Assistive Technology: Transforming today and creATing futures

2 -3 April 2025 | **GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT**
1 April 2025 | **CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**
Berlin, Germany

GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT

ATscale
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
Hosted by UNOPS

Welcome to the exhibition

Assistive Technology: transforming today and creATing futures is an exhibition showcasing the transformative power of assistive technology (AT) as part of **the Global Disability Summit (GDS)**, 2-3 April 2025 and the Civil Society Forum, 1 April 2025, in Berlin, Germany. With this exhibition, we aim to create an experience that educates, excites and challenges perceptions about assistive technology.

The exhibition is **curated by ATscale**, which was born out of GDS 2018, and is organized in close collaboration with the hosts of the Global Disability Summit, **the Government of Germany, the Government of Jordan, together with the International Disability Alliance**.

Worldwide, more than **2.5 billion people need to use one or more assistive products** and by 2050, an estimated 3.5 billion people will need AT, due to populations ageing and the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases rising. Yet, knowledge of what assistive technology is, the range of assistive products available, the progress made by the AT sector, and the transformative impact that AT can have on people's lives remains little known. **One billion people worldwide cannot access the assistive technology they need.** Closing this gap is essential for creating an inclusive world and part of the solution is to highlight the challenges of accessibility, availability and affordability, while sharing promising stories of change and impact from across the world.

We are excited to demonstrate **how the assistive technology landscape has evolved** across the world, **driven by the creativity and dedication of entrepreneurs, researchers, development organizations, private sector leaders, and most importantly, AT users**. Today's exhibition features all of them representing different parts of the world, including South Asia, Africa, South America, Europe, and the USA. Visitors to the exhibition will witness firsthand the impressive functionality of their products and engage in hands-on demonstrations and interactive activities. Visitors will also learn about real life stories of impact from across the world.

We encourage everyone to take this opportunity to explore, learn, ask questions, foster new connections, and generate new ideas. Thank you for being part of this important conversation. **Together, we can shape a future where assistive technology is accessible to all.**

About assistive technology

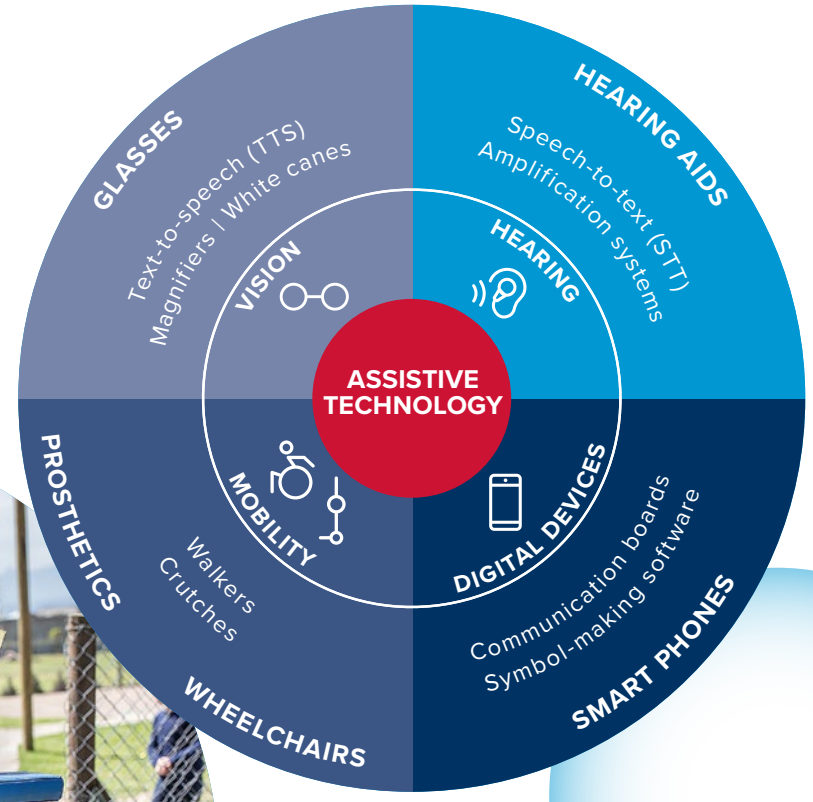
Assistive technology (AT) is an umbrella term for assistive products such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, prostheses, eyeglasses and digital devices, and their related systems and services.

