INCLUSION OF OLDER PEOPLE IN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

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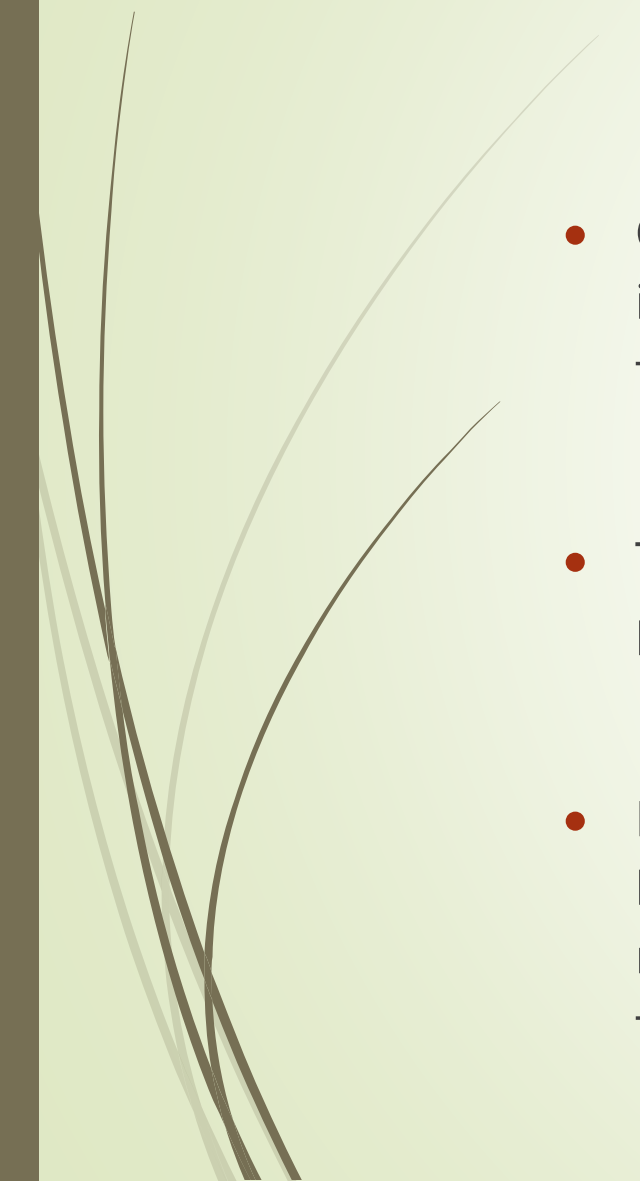
Issues of Inclusion:

- Despite religious and cultural injunctions to protect and respect older people in many societies, our research has clearly revealed that many older people feel excluded, marginalized and discriminated against.

- In recent research, for example, we identified that 69 per cent of older people in humanitarian situations did not know how to voice their complaints or opinions and some 77 percent of older people said they had never been asked about the help they needed.

Breaking Isolation.

- One of the major issues facing older people in many societies is social isolation, exaggerated today by modern trends of urbanization and nuclear families living apart.

- This was significantly worsened during the Covid pandemic when many people remained isolated at home and unable to physically meet.

- During this period HelpAge continued to facilitate the previous meetings we had organized for older people through the use of phones and Zoom meetings, accompanied by training with older people on the use of these technologies. (Jordan / Kyrgyzstan)

Communicating Information:

- In Vietnam there is an average of 79 % internet access across the general population yet only 12.7 per cent among older people aged 60 and above.

- In 2020 the Ministry of health, UNFPA and HelpAge developed a health information app to provide information about Covid and how to avoid or treat it, that subsequently developed into a more general health information platform.

