



## News



News 13 December 2021

### SENIORS, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL LIFE



Ilksen Oben ERUCAR

According to the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Istatistiklere-Yasilar-2020-37...>), the elderly population has increased by 22.5% in the last five years. This increasing trend is also observed in the data provided by the World Health Organization. The world population aged 60 and over will double by 2050 (2.1 billion). The number of people aged 80 and over is expected to triple between 2020 and 2050, reaching 426 million.

The aging of the world population also affects future plans, and the elderly are on the agenda of all countries, based on issues ranging from health to economy. While the participation of the seniors in social life and the concepts of active aging are among the topics of recent years as priority issues worldwide, 2019 has been declared the Year of the Elderly in Turkey.

The use of information and communication technologies is accepted as an important theme among the practices that will strengthen the active aging concept and support independent living for seniors. Digital technologies make it easier for the elderly to live healthy, independent and active lives. The European Commission has also developed programs on *Aging Well with Information and Communication Technologies*.

As various statistics show, the seniors are among the segments that benefit the least from information and communication technologies in the changing and digitalizing world. In Turkey, where 1 million 478 thousand 346 elderly people live alone (TUIK, 2020), the number of elderly individuals using the internet has increased compared to the past, but it is not even 30% yet. This ratio separates the elderly from society and makes them dependent on others for their needs in today's world where almost every transaction can be done with technological tools. The seniors will be able to connect with their loved ones more easily, their participation in social life will increase, and they will be able to lead happier and healthier lives with information and communication technologies.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which shook the whole world deeply, showed the whole world how important information and communication technologies are, especially for the seniors. Information and communication technologies provide many conveniences such as participation in social life, managing the required health processes by following health related applications, banking transactions, online shopping, but the seniors may have difficulties in using these tools effectively.

Lockdowns and social distance measures during the pandemic made the use of the internet and information technologies even more important. It is important to continue support and education in an increasingly aging world, as the elderly will only be able to use these opportunities with education and support.

The pandemic has once again revealed how important information and communication technologies play in the lives of the seniors, increasing their participation in social life, helping them manage their affairs related to shopping and banking more easily, and ensuring they can follow up-to-date information and developments more easily.

Programs and policies should focus on providing wider training opportunities by examining good examples in the field and providing the seniors with more affordable technology.



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Mentorship

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GAVIN HUGHES

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Daria Mrsic

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