

COVID, Impact & Recovery

Role of Technology and Policy Recommendations

**To reduce inequalities and ensure the health
and wellbeing of low income seniors**

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Presented to Human Services Planning Board (HSPB)
on September 17, 2021

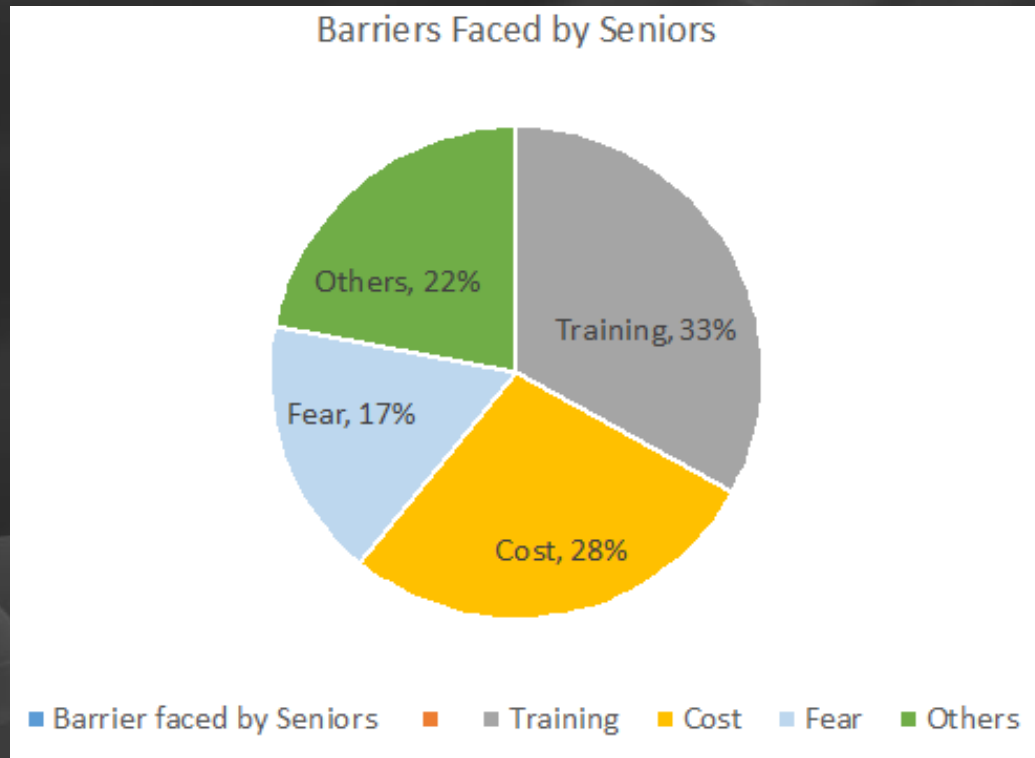
COVID & Impact

COVID 19 disproportionately impacted seniors by creating new inequalities and aggravated existing ones. Some of these inequalities are:

- Social exclusion
- Access to services
- Mobility
- Health
- Food security
- Information
- Technology access and use

