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Reaching older persons in the community: intergenerational approaches and local innovations

MAINSTEAMING DIGITAL INCLUSION IN INTERGENERATIONAL SELF HELP CLUBS (ISHCs) IN VIETNAM

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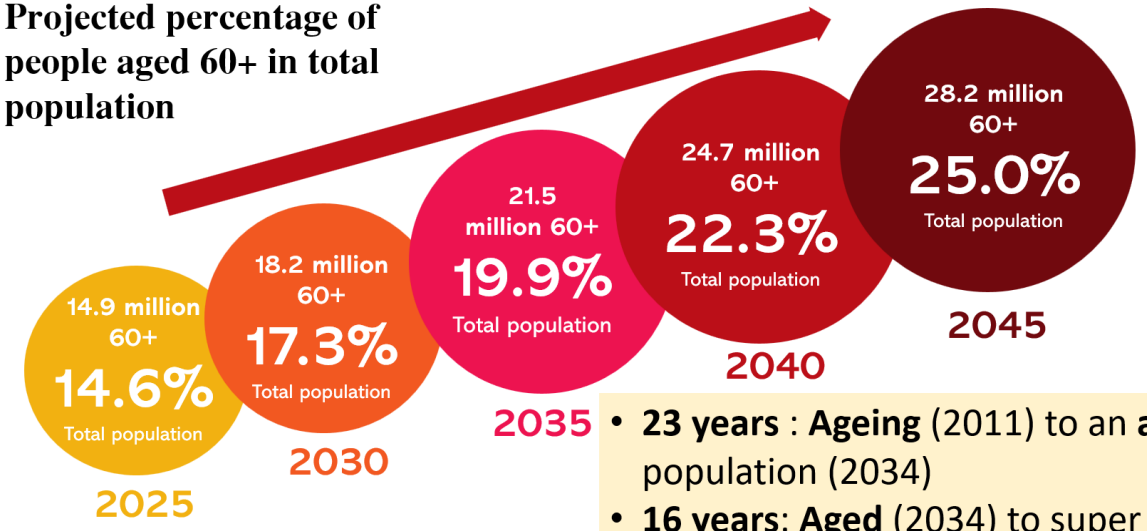
Digital divide in rapid ageing Vietnam

Rapid ageing in Vietnam



Source: Projection of Viet Nam's population, 2024–2074 (NSO, 2024)

- **23 years** : **Ageing** (2011) to an **aged** population (2034)
- **16 years**: **Aged** (2034) to super aged (2050)

Rapid advancement of digital technologies in Vietnam

2025:

- 84.2% of population or 85.6 M+: internet users
- ~77.6% of population or 79.0 M: social media user identities
- 137 M: mobile connections *(Oct 2025; Data Reportal, Digital 2026)*

Yet

- Large digital gap among older persons;
- **Only 20% of OP** feel comfortable using digital tools
- Older women, older old and those in remote areas face double disadvantages (low income + low confidence)

Key barriers faced by older peoples (OP) to meaningful digital participation

- **Limited IT training program specialized for OP;** Small scale; lack of on-going support; not age friendly technical methods
- Rely on guidance by **family members** who are usually not patient in teaching
- **Fear of scams, identity theft, in-confidence, and "I cannot learn" mindset**
- **Low affordability** for ICT devices and internet use, especially among older women, due to low income
  - *62% OP: no social, contributory pensions nor social allowance (2025)*
- **Devices/apps are not age friendly:** *small font size, difficult for use/navigate, language barriers, frequent change …*
- **Ageism:** See OP as unmarketable – lack of consultation with OP to understand their needs

Source 1: UNFPA; The Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in Viet Nam (LSAHV)
Source 2: https://vov2.vov.vn/nguoi-cao-tuoi/giup-nguoi-cao-tuoi-vuot-qua-rao-can-thoi-cong-nghe-40-42897.vov2

Our strategies

Mainstream digital literacy and skills into new and existing Intergenerational Self-Help clubs (ISHC)

