



Annual Review 2024

Unlocking Potential Amplifying Impact



ATscale

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Hosted by

 **UNOPS**

Annual review contributors

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Acknowledgements

This report highlights the remarkable achievements made possible through the collective efforts of numerous stakeholders dedicated to improving access to assistive technology worldwide.

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ATscale also acknowledges the invaluable role of its implementing partners, whose dedication and expertise on the ground are essential for translating strategy into impactful results, and ensuring that assistive technology reaches those who need it most.

National governments in supported countries also play an essential role in ATscale's mission. Their dedication to creating enabling environments and increasing the prioritization of assistive technology is key to the lasting impact of collaborative work. Equal gratitude goes to users of assistive technology and organizations of persons with disabilities, whose lived experiences, insights, and advocacy efforts are a driving force behind this work. Their participation at every level ensures that ATscale's interventions are relevant, appropriate, and responsive to the needs of users of assistive technology.

As ATscale's host organization, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) plays a critical role in facilitating operations, ensuring efficient and effective delivery of initiatives. ATscale extends its sincere appreciation to UNOPS for enabling the Partnership to focus on its core mission of expanding access to assistive technology.

To all stakeholders who contributed their time, expertise, and energy: thank you and we look forward to continued collaboration in the shared mission of unlocking the potential of assistive technology, and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live a fulfilling life.

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Sightsavers



The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)



UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund)



United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)



World Health Organization (WHO)

Foreword from ATscale CEO

Today, 2.5 billion people globally need to use at least one type of assistive product, and this need is growing fast.¹ In 2024, the global effort to ensure that every person who needs assistive technology can access it, gained both urgency and traction, marking a year of hard-earned progress. ATscale exists to bring together diverse actors – governments, donors, multilateral agencies, organizations of persons with disabilities and other representative organizations, and the private sector – to tackle this challenge collectively.

The need for assistive technology remains vast and urgent. In low-income countries only **10 per cent of people** have the assistive technology they need, in stark contrast to the **90 per cent of people** in need in high-income countries who do.

Across low- and middle-income countries, millions of children are still excluded from school, adults from employment, and older persons from full participation simply because they do not have access to the basic tools – like glasses, wheelchairs, prosthetics or hearing aids – that can help to enable independence and dignity. This is not an issue of charity or technical complexity. It is about fundamental human rights. Realizing the transformative potential of assistive technology across the life course requires sustained investment, bold policy reform and systemic change to ensure no one is left behind.

2024 saw the power of collective action in motion: from strengthening national ecosystems for assistive technology in over 20 countries, to increasing the number of users of assistive technology reached by ATscale-supported programmes, to launching

the first ever assistive product market report, ATscale worked to deliver practical, scalable solutions. Crucially, we did so in close partnership with technical, strategic and implementing partners, as well as representative organizations of persons with disabilities, who continue to push us to centre lived experience and ensure that the solutions we build are inclusive by design.

Yet challenges remain. Funding for assistive technology is still fragmented, and traditional donors are cutting their budgets for development assistance. Coordination between sectors is often weak. And too many people – particularly women, girls, and those in humanitarian settings – remain overlooked. We cannot meet the ambitions of the SDGs or the commitments set out by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities unless access to assistive technology becomes a global priority.

As we look ahead, we are reminded that real progress does not come from targeted programmes alone: it is driven by people and movements, and made possible through partnerships. We are deeply grateful to all those who contributed to this year's progress, and we invite all partners – new and longstanding – to continue on this path with us. Together, we can turn commitment into access, and promise into impact.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Bijleveld'.

Pascal Bijleveld
CEO ATscale

¹ [Global Report on Assistive Technology \(GReAT\), 2022](#)

Foreword from the Government of Cambodia

Our partnership with ATscale is helping Cambodia strengthen national systems to expand access to assistive technology for all who need it. These products – from eyeglasses and hearing aids to mobility devices – are not luxuries; they are vital tools that support independence, participation and dignity. Assistive technology is increasingly recognized as a key enabler of inclusive health, education and social services – and we are committed to advancing this agenda.

Since 2021, we have advanced on several fronts. With ATscale's support, Cambodia has nearly completed its first national priority assistive product list – a critical step toward making a wide range of assistive products available and affordable. Further, through ATscale support, The Fred Hollows Foundation (FHF) and Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) have worked to improve vision services, including vision screening and the provision of eyeglasses. In 2024, this initiative has already screened more than 1.4 million children and adults (51 per cent women and girls) and provided over 245,000 eyeglasses, improving lives and livelihoods across the country. Additionally, ATscale, through CHAI, has also supported the strengthening of mobility-related services in the country, primarily through public physical rehabilitation centres. These efforts form part of our broader commitment to strengthening inclusive systems and achieving universal health coverage, where access to assistive technology is recognized as an essential component.

This collaboration is rooted in shared priorities, technical support, and above all, the recognition that the users of assistive technology need to be included in every step.

We know that we still have far to go. But we also know that **when countries lead** – and are supported with the right expertise and resources – **inclusive change is possible**.

We remain committed to building on this momentum, and we thank ATscale for walking this journey with us.



A blue ink signature of H.E. Dr Sung Vinntak, written in a cursive style.

H.E. Dr Sung Vinntak

Secretary of State, Ministry of Health,
Kingdom of Cambodia



A blue ink signature of H.E. Yeap Malyno, written in a cursive style.

H.E. Yeap Malyno

Director General for Social Policy
Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans
and Youth Rehabilitation,
Kingdom of Cambodia

Executive Summary

This annual report charts the progress of ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, in its mission to transform lives through assistive technology. Since its inception, ATscale has been working towards

the ambitious goal that by 2030, an additional 500 million people in low- and middle-income countries have access to life-changing assistive technology.

ATscale's work is guided by three strategic pillars:

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

SUPPORTING COUNTRY PLANS

ATscale is working with over 20 countries to strengthen assistive technology policies, systems, services and financing.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

STRENGTHENING GLOBAL ENABLERS

ATscale supports the development of global tools and resources – such as knowledge, guidance and product information – to support countries to make progress. This includes fostering healthy markets that deliver reliable supplies of quality, affordable products.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

ATscale catalyses political will, builds public awareness and raises overall resources for assistive technology.

Key achievements in 2024

Supporting country plans

ATscale-supported programmes reached over 1.5M people (51 per cent women and girls) with assistive technology, including about 250,000 people who received an assistive product in countries such as Cambodia, Kenya, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Tajikistan and Zambia - a population where women and girls constituted a full half of the users.

Significant progress was made in **increasing the availability of assistive technology**, with initiatives such as training health professionals in Kenya, establishing a

wheelchair service provision programme in Lesotho, and supporting prosthetic and orthotic training in Cambodia.

Fostering governance and assistive technology frameworks:

ATscale-supported countries have established national steering committees and strengthened national assistive products lists - an essential step towards increasing the availability of assistive products.

Expanding financial coverage for assistive technology:

Notable progress was made in increasing financial coverage, particularly in Zimbabwe and Rwanda.

Strengthening the assistive technology workforce: Close to 9,000 individuals, half of whom are women, were trained across ATscale-supported countries, with an estimated indirect reach of up to 17.5 million people over time through enhanced capacity of front line workers.

Integration of assistive technology into humanitarian settings: with ATscale support, partners procured and distributed over 1,000 assistive products for hospitals in Gaza, and are working globally to establish four AT kits for rapid deployment in disaster situations.

Strengthening national health information systems: ATscale is supporting the integration of assistive technology data into existing health information management tools, such as the Kenya Health Information System.

Expanding ATscale impact through the preparatory work for 20 upcoming programmes to expand access to life-changing assistive technology in low- and middle-income countries

Strengthening global enablers

ATscale continued to support the development of critical global enablers, including:

Building sustainable assistive product markets: In collaboration with CHAI, ATscale supported the production of the first-ever assistive product market report, analysing markets for eyeglasses, hearing aids, prostheses, wheelchairs and digital technology. ATscale supported sustainable local production models like Motivation's *Made AT Kenya* and strengthened regional distribution hubs in South-East Asia and West Africa through partnerships focused on manufacturing, management, training, needs analyses and strategic expansion.

Bringing assistive technology services to everyone, everywhere: service delivery approaches for hearing aids were developed by the World Health Organization with ATscale support.

