



International
Labour
Organization

Digital platforms for domestic and care work in Latin America¹

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In the last decade, digital platforms for domestic and care work have expanded significantly in Latin American countries and have prompted growing interest, since they are presented as a disruptive phenomenon in the household services market. Based on the experiences of Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, this document describes the types of digital platforms interventions that predominate in the domestic and care work sector in the region, paying special attention to the relationship between their business models, specific characteristics of the sector and current local regulations.

Types of services provided

Digital platforms for domestic and care work in Latin America function mainly as intermediaries, providing services traditionally developed by agencies but in a digitalized way, such as worker recruitment, virtual digital connections, and digital outsourcing, while introducing new services based on communication technologies, including digitalized personnel management and electronic payment systems.

Traditional services

► **Worker recruitment and connections:** In digital platforms, the relationship between job supply and demand is presented digitally and certain mechanisms allow female workers to apply for jobs that are most convenient for them, while allowing employers to choose the candidates they consider most appropriate. The process includes verification of the workers' skills, in some cases through virtual or face-to-face interviews.

► **Outsourcing:** Digital platforms can also make domestic workers or caretakers available through the digital outsourcing service. Most platforms focus on cleaning services, scheduled as requested on a

case-by-case basis or a few hours per week. Through websites or apps, households contract a service, which can be provided by the same worker or by several at the same time.

New services linked to digitalization

► **Digitalized personnel management:** This service includes administrative and accounting personnel management services, including salary agreements, salary receipts, leave days, and others. They may also include workers' registration and payment of employer charges.

► **Electronic payments:** All platforms offer electronic payments, either through virtual wallets or bank transfers, although the possibility of paying in cash is not excluded. In many cases, the platforms advise workers on the procedure to use virtual wallets or to open bank accounts.

Given that households frequently have difficulties in navigating the regulatory framework that defines their role as employers, service platforms tend to make it easier to comply with their obligations and can, **therefore contribute to the formalization of the employment relationship between the worker and the employer household.**

¹ This document was prepared based on the report *Plataformas digitales de servicio doméstico y condiciones laborales. El caso de Argentina*. Buenos Aires: ILO Country Office for Argentina (2023).

Map of the digital platforms of domestic and care work in Latin America

64 digital platforms were identified by mapping domestic and care work platforms operating in Latin America. Some provide several services in a simultaneous and/or combined way, while others focus exclusively on one service:

- ▶ More than half of the digital platforms for domestic and care work in Latin America are dedicated exclusively to recruitment and digital connections.
- ▶ Most of these platforms specialize in cleaning and care work, but some also offer the possibility of hiring different types of personnel for different purposes, such as home repairs and other works.

▶ In most cases, they propose hiring services for a few hours a week – between four and five hours. However, many platforms enable the possibility of full-time daily contracts or even live-in arrangements.

▶ Digital outsourcing is a very common service among digital platforms in Colombia, but it is absent in other countries. Many of these platforms specialize in providing cleaning services to households and businesses on an hourly basis.

▶ The study identified only one platform, based in Colombia and Mexico, that focuses exclusively on digitalized personnel management.

▶ In most cases, digitalized personnel management appears in combination with worker recruitment and digital connections adding an extra service for employers and thus differentiating these platforms from traditional employment agencies.

Types of digital intermediaries in Latin America according to their proposed services

Digital Outsourcing	Recruitment and digital connections	Recruitment and digital connections + Digitalized personnel management	Digitalized personnel management
Chile <i>Santiago Impeque</i> <i>Aseo a domicilio</i> Colombia <i>Serv</i> <i>CasaLimpia</i> <i>Domestikas</i> <i>TocTocAseo</i> <i>Agemser</i> <i>AseoYa</i> <i>Home and Care</i> <i>Servido Domésticas</i> <i>Homesekeeper365</i> <i>Timbrit</i> <i>Limsa</i> <i>Cleandelivery</i> <i>4Home</i> <i>Hogaru</i> Paraguay <i>Helpers</i>	Argentina <i>Expertas Net</i> <i>BigBluePeople</i> Bolivia <i>Gober</i> Brazil <i>Parafuzo</i> <i>Clin</i> <i>Helpy</i> <i>Faxina da Hora</i> <i>CleanHouse Express</i> <i>Donamaid</i> <i>Broomy</i> <i>Limpeaqui</i> <i>Suacasalimpia</i> <i>Maria Brasileira</i> Chile <i>Keeping</i> <i>Mopit</i> <i>TeLoCuido</i> <i>Nanas del Sur</i> <i>La Nana</i> <i>Busco Nanas</i> <i>Chilenanas</i> <i>Nanas Perú</i> <i>Tuten</i> <i>Zolvers</i>	Colombia <i>Tap Tapp</i> <i>Home Squad</i> <i>Auxilimpieza</i> <i>Domésticas de Colombia</i> <i>Zolvers</i> Ecuador <i>Casera</i> México <i>Aliada</i> <i>Homely</i> <i>HomeSquad</i> <i>Aseo GDL</i> <i>Zolvers</i> Panamá <i>MiMaidXpress</i> <i>Lavanda</i> <i>Yocotizo</i> Perú <i>Tu aliado en limpieza</i> <i>Bertha</i> <i>Nanas y amas</i>	Argentina <i>Zolvers</i> Chile <i>Pide tu nana</i> <i>Nanamía</i> <i>Nana Filipina</i> Mexico <i>MiDulceHogar</i> <i>Kipper</i> <i>Bamba</i> Colombia Mexico <i>Simplifica</i>