Assistive technology can be life-changing and can enable people to live healthier, more productive, more independent, and more dignified lives, and to participate in education, the labour market and in their communities.

Everyone has a right to quality and affordable assistive technology. The principle of Leaving No One Behind is impossible without universal access to assistive technology. And yet, assistive technology is a historically neglected and under-resourced area, suffering from massive inequities. Barriers to access are usually greater for people living in low- and middle-income countries, for women and girls, older populations, and those of disadvantaged socioeconomic status.

Worldwide, more than 2.5 billion people need at least one form of assistive technology. Only 10% of people in low-income countries have access to the AT they need. AT is required and can positively impact outcomes at every stage of life — from childhood to adulthood to ageing populations. Research shows that **every $1 invested in assistive technology, generates a $9 return to the economy**. The benefits of AT extend beyond the individual user to wider society by boosting economic productivity, reducing healthcare costs by enabling preventive care and independent living, as well as promoting inclusivity and equality.

Access to AT can be strengthened by improving information, availability, and affordability of products. Innovative AT solutions — affordable, locally produced, and high-tech — are emerging globally. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), can make AT smarter, more efficient, and more inclusive. Innovations in AT have the potential to benefit all populations. However, transforming new solutions into reality requires collaboration across entrepreneurs, manufacturers, governments, and civil society. Moreover, a conducive ecosystem is required by strengthening health, education, and social protection systems to ensure AT can reach and be effectively used by those who need it. We appeal to partners across sectors for greater global commitment, coordination, and collaboration aimed at increasing global access to AT.



Child in a standing frame playing with his child carer at Edu-Play Centre in Cape Town.

Credit: Shonaquip

About GDS and ATscale

The Global Disability Summit (GDS) is a unique global mechanism that improves the lives of persons with disabilities, especially from the global south. It was created in 2017 to convene global, regional, and national stakeholders that share the same goal and vision for disability inclusive development and humanitarian action: advancing the rights and inclusion of all persons with disabilities through international cooperation. The GDS has made a remarkable impact welcoming approximately 1,200 participants in 2018 and 7,000 participants virtually in 2022, including more than 100 global leaders and 50 state representatives, such as the UN Secretary-General and the WHO Director-General. GDS 2025 aims to build on the momentum of the previous event where commitments were made by hundreds of stakeholders from governments, donors, and international organizations.

ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, was born out of a GDS commitment in 2018. It seems timely and appropriate that ATscale returns 7 years on to show progress made in the AT sector and make a renewed commitment towards positive change.

ATscale is a cross-sector global partnership with a mission to transform people's lives through assistive technology and provide access to AT to an additional 500 million people in low- and middle-income countries. ATscale convenes partners globally and nationally, and engages AT users, to drive progress across three mutually reinforcing strategic pillars: (i) supporting programmes in over 30 countries; (ii) strengthening global enablers including global tools, research, guidance, and resources; and (iii) advocating for change to catalyse political will, build public awareness and mobilize resources.

Spotlight on exhibitors

"Access to AT can enable people to live healthier, more productive, independent, and dignified lives."

GO Assistive Technology

UNITED KINGDOM

The majority of people with limb loss live in resource-constrained, challenging environments. Sadly, the current prosthetic offering does not meet their needs, and few people regain full mobility after an amputation. GO Assistive Technology, is on a mission to create game-changing prosthetic solutions appropriate for everyone. Using robust and cost-effective technologies inspired by the car industry, their artificial leg is designed to accurately replicate human motion while being waterproof, dustproof, durable, and stable on all terrains, so people not only regain their mobility but also the confidence to take part in the life of their community and trust in the future.

www.goassistivetech.com

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH THE RIGHT AT

When Anda lost his left leg 16 years ago, he was fitted with a government-issued prosthesis. This leg was slow and unstable, so he quickly abandoned it and used crutches instead. Anda continued to work in a factory, but he couldn't perform activities that involved carrying objects with his crutches and he was always assigned to the most repetitive tasks. Five months ago, Anda received a GO prosthetic leg. After only one day, he was walking hands-free. With this quality prosthesis, he can now use the stairs, carry boxes between floors, and take on new responsibilities at work.

