FACT SHEET

Enable Persons with Disabilities through Infocomm and Assistive Technology (Enable IT) Programme

As Singapore becomes a Smart Nation, it is important that we continue to enable infocomm technology (IT) adoption among population segments for digitally inclusiveness. Persons with disabilities (PwDs) are particularly at risk of being digitally excluded and not able to tap on IT or assistive technology (AT) due to lack of awareness, access and skills to use IT/AT.

Key Facts and Information (Enable IT)

The Enable IT Programme aims to enable PwDs through adoption of IT/AT to enhance their abilities in activities of daily living, education and employment as well as to help them interact with others. In addition, IDA is collaborating with relevant partners from the disability sector to promote and raise awareness on benefits of IT/AT adoption to PwDs, caregivers and disability professionals.

Guided by the Smart Nation vision, the programme is implemented through close collaboration between IDA, stakeholders (e.g. policy makers from Government agencies, disability voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) and private sector organisations. It aims to raise awareness and promote the benefits of IT/AT adoption.

The initiatives under the Enable IT programme are being established and implemented through a multi-pronged approach:

- Education and Awareness on Benefits of IT/AT: IDA recognises that it is important to raise the awareness of IT/AT among PwDs, caregivers and disability sector professionals. To this end, IDA is collaborating with relevant partners from the disability sector to plan and organise IT/AT education and outreach activities to promote the adoption of IT/AT amongst PwDs.

- IT/AT Initiatives at Enabling Village (EV)[1]: IDA is working with SG Enable and partners from people-public-private sectors to infuse IT/AT into facilities and services in Tech Able at the EV. The facilities and services will encourage PwDs to adopt IT/AT to interact with others, discover their abilities to perform daily activities and lead fulfilling lives. One major initiative at the EV is Tech Able, it serves as a:

    - Training facility to enhance PwDs' employability in the areas of communications and technology;

    - AT showcase and resource centre to promote the use of AT to PwDs; and

    - Platform for collaborations to create new social innovations for PwDs.

- Infusion of IT/AT into Disability VWOs' Programme Activities: Through the IT/AT adoptive grant scheme, assistance was provided to VWOs to help their PwD clients to be meaningfully engaged through adoption of IT/AT when they participate in VWO's programme activities. For instance, persons with intellectual disabilities can make use of customised communication devices, mobile apps and localised content to learn basic communication and social interaction skills at the VWOs. The disability professionals at the VWOs will also be better equipped with IT/AT skills as they tailor and conduct IT/AT-enabled programme activities for their clients.

- The Six VWOs awarded this grant are:

1. Blue Cross Thong Kheng Home (BCTKH)

BCTKH's clients are struggling and have little or no interest in paper-based programme activities conducted which are meant to help them (clients) to acquire community and daily living skills. The paper-based activities do not work well with their clients because they are unable to sufficiently stimulate clients to give a response. To address the limitations of the paper-based activities, integrated various IT/AT tools (in the form of Smart Interactive

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[1] As announced by SG Enable in July 2014, the EV (integrated community space) will serve as a focal point of services for people with disabilities and their caregivers. Please refer to https://goo.gl/GHPMkS for SG Enable's Press Release.

Whiteboard and Tablets with apps) into their day care and residential programme activities for their clients.

2. SUN-DAC

SUN-DAC highlighted as a Day Activity Centre (DAC) for adults with intellectual disabilities, one of the key challenges faced when helping their clients to develop new skills during their therapy programme activities, is maintaining their interest and motivation. SUN-DAC has incorporated a Virtual Reality Gaming Solution (Timocco) into both their DACs (Choa Chu Kang & Bedok) that is designed for PwDs during their therapy programme to develop skills such as motor and social skills that are required to perform activities of daily and community living.

3. Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS)

Clients participating in MINDS Training & Development Centres (TDC) have limited use of IT/AT for their training/therapy sessions. In addition, based on feedback gathered from the physio therapists, some clients often lose motivation and do not complete the exercises on exercise equipment. MINDS has incorporated the Virtual Reality and Sensory Stimulation Solutions into their existing Training & Therapy Programme activities so that clients will exercise in virtual environments while performing on the actual gym equipment. The Sensory Stimulation Solution will support development of skills for everyday functional-living tasks. Clients' senses will be engaged through the stimulating activities, and will help them to improve their cognitive abilities (e.g. memory skills, alertness and reaction levels etc.).

4. SPD

SPD's Occupational therapist has been using conventional methods to improve life skills in clients with disabilities in SPD Day Activity Center (DAC). Some examples of conventional strategies include vocalizing, association and repetition of activities through manual/paper tasks. SPD now has incorporated the Virtual Reality and Sensory Stimulation Solutions into their existing Programme activities carried out in the DAC. Through the use of Virtual Reality Solutions, clients can exercise in virtual environments while performing on the actual gym equipment. This allows the repetitive physical exercise to be more fun and "real" for the clients. SPD would also like to

enhance the Money Management skills so that clients will be able to make simple purchase in the nearby market/shopping centre.

5. **St. Andrew's Autism Centre (SAAC)**

SAAC coaches have noticed their clients facing difficulties in understand various concepts (e.g. Money Management) taught through the programme activities. They found that their clients were unable to express their needs and wants, resulting in a lack of social interaction between clients and the coaches during group activities. Many of the clients were also found to have a lack of interest in the repetitive programme, resulting in a lack of participation. SAAC would like to inculcate the use of IT tools in the form of tablets with apps to incorporate into their current programme activities for their clients. The tablets with apps will help clients to develop and understand various key concepts such as the use of money to purchase items, so that they can apply the knowledge learnt in their activities of daily and community living. Clients will also be able to use the apps in their practice of daily living activities, such as tooth brushing, at any time during their programme activities.

6. **Christian Outreach for the Handicapped (COH)**

COH's 2 Day Activity Centres (DACs, Toa Payoh & Tampines) conduct programme activities on Daily Living Skills like personal grooming, feeding, mobility and toileting; and Community Living Skills like sing along activity, art and craft and group outing for clients with IQ below 70. Currently, the activities are conducted through conventional methods using whiteboard and paper. It becomes difficult to maintain clients' interest when the activities are repeated overtime. COH is looking to enhance activities for their clients through tablet related technology that will keep clients motivated to learning as they are praised and corrected appropriately by the tablet apps' colourful pictures and sounds. Clients will also learn basic computing skills, such as basic typing skills to communicating with others through emails.

In addition, by equipping PwDs with technological skills, their employability will be enhanced. In turn, they will be enabled to pursue their dreams, attain a sense of self-worth and financial independence as well as contribute to Singapore's Smart Nation vision.

For more information, please visit www.ida.gov.sg.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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