

# How Ageism shapes the digital divide among older persons in Qatar

## Insights for the diverse ageing population in Africa

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OSRA5-0415-20006



# Agenda

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- **About Mada Center, Qatar**
- **Context**
- **Key Findings**
- **Ageism and Technology**
- **Insights for the African Context**
- **Questions-discussion**



Mada – Assistive Technology Center Qatar is a private institution for public benefit, which was founded in 2010 as an initiative that aims at promoting digital inclusion and building a technology-based community that meets the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly in Qatar.



Enhancing ICT accessibility in Qatar and beyond.



Unlock the potential of persons with functional limitations (PFLs), persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly – through enabling ICT accessible capabilities and platforms.

# International conventions



## أهداف التنمية المستدامة 2030 Sustainable Development Goals 2030

الهدف #4  
التعليم الجيد  
ضمان التعليم الجيد  
المنصف والشامل للجميع  
وتعزيز فرص التعلم مدى  
الحياة.



Goal #4  
Quality Education  
Ensure inclusive and equitable  
quality education and promote  
lifelong learning opportunities  
for all.

الهدف #10  
الحد من أوجه عدم المساواة  
الحد من انعدام المساواة من  
خلال تمكين وتعزيز الإدماج للجميع.



Goal #10  
Reduced Inequality  
Reduce inequality by empowering  
and promoting inclusion of all.

الهدف #11  
مدن ومجتمعات محلية مستدامة  
توفير مدن ومجتمعات مستدامة وآمنة  
وشاملة للجميع ويمكن الوصول إليها.



Goal #11  
Sustainable Cities & Communities  
Make cities and human  
settlements inclusive, safe,  
resilient, and sustainable.

## اتفاقية حقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة

## Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

صادقت عليها دولة قطر في عام 2008

### المادة 9 إمكانية الوصول

تمكين الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة من  
العيش باستقلالية والمشاركة بشكل  
كامل في جميع جوانب الحياة.



ضمان نفاذ الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة إلى  
تكنولوجيا ونظم المعلومات والاتصال.

### Article 9 Accessibility

Enable PWDs to live  
independently and participate  
fully in all aspects of life.

Ensure access to Information  
& Communication technology  
by PWDs.

UNCRPD: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

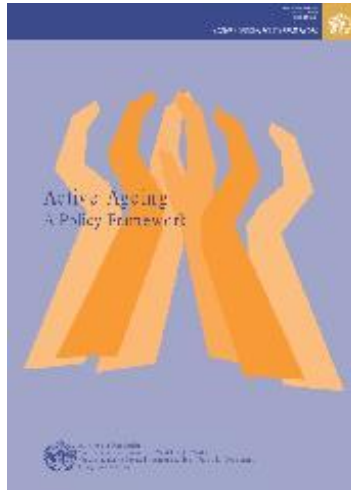
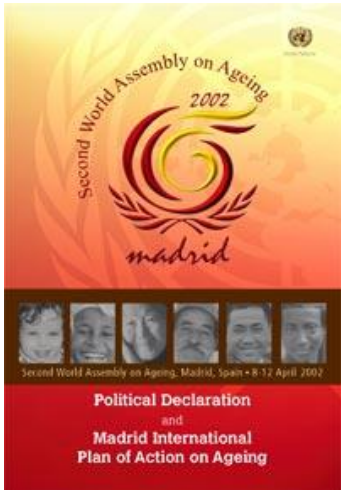
Sustainable Development Goals 2030: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