Removing financial barriers to accessing assistive technology: ATscale is supporting the expansion of the WHO Assistive Technology Capacity Assessment to integrate an investment case methodology for national policy makers.

Leveraging the power of digital assistive technology: ATscale supported UNICEF to expand access to information and communication in four underrepresented languages through text-to-speech software.

Advocating for change

Together with 24 partners, ATscale launched the “Unlock the Everyday” campaign, the first global campaign intended to raise awareness of increasing access to assistive technology. The campaign reached millions around the world and was celebrated on the first-ever World Day for Assistive Technology.

A boy in a wheelchair studies at a desk in a classroom. This photograph was taken for UNICEF's “It's About Ability” campaign, promoting inclusive education. ©UNICEF-UN040610



Looking ahead

ATscale is entering a scale-up phase, guided by its 2024-2027 Strategy. The organization intends to support at least 35 countries to develop stronger national assistive technology ecosystems, ensuring that 50 million more people benefit from assistive products and services. This will involve expanding access to priority assistive products, strengthening service delivery models, training workforces, and improving financing mechanisms.

ATscale recognizes the crucial role of users of assistive technology in its work, and is committed to ensuring that users are represented at all levels and that their voices are heard. In 2024, ATscale made significant strides in engaging users, including the recruitment of three persons with lived experience of assistive technology use.

In 2024, ATscale's work demonstrated the transformative power of assistive technology and the importance of collective action. The organization is well-positioned to continue its progress in the coming years, ensuring that assistive technology becomes an integral part of health, education, and social systems in low- and middle-income countries.



Shakira, a young girl, is being fitted with a hearing aid in Malawi. ©Deafkidz International

About ATscale

ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, is a cross-sectoral global partnership with the mission to transform people's lives through assistive technology. It catalyses action to ensure that, by 2030, an additional **500 million people** in low- and middle-income countries get the life-changing assistive technology they need.

Since being launched as an idea at the first Global Disability Summit in July 2018 in London, it has built a solid foundation. The 2024-2027 Strategy represents the beginning of the scale-up phase, in which it is poised to expand its country and global footprint to deliver a wider and deeper impact over the next three years and beyond.

ATscale convenes partners globally and nationally, and engages users of assistive technology, to drive progress across three mutually reinforcing strategic pillars:

Supporting country plans, and their implementation, to strengthen assistive technology policies, systems, services and financing in over 35 countries across multiple product areas;

Strengthening global enablers: the global tools and resources, such as knowledge, guidance and product information, that countries need to make progress, such as healthy markets that deliver reliable supplies of quality, affordable products;

Advocating for change to catalyse political will, build public awareness and raise overall resources for assistive technology.



Assistive Technology (AT) is an umbrella term covering the systems and services related to the delivery of assistive products. Assistive products are any product, including devices, equipment, instruments and software, specially designed and produced or generally available, whose purpose is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence and to facilitate participation. Examples include wheelchairs, eyeglasses, hearing aids, prostheses and digital devices and software.

Khendo & Nirmala, 10, sit and play wearing prostheses. Their legs were amputated after the earthquake which hit Nepal in 2015. ©L. Veuve/Handicap International



ATscale Highlights

OVERVIEW OF IMPACT FROM INCEPTION TO 2024

People reached with assistive technology²



1,543,465 (51% female)

↳ Indirect reach³: 4,771,592

People reached with products



247,533 (50% female)

↳ Indirect reach: 767,035

COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT

Supporting Country Plans and their implementation, to strengthen their assistive technology policies, systems, services and financing

Investments overview as of 31st December 2024

↳ 22 ATscale-supported countries

12

Foundational support

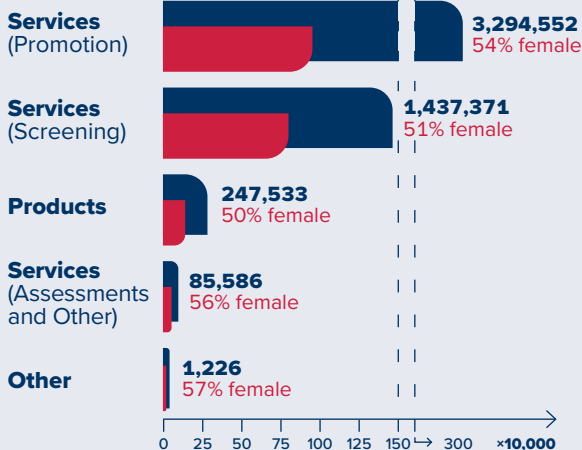
8

Scale up

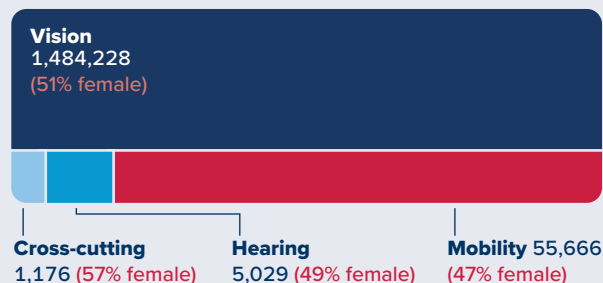
2

Humanitarian

Reached with assistive technology by type of intervention⁴



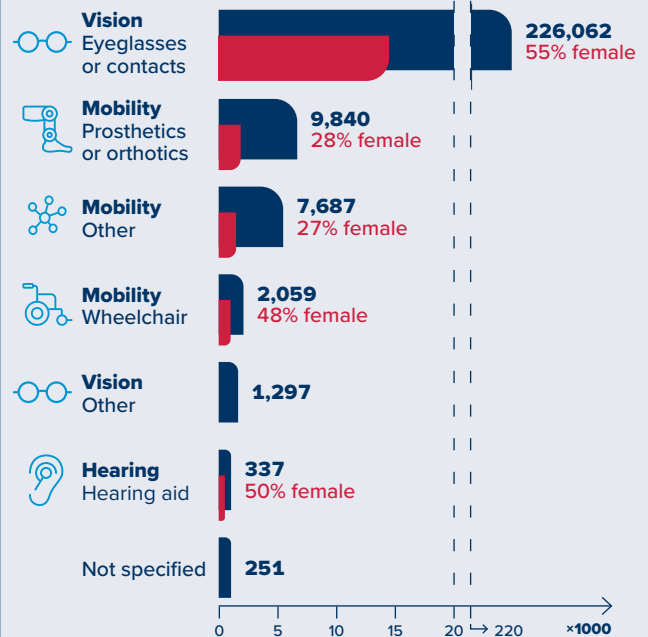
Reached with assistive technology by functional domains⁴:



People reached with products:

247,533 (50% female)

↳ Indirect reach: 767,035⁵

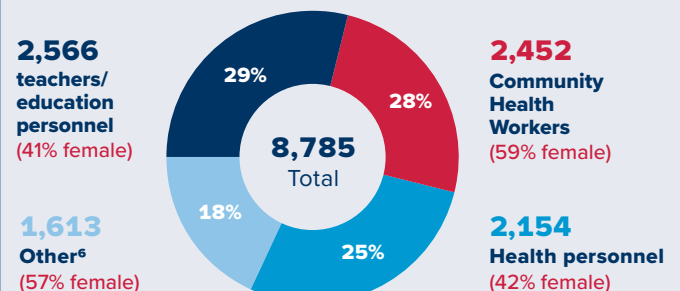


Humanitarian Aid

Over 5,600 assistive products pre-positioned in a regional logistic hub

People trained: 8,785 (50% female)

↳ Indirect reach per year: 17,570,000⁵



² ATscale counts people reached with assistive technology through service delivery (screening, clinical assessment, fitting, maintenance, among others) and/or product delivery.

³ The estimated indirect reach with assistive technology reflects the additional individuals within the households of those directly benefiting from assistive technology. This is calculated using the average household size for each country.

⁴ The sum of people reached across each intervention and/or functional domains controls for potential double counting of individuals who might have received several interventions and several functional domains.

⁵ Indirect reach is extrapolated based on an estimated reach of individuals served by each trained person on the front-line over a one-year period using global averages.

⁶ Organizations of persons with disabilities, government representatives, programme managers, etc.

