For Discussion
on 3 June 2024

Legislative Council Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Promoting Digital Inclusion

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the work progress of promoting digital inclusion by the Government.

Background

2. Digital technology is closely related to people's daily life. Mobile communications, online shopping, electronic payment, online meetings, remote learning, and the use of social media and various online services have become the common parts of many people's daily lives. With the wide adoption of digital technology, the usage rate of the Internet among elderly people has increased remarkably in recent years. According to the statistical figures released by the Census and Statistics Department, the rate of persons aged 65 and above using the Internet for handling personal affairs (including information searches, interactive communication, online entertainment, shopping or mobile payment activities) increased from around 56% in 2018 to around 66% in 2020, and further to around 82% in 2022, reflecting the widespread use of digital technology among the elderly in various aspects of their daily lives.

3. In order to allow members of our society to enjoy the benefits of digital technology, the Government continues to promote various digital inclusion measures to help those in need (especially the elderly) to understand and use digital technology products and services. It is also expected that the Internet usage rate of persons aged 65 and above will continue to rise and reach the new target of 87% in 2025. The progress of various digital inclusion measures is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Digital Inclusion Measures

ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly

4.   The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) has launched the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Outreach Programme for the Elderly (Outreach Programme) since 2014 on a regular basis.   Non-profit-making elderly services organisations commissioned by OGCIO have made visits to elderly people across the territory, including those living in residential care homes, receiving day care centre and home care services, as well as the hidden elderly.   In addition, these organisations organised various activities to enable the elderly to experience digital living and encourage them to use more digital technology.

5.   A new round of the two-year Outreach Programme has been launched in April 2023.   Apart from enabling the elderly to learn and use digital products, the Outreach Programme also covers a host of diversified activities, such as facilitating interactive communication of the elderly with other people in the metaverse, and leveraging augmented reality (AR) technology for reminiscence therapy or art therapy, etc.   While assisting them in widening their social network and integration into society, the Outreach Programme also helps arouse the elders' interest in technology and facilitates them to personally experience the benefits that digital technology brings to daily life.   There were over 123 000 elderly participated in the programme since its launch.   According to the post-activity surveys, the vast majority of the elderly respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the activities of the Outreach Programme.

6.   Furthermore, service organisations under the Outreach Programme have set up mobile outreach service stations on a pilot basis since 2021 at various community locations frequently visited by the elderly such as parks, shopping malls or housing estates, and proactively introduce to the elderly useful mobile apps and answer their questions about using smartphones.   Having regard to the situations of online and mobile phone scams, special efforts have also been made to introduce anti-fraud information and provide safety tips for using smartphones to the elderly.   A total of more than 200 mobile outreach service activities have been conducted so far, and around 15 000 elders in the community were served.   According to the post-activity surveys, the vast majority of the elderly respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the mobile outreach service activities.   In view of the positive response and demand of the elderly in the community for the mobile outreach service activities, we have incorporated the mobile outreach service into the Outreach Programme.

7.   Detailed information on the Outreach Programme is at **Annex I**.

Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly

8.   OGCIO has launched the Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (Training Programme) since 2019, offering over 230 free advanced digital training courses for the elderly with basic knowledge of digital technology.   In addition to smart healthcare, online shopping, mobile payment, e-wallet, social media and cyber security, the training courses also cover some commonly used Government mobile apps, such as "iAM Smart", "HKeMobility" and HA GO, etc.

9.   In response to the needs of society and the elderly, more diversified courses will be introduced to the Training Programme in 2024, such as the basic operation of commonly used Mainland mobile apps.   We will also update the anti-fraud courses from time to time to facilitate the elderly to deal with the evolving scam risks.   We have also engaged youth volunteers from the industry and professional bodies to act as course instructors for the Training Programme to help the elderly use digital technology and promote harmony across generations.   Besides, the elderly participants can act as instructors to help more elderly acquire technology knowledge and broaden their social circles.   Since the launch of the Training Programme, over 12 000 elderly have participated.

10.   A new round of the two-year Training Programme was launched in May this year, and it is expected that the number of participating elderly will reach 6 000.   Statistical figures and summary of the Training Programme are at **Annex II**.