# International conventions

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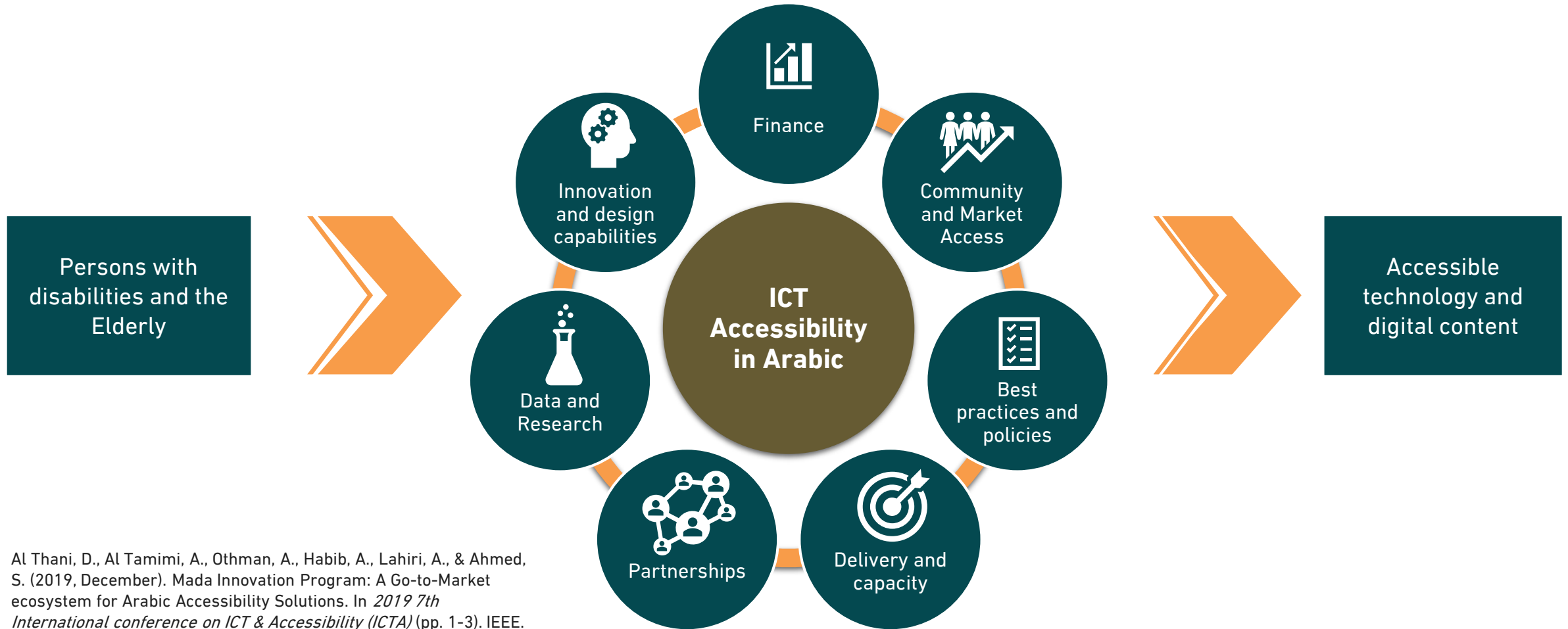
## Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002



UN: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/madrid-plan-of-action-and-its-implementation.html>

# What's Mada Innovation Program ?

The Mada Innovation Program (an ICT Accessibility Ecosystem) is designed to encourage innovators to create Arabic solutions for Persons with Disability and Elderly, thus increasing its availability within the region through a combination of grant programs.



Al Thani, D., Al Tamimi, A., Othman, A., Habib, A., Lahiri, A., & Ahmed, S. (2019, December). Mada Innovation Program: A Go-to-Market ecosystem for Arabic Accessibility Solutions. In *2019 7th International conference on ICT & Accessibility (ICTA)* (pp. 1-3). IEEE.

# Supporting older persons and their caregivers' digital inclusion in Qatari and Arab Families

OSRA5-0415-20006

# Team

## Supporting older persons and their caregivers' digital inclusion in Qatari and Arab Families



Dena Al-Thani, Ph.D.  
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Director of Interdisciplinary Programs  
Hamad bin Khalifa University



Hajer Chalghoumi, Ph.D.  
Research Associate/Coordinator  
School of Psychology  
University of Ottawa



Achraf Othman, Ph.D.  
Head of ICT Accessibility Innovation and  
Research, Mada Center, Qatar.



Suzanne H. Hammad, Ph.D.  
Sociologist, Research Consultant,  
Evaluator

### Funding entities:



### Participating institutes and institutions





# Research questions



1. What are the opportunities for ICT to support daily activity participation and social inclusion of older persons and their caregivers?