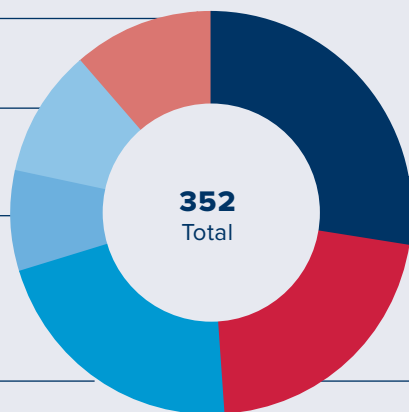
Organizations strengthened

10%
NGOs

10%
Other

8%
Intergovernmental
organisations

22%
Government
entities



28%
Organisations
of persons
with disability

22%
Community-Based
Organisations

System strengthening



National coordination
mechanisms



National plans & national
assistive products lists
(APL) development



Data system
strengthening

GLOBAL ENABLERS

Improving the availability of affordable, high-quality products and expanding access to up-to-date evidence and practical guidance for inclusive services



MARKET BUILDING

Local production and
assembly of assistive
products - *Made AT Kenya*

Strengthening **regional
distribution hubs** -
Cambodia, Togo

**Assistive Products Market
Report 2024**

SERVICE DELIVERY



WHO's 2024 **Hearing aid
service delivery approaches**
for low- and middle income
country settings

Measuring the outcome
of prosthetic services: LEAD
and COMPASS

FINANCING



**Case for Investing in
Assistive Technology**



DIGITAL AT

Research partnership
on **smartphone** use
as assistive technology

Development of **text-to-
speech (TTS)** for under-
represented languages

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Raising public awareness, building political will, and mobilizing resources to advance global access to assistive technology



SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

10,000+

followers across all social media platforms

300+ MILLION PEOPLE REACHED

with media & social media combined

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

21 USERS

of assistive technology participated
in events, supported by ATscale



UNLOCK THE EVERYDAY CAMPAIGN

160 MILLION

people reached

46 PIECES

of earned media coverage

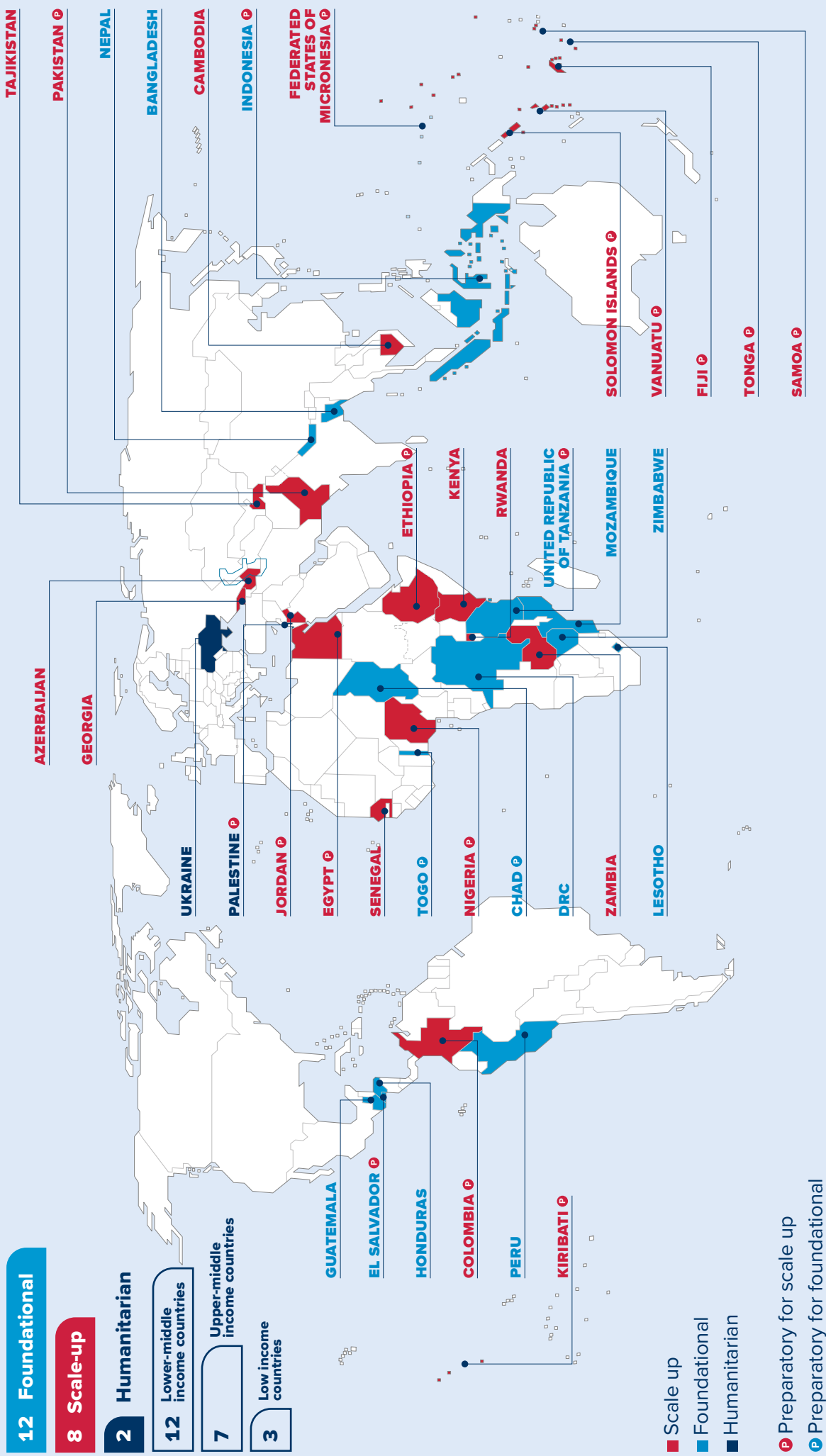
WORLD DAY FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

20+ COUNTRIES

2.3 MILLION

reached on social media

Ongoing as of 31st December 2024



The map presents the geographic distribution of ATscale supported programmes as of 31st December 2024. All foundational programmes are completed and scale-up programmes are ongoing. Countries marked in red with a "p" are preparing for scale-up, except Rwanda which is already a scale-up supported country but preparing for an additional scale-up intervention.



© UNICEF/UN0592190

Supporting Country Plans

Programmes supported by ATscale are intended to stimulate government ownership, multi-sectoral coordination, and multi-stakeholder partnership approaches, to bridge the gap between demand and supply by convening stakeholders towards a common vision.

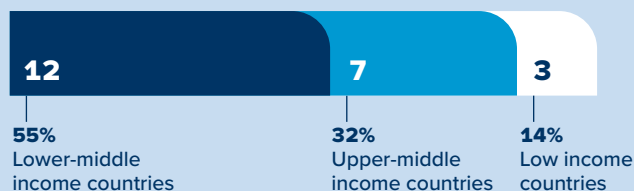
Through catalytic investments, ATscale supports government-led and locally driven national plans to scale up access to assistive technology, which are focused on strengthening systems and creating favourable political environments to sustainably increase access to assistive technology.

In 2024, ATscale and its trusted partners supported a range of country-level programmes across 22 countries, including 3 low-income, 12 lower-middle-income, and 7 upper-middle-income countries. These programmes fall into two categories:

Foundational support focuses on raising awareness, securing political buy-in, building policy and planning foundations, and strengthening leadership capacity towards access to assistive technology.

Scale-up support helps countries to expand access to assistive technology and strengthen systems for lasting impact. Priority is given to countries that demonstrate a clear understanding of their national needs, system gaps, and strategic plans for assistive technology, as well as strong government commitment.

ATscale is currently supporting a **range of programmes** in over **22 countries**.



1,543,465 people reached since ATscale inception with assistive technology by ATscale-supported programmes (**51% women and girls**).



In addition, ATscale works to raise awareness and promote the systematic inclusion of assistive technology in broader **humanitarian responses**, including through the pre-positioning of essential assistive products. At the request of partners and countries, support focuses on urgent and specific needs - such as the provision of these products in emergency settings - to help ensure immediate access and address health and protection risks for vulnerable individuals during crises.

Increased assistive technology availability and access

ATscale-supported interventions address both supply- and demand-side barriers to improve availability of and access to assistive technology in low- and middle-income countries. This is achieved by strengthening workforce capacity, expanding the availability of products and services, and raising awareness of the importance of assistive technology.

In **Rwanda**, ATscale supported UNICEF and the Rwanda Biomedical Center to equip twelve hospitals across nine districts with state-of-the-art audiological equipment and digital hearing aids, coupled with training for health staff, greatly improving the availability of quality hearing-related services.

