

# Digital Skills and Lifelong Learning Opportunities for the Elderly with Disabilities

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## ABSTRACT

In an era where society is rapidly embracing digitalization, the ability to engage and participate effectively in various aspects of life is closely tied to one's digital skills. These skills encompass the understanding and utilization of everyday Internet technologies that have become integral to our lives. Unfortunately, certain segments of the population, particularly the elderly with disabilities, face significant challenges in acquiring these essential digital competences, thus putting them at risk of being digitally excluded. To address this issue, the joint project of the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education and Shanghai Open University aims to support the development of new competencies tailored specifically to the needs of elderly individuals, enabling them to learn and actively participate in the digital world. The project recognizes that the elderly population faces unique obstacles in acquiring digital skills, such as unfamiliarity with technology, lack of confidence, and limited access to relevant resources. By focusing on empowering disabled elderly people with the necessary competences, the project seeks to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusivity in an increasingly digital society. Through targeted training programs, workshops, and educational initiatives, the project aims to equip the elderly with the knowledge and abilities needed to navigate digital platforms, access information, including medical and well-being resources, communicate with others, and utilize online services effectively. By fostering digital literacy and assistive technologies among the elderly with disabilities, the project envisions enhancing their overall quality of life, enabling them to stay connected, access vital services (including medical), and participate actively in the digital landscape. Collected advanced cases of digital inclusion of the elderly from various regions around the world are focused on specific application scenarios, covering corresponding areas for the digital needs of the elderly such as access to information and navigation in daily life and wellbeing to narrow the digital divide among senior citizens.