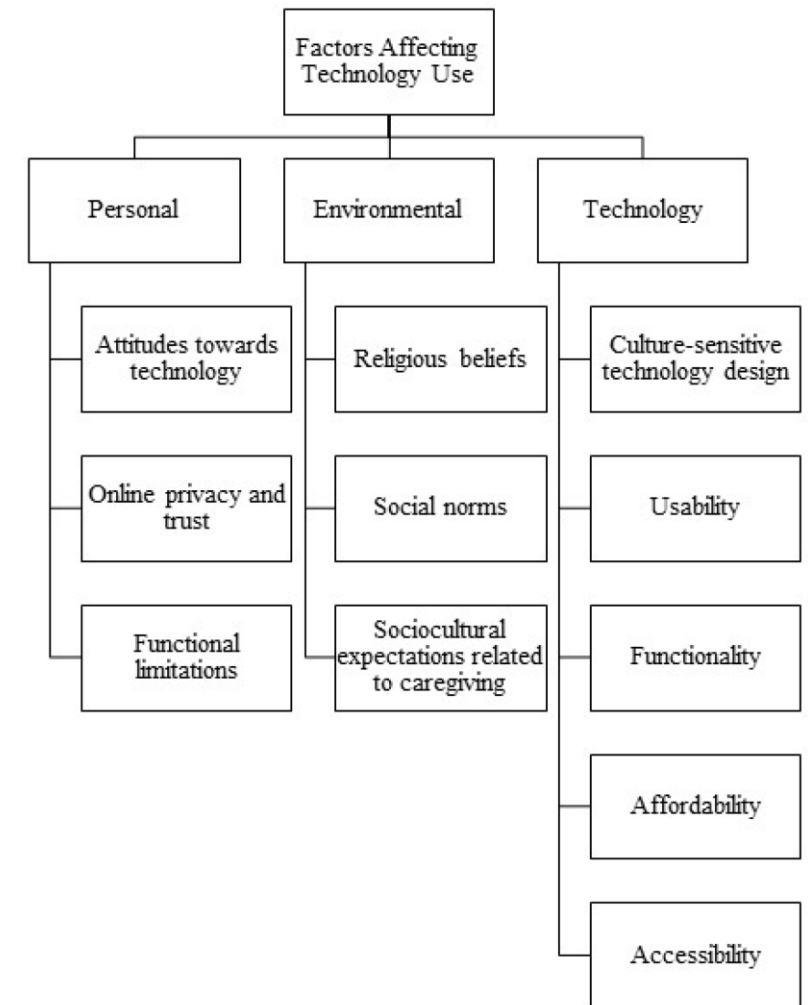


2. What are the challenges, concerns, and enablers for ICT access and use to meet these opportunities?



## Research on Older Persons' Access and Use of Technology in the Arab Region: Critical Overview and Future Directions

- The search was conducted in 11 scientific databases and search engines covering empirical studies in English and Arabic between January 2016 and June 2021.
- The most accessed and used technologies by older persons in the region were smartphones and social media applications for communication and information sharing.
- Major challenges found were functional limitations and usability, functionality, and accessibility.
- The study highlighted the scarcity of research on the subject in the Arab region and the need for more research on older persons and their caregivers in the context of the Arab world.
- Culturally appropriate need-based and adapted technologies are recommended.



Chalghoumi, H., Al-Thani, D., Hassan, A., Hammad, S., & Othman, A. (2022). Research on Older Persons' Access and Use of Technology in the Arab Region: Critical Overview and Future Directions. *Applied Sciences*, 12(14), 7258. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app12147258>

# Motivation

## Addressing the Digital Gap for the Older Persons and their caregivers in the State of Qatar: A Stakeholders' Perspective

- In the coming decades, the Arab world is expected to experience an increase in the older population in Qatar.
- Access and use of ICT by older persons and their caregivers have not been widely discussed.
- The findings showed the importance of existing efforts, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the extent of technology acceptance.
- The study highlighted the extent of partnership between different institutes when providing services, raising awareness, and supporting technology acceptance.



Al Thani, D., Hassan, A., Chalghoumi, H., Othman, A., & Hammad, S. (2021, December). Addressing the Digital Gap for the Older Persons and their caregivers in the State of Qatar: A Stakeholders' Perspective. In 2021 8th International Conference on ICT & Accessibility (ICTA) (pp. 01-06). IEEE.

