

THE POTENTIAL OF HRTECHS & EDTECHS FOR

# PROMOTING WOMEN'S RETENTION AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although the past decade has seen women in Latin America achieving higher levels of education and training, corresponding improvements in women's professional stability and career progression have not followed.<sup>1</sup> On average, **women hold senior management positions in only 20% of companies in Latin America.**<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, for each hour worked, women in Latin America, on average earn 17% less than their male peers.

**Multiple barriers underpin these gender gaps in women's career development in Latin America,** including gender biases, social expectations that women be the primary caregivers, systems that reward men more than women, a gender pay gap, more limited professional networks, few women role models particularly in both leadership and male-dominated sectors, and gender-based violence at work.

In the face of these immense challenges, B2B technology companies working in human resources (HRTech) and education (EdTech) are supporting a successful transition to the future of work. **By facilitating flexible and diverse work models, reskilling, applying data intelligence to promotion processes, and supporting anonymous whistleblowing, many of the HRTech and EdTech solutions reduce some gender inequalities.**

**But to do this well, they must consider gender throughout their business models.** While tech firms with B2B models have indirect or limited contact with end users, they can incorporate segmentation into their products or work collaboratively with their corporate customers to offer solutions that help their customers improve DEI in the workplace.

**This report looks at how HRTech and EdTech firms can better contribute to increasing women's retention and professional growth in the workplace.** The potential payoffs to businesses and investors for doing so are immense; businesses that embrace diversity tend to both outperform their peers financially and benefit from increased internal collaboration and innovation.<sup>3</sup>

To answer this question of "how," the report draws from conversations with over 30 tech companies, regional specialists, intermediary organizations, consultations with over 100 women, and an extensive literature review.

1 UNESCO, 2021a  
2 World Bank, (n.d.)  
3 Montilla, E., 2020; Castillo, P. & Callegaro, H., 2020

It finds that **some HRTechs and EdTechs are already catalyzing gender inclusion in retention and professional growth, offering solutions that address key gender-related barriers.** These powerful solutions existing today include providing the data to inform companies' gender, diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies; providing insight into the heterogeneity of women's experiences and into the experience of caregivers within a company; using virtual reality to increase company awareness of biases and discrimination; monitoring the gender pay gap; and offering solutions that reduce sexual harassment risks in companies.

With gender inclusion generally a new focus area for HRTechs and EdTechs, besides a few notable examples (i.e., solutions at the vanguard), **there is much opportunity for these companies to do more to support gender equality.** But where to start? We share the following seven recommendations for HRTechs and EdTechs:

**1 Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data.** Tech companies can use the large amounts of data they are already generating on their customers and users to streamline business decision-making on DEI.

**2 Use inclusive algorithms.** Ensure artificial intelligence does not replicate gender stereotypes, and that teams can both prevent bias and act when they identify bias.

**3 Include a women-centric approach.** "Gender-neutral" designs often exclude women. Instead, specifically consider women, among others, when developing training solutions.

**4 Create diverse product development teams.** Formalizing practices and policies that promote diversity in the company and delivering anti-bias training to product development teams will help de-bias technologies.

**5 Develop a DEI value proposition.** Develop a value proposition around how solutions can catalyze change on DEI within companies and communicate both the social and business impacts a company will experience as a result of this change.

**6 Walk the talk.** Practice DEI internally to give the business ecosystem a model of DEI in the workplace.

By implementing these recommendations, and with the support of investors, accelerators, and business hubs and networks, the HRTech and EdTech sectors could increase the odds that women benefit from the technology transformation occurring in Latin America's economy and that businesses flourish.