In **Kenya**, ATscale partners have strengthened systems to support the delivery of white canes, braille papers, braille kits, and braille machines to 41 schools, enabling an estimated benefit for over 1,200 children in need of AT for continued learning.

Through its partnership with WHO, the Government of **Georgia** integrated provision of assistive technology into several physical rehabilitation centres through a large national supplier, ensuring sustainability and building procurement capacity for quality, local assistive technology, and further committing financial support for each screened and served individual.

In **Cambodia**, under the leadership of the national eye health programme, ATscale is supporting two complementary programmes implemented by FHF and CHAI to strengthen vision services across the country. These initiatives focus on building the capacity of public vision centres, conducting eye screenings, and providing eyeglasses. To date, they have reached 1.4M people (51% women and girls) through screenings and provided eyeglasses to 245,000 children, teachers, and the wider community.

Joshua Tiisa, optical technician at Kenyatta Hospital providing a demonstration on the functionality of a newly-acquired machine that cuts lenses. Patients no longer have to go elsewhere with their prescription for glasses and can receive them in the same place. ©ATscale/Carlisto Ochieng



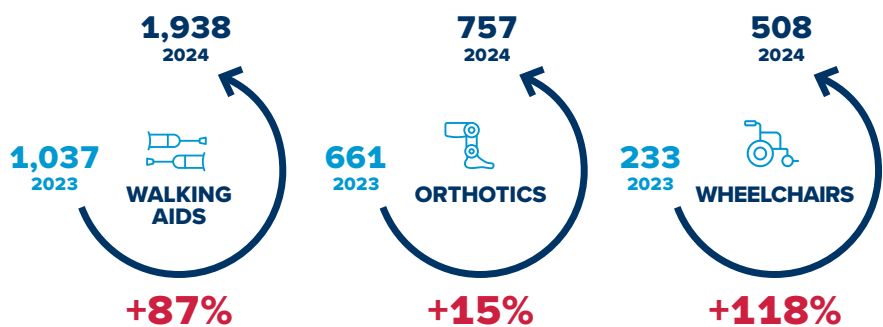
Cambodia country example : significant strides in assistive technology provision and outreach

In Cambodia, significant progress has been made in expanding access to assistive technology through physical rehabilitation services. Efforts have focused on strengthening government-managed physical rehabilitation centres (PRCs), providing essential assistive devices such as prostheses and orthoses, and extending services through outreach programmes.

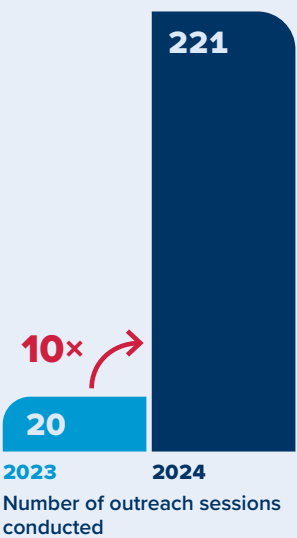
As a result, the number of assistive devices distributed across six PRCs increased by 40 per cent between 2023 and 2024. Additionally, outreach sessions expanded tenfold in the same period, significantly increasing the number of users of assistive technology reached. The ATscale-supported programme enabled the restart of critical outreach services, leading to a tenfold increase in outreach sessions since 2023, reaching nearly 20 times more people and ensuring the distribution of over 2,000 products.



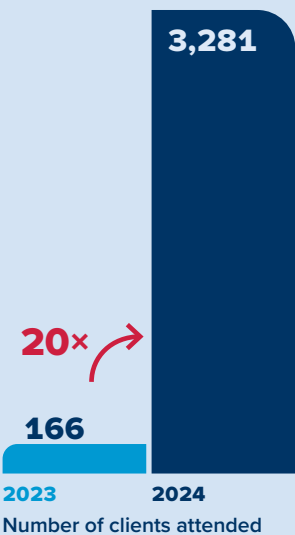
Ms Sopanhary Huy was assigned to oversee the new refractive error services. In preparation, she underwent an intensive six-month training programme, organized by Cambodia’s National Programme for Eye Health (NPEH), with support from The Fred Hollows Foundation. ©The Fred Hollows Foundation



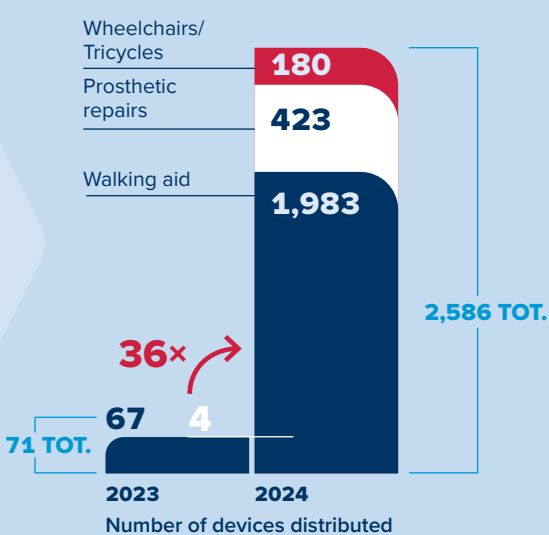
10 TIMES INCREASE IN OUTREACH SESSIONS CONDUCTED BY 6 PRCs IN 2024



REACHING ALMOST 20 TIMES MORE PEOPLE THAN IN 2023



WITH MORE 2,000 DEVICES DISTRIBUTED TO CLIENTS WHO MAY NOT HAVE COME TO PRC



Fostering of governance and assistive technology frameworks

To strengthen ecosystems and address fragmentation, ATscale's support has facilitated the creation of national AT steering committees, bringing together stakeholders from various sectors involved in provision of assistive technology to develop national policies and strategies.

In parallel, **progress has been made in developing and updating national assistive product lists in several countries. These lists are crucial for ensuring that a wide range of assistive products are available and accessible.** Notably, in Cambodia, the development of the nation's first priority assistive product list (APL) is nearing completion with strong support and commitment from the government, and it is expected to be approved in the third year of programme implementation.

The Government of **Tajikistan** has approved a comprehensive national AT action plan, and has established a National AT Quality Assurance Committee to ensure quality control and effective implementation. The revised APL has increased the number of available products by 72 per cent.

Assistive product lists (APLs) have been ratified by the governments of **Bangladesh, Nepal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe.**



National coordination mechanisms – such as technical working groups in Kenya and a National AT Quality Assurance Committee in Tajikistan – have been established in ATscale-supported countries to ensure collaborative action among government bodies, NGOs and other stakeholders.



A training session for Wheelchairs for Healthcare and Social Service Specialists in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

©Ministry of Health Tajikistan

Increased financial coverage and funding for assistive technology

ATscale-supported programmes have been advocating increased financial coverage for assistive technology in several countries, to **ensure equitable access to affordable assistive technology**.

The removal of import tax on essential assistive products (hearing aids, braille materials and crutches) using amended VAT regulations in **Zimbabwe** has increased accessibility and affordability.

In **Bangladesh**, a comprehensive costing analysis and investment case is being developed for key assistive products, which will be crucial for assessing financial needs for assistive technology and informing budget allocations in the country.

ATscale and UNICEF are collaborating in **Rwanda** to support the Rwanda Biomedical Centre to deliver hearing aids to school-age children and teachers. In Rwanda, UNICEF's work drove down the cost of hearing aids from \$2,000 to \$118, thanks to a national procurement strategy focused on demand and centralized purchasing.

Strengthened workforce capacity

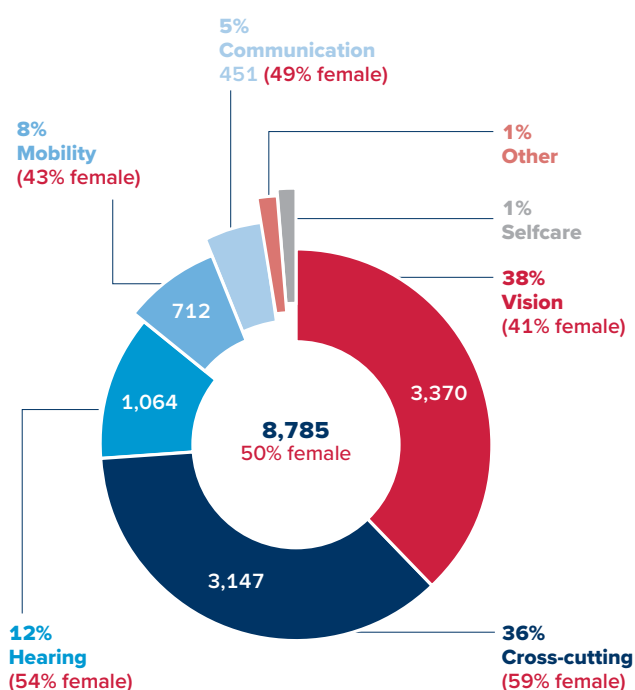
Building a skilled workforce is essential for ensuring sustainable and inclusive access to assistive technology and rehabilitation services. ATscale supports capacity for managing and delivering services through training and technical assistance to government officials and other stakeholders on policy development, procurement and service delivery for assistive technology.