# Research Methodology

## Recruitment

Via a regional health institution

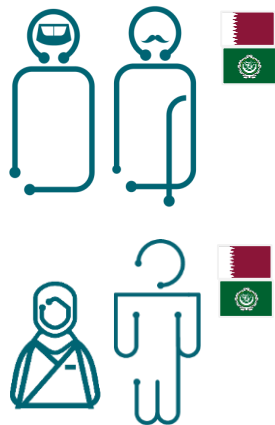
Location: Doha, Qatar

Dates: January-July 2021

## Sample

Maximum variation sample

20 older persons (65+) / 20 caregivers



## Instrument

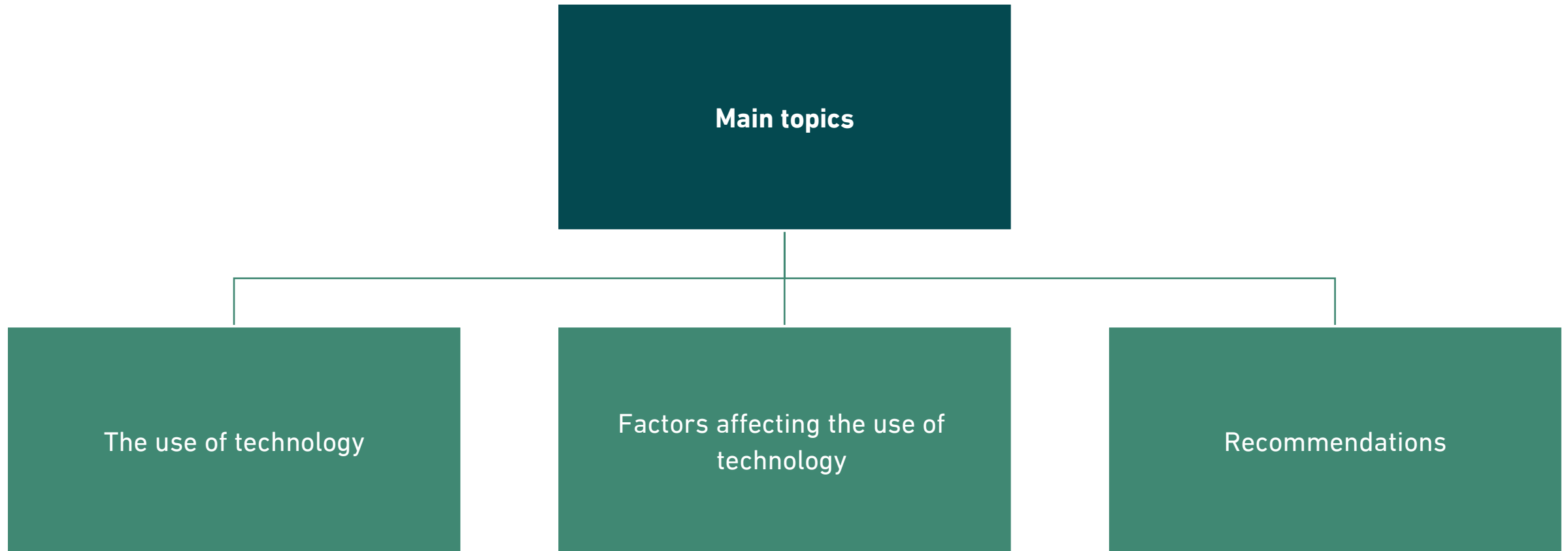
Semi-structured phone interviews

Hybrid thematic analysis using NVivo 10



Mada Center

# Research focus



# Demographics

## Older Persons



**45%** have a secondary education level or less.



**60%** are between 60 and 69 years old



**55%** are female.



**90%** live with their families.  
Only **1** is living alone

## Caregivers



**80%** have a secondary education level or less.



**85%** are between 60 and 69 years old.

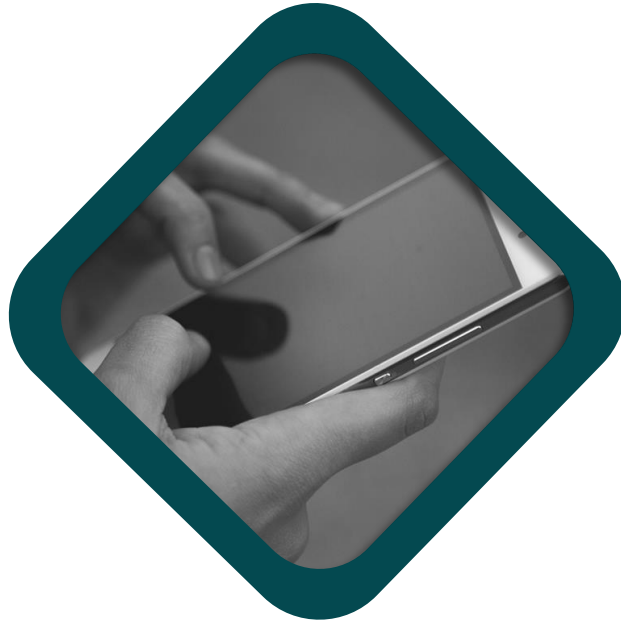


**90%** are female.



**45%** spent 6 hours or more daily in caregiving  
(With the help of domestic).

# Research findings: Most used devices



1. Smart Phones



2. TV



3. GPS Technologies



4. Tablets

# Research findings: Frequent usage



Voice and text messaging



E-services, mainly governmental



Social Media (WhatsApp)



Searching and browsing



Religious use



# Factors Affecting Technology Access and Use



## Privacy Concerns

2 dimensions – their own privacy and the one of their family.