- By 2023 some 6,500 Older Peoples' Associations with an average of 50 to 70 older people per group had received exposure to the app and trained on its use.
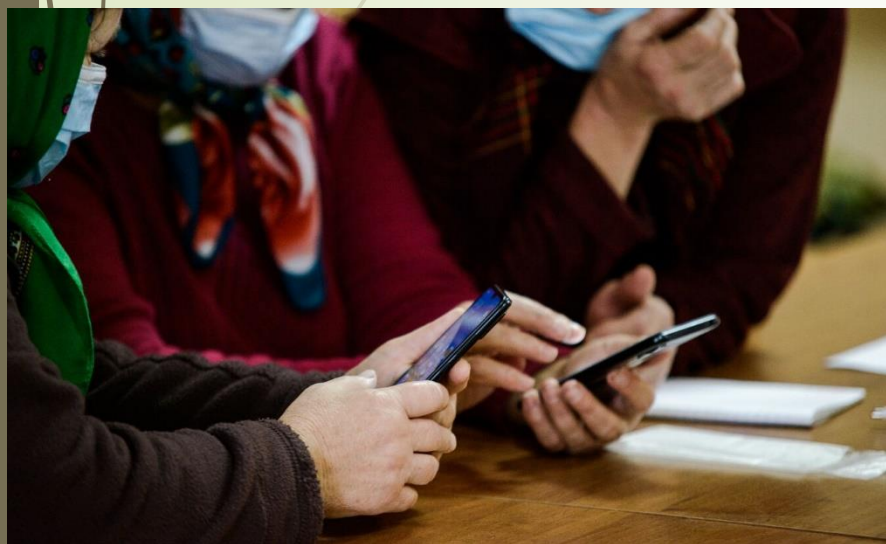
Building Relationships

- Only 3 per cent of older people in Moldova use information technologies compared to an average of 41 per cent in EU countries.

- HelpAge, UNFPA and an IT company developed a programme to bring 50 younger people and 500 older people together on the issue of digital education.

- Mutual benefits to both older people and younger people were registered: among which not only use of technology but information on social services available, e-health services, information sessions with a lawyer, healthy aging lifestyles, and positive uses of social media to combat ageism.

Activities in Pictures

Thanks to this phone, I'm in the know about the news in Moldova and in the village because now I'm a member of the Viber Group of our village, said Ms Ekaterina from Carabetovca. Young volunteers taught me how to use the telephone and how to use different applications and the Viber."

I felt as if I'm in the first form again, said an older person Ana from Sarata Noua village who participated in the training sessions.

"Now I understand why young people spend so much time on the phone, said Ms Vera from Sadaclia. When I discovered the application Youtube, I started looking for songs of my youth and I listened to them once, but then I saw the recommendations for other similar songs and thus I spent 3 hours navigating".
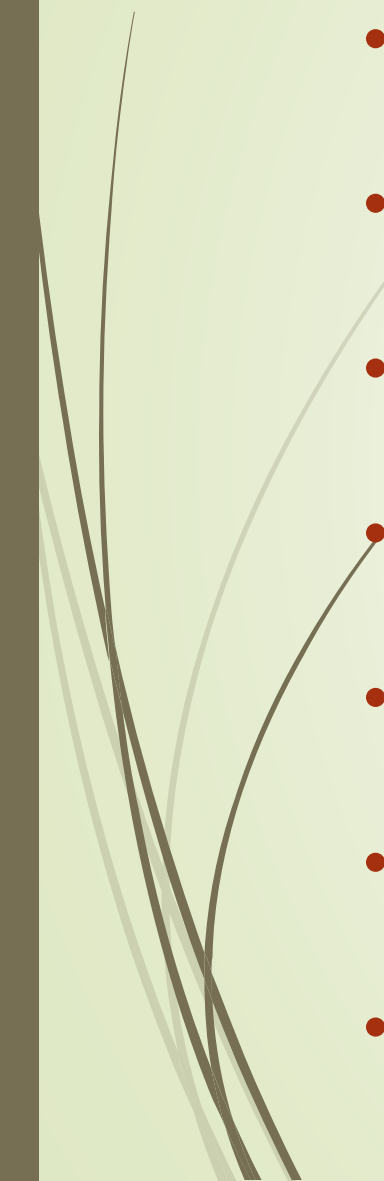
Worries and Concerns

Safeguarding against exploitation and abuse. (Egypt / Jordan)

Negative cultural influences (Kyrgyzstan)

Undermining social / personal interactions.

Recommendations:

- Addressing dexterity and vision.

- Complex interfaces and inaccessible terminology

- Economic exclusion.

- Rural / Urban digital divide (Access to electricity, internet etc)

- Data privacy and cyber security

- Nothing About Us Without Us.

- Social media impact and ability to 'interrogate' information.

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'How do we enjoy the benefits of technology without inviting its hazards into our society? That is a question we have no answer to today.' Older person in Kyrgyzstan