Hope laughs with her child in Zimbabwe. She received her wheelchair from ATscale partner, via the CLASP project. ©Momentum Wheels for Humanity, Zimbabwe

ATscale-supported programmes have trained 8,785 people (50 per cent women) across various countries, including Rwanda, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Cambodia, Indonesia, Tajikistan, and Georgia. ATscale estimates that **17.5M people will indirectly benefit from the increased capacity of front line workers**.

PEOPLE TRAINED BY FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS



PEOPLE TRAINED BY PERSONNEL TITLE

49% Female
51% Male

Teachers/education
personnel



Community health
worker/volunteers



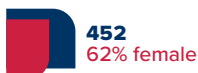
Health personnel



Other



OPDs Personnel/
Leaders



Government
Representative



Cambodian students from the Bachelor's in Prosthetics and Orthotics during a visit from the ATscale Partnership.

©ATscale

In **Kenya** 1,580 health professionals are undergoing training focused on several topics, including speech and language therapy, ophthalmology, audiology and hearing, wheelchair service provision and braille devices. About 3.2 million people a year will indirectly benefit through improved health and care services.

The ATscale-supported programme launched a scholarship initiative in **Cambodia** that has enabled eight prosthetics and orthotics students to advance to their second year of training and has successfully placed five prosthetic and orthotic technician graduates across physical rehabilitation centres.

Local expertise is building in **Lesotho** with certification in wheelchair service provision, empowering instructors to train others, and establishing a programme at Technical and Vocational Education Training schools.

Hearing aids unlock opportunities for Rwandan children

Jeannette and Emmanuel from Huye district, Rwanda, are parents of children with hearing impairments. The family has faced numerous challenges, including poor performance at school, harassment and bullying, high cost of devices, and limited access to essential support services. In February 2024 the children received hearing aids through ATscale's programme in collaboration with UNICEF and the government.

Through the programme supported by ATscale, 2,284 children with various impairments were identified, of whom 1,299 were assessed, screened and managed by ear, nose and throat specialists. In addition, 582 hearing aids were fitted to 317 children and adults. Also, through market shaping efforts, the cost of hearing aids dropped significantly for the Rwanda Biomedical Centre. Health systems were strengthened with high-tech audiology equipment and health worker capacity developed.

“Our eldest, Nathanael Irvuzumuremyi, now 20, is starting medical school at the University of Rwanda, while 18-year-old Jehovanis Irabiziis enrolled in a technical and vocational education training school,” said Ms Mukanomero, highlighting the impact of hearing aids on her children.

©UNICEF Rwanda



Strengthened national health data systems

To support sound decision-making for assistive technology policies and services, and accountability for performance by both national governments and global actors, ATscale is supporting the **strengthening of existing health information management tools that track beneficiaries. Such tools have already been integrated into the Kenya Health Information System (KHIS).**

Comprehensive assessments – including the rapid Assistive Technology Assessment (rATA), the Situation Analysis of Assistive Technology Systems (STARS), and the Assistive Technology Capacity Assessment (ATA-C) – have been conducted in several countries supported by ATscale (Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Nepal, Peru and the United Republic of Tanzania).

In **Indonesia**, the rATA data collection was largely conducted by persons with disabilities fostering strong community ownership of the programme activities. The survey results informed advocacy, integrated IT systems, services, and AT working group priorities. When individuals in need of assistive technology are actively involved in the process, the solutions are more likely to be effective and sustainable.



Comprehensive assessments provide valuable insights into the current state of access to assistive technology, needs, and gaps within a country, informing evidence-based planning and decision-making.

Members of the assistive technology fulfillment working group pose together for a group photo in Purworejo, Indonesia.

©Pusat Rehabilitasi YAKKUM



Integration of assistive technology into humanitarian settings

Access to assistive technology is vital in humanitarian emergencies, offering essential support, enhancing inclusivity, and mitigating protection concerns for people in vulnerable situations. In contrast, the absence of assistive technology can create barriers to essential services, magnify risks and lead to long-term impairments.

In 2024, over 1,000 assistive products – including wheelchairs, walking frames, and toilet and shower chairs – were procured and distributed by WHO to hospitals in the **northern and southern regions of Gaza.**

ATscale worked with CLASP to pre-position four AT kits – collections of essential assistive products designed for rapid deployment in humanitarian emergencies. By reducing the time it takes for people in crisis situations to receive assistive technology, these kits will help make humanitarian responses more inclusive and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Further kits will be stored in United Nations Humanitarian Response Depots alongside other emergency supplies, ready for swift distribution. Their content was developed in consultation with key humanitarian actors, including WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, CBM, Humanity & Inclusion, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Future deployments will provide valuable insights to refine both the kits and the delivery approach.

Expanding the impact of ATscale: A new chapter of growth

In 2024, ATscale launched an ambitious new initiative to expand access to life-changing assistive technology in low- and middle-income countries for school-aged children. A key element of this programme is strengthening national systems to screen approximately four million children for hearing and vision impairments, followed by the provision of the assistive products they need.

The Partnership invited eligible countries to express their interest in receiving funding support. As a result, twenty countries, including seven Pacific Island countries, were selected. Planning processes for scale-up support were launched in Colombia, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Indonesia, Jordan, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the State of Palestine, Samoa, Solomon Islands, The United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda, Tonga and Vanuatu. Recognizing the need for establishing a stronger base, Chad and Togo were also selected for foundational programmes.

Throughout 2024, the ATscale Secretariat actively prepared for the rolling out of this important initiative, beginning with country scoping missions, evaluation of proposals, and selection of implementing partners to kick off activities in 2025.

Smiling faces at the Momentum Wheels for Humanity warehouse as AT kits arrive. ©Momentum-Wheels for Humanity



Restoring sight, building a brighter future: Sustainable refractive error services empower Cambodian communities

In Cambodia, uncorrected refractive error is the leading cause of visual impairment. Simple interventions, such as providing eyeglasses, can have a profound impact on people's lives. Sina, a 60-year-old former tailor, experienced this firsthand. Her deteriorating eyesight forced her to abandon her tailoring work and take up manual labour on a cassava plantation. After many years, Sina finally found the help she needed when she received a pair of properly prescribed glasses. With her vision restored, Sina regained not only clarity of sight but also a renewed sense of confidence and independence.

ATscale has been supporting the Fred Hollows Foundation, in partnership with the Government of Cambodia, and supported by the Government of the United States to address the issue of uncorrected refractive error. So far, the programme has achieved significant results, providing eye screenings to over 380,000 children and adults (49 per cent women and girls), providing eyeglasses to over 37,000 children and adults, and delivering eye health education sessions to over 3.2 million. In addition, the programme has set up public vision centres, trained local eye health professionals, and raised awareness about eye health among the general public. To ensure long-term sustainability, the project in Cambodia is deeply integrated with national systems, working collaboratively with both the public and private sectors to create lasting impact.

“ I was so happy when I first wore my glasses. I could see clearly for the first time. Once I returned home, I noticed a significant improvement in my vision. Everything is much clearer, and it's easier for me to travel to work.”

©The Fred Hollows Foundation



Strengthening Global Enablers

Beyond country engagement support, in 2024 ATscale has continued to support the creation and advancement of critical global enablers (also termed 'Global Public Goods'). This includes the development of global key normative tools, guidance and advocacy products that fill knowledge gaps to drive informed decision making, advocate for policy change, and promote coordinated action at national, regional and global levels. These resources – along with research that builds evidence and generates data – are essential to underpin new or improved approaches to the provision of assistive technology.



ATscale has identified four priority areas that cover a range of critical bottlenecks.