## Literacy and Digital Literacy

A low level of literacy increases the complexity of the technologies and diminishes older adults' self-efficacy



## Accessibility and Usability

UNIVERSAL necessary but nonsufficient



## Religious Beliefs

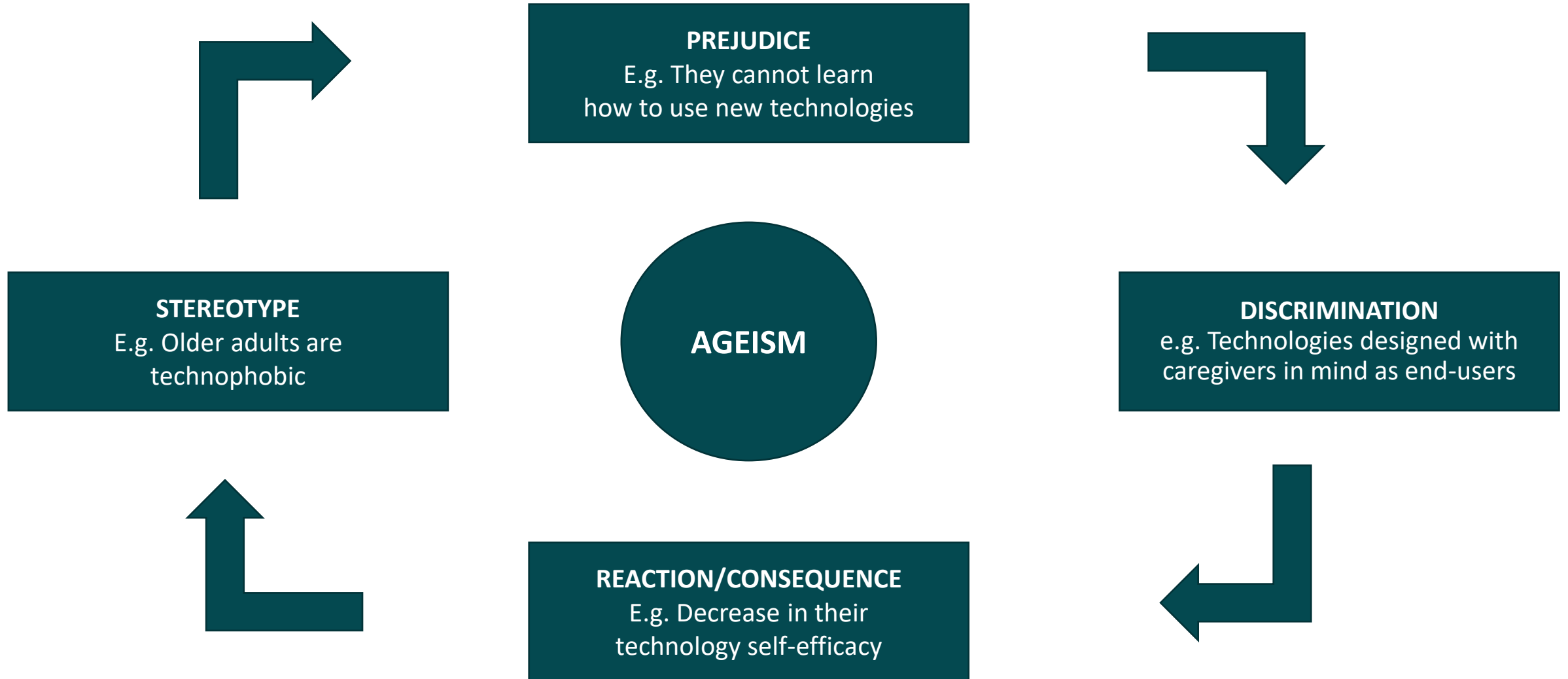
The technology used to practice religion VS technologies was rejected due to conflict with religious beliefs.



