

Education, Training, Capacity-Building – Lifelong Learning for the Best and Worst of Times

The Pass It On Network, a global peer-learning network of positive ageing advocates, sees this time as both the best and the worst of times for older adults seeking access to lifelong learning. The Internet's extraordinary capacity for access to learning can be realized worldwide, but only if free digital tools, training, and access are provided for those who lack essential resources and care as the gap between rich and poor widens.

The Gap in Access to Learning

As illustrated by our Pass It On Network liaisons in 50+ countries and 25+ partner networks, access to the Internet through a cell phone or tablet is adequate for every user to develop a world-wide learning community. With enough English to communicate with one another, our liaisons co-create, share, and spread information about programs and policies and other resources that support well-being in later life.

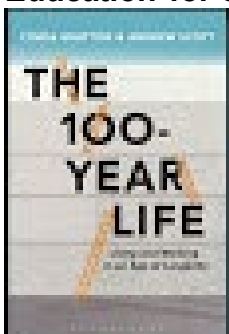
All of us who use the Internet have access to free online education courses (called MOOCs) that are presented by prominent universities around the world. Regardless of income, we can participate in online peer-learning programs through Universities of the Third Age. For those who are homebound or otherwise socially isolated, virtual learning programs provide social connections as well as knowledge.



On the other hand, in rural areas around the world where traditional agriculture has been replaced by large-scale industrial management and there is no universal income security program, young people have gone off to the cities and elders have been left behind without resources to satisfy basic needs. The Agewell Foundation's research in India, for example, shows that 20% of elders, both in rural areas or in big cities, have NO source of income and are reduced to begging. The gap between rich and poor is increasing all over the world.....affecting most the very

young and the very old.

Education for Self-Empowerment Is Essential to Well-Being



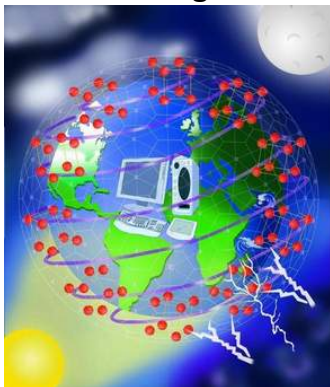
The function of the Pass It On Network is to connect positive ageing advocates with free or low-cost resources that empower the well-being of older persons. At this time when population worldwide is rapidly growing, much of the growth is due to increased longevity. Added

longevity is outdistancing the capacity and security offered by individual savings and both public and employer pension funds. In many developed countries, older adults have relied on prolific public services, supplemented by affordable health care. But now, cutbacks in government budgets along with the increase in needy consumers and the shortage of low-paid caregivers have raised costs and reduced easy access to services.

Education that encourages individual self-empowerment is needed. We need to train service providers to be advocates for positive ageing, ready to prepare their older adult clients for self-empowered self-management. Each of us should be encouraged to identify our needs, find the resources to meet those needs, and become self-advocates making effective use of available resources – including our own strengths.



Universal Digital Access for Older Adults



Internet access is ESSENTIAL for the self-determination and well-being of older adults. Digital tools with access to the Internet plus training and support for their effective use are needed by every individual. This is basic for the self-empowerment that underlies autonomy and independence. Digital literacy is essential to meet the desirable norms for economic and social security and long term care considered by the OEWGA. Digital access is essential to guarantee the education and capacity-building services that are basic for self-determination.

What would guaranteed digital access for older persons look like?

Every older adult would receive a free smart phone with free Internet access and user training/support, in return for a commitment to fulfill conditions for use established by the local/regional/national jurisdictions.

The phone's software would include both individualized and standardized elements:

- Standardized – search engine, emergency help connection, translation to country's language (if needed), WhatsApp software to promote community participation





A Global Peer-Learning Network for Positive Ageing Advocates

- Individualized –
 - Direct connection with a minimum of two family/personal contacts
 - Local/regional Ageing Services Directory
 - Education/Lifelong Learning Directory
 - Individual banking

Supportive Public Policies/Programs (Resource List Available)

Pass It On Network's liaisons are developing local-to-global programs that foster digital access for older adults, including:

- Active Aging – enabling state legislation
- Ageing Service Directory -- online formats
- Training programs to diminish ageism and expand self-empowerment
- Skills Bank for income-generating jobs
- Directory of Accessible Learning Opportunities -- online format
- Third Age Universities -- worldwide connector
- Employer programs to recruit and retain Older Workers
- Individual Banking
- Virtual Reality -- training and support
- Intergenerational Digital Literacy -- Training programs

Human Rights for Older Persons Must Include Universal Digital Access

We are living the Longevity Revolution in real time. That means moving into the future prepared to develop a supportive, adaptive community for older persons worldwide. The Pass It On Network is eager to work with you on this effort.