



Addressing the Senior Digital Divide: Evaluating the Technology, Access and Support for Seniors (TASS) Project

A Community-Academic Partnership

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Executive Summary

This impact evaluation study aims to assess the economic, social and cultural impact of the Technology, Access and Support for Seniors (TASS) project, initiated in May 2020 by Human Endeavour, a senior serving organization in York Region. Recognizing the need to pivot to online program delivery, Human Endeavour and community partners obtained grants to purchase and distribute free, over 400 easy to use, integrated android tablets preloaded with apps and data to vulnerable seniors, who were identified by our community partners United Way Greater Toronto, the Municipalities of York and Muskoka, and eleven senior serving organizations. In this research, we evaluate the impact and effectiveness of TASS by gathering survey and interview data: online surveys from 105 of the 400 seniors who received tablets and technical support from the TASS Helpline (just more than 25%); 29 in-depth Zoom interviews (just more than 25% of the 105 seniors surveyed); and 13 in-depth Zoom interviews with project managers from eleven senior serving organizations; and Zoom interviews with 2 key informants participating in TASS. Findings reveal that TASS bridged the first, second and third digital divides among seniors; lessened material barriers to digital uptake; sustained seniors' social and emotional health and well-being; sustained seniors' physical health and well-being; facilitated aging in place; and enhanced intergenerational learning and support. Examining the effectiveness of TASS, an online program delivery model, provides insight into what digital strategies enhance seniors' social inclusion while also helping senior serving organizations meet the workforce and skills challenges required to reduce the senior digital divides.