Characteristics of digital platforms in Latin America combining recruitment and digital connections with personnel management

Country	Platform	Type of service	Type of contract	Customers
Argentina	Zolvers	Cleaning and care	All	Households and offices
Chile	Pide tu nana Nanamia Nana Filipa	Cleaning and care	All Live-in	Households
Mexico	MiDulceHogar Kipper Bamba	Cleaning	All Not specified	Households and offices Households

Source: Own database.

Labour regulations and digital platforms development

In order to analyze how labour regulations enable or condition the development of digital platforms whose main function is the selection of workers and digital connections, this subsection focuses on the study of four countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico.

Among the surveyed platforms, it was possible to identify two different contracting models:

- I. Hiring domestic workers **as independent workers** for less than eight hours per week.
- II. Hiring through all contract types – live-in, full-time, part-time, and hourly – **under a paid labour relationship** between the employer and the domestic worker.

These ways of contracting are related to the common practice in the sector of each country and the level of

formalization, as well as to the characteristics of domestic work regulations nationwide.

Hiring independent workers

This way of contracting is generally found in platforms of Brazil and Mexico, countries that differ greatly regarding regulatory frameworks and law enforcement.

In the case of Brazil, this can be explained by the legal definition of domestic work, which implies the rendering of a service "on a continuous, subordinate, onerous and personal basis, without profit, to a person or family, within their residential address, for more than two days a week" (*Ley Complementaria 150/2015*, art.1). This leaves out a significant group of people who work for employer households on an hourly basis, known as *diaristas*. The Brazilian platforms explicitly state that they connect "clients" with "autonomous service providers" and propose a work schedule of no more than eight hours per week. Although female workers can register as independent workers under the category "Individual Microentrepreneur" (*MEI*) and access certain social protections, in practice, most of these women work informally. In that regard, **digital platforms would be increasing the growing number of female workers excluded from legal protection.**

In Mexico, digital platforms are also focusing on hourly work, offering services from three to eight hours per week. In 2019, the regulation of hourly work was introduced for various profiles of employer households, achieved through an amendment to the Federal Labour Law. Also, a Supreme Court ruling established the compulsory registration of all domestic workers in the Social Security system. Nonetheless, levels of informality remain very high. **That is why digital platforms keep relying on these practices, to develop a business model in which the platform "does not assume any type of**



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responsibility for the services provided", as read in *Aliada's* Terms and Conditions.

Recruitment of workers through paid labour relationship

This model is generally found in platforms of Chile and Argentina, where recent reforms have consolidated the protection of domestic workers' rights. Furthermore, in both countries the governments have created relatively effective mechanisms to implement the regulations.

The regulatory framework of the sector in Chile is one of the most inclusive in Latin America, with maternity leave, social security, minimum wage, unemployment insurance, among other rights. The significant level of formalization of the sector enables the tendency towards formal labour relations. Digital platforms propose different types of contracts, including both live-in and live-out arrangements, full-time, part-time, or hourly, and generally provide information on the formalization process.

In the case of Argentina, digital platforms mostly offer services of hourly work, generally for periods of less than five hours per week since short working hours predominate in the sector. The law grants all workers the same rights, regardless of the number of daily hours or weekly shifts. Therefore, the worker must be registered in the social security system as an employee of the household, whatever the number of hours per week worked. For example, *Zolvers* is a platform that provides free advisory services throughout the registration procedure for both workers and employers, as well as paid services for managing the employment relationship.

Final thoughts

► This comparative study shows that, although the surveyed platforms have common characteristics – such as fast hiring process, guaranteed personnel, and electronic payment systems – they have developed different business models due to the limitations and possibilities of current legislation regarding household labour, and to the characteristics of the sector, particularly the levels of informality that strongly influence the way digital platforms operate.

► In summary, the regulatory framework and structure of the sector in each country define the different opportunities for intervention and development that worker recruitment and digital connections platforms have in the domestic and care services sector.



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