1

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE ASSISTIVE PRODUCT MARKETS

DESIRED OUTCOME: A step-change in assistive product markets is attracting growing numbers of buyers and suppliers of affordable and high-quality products situated closer to users.

2

BRINGING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES TO EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE

DESIRED OUTCOME: Comprehensive guidance and tools, including on innovative service delivery models, is easily available and supporting countries to design services for assistive technology access across the life cycle for all those who can benefit.

3

REMOVING FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

DESIRED OUTCOME: Evidence on sustainable assistive technology financing options, approaches and models, as well as costing tools, have been strengthened and are available for countries for adoption and roll out.

4

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF DIGITAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

DESIRED OUTCOME: The potential of digital advances for assistive technology, particularly smartphones, is being harnessed more effectively.

A key aspect of ATscale's work on global enablers is to strengthen assistive product markets to attract a growing number of buyers and suppliers of affordable and high-quality products situated closer to users, which can include local production.

Assistive Products Market Report 2024

Transparent, reliable and up-to-date market data and information about assistive products are foundations of a well-functioning market and affordability. They allow buyers to better understand the price, quality and availability of products, and provide suppliers with a much clearer understanding of market demand.



For this purpose, ATscale supported the development of the [Assistive Products Market Report](#) in collaboration with CHAI, analysing markets for eyeglasses, hearing aids, prostheses, wheelchairs and digital technology. The report acts as a catalogue for assistive products, specifications, prices and suppliers to enhance information about the availability of affordable, high-quality assistive products in low- and middle-income countries.

Local production and assembly

Lack of access to appropriate wheelchairs is a pressing issue in Africa, where hundreds of thousands of people would benefit from their use. An appropriate wheelchair is not simply any wheelchair; it must be tailored to the individual's specific needs, taking into account the person's physical requirements, the environment in which they live, and their daily activities.

ATscale supports the development of local production and local assembly guidance and tools. Implemented by ATscale partner Motivation, the *Made AT Kenya* project provides a sustainable and scalable manufacturing model that supports the development of a reliable supply of safe, durable and affordable wheelchairs, while also testing the economic viability of a national wheelchair production system.

Wheelchair user in Kenya supported by Motivation. ©Motivation



Strengthening regional distribution hubs

ATscale supported two organizations in Cambodia and Togo to review and refine their strategies with the objective of developing regional distribution hubs in Southeast Asia and West Africa, respectively. In Cambodia, a comprehensive review of the Orthopaedic Component Factory is being conducted, targeting management upskilling, mechanical training, and compliance with wheelchair production and provision standards. In Togo, ATscale has supported the Organisation Africaine pour le Développement des Centres pour Personnes Handicapées (OADCPH) to develop its five-year strategy to expand its function and reach in Western Africa.



A worker in Togo making an elbow crutch. ©OADCHP

2

BRINGING AT SERVICES TO EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE

ATscale has continued to ensure that comprehensive guidance and tools – including on innovative service delivery models – is easily available and supporting countries to design services for access to assistive technology across the life cycle for all those who can benefit.



Hearing aid service delivery approaches for low- and middle-income settings

As countries invest to strengthen their policies, systems, services and regulatory frameworks, it is critical that they have access to the latest evidence, knowledge and guidance on effective approaches. ATscale invests with partners to fill gaps in guidance. Supported by ATscale, the [Hearing aid service delivery approaches](#) for low- and middle- income settings, which was launched on World Hearing Day (3 March 2024) by

WHO, is one such example. ATscale is encouraging all countries it supports to inform their proposals and approaches using the expert guidance.

Measuring the outcome of prosthetic services: LEAD and COMPASS

ATscale is working with the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) to improve access to quality prosthetic services for people with limb loss. As part of this collaboration, they are developing a mobile application to bring [two key outcome measurement tools](#) - LEAD (Lower Extremity Amputation Dataset) and COMPASS (Comprehensive Outcome Measurement for People with Amputations and Stump/Socket Systems) - closer to users. These tools assess the effectiveness of prosthetic services by capturing data on users' physical functioning,

mobility, comfort, and overall experience, supporting evidence-based improvements in service delivery.

The initiative includes developing the app in English (with planned translations into Spanish and other languages), piloting the tools in multiple countries to validate their clinical relevance and usability, and building a business case for long-term, secure data collection and management. By equipping providers with insights into what works for users, the project aims to ensure that prosthetic services are not only more widely available, but also more effective and responsive to individual needs.

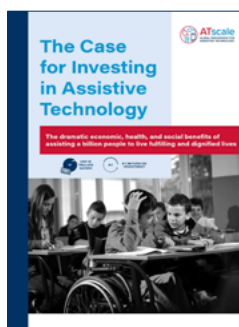


With continued support from ALTSO, Bhupendra, aged 21, received appropriate prostheses to study at the University ©ALTSO

3

REMOVING FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO ACCESS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Enhanced, predictable financing is crucial for accelerating access to assistive technology. Making progress requires new approaches at two levels. At country level, ATscale is working to strengthen financing policies and frameworks, such as revenue mobilization, expansion of insurance benefit packages, strategic purchasing and integration of donated products. At global level, ATscale is working with partners to comprehensively review evidence on sustainable financing options, approaches and models to inform guidance for policymakers.



Increasing country investments for assistive technology

ATscale is supporting the piloting of the Assistive Technology Capacity Assessment (ATA-C) developed by WHO, which has been expanded in partnership with the United Nations Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, based on ATscale's investment case methodology. The objective is to provide national policymakers with robust tools to prioritize and shape public health financing measures that will increase access to assistive technology. The tool is already being piloted in Bangladesh.

4

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF DIGITAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Digital assistive technology (DAT) offers a powerful opportunity to improve accessibility through affordable and scalable solutions. While smartphones have significant potential in this space, their impact remains limited by fragmented standards, insufficient local language support, and the lack of enabling policies.

ATscale is developing a portfolio of initiatives to address these gaps, with an initial focus on smartphones. This includes promoting common accessibility standards for developers and exploring opportunities to work with governments to recognise smartphones as assistive technology, including their integration into national Assistive Products Lists (APLs).

Smartphones as assistive technology

In 2024, ATscale made progress with Google and the GDI Hub to make the case for smartphones as assistive technology based on a joint study in Kenya, Brazil and India. The study assesses the feasibility and impact of providing smartphones and digital skills to individuals with hearing and vision impairments. Preliminary findings show that, when combined with digital skills and internet access, smartphones can serve as a powerful assistive tool for persons with disabilities. These insights will help shape future accessibility-focused designs, programmes, and policies that promote access to mobile technology as assistive technology.

Development of text-to-speech (TTS) for four under-represented languages

ATscale identified TTS voices for under-represented languages as an area in which it could make a catalytic investment to improve access. Under-represented languages are those which tend to have less support from private information technology companies due to the perception that they are predominantly spoken in countries or regions for which such investments are not considered commercially attractive.

ATscale worked with UNICEF to develop voices in Turkmen, Nepali, South Vietnamese and Setswana (spoken in Botswana and South Africa) for TTS software. This adds realistic voices to existing applications, such as book readers or screen readers, so that people can use digital devices, such as smartphones, to read text out loud in their languages from web pages, emails, electronic books and more. As open-source software, the voices are available free to download and can be further modified and improved to be installable on additional platforms, ensuring broader access to digital content for children and adults.

“ This initiative is a major step towards making digital content accessible to everyone. It opens up new possibilities, especially for visually-impaired children and young people in Nepal. (...) I am deeply thankful to the young volunteers who tested this software and helped to improve it. Their involvement shows that community-based engagement is crucial for developing solutions that are effective, inclusive and sustainable.”

Alice Akunga
UNICEF Representative to Nepal

A young man using 'Vi Vu,' an innovative Vietnamese text-to-speech software in the Southern dialect, as part of a broader effort by UNICEF and ATscale.

©UNICEF Viet Nam/Truong Viet Hung





©UNICEF/UN0592190

Advocating for Change

A year of breakthroughs in visibility and advocacy

ATscale's commitment to increasing public awareness, political will and resources for assistive technology took significant strides in 2024. Through strategic partnerships, impactful campaigns and a growing digital presence, ATscale amplified its message and reached millions of people around the world.

