

Founding the Center for Usability and Aging Research (CUAR) with senior citizens

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Project Goals

Problems to be solved

Elderly people tend to feel difficulties and reluctances in using any new equipment/ system, especially, Information Communication Technology based equipment) and often experience troubles when actually using them. → causing QOL deterioration of healthy elderly who are living independently, and problems in establishing new support system at a low cost



R&D Target

Creating CUAR, a platform to study the universal design, based on community of older adults, Corporations who have interests in “usability for elders and university researchers.

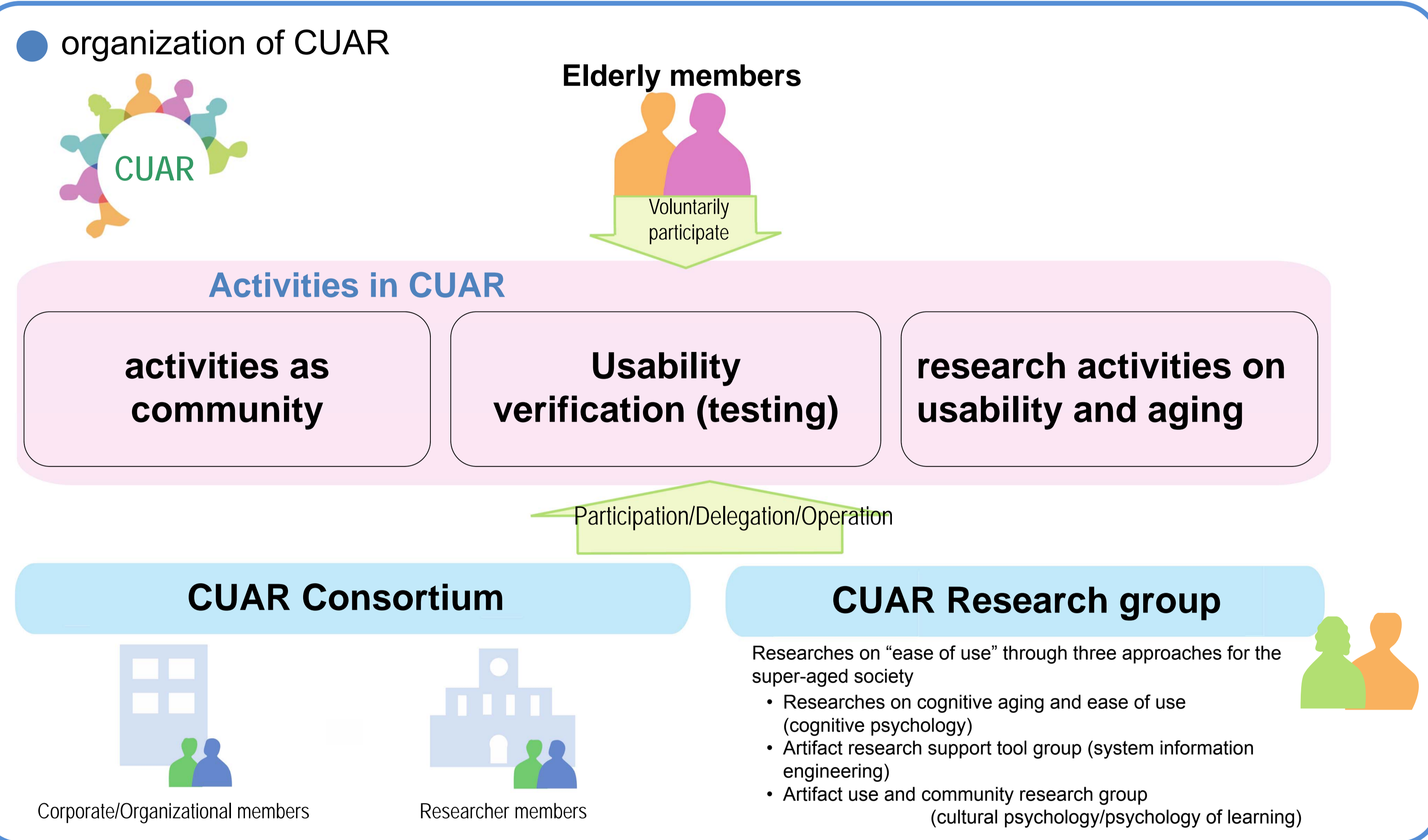
- Senior citizens can contribute to the society in offering important information about problems in interactions of human and artefacts.
- ⇒ Establish Center for Usability and Aging Research, abbreviated “**Min-Lab**” from “*Minna-no-Tsukaiyasusa-Lab*” that means “Laboratory of usability for everyone”.