A young man wearing GO's prosthetic leg and going about his daily chores [1]

THEIR STORIES, THEIR VOICES

Thaisa Pereira is a 20-year-old woman with an intellectual disability who participated in the IJC Apprenticeship Program. Living in the southern part of São Paulo, Brazil, she would have challenges in getting to work located in the central part. As she didn't feel safe traveling alone, her mother accompanied her every day. Through the Virtual Reality Project, Thaisa simulated walking on streets, accessing the subway, using a ticket, boarding, and disembarking. This experience helped her develop the confidence to travel independently, which ultimately led to her being hired by the company where she was an apprentice, thanks to IJC's support.

A boy trying out Jô Clemente Institute's VR glasses that simulate subway access to develop confidence among AT users[2]

"Everyone has a right to quality and affordable assistive technology"

Instituto Jô Clemente

BRAZIL

The Jô Clemente Institute (IJC) is a civil society organization that, for over 63 years, has been dedicated to promoting health and quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and rare diseases. Understanding the challenges that people face in accessing equal opportunities across all areas of life, IJC uses assistive technology to help people with disabilities overcome physical, communication, and social barriers. Assistive technology plays a crucial role in promoting autonomy and inclusion, strengthening rights, and contributing to a fairer, more equal society for all.

www.ijc.org.br

"AT can positively impact every stage of life — from childhood to adulthood to ageing populations."

Benetech

USA

Benetech is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing accessibility and equity through technology. Their mission is to empower individuals with disabilities, particularly students with learning variabilities in developing countries, by providing inclusive digital solutions that enable them to learn, work, and thrive. Through digital literacy initiatives, they bridge the accessibility gap by leveraging affordable, accessible, and locally available technology, training educators and students in screen readers and assistive tools, and partnering with governments, schools, and NGOs to implement sustainable digital learning solutions. By combining technology with advocacy, they create lasting impact, ensuring that education and opportunity are accessible to all.

www.benetech.org

LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR ALL STUDENTS

In rural India, Rajvinder, a visually impaired high school student, faced immense challenges in accessing textbooks. With Benetech's Bookshare platform, he gained access to accessible digital books and assistive technology training. Learning to use a smartphone with a physical keyboard, he now types confidently and is preparing to write his board exams independently. His journey exemplifies the transformative power of assistive technology, enabling self-reliance and academic success. Through initiatives like this, Benetech is changing lives, ensuring that no student is left behind due to a disability.

Girls in India using Benetech's accessible digital platforms to study in school. [3]

Photo credits: 1: GO Assistive Technology, 2: Jô Clemente Institute, 3: Benetech

Spotlight on exhibitors

AFFORDABLE GLASSES, BRIGHTER FUTURES

Eight-year-old Amina Kioko used to squint at the blackboard, struggling to keep up with school. Thanks to Dot Glasses, she received an affordable pair of glasses. Now, her eyes sparkle with understanding, and her hand shoots up eagerly in class. "I can see everything!" she exclaimed the first time she was able to see the blackboard clearly. Amina's story is just one of thousands.

"More than 2.5 billion people need at least one form of assistive technology."

Dot Glasses

KENYA

1 billion people globally live with uncorrected refractive error and need eyeglasses, the disability with the largest unmet need in the world. However, due to the high costs of eyeglasses, many are unable to access it. Dot Glasses manufactures glasses, testing tools and trains non-eyecare specialists to effectively sell glasses affordably to the most underserved communities. This boosts livelihoods, education, gender equality, quality of life and wellbeing.

www.dotglasses.org

"Every $1 invested in assistive technology, generates a $9 return to the economy."

Shonaquip

SOUTH AFRICA

Shonaquip Social Enterprise is more than just an assistive technology provider — they are changemakers working to create a world where every person with a disability has the right support to thrive. Their work goes beyond wheelchairs; they focus on the full journey of access, from assessment and fitting to training and long-term support, ensuring every assistive device truly meets the user's needs. By equipping healthcare professionals, empowering parents and early childhood development practitioners, and advocating for better policies, they are strengthening systems and breaking down barriers to inclusion — because real change happens when the right technology is paired with the right support.

www.shonaquipse.org.za

AT MAKES A DIFFERENCE FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD

For R and her family, everyday activities like meal times and play were a challenge. Born with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy, she struggled with head control, limiting her ability to engage with the world around her. That all changed when she received a Madiba2Go Buggy from Shonaquip. "Within just one week, we saw a big improvement in her neck control – something we had worked on for so long," her parents shared. Now, R can sit upright, take part in sensory activities, and interact with her surroundings in ways she couldn't before. "We wish we had it earlier!"