Global awareness raising across all sectors

Unlock the Everyday: the first campaign for assistive technology takes centre stage

The launch of the Unlock the Everyday campaign – the first global campaign aimed at raising awareness to increase access to assistive technology – was a pivotal moment for ATscale, the leading partner behind the campaign. The campaign was launched in Davos by Begum Samina Arif Alvi, the First Lady of Pakistan at an event attended by leading champions of assistive technology, political leaders, investors, and representatives of the private sector.

The first-ever World Day for Assistive Technology on 4 June 2024, was a powerful global celebration of assistive technology initiatives. It significantly amplified the campaign's reach. The campaign film, launched on this day, attracted thousands of initial viewers and ultimately surpassed three million views by the end of the year.

The Honourable First Lady of Pakistan, Begum Samina Arif Alvi, at the Unlock the Everyday campaign launch event.

©Devex/Marcel Mainzer





Campaigners gather in Times Square, New York during the UN General Assembly - September 2024. ©Grayling

Partnerships and influencers: amplifying the message

The campaign is backed by 25 official partners. Prominent figures, disability advocates, poets, singers, artists and government leaders helped to expand the campaign's reach throughout the year, including at an exciting moment in Times Square, New York, which was followed by a reception, hosted in partnership with Devex, which showcased the work "Disability and Armed Conflict" by the United Nations advocate and renowned photographer Giles Duley.

Strategic partnerships and high-level engagement

ATscale actively engaged with partners across sectors – including governments, international organizations and the private sector – at a series of events to make the case for why assistive technology matters for a wide range of cross-cutting issues. A priority has been ensuring that users of assistive technology from low- and middle-income countries are represented, and providing platforms for their voices to be heard.

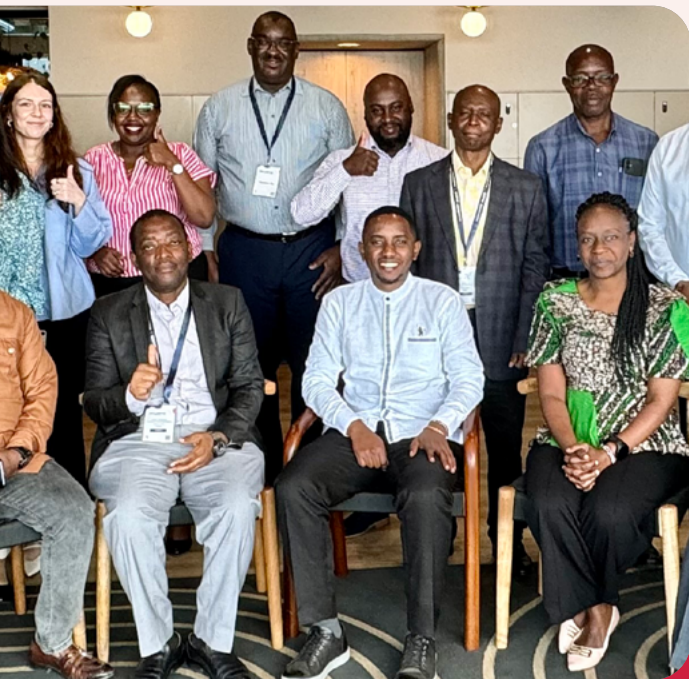
Highlights include:

The United Nations Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP 17):

a side event on the power of partnerships to achieve access to assistive technology.



©Tadej Znidarcic



©ATscale/Tabitha Icuja Topp

Inclusive Africa Conference: a high-level conversation with government representatives from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

World Health Summit: a roundtable discussion on assistive technology and inclusive health.



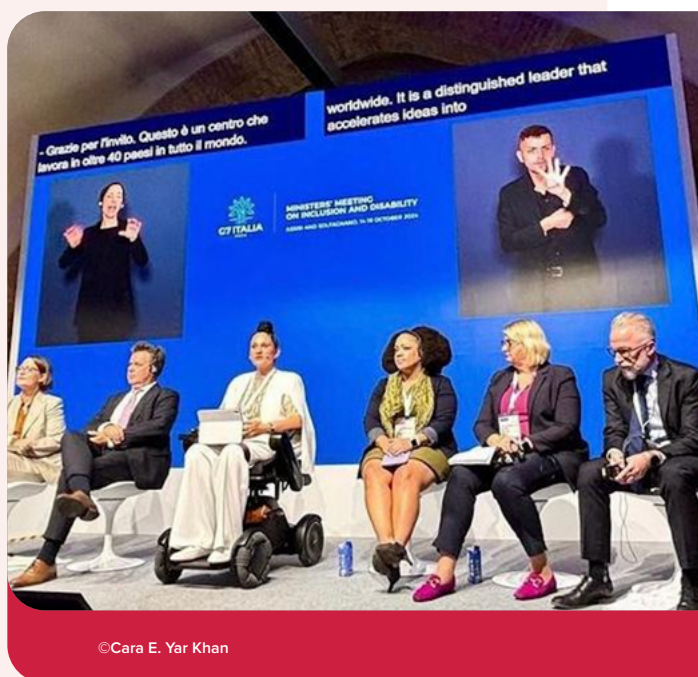
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©Timo Diers, Global Partnership for Education

United Nations Summit of the Future Action Days: discussion with high-level speakers and youth with lived experience about the intersection between assistive technology, inclusive education and access to work.

G7 Summit: Participation in the first ministerial meeting on inclusion and disability in Italy.



©Cara E. Yar Khan

A strong digital presence

ATscale is building momentum and reaching new audiences with compelling content demonstrating the transformative power of assistive technology. ATscale's website experienced a 72 per cent increase in visits between 2023 and 2024, and the quarterly email update also saw a significant rise in readership, with open rates exceeding averages of comparable actors. The social media presence continues to grow, with a combined potential reach of 300 million across all platforms.



Advocating for change at country level

Building momentum at country level

ATscale's advocacy efforts extended beyond the global stage, with impactful events and initiatives in over 20 partner countries on World Day for Assistive Technology for example. These included:

A multi-stakeholder forum in Nairobi, **Kenya**, live-streamed on YouTube;

A high-level event with ministers in **Lesotho**; and

A community eye screening led by CHAI in **Cambodia**.

In its next strategic period, ATscale's advocacy efforts will be grounded in clear evidence and analysis to drive meaningful policy change. One key initiative is the development of an Africa strategy on access to and financing of assistive technology, which began in 2024 with a special event at the African Union.

Celebration of World Day for Assistive Technology, 4 June 2024, in Indonesia. ©Pusat Rehabilitasi YAKKUM



Breaking down barriers through local research and advocacy

ATscale has been working with the International Disability Alliance (IDA) on the project Boosting AT User Engagement and Knowledge, Globally and Locally, which aims to position organizations of persons with disabilities as equal partners in prominent dialogues on assistive technology. As part of the programme, microgrants were provided alongside technical support to local and national organizations working to advance access to and use of assistive technology.

“The microgrant programme enabled local organizations of persons with disabilities to become agents of change in their communities. These organizations, often working with limited resources, are now better equipped with

the tools and knowledge they need to advocate inclusive policies and increased access to assistive technology,”

Pascal Bijleveld

CEO of ATscale

“Assistive technology brings possibilities for persons with disabilities. The microgrant programme provided us with the resources to develop an advocacy toolkit that enables organizations of persons with disabilities to effectively advocate for access to assistive technology in Nepal. This resulted in increased budget allocations for assistive technology.”

Chhabi Aale

General Secretary of the Nepal Blind Association, Gandaki Province

A participant with a visual impairment in Nepal reviewing the draft advocacy toolkit in Braille. ©NFDN, Nepal



Financial and human resources

Growing resources and expanding partnerships

Increasing awareness through advocacy, communications, events, and country programmes has led to an increase in resources for assistive technology across national budgetary contributions and donor allocations. Notably, DFAT's generous AUD 8.1M contribution, signed in 2024, is enabling ATscale to expand its work in the Pacific and Southeast Asia and EUR 500k from the EC are contributing towards advancement of global enablers. In 2024 ATscale also received core funds from existing donors such as USAID (USD 7M) and FCDO (GBP 3M). ATscale's growing resources and expanding donor partnerships are further elevating attention for the sector.

