance could be the first step in encouraging people to later do things online by themselves, initially with the help of trusted store owners, and potentially by themselves. In fact, known and trusted peers are an effective way of promoting good practices and learning aimed at promoting greater levels of inclusion across different dimensions such as digitalization and others, such as access to financial services, as we have seen in previous research.

Doing things online results in avoiding the need to commute to public and private offices where things are done in person. This way, residents enjoy the advantages of doing things closer to home thus saving time and money thanks to the decentralization that comes from avoiding the need to travel to urban centers.

Just as in the experience of Concepción del Uruguay, in Fray, the number one reason for using the Network was “not knowing how to perform the task independently” (31%). Not knowing how to handle the task without help could be linked to a lack of knowledge of digital tools, but also to a difficulty in understanding the steps in the instructions on how to do it. It should be noted that store owners were trained on how to carry out some of the procedures with step-by-step instructions. In other instances, they learned how to do them by themselves. In both cases, the possibility of having someone to help them, almost always a person they were familiar with facilitated the completion of the procedure itself, besides the fact that it could also be carried out online.

The number two reason was “proximity of home to store” (26%). Convenience was number three. It is interesting to see how “convenience and proximity” are practically on the same level as “not knowing how to do it yourself” and “not having the tools” (such as Internet, a computer, or a printer). This can be linked to the fact that localities are far apart (between 11 km to 30 km from one another) and are poorly connected with the capital by means of public transportation. Thus, digital inclusion is an indirect solution to make daily life easier, saving time and distance, as seen below. This is particularly true for people for whom, due to their limited access to transportation, time or resources, decentralized strategies are key to their inclusion, as it is for people with caregiving responsibilities who are disproportionately tied to their home and neighborhood dynamics and find it difficult to go to the offices in person to carry out various tasks.



When we break down these variables by user profile, we see that children up to 14 years of age and adults over 64 indicate a higher rate of using the Network due to a lack of knowledge about how to complete tasks independently. Hence, the Network also plays a role in contributing to closing the digital divide, which widens when combined with other inequalities, such as less knowledge due to young age or a lower access to information and resources for older people. People between 15 and 24 years of age choose the Network primarily due to proximity. For those at the peak of their working life (25 to 55 years of age), not having the knowledge and proximity are the two main reasons for using the Network, both bearing the same weight.



Did the Con Vos Network help decentralize digital procedures?

The experience of the Con Vos Network in Fray proved the potential of this solution to decentralize different tasks, and requests and applications to public agencies and private companies, such as banks. Its use saves time and travel. In fact, convenience and proximity to home were two of the most frequently cited reasons for choosing the Network.

Fray is 30 km from the capital city and, to get there, it takes approximately an hour and a half by public transportation, and about 40 minutes by car although this varies from locality to locality. San Antonio is the southernmost town, located at 11 km from the provincial capital, while Las Pirquitas is the northernmost, located approximately at 30 km from the provincial capital. Some procedures can be done in Piedra Blanca, where the municipal government and the two digital points are located (these are public spaces dependent on the federal government where residents have access to Internet connectivity and training in digital topics). Therefore, the distance saved depended on the procedure being carried out. An interesting fact is that sometimes people chose to