Three types of activity in CUAR

- (1) Studies on human-artefacts interaction for usability and aging
- (2) Usability Verification for products or services
- (3) Activities in Community of three parties - the elderly registered members, manufacturers/service providers, and researchers

Project implementation

Project overview



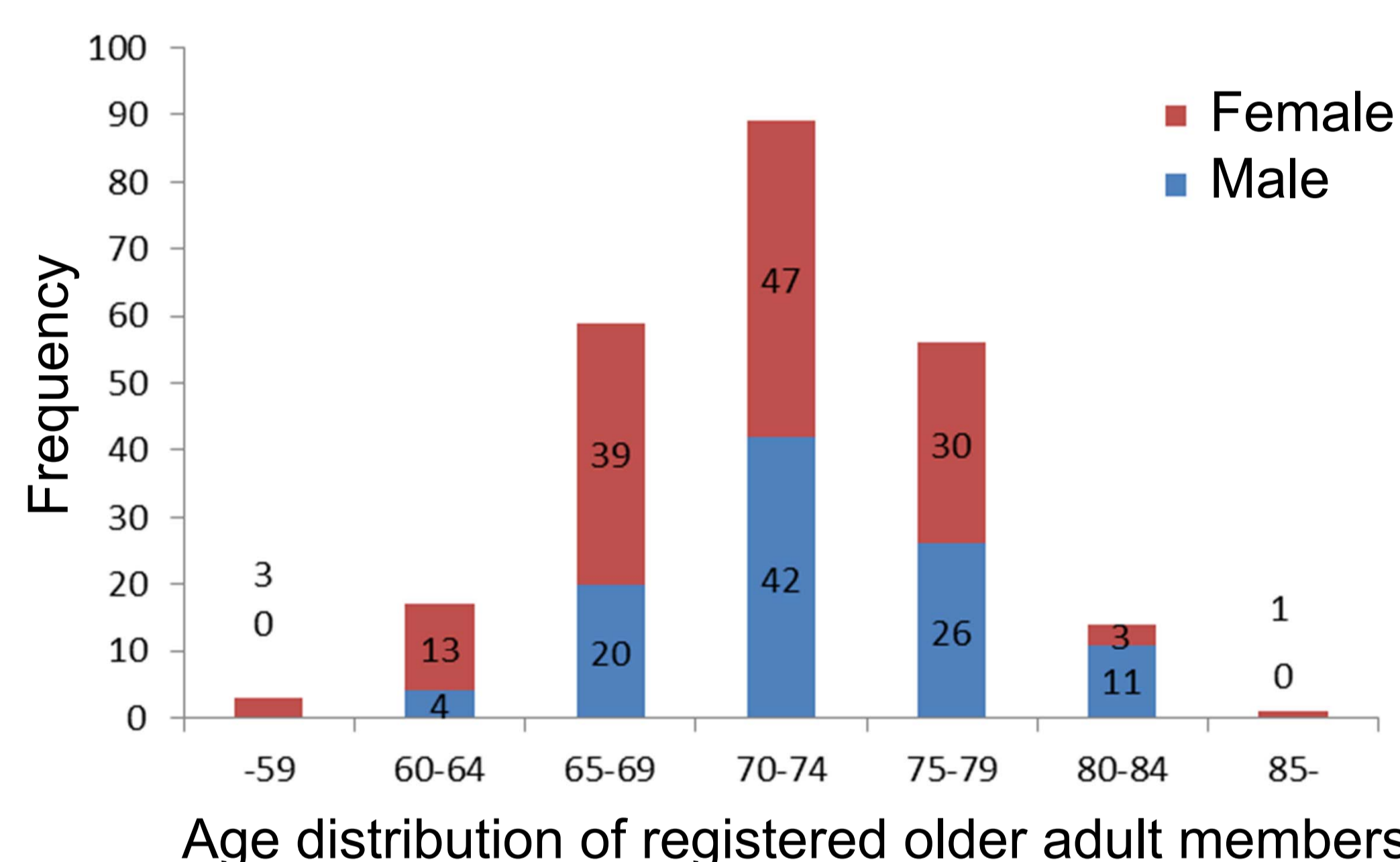
Target communities/ participants

CUAR (“Min-Lab”)

Citizens: elderly residing in the south area of the Ibaraki Pref., around Tsukuba City (250 registered members at the end of 2015)

Industry: Corporations, such as manufacturers, service providers

Academia: Researchers in the University of Tsukuba, etc.