Children using Shonaquip's Sully Active chair (on the left) and the Madiba Buggy (on the right). [1]

Young men using NeoMotion vehicles and returning to work. [2]

AT @ WORK

Imtiaz Mulani, a former restaurant owner in Pimpri-Chinchwad, lost mobility in 2015 due to an undiagnosed condition, forcing him to shut his business. Determined to regain independence, he discovered NeoMotion's NeoBolt, a motorized clip-on that transforms a wheelchair into a roadworthy vehicle. With community support, he acquired the device and returned to the workforce. Today, he navigates the city confidently, earning a livelihood and inspiring others. His story highlights the life-changing impact of assistive technology, proving that with innovation and resilience, mobility challenges can be overcome.

NeoMotion

INDIA

NeoMotion is dedicated to transforming the lives of people with disabilities and the elderly through innovative mobility solutions. With a research and design facility at IIT Madras Research Park, the company has developed NeoFly, a customized wheelchair, and NeoBolt, a motorized clip-on, after extensive trials with wheelchair users across India. These products address critical indoor and outdoor mobility challenges, enhancing accessibility, independence, and overall well-being. With over 6,000 users and a diverse 50-member team (25% of whom are people with disabilities), NeoMotion continues to pioneer assistive technology, ensuring dignity and mobility for all.

www.neomotion.in

"Only 10% of people in low-income countries have access to the AT they need"

AcoSound

CHINA

AcoSound, established in 2011, is the first domestic hearing aid manufacturer to achieve independent R&D of hearing aid chips. They were the official hearing aid supplier to the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games. The company has played a pivotal role in defining and establishing testing standards for hearing aid channels, significantly contributing to the standardization of hearing aids in China. Through its innovative approach and commitment to quality, AcoSound has set a benchmark in the hearing aid industry, ensuring people with hearing impairments receive reliable and effective solutions.

www.acosoundhearingaid.com

A STORY ABOUT RECONNECTING WITH LIFE

In 2024, 68-year-old Li Fan, a hearing-impaired older man from Yunnan, heard the world clearly again. Due to financial hardship, he had long been unable to afford a hearing aid. Thanks to a disability project led by the AcoSound team, he obtained a high-end hearing aid. After the device was fitted and adjusted on-site, Li Fan held the staff's hands tightly, tears streaming down his face. This moment was not just about sound — it was about reconnecting with life, love, and hope. AcoSound gave him a renewed sense of belonging.

Photo credits: 1: Shonaquip, courtesy of Door of Hope & Hannah Thompson, 2: NeoMotion

Spotlight on exhibitors

"Markets for AT can be strengthened by improving information, availability, and affordability of products."

3DP4ME

USA | JORDAN

3DP4ME is empowering patients to walk, move, and hear with 3D printed prostheses and hearing aids. They focus on providing holistic healthcare solutions in the Middle East, helping vulnerable children gain access to life-changing care. By leveraging 3D printing technology, they create customized, patient-specific prostheses and hearing aids that address the unique needs of children in underserved communities. Their work has been recognized by the World Economic Forum as well as industry leaders like Accenture and Intel.

www.3dp4me.org

"New technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), can make AT smarter, more efficient, and more inclusive."

Signvrse

KENYA

Signvrse is making sign language as easy to access as spoken language. Using AI and motion capture, they break down communication barriers for 430 million deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who struggle to access education, healthcare, jobs, and digital services. Their flagship solution, Terp360, delivers real-time 3D sign language translation, allowing users to understand and engage with content instantly whether in a classroom, at work, or online. They are building one of the largest sign language datasets, ensuring translations are accurate, culturally relevant, and always available. Businesses and institutions can integrate sign language accessibility effortlessly, creating a world where no one is left behind.

www.signvrse.com

NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE FOR REFUGEE POPULATIONS

Sham, a seven-year-old girl from Syria, struggled with hearing loss after her family fled as refugees to Jordan in 2012. Sham's family's financial hardship made accessing hearing aids impossible, leading to further isolation and bullying. However, in April 2023, Sham received 3DP4ME's customized 3D-printed hearing aids. The transformation has been remarkable. Her hearing and speech comprehension have improved from 20% to 70%, and she is now speaking confidently. "She's becoming more independent," says her father, Khalid. With her newfound confidence, Sham no longer feels isolated, and her story is a testament to the life-changing power of accessible healthcare.