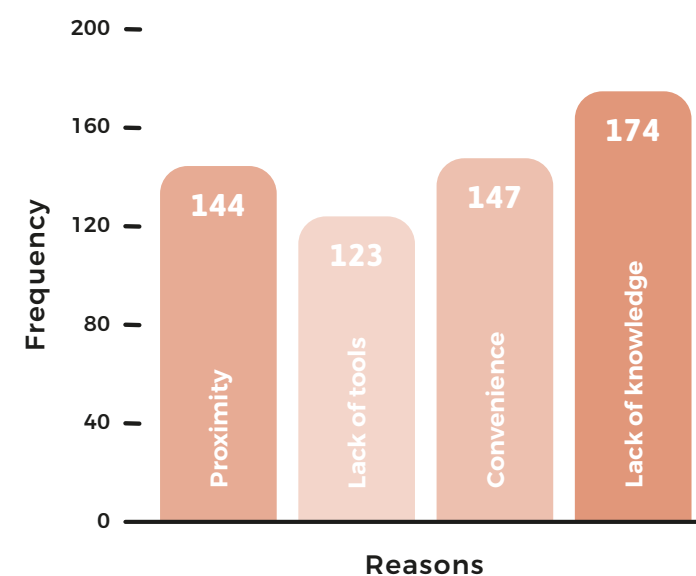
Reasons for using the Network

The store was **close** to their home.

They **lacked the necessary tools** to do it themselves (Internet access, a computer, a printer, etc.).

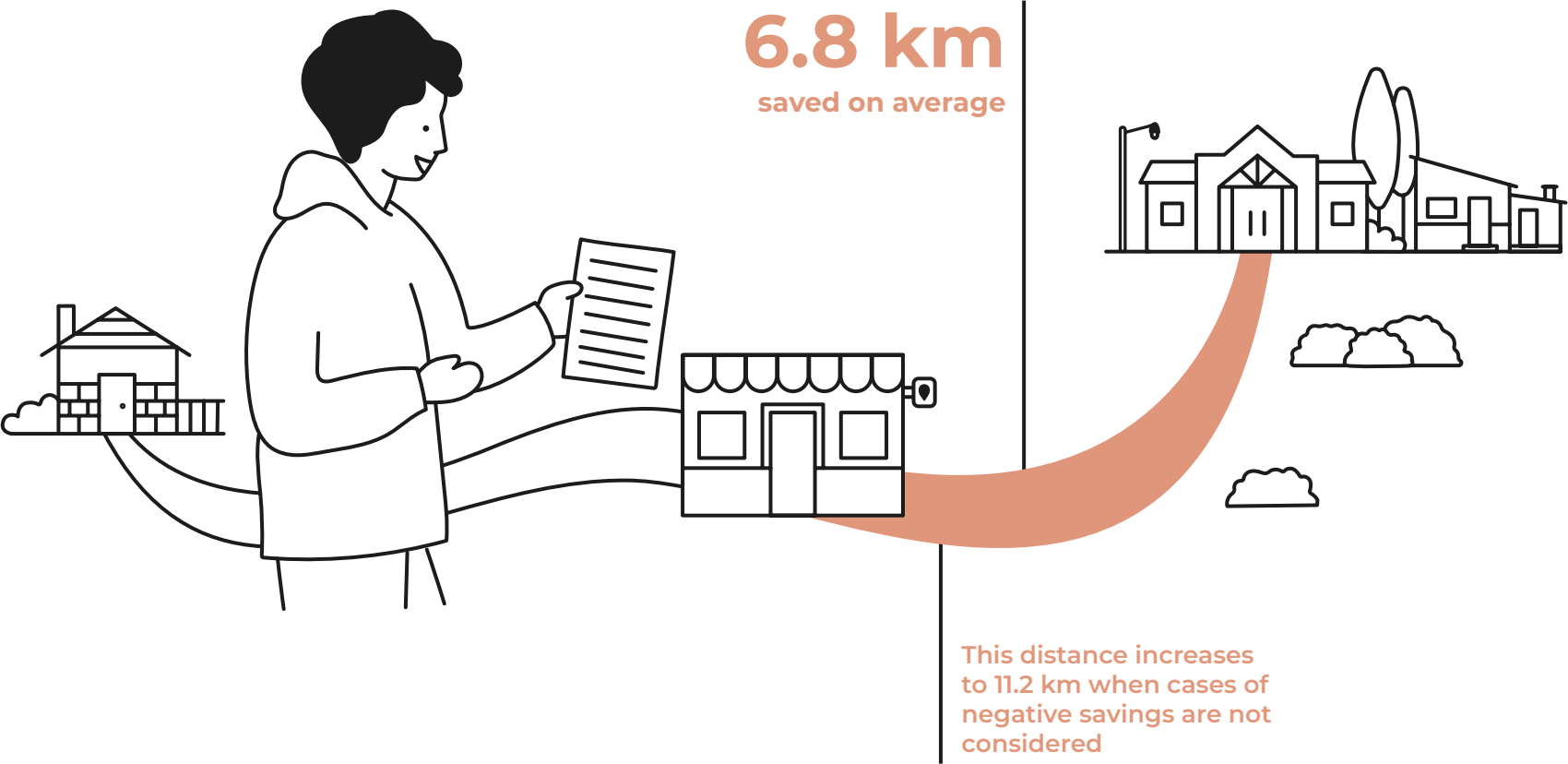
It was **convenient** for them to do it in the store.

