

## Chapter 51

# Policies Information Literacy, Equality, and Gender: The Case of Spanish Prisons

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### ABSTRACT

*The development of information and communication technologies (ICT), especially the internet, means that not all the population has the same opportunities of access and use of these technologies or the training necessary to use them effectively. These technologies are producing socio-economic transformations. They also bring about important changes in the way they work, communicate, behave, and socialize. All these changes constitute a factor of social exclusion and have led to the emergence of the so-called digital divide (BD). This BD has accentuated the social gap and has contributed to the fact that certain population groups, such as female inmates, are considered to be “socially excluded” or “excluded digital,” and in the case of these female inmates the gender gap would also be present. The authors presented results of the analysis carried out to know the policies, projects, and programs that are being carried out both in Europe and in Spain in the field of informational and digital literacy for social and labor inclusion, as well as equality and gender policies.*

### INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Information and Communication Technologies (TIC) requires citizens to acquire the necessary skills and abilities to ensure the proper use of TIC, training them to manage the large amount of available information and thus being able to solve their information problems on a daily and work basis throughout their life.

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These technological changes bring a risk that can cause and increase the digital social exclusion of some groups or population groups. One of these population groups are women prisoners, these inmates are in clear risk of social and labor exclusion. As a woman and as a prisoner, we must add that most of these women are very poorly qualified, with a low self-esteem profile, school failure, most of them dependent on the male figure, with family, social, psychological problems and lack of freedom. All this causes them to have fewer opportunities of accessing the labor market, being doomed to unemployment or low-paid jobs, all of which makes it difficult to achieve their social and labor integration once they have obtained their freedom.

In prisons where women prisoners are deprived of their liberty, contact with the outside world is usually very limited or completely non-existent. Since they spend several years of their lives in these centers, they should be prepared to live in the information society that awaits them outside once they obtain their freedom. The knowledge about informational competences that they may already have is acquired before entering prison, so that in a brief time these will become obsolete. Therefore, their social and digital exclusion will be greater, the greater their sentence, becoming part of the group called “none-liners” (Buchmueller et al, 2011).

Therefore, information literacy is presented as a great challenge to solve this situation of inequality for these women prisoners with their subsequent inclusion in society and the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills to become informationally literate. The objectives pursued by this research are:

- Determine and know the policies, projects and programs that are being carried out both in Europe and in Spain in the field of information and digital literacy for social and labor inclusion, as well as equality and gender policies.
- Diagnose if these policies are being carried out in the prisons of Spanish women.

The methodology used is a research and analysis methodology to identify existing policies on information literacy at a European level and at a Spanish level and see if they have reached the level of implementation in Spanish female prisons.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Information Literacy for Social Inclusion**

The European Union (2006) links information literacy with lifelong learning, in its “Action Program in the field of lifelong learning”, where it points out that new technologies are an instrument that can lead to social inclusion and that, therefore, people who do not use them for different reasons are excluded from a society of information that is increasingly digitized. Marzal (2007), states that information literacy is closely linked to other contexts such as economic, cultural and social, for this author a person informationally literate should be able to know what information is relevant to evaluate, select and communicate for this way to be able to participate actively within society. Another author Abid (2012), adds a new denomination of information literacy, calls it “information culture”, this information culture is the sum of informational, digital and graphic literacy as well as reading and writing, it is a culture of collective exchange and enrichment. Authors such as (Bernhard, 2002, Gómez Hernández, 2002, Ponjuán, 2002) refer to the culture of information in an educational sense. Agúndez (2016: 60) defines information

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