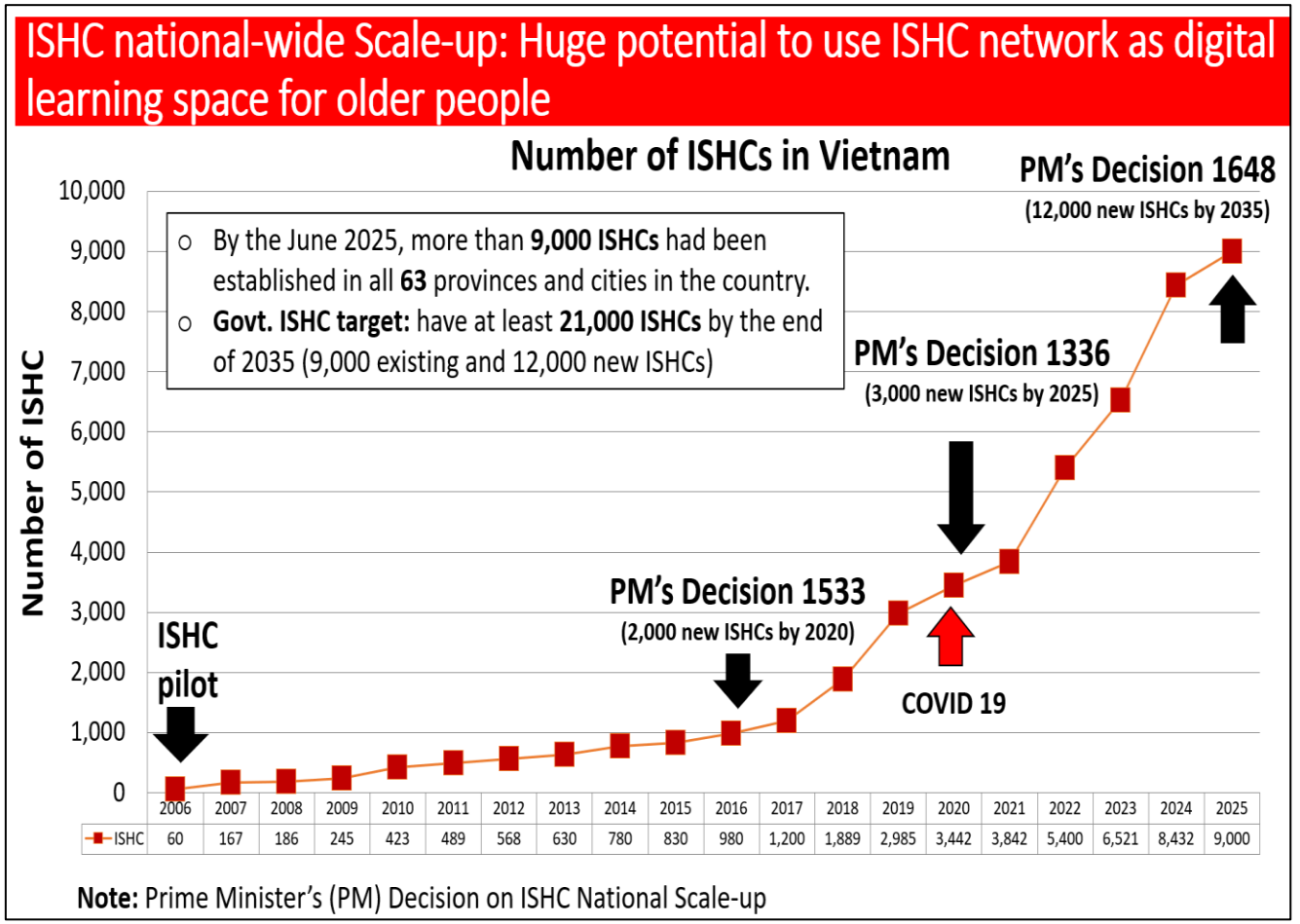
- Pilot stage
- TOT
- Peer learning
- Intergenerational
- Potential to replicate





Why ISHCs?

- Existing structures as voluntary social organizations
- 50-70 members at **village** level
- **Purpose:** to improve the well-being of ISHC members, majority of whom are **older people** (OP), **women** and other vulnerable groups, using intergenerational and mutual support approach.



- **Promoted by Vietnam government:** target in national and local policies including national strategy on older person till 2035, three Prime Minister's master projects to replicate national-wide (21,000 ISHCs by 2035).

Strategies: include/embed into ISHC regular activities



1) Social/Cultural



2)Food & Income S.



3) Healthy Ageing



4) Community-based Care



5) Self-help & CD.



6) Life-long Learning



7) Rights & Entitlement



8) Resource Mobilization





COVID-19 and Seniors: Information for loved ones and carers







Our strategies

- **Generate interest:** Developed a number of videos for ISHCs to use *(COVID-19, health, care, income generating activities, games, songs, dance ect…)*
- **Go practical:** TOT Trainings for ISHC's leaders and members on how to use smart phone, social media, Zoom to contact family and friends, read news, health apps, how to make videos and upload…

Our strategies







- **Use age friendly materials and training methodologies:** large fonts, clear visuals, step-by-step guides, provide printed illustrated manuals.
- **Create safe, supportive environments:** small groups in ISHCs**;** encourage participation *(bonus cards, promoting healthy competition …)*
- **Celebrate progress:** Recognize small achievements to build confidence and motivation.
- **Ensure continuity:** Offer **follow-up sessions** or digital help desks where older adults can seek help when facing new challenges or forget what they have learnt.
- **Consult for improvement:** Let them suggest topics, tools, or applications that are truly relevant to their needs; input for the training materials and methodologies







WHAT did the ISHCs do after TOT?

- Re-train ISHC members by trained leaders and volunteers
- Using digital tools in ISHC monthly meetings & outreach
- Promoting intergenerational & peer-to-peer support (digital champions in each small group)

DIGITAL INCLUSION IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF.

When embedded in trusted community structures such as **ISHCs**, it empowers older people to **CONNECT**, **ACCESS**, **PARTICIPATE** and **CONTRIBUTE** – building more inclusive and **age-friendly communities**.

- Rapid ageing population
- Rapid digital transformation
- Risk of digital exclusion

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

TRUSTED COMMUNITY PLATFORM



Community based | Intergenerational | Peer support | Trusted & local

EMPOWERS OLDER PEOPLE THROUGH DIGITAL INCLUSION

- CONNECT
- ACCESS
- PARTICIPATE
- CONTRIBUTE

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES



- Inclusive
- Connected
- Supportive
- Resilient

NO ONE SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION.

Lesson learnt & recommendations

- **Believe** that OP can master technology – **remove age stereotype**
- Build OP **interest** and **confidence**. Training should address **practical** topics including on online scams
- **Use intergenerational** *(younger teach older)* and peer/mutual support **approach** *(OP can teach each other)*
- **Design age friendly training materials and guideline**, use age friendly training methods *(theory and practice, re-training, follow up support, local resource persons, illustrated materials…)*
- **Include digital literacy and skills** into the strong existing community structures as they, if included/invested, can provide **low cost**, **effective** and **sustainable** solution to digital inclusion and empowerment, contributing to age friendly environment in digital era.


Thank you!
OLDER PEOPLE IN INDUSTRY 4.0!
HelpAge