They **didn't know** how to do it by themselves.



complete their procedures at stores within the Network regardless of the distance saved. For example, they chose to do the procedure online at a store within the Network even when said store was close to the office where they could do it in person, and, in other instances, people who lived in the capital ran their errands in Fray. These unusual cases are discussed below.

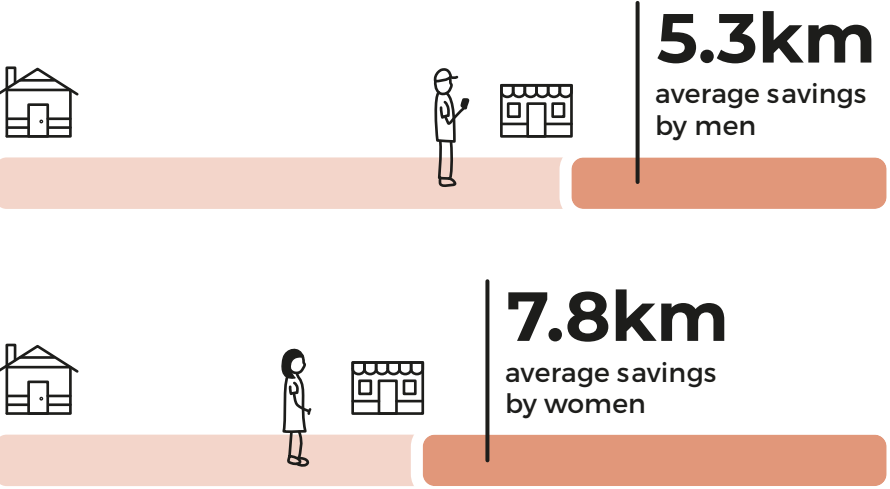
Distance saved thanks to digital procedures



The distance saved was calculated as the difference between the distance the neighbor would have to travel to get to the proper office to complete the procedures in person, minus the distance they would have to travel from their home to the store in the Network where they could do it online.

The average distance saved by doing the procedures online versus doing them in-person was of 6.8 km per person (calculated from 522 procedures/users whose addresses were validated). This increases to 11.2 km when cases of negative savings are not considered. These cases are discussed below.

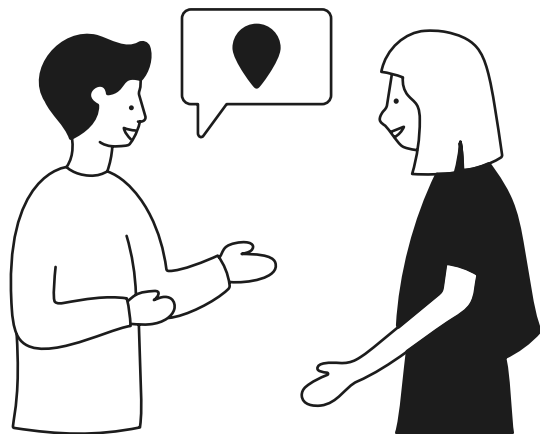
The average distance saved per gender was of 7.8 km for women and of 5.3 km for men, which indicates that women, who are also most of the *Con Vos* Network users, live further away from urban centers. Women were again the majority of users in Concepción del Uruguay, where they also saved greater distances.