Boy wearing a 3D printed hearing aid. [1]

FROM EXCLUSION TO COMMUNITY LEADER

Four years ago, during a training program with the Deaf community, Daniel Angila discovered that despite his passion he couldn't pursue STEM. Signvrse welcomed him as an early user, co-creating Terp360 alongside him and 30+ individuals with accessibility barriers. Today, Daniel is a community lead who is ensuring linguistic accuracy in Terp360. His work with Signvrse enabled him a full scholarship at USIU Africa and a spot as a Global UGRAD Fellow at Missouri State University. His journey from exclusion to inclusion, to leader in designing digital accessibility shows the power of inclusive innovation.

Young people in a classroom using Terp360 for real-time 3D sign language translation. [2]

"Innovative AT solutions — affordable, locally produced, and high-tech — are emerging globally."

LLVision

CHINA

Founded in 2014, LLVision is a global augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI) leader, specializing in AR optics and computer vision. It provides a full-stack AR ecosystem from R&D to commercialization. Its ARISE platform and smart security solutions serve 5,000+ enterprises across 100+ countries. LLVision also developed the world's first AR subtitle glasses, using AI speech-to-text for seamless communication accessibility. With nearly 500 patents, LLVision is committed to integrating AR+AI into industries and driving intelligent transformation.

www.llvision.com/en/

THE IMPACT OF INNOVATION ON EVERYDAY LIFE

Li Zhengang, a Deaf content creator, has produced over a thousand videos on Kuaishou, a leading social media platform. But his son, Xiaoyu, often had to translate for him. Li felt guilty about burdening Xiaoyu with this responsibility. Upon discovering the Leion Hey AR Subtitle Glasses, Li's communication experience changed dramatically. During a family meal, Li understood Xiaoyu's speech for the first time without relying on sign language, which was a deeply emotional moment. With these glasses, he could connect with his son in new ways. The glasses have empowered him to engage with the world more confidently, reducing his dependence on others for communication.

A woman at a conference wearing LLVisions AR glasses using AI speech-to-text for seamless communication. [3]

"Strengthening health, education, and social protection systems ensures that AT reaches those who require it."

OADCPH

TOGO

OADCPH is transforming the lives of people with disabilities in Africa. Based in Togo since 2012, OADCPH is a not-for-profit organization that facilitates access to assistive technology related to vision, hearing and mobility in Africa. Thanks to ATscale, it has developed a strategy for its next 5 years. They created a central purchasing unit, the supply of 600 tonnes of equipment, support to several organizations in West Africa, and helping thousands of vulnerable people to access services. OADCPH has also strengthened the capacity of rehabilitation professionals with more than 40 training modules.

www.oadcph.org

FROM BARRIERS TO FULFILLING DREAMS

A young Senegalese law graduate, with an amputated limb since childhood, dreamed of becoming a magistrate. Despite numerous rejections due to his disability, his career path took a turn in 2021 when OADCPH helped him obtain a new, customized prosthesis. With this equipment, he was able to apply for the judicial training program and was accepted. Throughout his training, OADCPH and the CNAO (National Center for Orthopedic Appliances) in Dakar supported him, renewing his prosthesis in 2022. In 2025, he obtained his diploma, thus fulfilling his childhood dream.

Photo credits: 1: 3DP4ME, 2: Signvrse, 3: LLVision

Spotlight on exhibitors

"Innovations in AT have the potential to benefit all populations"

Microsoft

USA | GERMANY

Microsoft is a global leader in software, IT security, hardware, and open-source development platforms. Accessibility is a core value at Microsoft, integrated into all products and services, including Copilot, to support people with disabilities. From Windows 11 to Microsoft 365, inclusive design and assistive technologies ensure everyone can participate fully in the digital world. Collaborating with politics, business, and science, Microsoft drives initiatives to ensure inclusive participation in the digital society's progress.

Microsoft Germany GmbH, founded in 1983 as a subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation (Redmond, USA), employs over 3,000 people at seven locations in Germany. Alongside 30,000 partners, Microsoft supports companies with innovative cloud and AI solutions for digital transformation. As a global leader in software, IT security, hardware, and open-source development platforms, Microsoft connects 950 million people via LinkedIn and offers cross-platform gaming with Xbox and Game Pass. The company invests in AI infrastructure, cloud expansion, and workforce training.

www.microsoft.com

"Transforming new solutions into reality requires collaboration across entrepreneurs, manufacturers, governments, and civil society."