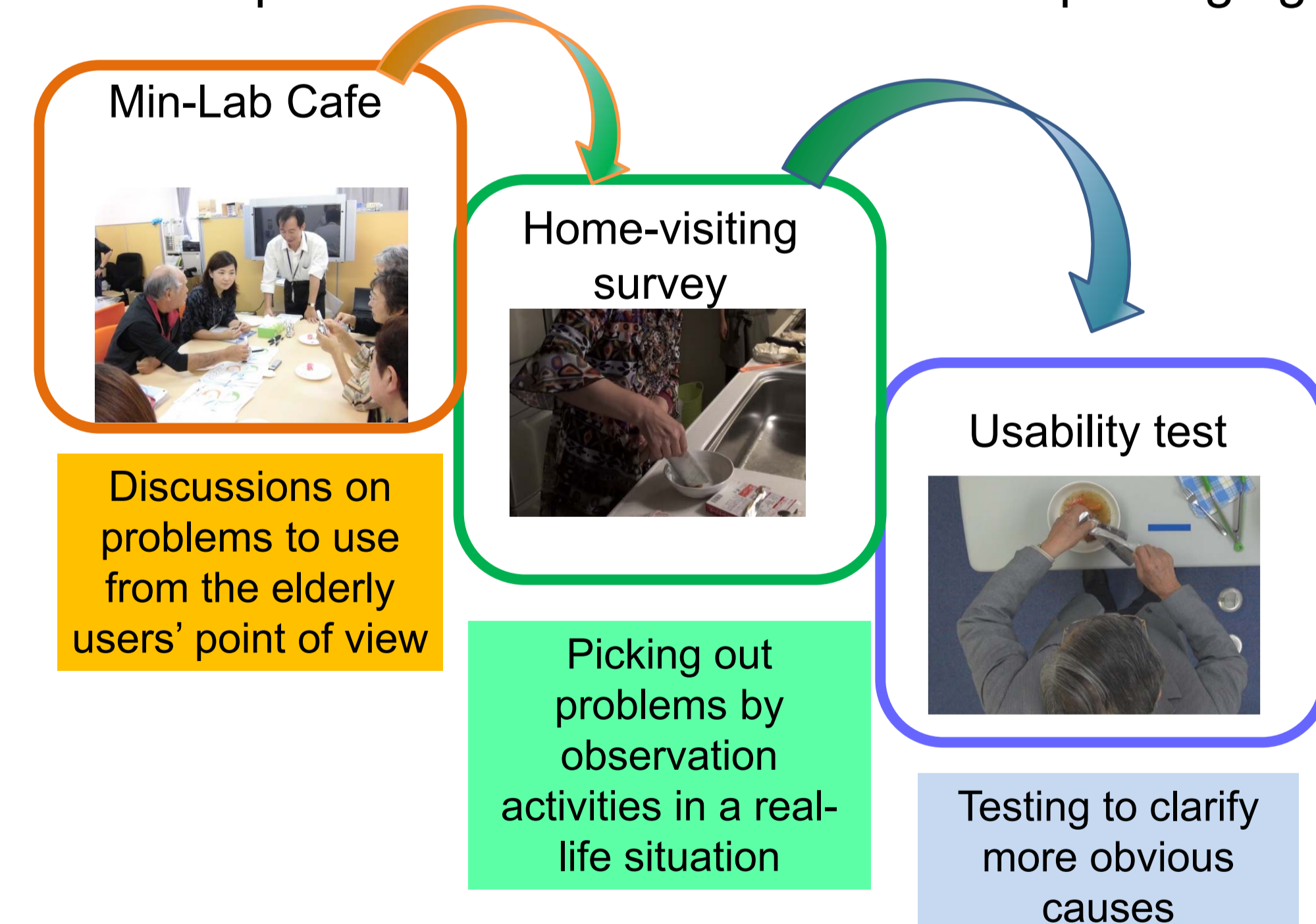


Project achievements and future prospects

Project achievements

1. Research on usability problems for the elderly
 2. Investigation on individual products/ services usability problems, with some aspects of participatory organization
 3. Accumulating know-how in wide range of products/ services
- Depicting and analyzing difficulties in using various artifacts (incl. spatial design and systems) that elderly may encounter, or trying to solve the problems to support learning to use new equipment for elders.
 - Discovering some insights on general mechanisms of relations in usability and aging
 - Example 1) timid behavior and motivational changes in aging
 - 2) powers of inter-generational communication etc.
 - Achieve “new points of view on human-artefacts interactions and general aging” through interacting continuously with each of three kinds of members of CUAR

Example: Verification activities on food packaging



Q “Why SOME older adults cannot open a plastic bottle?”

- ✗ gripping power
- selecting styles of grasping the cap and bottle, and ways of opening



Activities in the Min-Lab Café (mini-workshop)



Future developments and prospects

- CUAR will continuously execute various community activities.
 - Min-Lab Café (mini-workshops)
 - For Publicity, making “Min-Lab Quarterly Reports” edited by registered elderly members
 - Circle group activities (gourmand meeting, health boasting gathering, fret violin players meeting..)
 - Min-Lab research project
- Activities for usability verifications, and activities in the consortium members
- Joint researches with the Shimizu project
 - Discussions on the readiness notebook → Develop a readiness game