Users of economically active age and those with more years of education were the ones who saved the least distances. It is worth noting that the average distance saved per age range was of 8.8 km for children, 4.9 km for individuals in their early working years, 6.7 km for individuals at their peak working years, 12.5 km for individuals in their mature working years, and 7.5 km for individuals of advanced age.

In a different sense, the average distance saved per educational level was of 10.4 km for individuals with an incomplete primary education, 11 km for those with a complete primary education, 6.38 km for those with an incomplete tertiary or university education, and 4.6 km for those with a complete tertiary or university education.

A different hypothesis test confirms what was already evidenced descriptively. **On average, women saved 1.9 km more than men and, as the level of education increased, the distance saved dropped by 0.75km.** This may indicate that more educated people live closer to urban areas, with access to the offices to carry out their procedures. Meanwhile, **people with fewer years of schooling and who live in more rural areas and further away from the offices save significantly more distance.** As a result, we see that this solution would be more beneficial to those people with fewer years of education.

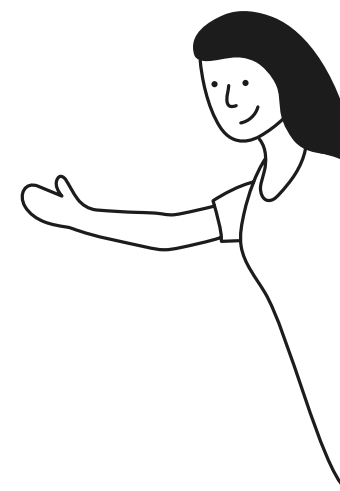


Peers bring distances closer

People chose to use the Network regardless of the distance saved. The considerations on distance were examined together with others, such as personal trust in peers like neighbors and nearby store owners or clerks, or the convenience of being able to do the procedures online, without the need to go to the offices, even when these were close to the stores in the Network. In other cases, people took ownership of the solution by creatively combining it with other digital tools like WhatsApp. In these cases, the distances saved were not physical. This is demonstrated by the following two examples:



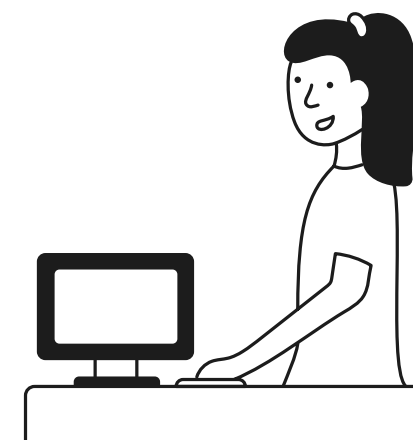
When analyzing the results, we discovered cases in which people were carrying out procedures online with stores within the Network that were just a few meters away from the office where they could conduct these same procedures in person. In these cases, people



did not save on travel. **There was a total of 43 of these cases with neutral savings (savings of between 0 km and 1 km).** Although no evidence was recorded on the reasons why people chose to use the Network in that way, it could be to avoid delays at the offices or due to a preference for personal assistance. The store owner is someone who they either know or who provides assistance (or both), that is to say, someone like them, a peer. In these and other cases, personal relationships sometimes facilitated the use of the Network.

Valentina has a gift shop in Las Pirquitas. She was not feeling too confident about participating in the Network when the recruiter visited her. Once in the Network, she was not very successful in attracting customers and could not complete any online procedures during the first few months of the project. It was only towards the end of the initiative that she became excited about the Network's promotional campaigns. With the help of her partner, a police officer, she began to attract other police officers to her shop to do their transactions through the Network. By doing so, she was able to actively participate in the *Con Vos* Network and, in the end, considered it a pleasant experience that she plans to continue.

