
From Cash to Clicks: Empowering Women in Cyprus with Digital Financial Skills



Case study based on story from media
resources

Developed by the Center for Social Innovation (Cyprus)

Introduction

In recent years, the rise of digital financial services has significantly altered the landscape of personal finance, particularly for women. Digitalisation has made managing finances more accessible, empowering women to handle transactions and bill payments more efficiently. However, this increased accessibility also highlights the importance of digital financial literacy to ensure that women can make informed financial decisions. According to a survey on financial literacy in Cyprus conducted by the Central Bank of Cyprus, financial literacy is a major issue in Cyprus, since the results show low level of digital financial knowledge in the general population, and even lower in women and young people groups. This case study aims to illustrate the importance of upgrading digital financial skills among women in Cyprus, promoting socioeconomic inclusion and financial independence.

Case analysis

In Cyprus, many women, especially those from rural areas or low-income backgrounds, face challenges in accessing and managing financial services digitally. Maria, a 45-year-old woman from a small village, exemplifies this issue. With limited digital literacy, Maria found herself reliant on cash transactions and physical visits to banks and bill payment centers, which were both time-consuming and costly.

Maria's financial difficulties began when her husband lost his job, and she had to manage the household finances on her own. The nearest bank was several kilometers away, making frequent visits impractical. Without the knowledge of online banking or digital payment methods, Maria struggled to keep track of her expenses, leading to missed bill payments and financial stress. Her lack of digital skills also prevented her from exploring additional income opportunities that could be accessed online.

Recognizing the need for improved digital financial literacy, a local women's association launched a program aimed at educating women like Maria. The program's goal was to provide comprehensive training on digital financial tools and empower women to manage their finances more efficiently.

Proposed solutions and recommendations

The first solution was for the government to organize info days, focusing on practical digital financial skills. The second step was to provide small workshops covered essential topics such as using smartphones and computers for online banking, digital payment methods, and secure online transactions. Maria attended these info days and workshops, where she learned how to navigate online banking platforms, set up automatic bill payments, and use mobile payment apps.

To ensure accessibility, the program offered sessions at convenient times for women with family responsibilities. The workshops were designed to be interactive and hands-on, allowing participants to practice their new skills in a supportive environment. Maria found the practical approach and peer support invaluable in overcoming her initial fears and building confidence.

These solutions worked because they addressed both the practical and psychological barriers to digital financial literacy. By providing education and training tailored to the needs of women, the program empowered them with the knowledge and skills needed to manage their finances digitally. Making digital tools accessible and easy to use further removed barriers to entry, while community and institutional support fostered a nurturing learning environment.

Self-reflection questions

These questions can serve as prompts for introspection and self-assessment, helping individuals gain insight into their financial habits, values, and aspirations.

1. How do Maria's challenges in managing her finances resonate with your own experiences or observations?
2. Reflecting on the proposed solutions, which one do you think would have the most significant impact on improving digital financial literacy among women in Cyprus, and why?
3. Consider the importance of tailored programs like the one Maria attended. How might similar initiatives benefit other communities facing similar challenges globally?
4. Reflect on the role of community support in fostering digital empowerment. How can communities and institutions collaborate to create more inclusive financial education programs?

Self-assessment questions

*Read each question carefully and select the best answer from the options provided.**

1. Which of the following strategies did Maria implement to improve her financial situation:

- a) Increasing her spending on unnecessary items
- b) Taking out more short-term loans
- c) Using a secured credit card for small purchases
- d) Ignoring her existing debts and financial responsibilities

2. What was the outcome of Maria's efforts to enhance her digital financial literacy:

- a) She declared bankruptcy
- b) She obtained approval for a large loan
- c) She continued to face challenges with managing her finances
- d) She successfully invested in a new business venture.

3. What impact did the local women's association's program have on Maria's financial knowledge:

- a) It reinforced her habits of financial irresponsibility
- b) It inspired her to adopt more responsible financial practices
- c) It pressured her to relocate for better opportunities
- d) It provided her with strategies to accumulate more debt.

4. What lesson did Maria learn through her journey in improving her digital financial literacy:

- a) The importance of financial dependence on others
- b) The benefits of making impulsive financial decisions
- c) The consequences of not planning for the future
- d) The significance of acquiring financial knowledge and skills

5. How did Maria's participation in the digital financial literacy program impact her ability to manage household expenses effectively?

- a) She continued to struggle with budgeting and overspending
- b) She learned to prioritize savings over immediate expenditures

- c) She opened multiple new credit cards to cover expenses
- d) She neglected to monitor her spending habits

This multiple-choice test can help assess understanding financial journey and the lessons learned from his experiences.

* Correct answers

1.C 2.C 3.B 4.D 5.B

References

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