Approved annual budget and expenditures

During 2024, ATscale operated with a budget of US\$17 million, after the addition of a new contribution from DFAT. The 2024 expenditure against the budget was US\$11.8 million, with the remaining balance expected to be committed in 2025.⁷

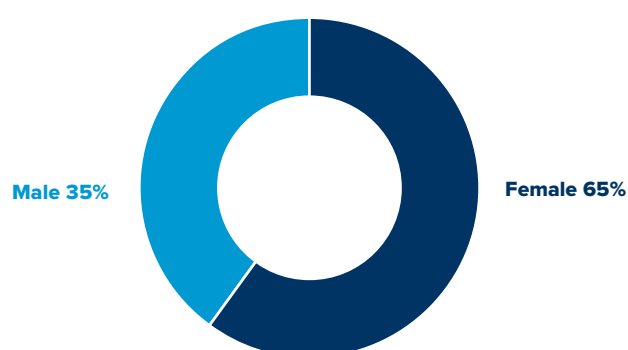
A multicultural and inclusive team

During 2024, ATscale continued to deliver its mandate through a lean yet effective Secretariat of 17. The strong mandate for an inclusive team with representation of users of assistive technology resulted in targeted

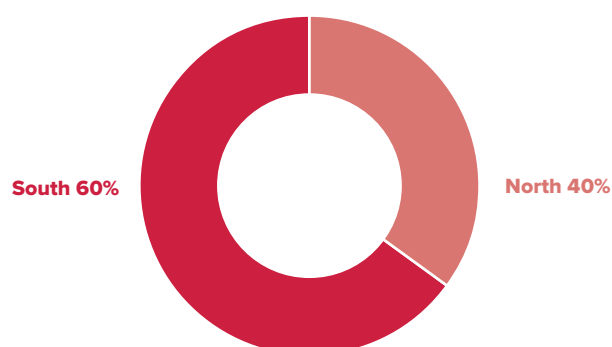
outreach efforts for the vacant positions to be filled by qualified users. As a result, three persons with lived experience of assistive technology use are now part of the Secretariat, including a Senior Programme Manager.

ATscale's efforts towards a balanced team have resulted in a multicultural staff representing 13 nationalities, with a South/North ratio of 60/40 and a women/male ratio of 65/35 in terms of gender and geographical distribution.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION



GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION



⁷ The official Certified Financial Statement from UNOPS for 2024 had not been finalized at the time of printing so final numbers may differ.

The way forward: entering the scale-up phase

ATscale has reached a pivotal moment. Building on the foundation laid during its start-up phase, it is now entering a scale-up phase, guided by its 2024-2027 strategy, which was approved in 2024. In recent years, ATscale has helped shape policies, strengthen markets, and support country-led efforts to improve access to assistive technology. However, the need remains vast, with **more than 2.5 billion people still lacking access to the assistive technology they require**. The momentum achieved must not be taken for granted. It is threatened by shifting global priorities and a sharp decline in international development assistance, which risks undermining progress just as real gains are being made. ATscale's next phase will focus on translating progress into large-scale, sustainable impact.

The 2024-2027 strategy sets out an ambitious yet achievable roadmap to ensure that assistive technology becomes an integrated part of health, education, and social systems. Over the next three years, ATscale aims to support at least 35 low- and middle-income countries to develop stronger national AT ecosystems, ensuring that 50 million more people benefit from assistive products and services. This includes expanding access to priority assistive products while also strengthening service delivery models, training workforces and improving financing mechanisms.

Alongside its country-level work, ATscale will continue to address global systemic barriers that limit access to assistive technology. This will drive market-shaping initiatives to lower costs and improve supply chains, advocate policy and regulatory improvements, and support innovative funding models to ensure that AT financing is sustainable. Strong focus will be placed on leveraging digital solutions, ensuring that assistive technology can also meet the needs of an increasingly connected world.

None of this will be possible without strong partnerships and collective action. ATscale will work closely with governments, donors, private sector actors and civil society to mobilize resources and advance solutions that are locally owned and scalable. The success of this strategy depends on a fundamental shift: assistive technology is no longer a neglected area of development, but a recognised enabler of health, education, employment and inclusion.

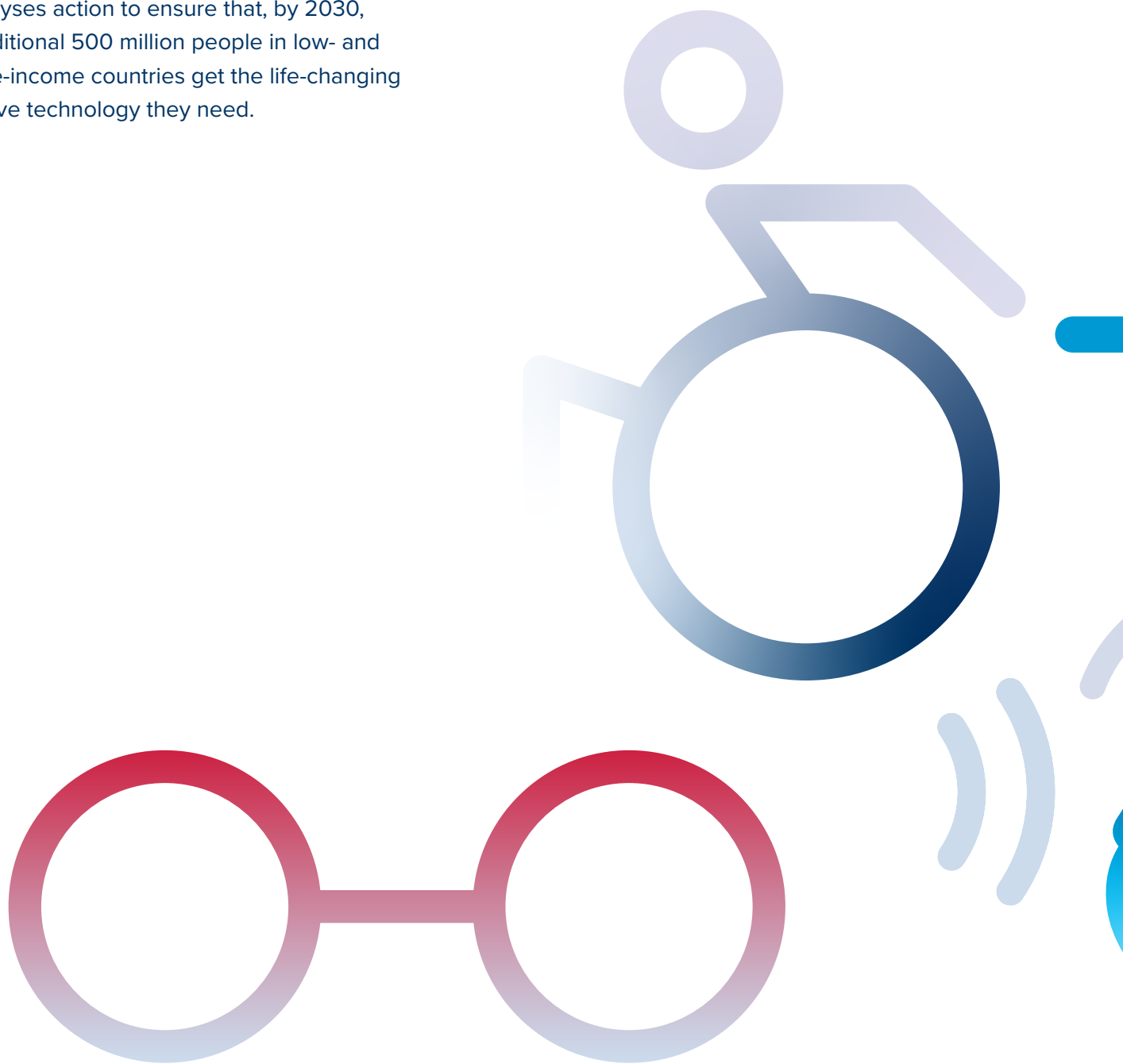
The next three years represent a defining window of opportunity to turn commitments into impact. Through coordinated effort and shared responsibility, access to assistive technology can be unlocked for millions more people worldwide, enabling them to learn, work, and participate fully in society.

Fadhil, a young boy wearing orthoses, smiles and waves outside his school in Purworejo, Indonesia.

©Pusat Rehabilitasi YAKKUM



ATscale, the **Global Partnership for Assistive Technology**, is a cross-sector global partnership with a mission to transform people's lives through assistive technology. It catalyses action to ensure that, by 2030, an additional 500 million people in low- and middle-income countries get the life-changing assistive technology they need.



For more information, visit
atscalepartnership.org

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