Torchit

INDIA

Torchit is a pioneering social enterprise dedicated to empowering persons with disabilities through innovative and affordable assistive technology. With a strong legacy in AT development, their solutions, such as the Saarthi Smart Cane and Jyoti AI Smart Glass, have impacted over 400,000 lives in 40+ countries. They work closely with governments, NGOs, and corporate partners to ensure accessibility, affordability, and large-scale adoption of AT. Their focus extends beyond providing devices –

HOW A CHANCE ENCOUNTER CHANGED A COMPANY

A chance encounter on a Munich S-Bahn changed a life and a company forever. A passenger with vision impairment demonstrated assistive technology to a Microsoft employee, sparking a conversation that led to an internship — and later, a full-time role as Microsoft Germany's first permanent employee with vision impairment. Since 2020, Microsoft Germany has championed accessibility, giving workshops and providing feedback to improve Microsoft products. They also founded a community to promote workplace inclusivity. Tools like Seeing AI and accessibility checkers have transformed their daily life, showcasing Microsoft's commitment to empowering people of all abilities through technology.

An employee with vision impairment at Microsoft Germany working on her computer with a Braille display. [1]

RESTORING DIGNITY AND UNLOCKING HUMAN POTENTIAL

Ankit, a visually impaired entrepreneur from Ahmedabad, struggled with mobility and daily tasks until he received Jyoti AI Smart Glass. Previously dependent on others for reading and navigating his surroundings, Ankit now independently manages his store, reads printed materials, and interacts confidently with customers. This transformation not only enhanced his business but also restored his confidence and dignity. Stories like Ankit's highlight how Torchit's assistive technology is not just about innovation — it's about unlocking human potential and creating self-reliant futures.

Two men in India using the Saarthi Smart Cane to make their way through the city. [2]

they create inclusive opportunities through upskilling programs, employment initiatives, and AI-driven accessibility solutions, ensuring that assistive technology becomes a bridge to independence and dignity for every individual.

www.mytorchit.com

"Commitment, coordination, and collaboration are key to increasing global access to AT."

Ottobock

GERMANY

For more than 100 years, Ottobock has been developing innovative fitting solutions for people with reduced mobility. With innovative power, outstanding technical solutions and services in the fields of prosthetics, orthotics, NeuroMobility and patient care, Ottobock enables people in 135 countries across the world to live their lives the way they want them to. As a Human Empowerment Company, Ottobock promotes freedom of movement, quality for life and independence.

www.ottobock.com

A woman, using a prosthetic leg from Ottobock, feeding chicken in her farm. [3]

THE GIFT OF INDEPENDENCE THROUGH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Agnes is a farmer from Kenya who experienced a blood clot that led to an amputation. Using only crutches for mobility, she faced challenges in carrying out her daily chores at the farm and in her family. Ottobock explained different prosthetic solutions and provided her with a prosthesis tailored to meet her everyday needs. Today she shares how this changed her life: "I am independent and I can do my chores alone." Since she is able to move again, she can fulfill her dreams of raising her family and extending her farming business.

Photo credits: 1: Microsoft, 2: Torchit, 3: Ottobock

Unlock
The Everyday

Call to Action:
Unlock the Everyday Campaign

Unlock the Everyday is the first global campaign aimed at raising awareness of the importance of assistive technology and people's right to access – no matter their income and no matter where they live. Launched in Davos during the World Economic Forum in 2024, the campaign is calling on governments to do more to help the hundreds of millions of people urgently in need of assistive technology through increased support and investment. It is also calling on all those involved with the sector to improve supply chains, generate research, foster partnerships, and play their part in improving access to affordable assistive products.

How can you get involved?

Unlock The Everyday will mark the second **World Day for Assistive Technology** on 4 June 2025, to celebrate assistive technology initiatives and continue to raise awareness of this critical issue. Ensuring equitable access to assistive technology requires a concerted effort from policymakers, community leaders, and organizations. Take action and **add your voice to the campaign** through **Me and my AT** – Take a photo or record a short video and tell the world how your assistive product(s) help you to live your life to the full. To learn how you or your organization can get involved and to download the World Day assets scan the QR code.

Join us as we build a movement for assistive technology and take us one step closer to our goal for equal access and greater awareness and investment in assistive technology!

Contact

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