Technology Barriers Faced by Seniors

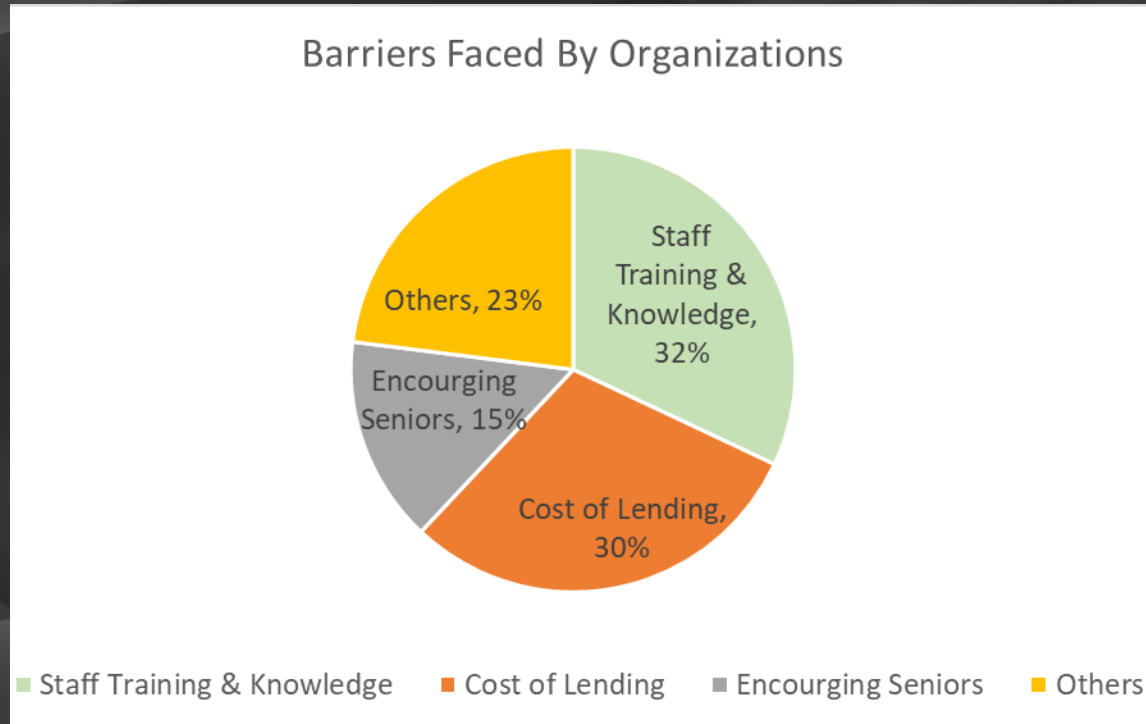
- A survey with seniors, community leaders, and senior-serving organizations identified :



Cost, Training, and Fear represent **78%** of the barriers that seniors face in adopting technology.

Technology Barriers Faced by Organizations

- A survey with senior-serving organizations identified,



Staff Training and Knowledge, Cost of Lending and Encouraging Seniors represent 77% of the barriers organizations face in employing technology.

What is TASS?

A Collective Impact Project

- Technology Access and Support for Seniors (TASS) is a collaborative, scalable, and replicable senior-friendly technology project.
- TASS offers fully integrated and accessible technology solutions for seniors and organizations to keep seniors engaged, active, and healthy during COVID and beyond
- TASS offers senior-friendly tablets with built-in internet and multilingual tech support
- York University researchers are involved in TASS program evaluation and impact

- During 2020/2021, Human Endeavour developed several **integrated, senior-friendly, simplified, plug & play** technology initiatives that have been implemented across York Region/GTA/Ontario
- **Technology, Access and Support for Seniors (TASS)**
 - 850+ seniors from 25 organizations have benefited by receiving integrated solutions
 - Setup a helpline (call centre) for seniors that has supported 13000+ calls since March, 2020

- Technology, Access and Support for Senior-Serving Organizations
 - Monthly technical capacity building workshops
 - Technical write ups on important topics
 - 161 organizations built their capacity and benefited 4000+ members
 - Conducted sector wide feedback and surveys

During COVID technology has emerged as new social determinant of health

Seniors who received integrated technology, access & support during COVID:

- 89% have become comfortable with technology
- 75% are connected to more groups than pre-COVID
- 74% attend more programs than pre-COVID
- 86% have maintained their social connections
- 86% have maintained physical and emotional health
- 77% would like a mix of online and in-person (hybrid) program environment

Strategy and Recommendations

- Human Endeavour has setup a Provincial Technology Advisory Committee and has collectively developed “Digital Literacy Strategy for Seniors and Senior-Serving Sector”
- Link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zulh-GHbU_Px7hWj9m_Mr0_9xT5sxckD/view?usp=sharing

Policy Recommendations

- Design and implement online environment for current and future service delivery because of ongoing risks related to future COVID variants and because online programming has significantly reduced many traditional accessibility barriers for seniors and senior-serving organizations
- Build organizational capacity and knowledge to understand the requirements for hybrid environment at the staff and management level. This will reduce knowledge disconnects within the organizations
- Work with technology partners to clearly understand the role and space of senior-serving organizations and technology service provider organizations

Policy Recommendations

- Offer/lend fully integrated solution (pre-programmed/simplified tablets, seniors friendly layout, built-in data/internet, graphical documentation, and live tech support) to seniors to offer an empowering technology experience and enable them to get familiar with online services
- Establish call centres with professional staff and volunteer-based programs to offer senior-friendly technical support for seniors' introduction to technology and ongoing operational challenges
- Technology has emerged as a critical social determinant of health. Governments and funding agencies must make long-term investments to implement digital solutions for seniors and senior-serving organizations

Q & A

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