## Ageing

- Ageing is perceived differently: Aging as a process that brings changes in abilities VS aging as a “disability”.
- Self-directed ageism is a major barrier.

# Stereotyping of Older Adults and Ageing



# Culture in an ageist society

Conservative society

Culture of 'aib' in relation to age-related diseases

Stigma found to delayed help-seeking in mental and cognitive health

Social shame and guilt for not fulfilling social expectations as a caregiver of aged members in the family

Stigma of being seen in public allowing their elder to use assistive technology

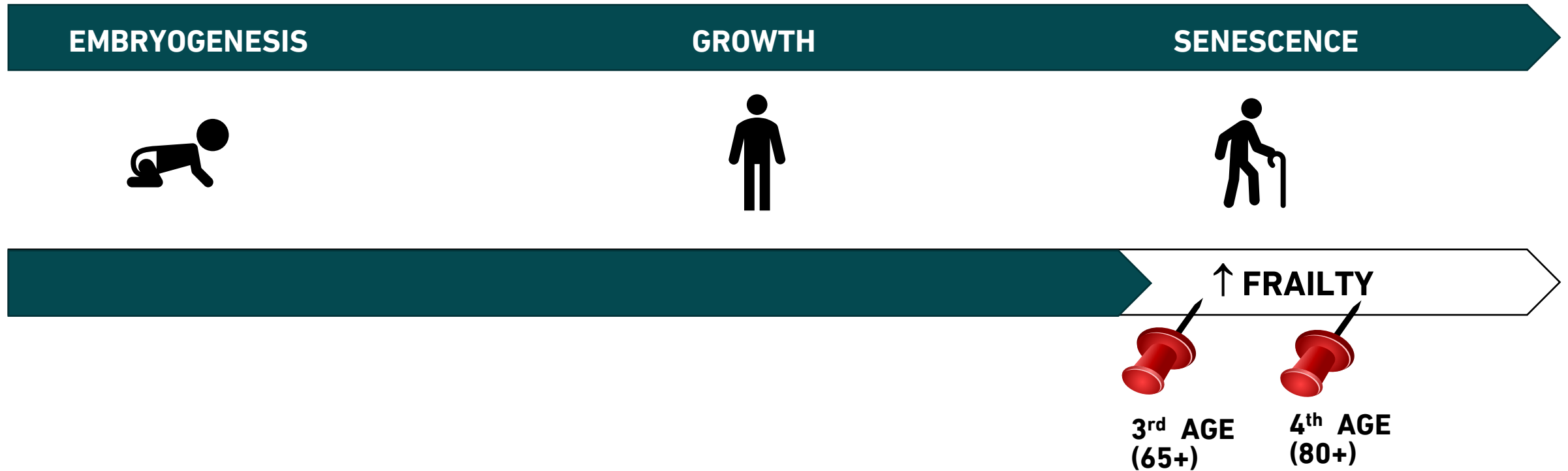
The special religious status of older persons



# Identify needs

Need for redefining aging : Aging is a process that brings changes in abilities, rather than a disability

Need for an inclusive and interdisciplinary perspective



# Lesson learned

## AgeTech Transfer and Research in MENA contexts



### Ageism VS Technology: Friend Or Foe

- Get ready to deconstruct your conscious and unconscious Bias.
- Get ready to learn (NOT teach) with openness, humility, and respect.



### Western Research Methods Are Not Universally Suitable

- Collaborate with social scientists and local research facilitators.
- Cross-gender communication is a real challenge.
- Linguistic translation is NOT enough.

# Lesson learned

## AgeTech Transfer and Research in MENA contexts



### Your Solution May Not Be The Answer

- Ageism (institutional and self-directed) acts like a self-fulfilling prophecy and impede older adults' engagement in technology



### Show R.E.S.P.E.C.T

- Accessibility VS Usability UNIVERSALLY needed but nonsufficient
- Treat others the way THEY want to be treated.
- Add cultural competency to the set of soft skills.

# Conclusion - Transferring to the African Context

- More than 3000 ethnic groups (2021 Census).
- Ethnocultural minority seniors = the fastest-growing segment of this population.
- Most AgeTech solutions treat them as a homogeneous group.
- The variety of needs, concerns, and experiences of ethnocultural minority seniors **NEED** to be recognized.



\* <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/new-census-report-aging-trends-africa>

# Thank you!

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