Another unusual situation was when the Network user was already near the office where they could carry out a procedure in the capital but chose to do it at a store within the Network in Fray, between 20 to 30 km away. In this case, the distance saved was negative, meaning that using the Network resulted in covering a greater distance. How did this counterintuitive result come about? Qualitative evidence showed that, in these cases, even though people were already close to the office, they kept in contact with a trusted store owner or clerk from the Network through WhatsApp. **There were 81 of these cases where the neighbors were closer to the office where they could carry out the procedure in person than to the store where someone could do it for them online,** charging a fee for their services that they could pay through a money transfer.



The last store to join the *Con Vos* Network was Melanie's printing shop. She approached the Network on her own. She contacted the recruiter of Las Pirquitas as she saw it as an opportunity to advertise her business and attract more customers. In this way, she was able to carry out digital procedures for her peers at university, who needed to register for exams, and some of them lived in the capital.

These results, which at first seemed counterintuitive, actually showed how **people took ownership of the solutions and shaped and adapted them to their convenience.** They innovate based on previous innovations and take them to the next level. Also, apart from distance and convenience, personal relationships, like the ones between neighbors, colleagues at work, and peers at university, constitute a network through which information is exchanged and support is offered among peers.



Did the Con Vos Network facilitate the digital inclusion of Fray Mamerto Esquíú neighbors?

50%

of the customers did not know how to do the procedures on their own

women, elderly people and people with fewer years of formal education were

the least digitally included

To analyze whether the Network influenced the digital inclusion of its users, we used its most basic dimension. Digital inclusion is understood as people doing things online, even with the help of others. The nearby stores play a vital role in bringing new technologies closer to these people, as shop owners are trusted peers for the neighbor, people they can rely on for assistance for carrying out these procedures. Potentially, this first step could motivate Network users to keep completing procedures online with the support of their peers or to learn how to do them on their own, or, if they already know how, to overcome the fear of doing it on their own in the near future.

To test this hypothesis, it is worth noting that 50% of the customers who chose to use the Network did so because they did not know how to do the procedures on their own, because they did not have the tools to do so, or both. This number was 8 percentage points lower than in Concepción del Uruguay. Thus, it comes as no surprise that, in Fray, reasons related to convenience and proximity are much more important, as the distance that separates people from the bulk of the offices is much greater than the one for the residents of Concepción del Uruguay, which is also a city with greater urban infrastructure for public services.

We did an inferential analysis with the responses received on the reasons for using the Network. Once we had these, we created a digital literacy index in order to assign a value to the reason for the person's visit, based on whether it was for practical reasons or out of necessity, either because they lacked the knowledge or tools to do so on their own. The index ranges from 0 to 1, where 1 is the highest level of digital literacy.

- **The first finding was that women have a digital literacy index of 7.5% lower compared to men, meaning they are less digitally included.** In the case of Concepción del Uruguay, this index was 1 percentage point lower for men.
- As in the previous edition, in Concepción del Uruguay, it was noted that, digital literacy is inversely proportional to age, which indicates that **older people have less knowledge or possession of digital tools.**
- Finally, digital literacy increases by an average of 3.5% per year of studies, showing that **more educated people have greater access to and knowledge of digital tools.**

Con Vos also helped promote the digital inclusion of store owners and clerks.

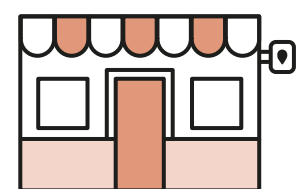
To be part of the *Con Vos* Network, the mandatory requirements for stores were to have a computer and Internet access. Having a printer was a plus, but not mandatory. **In Fray, there are around 80 small stores. And the Network aimed at, and succeeded on, reaching 30 of them,** a significant percentage, out of which 20 were active, that is, they managed to complete at least one online procedure with Network users. **Every person in charge of a nearby store received training when joining the Network.** They learned about new tools and improved their standing among their neighbors by providing new services. In several cases, they took the extra step of subscribing to an Internet provider service or buying printers to be part of the Network. In other cases, they upgraded their existing equipment and purchased tablets. **Thus, being part of the Network became an incentive to better equip themselves.** Other store owners and clerks repaired their existing equipment and bought tablets in order to join the Network.





