

Digital Inclusion of Older Persons – Virtual UN Forum, August 11, 2020

Following are the key-points of this event:

Digital Technology is essential for the wellbeing of older persons. During the Covid-19 pandemic it became clear that, in order to stay connected with the outside world, older persons should start with the use of digital technology.

Benefits of using DT:

- Education (long-life learning) and entertainment
- Healthcare (tele-medicine)
- Information
- Social integration and participation
- Tele-shopping/-banking
- Virtual contacts

It is, however, of great importance that DT becomes more user-friendly and it would be extremely useful to include older persons in research and product-design.

It is essential to educate older persons in a positive way how to use technical devices and how to move in the digital world.

DT is created for every age and built for daily-living use. This also includes older persons! It is important to demystify Digital Technology!

In 2019 the Vienna NGO Committee started a project on
“The use of very advanced technologies and artificial intelligence in personal support and care services for older persons living in their own homes”

Research has shown that older persons in Europe (around 80%) strongly prefer to age “at home” and do not want to be put into care institutions – even not in case of mild or medium health and functional problems. On the other hand, residential homes and/or care homes are generally very expensive and for many older people not affordable. Frequently, these institutions even do not exist in sufficient numbers, and the quality of their services is not always at a satisfactory level.

“Ageing at home” does not necessarily mean in one’s own flat or house – which may be an uncomfortable, work-intensive and physically dangerous place – but simply dwelling in familiar surroundings. To live as long as possible in one’s own habitual environment, but socially well connected, is a dream of many older persons. Independence, self-determination and participation are considered as important rights and key determinants of quality of life.

The development of systems for the use of tele-medicine and tele-care opens interesting horizons for taking care of older persons in need of care and assistance through at-distance-processes of monitoring, diagnostics, counselling, support and treatment.