Web-based Learning Portal for the Elderly

11.   The "Elderly IT Learning Portal" (the Portal) was launched in 2019 with the aim of facilitating the acquisition of digital skills by the elderly, anytime and anywhere, based on their personal needs and interests.   The Portal has rolled out 36 learning modules so far, with their contents being updated regularly, covering online shopping, "iAM Smart", "HKeMobility", cloud-based tools, cyber security, electronic payment and electronic food ordering applications, etc., as well as providing an entertaining and easy-to-understand introduction through animation and story plots on Mainland mobile apps frequently used by the elderly, streaming platforms and online banking.   So far, the Portal recorded over 580 000 visits and over 33 million hits.

Community Cooperation Activities

12.   In addition to the regular programmes mentioned above, OGCIO also works in collaboration with the District Care Team to design and develop the learning materials of digital technology suitable for the elderly.   The contents of these learning materials cover various digital technology applications in daily life, such as "iAM Smart", social connectivity, anti-fraud information, streaming platforms, electronic food ordering, etc.   It is expected that through the Care Team's community network and close contact with residents, as well as opportunities to reach out to the elderly in ordinary district work, we could more effectively disseminate practical information, including anti-fraud measures, to the elderly and assist them in making good use of digital technology.

Web/Mobile App Accessibility

13.   On the promotion of digital accessibility, a total of about 650 government websites have already met the Level AA standard of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.0 promulgated by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), such as providing textual descriptions for non-textual content, subtitles for video files, sufficient colour contrast and sufficient time to facilitate users in reading content and performing operations, etc., to comply with the accessibility requirements for making websites accessible to persons with disabilities.   Besides, all of some 80 government mobile apps have adopted accessibility design.   In view of our ageing society, we have introduced design requirements for accessibility of websites and mobile apps to facilitate web browsing and the use of Internet services by the elderly, thereby catering for the needs of an ageing society.   Examples of elderly-friendly design include the provision of simple and large icon/text buttons, custom position of functions on the screen, page reading functions, etc. In end-2023, we published the "Elderly-friendly Website/Mobile Application Design Guide" for the reference of government departments and industries. OGCIO will also regularly conduct accessibility standard audits for government departments, and assist the departments concerned in making continuous enhancement to ensure that the existing and the newly developed government websites and mobile apps comply with the prevailing accessibility standards.

14.   At the same time, we support the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited (HKIRC) in regularly organising the Digital Accessibility Recognition Scheme (the Scheme), so as to encourage more enterprises as well as public and private organisations to adopt accessible designs on their websites

and mobile apps.   The recognition scheme will provide free assessment and advisory services to all participating organisations, as well as conduct briefing sessions for different sectors of the community (including tertiary students and staff of enterprises) to promote the concepts and technical requirements of accessibility design.   The 2024-25 Scheme is now accepting applications. The awards ceremony of the Scheme is tentatively scheduled to be held in the second quarter of 2025.

Social Innovation and Cross-sector Digital Inclusion Projects

15.   Launched in 2013, the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund) seeks to drive social impact in alleviating poverty and social exclusion as well as fostering the well-being and cohesion of the society by promoting social innovation and nurturing social entrepreneurship.   As at end-April 2024, a total of 583 projects have been funded under the SIE Fund and over 50 of these projects involve the promotion of digital inclusion or the use of digital technologies to help improve elderlies' health/ quality of life, for example, provision of convenient and affordable rehabilitation programme to elderly patients with aphasia or dementia through virtual reality technology, using devices to detect falling motion of the elderlies and send alert messages to their family members and carers, providing equipment and support to facilitate elderlies to seek online medical consultation, developing a puzzle game to help dementia patients defer the progressive cognitive deterioration, and setting up an online and offline entertainment platform for the elderlies.   The projects benefitted over 21 000 elderlies by improving their daily life as well as physical and mental health.

16.   In addition, four innovative projects promoting inter-generational digital inclusion were funded by the SIE Fund in September 2021, including launching of digital outreach rehabilitation services for the elderlies, training young people to teach elderlies the operations of tablet computers/ smartphones and mobile applications, engaging the elderlies after training to volunteer and introduce digital products to their fellows, etc.   These four projects were completed by April 2024.   A total of 650 young people participated in the projects, benefiting more than 4 800 elderlies.   Besides, the SIE Fund has funded the establishment of the Gerontechnology Platform in January 2021 to promote the development and application of gerontechnology by way of engagement, cross-sector partnership and collaboration.   The platform has provided over 1 800 support and consultancy services on the design or development of gerontechnology products to date.