Did the Network help local stores?

Nearby stores play a fundamental role in bringing products and services closer to everyone, regardless of their access to urban centers. Moreover, they are a means for innovation when they bring with them new technologies on a small scale. On the other hand, when they first join the *Con Vos* Network, store owners receive training and start offering new services, thus improving their standing in relation to their neighbors, who have a demand for these services.



70% of the participating stores had at least one new customer thanks to the network



31 Network participating stores

27% were new clients



531 digital procedures carried out

52% bought additional products



531 digital procedures carried out

As a result, they attract new customers and gain sales. From the Network's total digital procedures, 27% were new customers (14 out of the 20 stores in the Network that completed at least one procedure online attracted at least one new customer) and, in 52% of the cases, these new customers made extra purchases in addition to completing a procedure.

Out of the entire number of new customers, or customers who bought an additional product

80%

were women

94%

of those who claimed to use the *Con Vos* Network for convenience reasons had less chance of being new customers or buying an additional product

We created an index to assess whether the Network had any effect on strengthening community markets. This index is made up of the following possibilities: first, if it was the first time the customer came to the store, second, if they had bought any other product at the store in addition to completing their procedure online, or third, both. This index has a value of zero when the person accessed the Network but did not meet any of the conditions above; a value of 0.5 when they approached the Network as a new customer or bought any other product from the store in addition to completing the procedure; and a value of 1 when they met both conditions simultaneously.

Using this index as a dependent variable, we assessed how variables such as gender, education, and reasons for choosing to use the Network were related to proximity and convenience. In response, we observed that out of the entire number of new customers, or customers who bought an additional product, women accounted for a total of 80% in relation to men. We also observed that those who claimed to use the *Con Vos* Network for convenience reasons had, on average, a 94% less chance of being new customers or buying an additional product. This may indicate that, for these users, convenience arises from the fact that they were already clients of the store before it joined the Network.

A stylized illustration of a landscape. In the foreground, there's a brownish-orange ground with a small tree on the left and a small building on the right. Two people are cycling on a path that winds through rolling hills. The sky is white with a few blue clouds and a large white bird flying on the left. The text 'Con Vos: From Concepción del Uruguay to Fray Mamerto Esquiú' is written in a bold, orange font across the middle of the image.

A stylized illustration of a building on a hill. The building is a simple line drawing with a triangular roof, a circular window, and a rectangular base. It sits on a dark brown, rounded hill. In the foreground, two horses are depicted in a simple line-art style. One horse is standing and facing left, while the other is facing right. The background is a solid light brown color.

One important difference is that, in Fray, women were less digitally included. In Concepción del Uruguay, the digital inclusion index was 1 percentage point lower for men. The relative impact of the *Con Vos Network* on stores in Fray was greater than in Concepción del Uruguay if we consider that 27% of customers were new customers in Fray, compared to 14% in Concepción del Uruguay, and that 52% of them made additional purchases in Fray, compared to a 37% in Concepción del Uruguay. The pilot test in Concepción del Uruguay was conducted in 2021, a year in which the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to mobility restrictions, albeit more irregularly than the ones imposed since March 2020. In Concepción del Uruguay, the recruitment and training of store owners and clerks took place over a longer period, while the pilot test itself had the same duration than in Fray, taking place between March and June of 2021.

Lessons learned

An innovative grassroots solution that works has certain elements that are likely be used to replicate interventions in other places. This is the main result of this second experience of the *Con Vos* Network. Both in Concepción del Uruguay and in Fray, the solution was adopted by local stores and used by neighbors and proved to be effective in promoting decentralization and distance savings, digital inclusion, and community markets.

The results of the experience in Fray showed the following:

- The **main reason people choose to approach stores in the Network is due to a lack of knowledge to do the procedures online on their own**. When looking at the reasons as a whole, people also choose the Network for **convenience and proximity** reasons, almost as much as for their lack of knowledge and tools (such as computers, cell phones, and/or Internet access).
- Innovative territorial solutions arise from **people's inventiveness in times of need**, but they are also **useful for amplifying public policies that seek to address such needs**. The Network was implemented on the basis of pre-existing digitalization of municipal, provincial, and national procedures and, at the same time, expanded their scale.
- The Network **favors the decentralization of these procedures and results in time and distance savings for the residents**. This is especially true for women, who constituted the majority of users and saved greater distances. They benefit from this decentralization because they are typically responsible for caring for the elderly and children. As a result, they are disproportionately tied to their home and neighborhood dynamics and find it difficult to come to the offices in person to carry out several procedures.

- **Solutions evolve**. People find new uses and optimize existing solutions. Technology overcomes physical distances and people choose the Network regardless of the distance savings they obtain. This happens when neighbors:

- Carry out procedures online at a store within the Network, even when said store is close to the place where they could carry out that same procedure in person. In cases like these, distance savings are neutral.
- Take ownership of the solution and reinvent it in an innovative way. For example, when they are in the capital city again, very close to the offices where they could just carry out the procedure in person and choose to reach out to a store owner in Fray through WhatsApp to ask them to do an online procedure for them. This results in the paradox of negative distance savings.

In the first case, trust among peers or the convenience of personal assistance seems to bear greater importance. The second case is a variant of this, with a creative combination of different technologies.

- **Digital inclusion varies by age, gender, and level of education**. Women, older people, and those with lower levels of education showed lower levels of digital inclusion. Solutions such as the *Con Vos* Network benefit these groups to a greater extent, as they are already at a disadvantage.
- **Being part of the Network promotes digital inclusion among store owners**. Those responsible for working with the Network received training and took the additional step of acquiring equipment and/or connecting to the Internet to be a part of it.
- The Network can **strengthen community markets**. Nearby stores saw an increase in customers and sales by being part of the Network.

Conclusion

The second edition of the *Con Vos* Network, by which nearby stores provided support to residents to carry out online procedures, shows that grassroots solutions can be sources of innovation to promote digital inclusion.

Since they are based on what people are already doing, they are very easy to scale up because they can be adopted in a wide range of territories. **Results show that people feel more encouraged thanks to the support of nearby store owners and clerks, acquaintances, and peers, thus contributing to their digital inclusion in its minimal expression: people doing more things online.** This prevents users from having to go to the offices in the capital to do these procedures in person and, as a result, they save time and the need for travel, which implies decentralization in itself. **We also found that this solution allows for time and distance savings and presents a more practical solution, something which the users of the Network valued very much.** This favors groups with less knowledge and tools, such as people with lower levels of education, younger and older people, and women. The latter also benefit from doing things online near their homes because they typically have greater caregiving responsibilities and time constraints that prevent them from travelling to the city.

A novel result was linked to the appropriation of the solution by residents. They chose to use it in combination with other tools like WhatsApp and therefore, ended up carrying out procedures in Fray even when they were closer to offices where they could potentially have carried out the procedure in person.

Store owners also acquired new knowledge as they offered a new service to residents, for which they obtained an additional source of income and attracted new customers. At the same time, they improved their standing among their neighbors and received training to be able to provide a new service. Being part of the Network favored their digital inclusion as well. They acquired new knowledge and, in some cases, joining even meant receiving the push they needed to subscribe to an Internet provider or buy a printer or tablet.

The *Con Vos* Network allows people to do more things online. However, this first step must be complemented with other strategies for digital literacy, access to the Internet, and digital infrastructure. On the other hand, procedures must be designed to be user-friendly, so that the user experience is as seamless as possible for residents, regardless of their age, gender, or level of education. The *Con Vos* Network is a grassroots solution that works, and which can be scaled to other territories so that everyone can easily solve their procedures closer to their homes with a little help from their neighbors.



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