Digital Inclusion Programme for the Elderlies

17.   To further promote digital inclusion, the Government has announced in the 2024-25 Budget that the SIE Fund would allocate $100 million to implement a territory-wide digital inclusion programme for the elderlies (Digital Inclusion Programme) by batches in the coming three years.   We expect the programme to benefit at least 50 000 elderlies in total.   The programme aims to set up community-based help desks at suitable locations (e.g. community centres) to provide regular and fixed-point training on digital technologies and technical support to elderlies aged 60 or above, particularly the singleton or doubleton elderlies.   Apart from smartphone operation and the use of digital government services (e.g. iAM Smart and other common government mobile applications), we also intend to cover topics such as online shopping, electronic payment and cyber security, etc. in the programme, with a view to enhancing the elderlies' capability in adopting digital technologies.   Experienced staff (or volunteers) will station at the community-based help desks to provide technical support tailored to the specific needs of the elderlies, so that they can enjoy the benefits brought about by digital services.

18.   We believe that the Digital Inclusion Programme implemented by the SIE Fund will complement and create greater synergy with the existing digital inclusion measures of the OGCIO.   Among them, the ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly of the OGCIO organise a variety of activities, including the setting up of mobile outreach service stations in various districts, to help promote the elderlies especially those who are not conversant with digital technologies, to participate in the Digital Inclusion Programme under the SIE Fund.   In particular, through the regular and fixed-point services provided by community based help desks, the elderlies may access assistance more easily as they can seek one-to-one technical support when encountering problems on digital technology applications and, with specific assistance, have their individual problems resolved, thus ensuring their effective and safe use of digital technologies, thereby fully integrating elders into the digital society and achieving the objective of the SIE Fund to foster social inclusion.

19.   We plan to invite proposals for the Digital Inclusion Programme from institutions/ organisations through open invitation in the third quarter of 2024 at the earliest, with a view to commencing the first batch of programme by end-2024.   In addition to providing basic support services, the institutions/ organisations engaged for the Digital Inclusion Programme are required to implement the programme with innovative approach, for example, engaging young people to, through employment or volunteer work, make good use of their digital knowledge to help the elderlies enhance their knowledge and

adoption of digital technologies, and collaborating with the Community Care Teams to visit the singleton and doubleton elderly households to help identify those in need.   Service providers are also required to submit regular operation, performance, and financial reports which enables monitoring by the SIE Fund in ensuring transparency, accountability and prudent use of public funds, while also facilitating the evaluation of effectiveness.   Key performance indicators shall include the total number of elderly beneficiaries, training courses/ sessions conducted, helpdesk service points provided, and satisfaction rate of the participating elderlies, etc.   The SIE Fund Secretariat is working out the details and will announce in due course upon consultation with the SIE Fund Task Force.

Advice Sought

20.　　　Members are invited to note the content of this paper and give advice.

Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
Efficiency Office
June 2024

Overview of the ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly

Statistics (Since the first round of programme in 2014)

ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (As of April 2024)	
Number of participating elderly aged 65 or above who have received the services	Over 120 000 participating elderly (including around 19 000 participating elderly with dementia) • Around 49 700 participating elderly from institutions • Around 19 800 participating elderly who are receiving day care centre services • Around 15 600 participating elderly who are receiving home care services • Around 38 500 participating hidden elderly
Number of activities conducted	Around 44 000
Number of mobile outreach service stations activities conducted (since end-2021)	• Over 200 service stations • Additionally served more than 15 000 elders in the community
Number of non-profit-making organisations	14 (including six rounds of programme, some of these organisations have participated in more than one round of programme)

Programme Summary (As of April 2024)

	ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2023-2025)	*ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2021-2023)*	*ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2018-2021)*
Implementing Organisation	• Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club • Hong Kong Children & Youth Services • Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service • The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council • Tung Wah Group of Hospitals • Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service	• Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club • Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service • Methodist Centre • The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council • Po Leung Kuk • Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service	• Caritas Hong Kong - Services for the Elderly • Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club • Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service • The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council • Po Leung Kuk • Yan Chai Hospital Social Services Department
Implementation Period	April 2023 – April 2025	March 2021 – March 2023	December 2018 – July 2021
Districts covered	All 18 districts across the territory	All 18 districts across the territory	All 18 districts across the territory
Number of elderly units visited	An estimate of about 250 residential care homes for the elderly and day care centres	Around 200 residential care homes for the elderly and day care centres	Around 100 residential care homes for the elderly and day care centres
Number of participating elderly aged 65 or above receiving services	An estimate of about 48 000 participating elderly • An estimate of about around 22 000 participating elderly from institutions • An estimate of about around 5 000 participating elderly who are receiving day care centre services • An estimate of about 5 000 participating elderly who are receiving home care services • An estimate of about 16 000 participating hidden elderly (including 8 000 participating elderly with dementia)	A total number of around 44 700 participating elderly • Around 17 100 participating elderly from institutions • Around 6 100 participating elderly who are receiving day care centre services • Around 6 300 participating elderly who are receiving home care services • Around 15 200 participating hidden elderly (including 6 800 participating elderly with dementia)	A total number of around 30 200 participating elderly • Around 11 000 participating elderly from institutions • Around 5 000 participating elderly who are receiving day care centre services • Around 5 300 participating elderly who are receiving home care services • Around 8 900 participating hidden elderly (including 5 000 participating elderly with dementia)
Number of activities conducted	An estimate of about 10 000 outreach activities An estimate of about 300 mobile outreach service stations	Around 20 000 outreach activities Around 20 mobile outreach service stations	Around 14 000 outreach activities

	ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2023-2025)	*ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2021-2023)*	*ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2018-2021)*
Programme Content	**Outreach Activities** • Use of applications to communicate with family members, relatives and friends, or to produce personalised photos and videos and share with family and friends • Provide rehabilitation and functional strengthening activities for elderly with gerontechnology products (e.g. motion sensing games) • Facilitate the elderly to enjoy using technology through multi-sensory stimulation and 3D simulated scenes • Interact with other people in metaverse and experience the new ICT • Arrange youth volunteers to visit institutions, and share the benefits in using ICT and gerontechnology with the elderly • Assist elderly in conducting smart heath management and remote telehealth consultation with professional nurses • Provide basic health assessments and recommendations to the elderly by using the AI-powered mirror • Conduct music therapy by using the music rings and games • Use augmented reality technology combined with different applications for reminiscence therapy or art therapy • Enhance emotional management of the elderly by interacting with smart robots • Provide virtual tours for elderly people by facilitating them to explore the community through technologies	**Activities conducted remotely** • Provide interactive virtual tours for community exploration through the use of technologies • Use of smart robots to teach fitness exercises • Watch tutorial videos on the "Elderly IT Learning Portal" • Demonstrate rehabilitation treatment with virtual reality products • Teach the use of mobile devices and video call software • Teach the elderly to use LeaveHomeSafe mobile app and introduce Vaccine Pass **Activities conducted physically**	**Activities conducted remotely** • Live streaming of "Virtual Community Tour" on social media • Use of smart robots to teach fitness exercises • Watch tutorial videos on the "Elderly IT Learning Portal" • Demonstrate rehabilitation treatment with virtual reality products • Teach the use of mobile devices and video call software • Monitor health conditions with smart bracelets and Bluetooth health check devices **Free lending services** • Tablets, smartphones or mobile Internet devices **Activities conducted during non-epidemic period** • Train physical coordination using interactive floor projection system • Encourage interaction of elderly people with the aid of touch-controlled multiplayer training system • Use of robots to teach fitness exercises and provide online health platform • Provide virtual tour experience and various health and training applications • Teach the elderly to understand and use digital products in the form of experiential classes • Use of virtual reality games to provide reminiscence therapy to the elderly • Invite young people to design exercise programs of smart robots for the elderly

	ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2023-2025)	ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2021-2023)	ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2018-2021)
	Mobile Outreach Service Stations • Introduce common mobile apps to the elderly • Answer elders' questions on the use of smartphones	• Train physical coordination using an interactive floor projection system • Conduct virtual aerial tours for elderly people using drones • Train elderly to strengthen their muscle and eye-hand coordination through augmented reality archer games • Explore different facets of the community with an immersive experience through the use of head-mounted virtual reality devices • Use of smart robots to teach fitness exercises • Assist elderly in conducting smart heath management and remote telehealth consultation with professional nurses • Teach the elderly to understand and use digital products in the form of experiential classes • Use nostalgic movies to provide reminiscence therapy to the elderly • Train elderly to strengthen their attention and memory through digital calligraphy, digital drawing and brain-training games	

Information about past ICT Outreach Programmes for the Elderly (2014-2017)

Number of participating elderly aged 65 or above who have received the services	A total number of around 23 900 participating elderly (including 2 200 participating elderly with dementia) • Around 10 500 participating elderly from institutions • Around 5 800 participating elderly who are receiving day care centre services • Around 1 200 participating elderly who are receiving home care services • Around 6 400 participating hidden elderly
Number of activities conducted	Around 3 500 outreach activities

Overview of the Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly

Statistics (Since the first round of programme in 2019)

Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (As of April 2024)	
Number of participating elderly aged 60 or above	More than 12 000 participating elderly
Number of courses organised	Around 230
Number of classes organised	Around 720
Number of elder academy	16 (including three rounds of programme, some of the academies have participated in more than one round of programme)

Programme Summary (As of April 2024)

	Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (2024-2026)	Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (2021-2023)	Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (2019-2021)
Implementing organisation	• Caritas Wu Cheng-chung Secondary School Elder Academy • Elder Academy at Hong Kong Metropolitan University • Hong Kong Island Elder Academies Cluster • Lai Chack Elder Academy • Lingnan Hang Yee Memorial Secondary School Elder Academy • LingnanU Elder Academy • LST YKH & Buddhist HWCP Innovation Elder Academy • New Territories West Elder Academies Cluster • Pui Shing Elder Academy • Research Centre for Gerontology and Family Studies, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University • Tak Sum Elder Academy • TM Hope Elder Academy (Most of the implementing organisations of this round will provide cross-district services)	Hong Kong Island • Aldrich Bay Government Primary School Hong Kong Women Foundation Neighborhood Elderly Centre Elder Academy • Caritas Wu Cheng-chung Secondary School Elder Academy • Hong Kong Island Elder Academies Cluster Kowloon • Research Centre for Gerontology and Family Studies, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Formerly known as Institute of Active Ageing, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University) • LST YKH & Buddhist HWCP Innovation Elder Academy New Territories • Ching Wah Elder Academy • Elder Academy at Hong Kong Metropolitan University • LingnanU Elder Academy • New Territories West Elder Academies Cluster • Pui Shing Elder Academy • TM Hope Elder Academy (Also providing courses in Kowloon region)	Hong Kong Island • HKSKH Eastern District Elder Academy • Hong Kong Island Elder Academies Cluster Kowloon • Institute of Active Ageing, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Currently known as Research Centre for Gerontology and Family Studies, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University) • Kowloon West Elder Academies Cluster • LST YKH & Buddhist HWCP Innovation Elder Academy New Territories • Elder Academy of the Open University of Hong Kong (Currently known as Elder Academy at Hong Kong Metropolitan University) • Kiangsu-Chekiang (Shatin) Elder Academy • New Territories West Elder Academies Cluster • Pak Kau Caritas Elder Academy • Pui Shing Elder Academy • TM Hope Elder Academy
Implementation period	February 2024 – February 2026	December 2021 – December 2023	February 2019 – August 2021

	Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (2024-2026)	*Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (2021-2023)*	*Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (2019-2021)*
Number of participating elderly aged 60 or above	An estimate of over 6 000 participating elderly	A total of more than 6 800 participating elderly	A total of more than 5 200 participating elderly
Number of elderly volunteers/teaching assistants	An estimate of over 300	Around 200	Around 200
Number of courses organised	An estimate of over 130	Around 120	Around 110
Number of classes organised	An estimate of over 380	Around 380	Around 340
Main content of courses	E-government • "iAM Smart", "SmartPLAY", "Contactless e-Channel" • "Wi-Fi.HK", "MyObservatory", "My Library", "GovHK Notifications", "RTHK On The Go" mobile apps Mobile apps related to Smart Living • Smart Healthcare, instant messaging software, social media • Mobile payment, traffic and transport mobile apps, mobile apps frequently used in the Mainland • Online shopping, takeaway food ordering mobile apps Digital Technology Appreciation • Cyber security, big data • Gerontechnology, simple programming • Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things	E-government • "iAM Smart", "LeaveHomeSafe", "Hong Kong Health Code" • "Wi-Fi.HK", "MyObservatory", "My Library", "GovHK Notifications", "RTHK On The Go" mobile apps Mobile apps related to Smart Living • Smart Healthcare, instant messaging software, social media • Mobile payment, traffic and transport mobile apps, online shopping, takeaway food ordering mobile apps Digital Technology Appreciation • Cyber security, big data • Gerontechnology, simple programming • Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things	E-government and Smart Healthcare • Leisure Link, My Library, GovHK • TouchMed, HA Go • Smart bracelet, Bluetooth health check device, "iAM Smart", "LeaveHomeSafe" • "GovHK Notifications" mobile app Mobile apps related to Smart Living • Instant messaging software, social media • Mobile payment, traffic and transport mobile apps, online shopping, takeaway food ordering mobile apps • Mobile phone shooting, photo and video editing Digital Technology Appreciation • Cyber security, big data • Smart home, gerontechnology • Cloud storage, simple robot programming • Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things