

Emergency Assistive Technology (AT) Preparedness

momentum
wheels for humanity
creating mobility & expanding lives



At a Glance

Funding Organization

Funded by ATscale and managed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Implementing Organizations

Momentum Wheels for Humanity (Wheels for Humanity)

Funding Period

December 1, 2024—November 30, 2025

Budget

\$350,000

Geographical Focus

Global

Summary

The Emergency Assistive Technology (AT) Preparedness project will leverage Wheels for Humanity's extensive experience managing a global AT supply chain, strong partnerships with NGOs and UN agencies, and expertise in emergency rehabilitation and assistive product provision to improve access to essential, life-saving resources during humanitarian crises.

Funded by ATscale, Wheels for Humanity will procure, pre-position, and dispatch high-quality mobility aids and self-care products to meet urgent needs during emergencies. Sufficient stock to support an estimated population of 40,000 people will be pre-positioned at a strategically located warehouse for rapid deployment. In collaboration with partner organizations, **we will respond to humanitarian emergencies, ensuring timely delivery and expert provision of life-changing support.**

Background

Assistive technology—such as wheelchairs, walking aids, and toilet-shower chairs—is crucial during humanitarian crises to ensure that people with mobility disabilities or injuries stay safe and recover quickly. Yet, just as demand surges due to injuries, displacement, and healthcare disruptions, emergencies create barriers to accessing these vital products.

People with disabilities are two to four times more likely to die or be critically injured during disasters. The global need for AT is also growing. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 300 million people now need humanitarian assistance—a sharp rise from 274 million in 2022—driven by conflict, climate disasters, and economic instability.

Without access to AT, vulnerable populations face significant challenges, including limited access to transportation and essential health services—especially when forced to flee their homes. Discrimination and social isolation further increase their risk of being left behind. These barriers are compounded by disrupted supply chains, damaged infrastructure, funding shortfalls, and a lack of trained local providers. Despite the rising demand, current global AT stockpiles remain insufficient, able to serve only a fraction of those in need.

Pre-positioning AT for rapid deployment can help overcome these challenges, enabling humanitarian organizations to respond faster and more effectively, ensuring that people receive the support they need when they need it most.

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Rough-terrain wheelchairs enable mobility across the uneven landscapes often encountered during humanitarian emergencies.

Expected Outcomes

At least **four kits** stored and ready for dispatch

Humanitarian partners informed about prepositioned AT

At least one humanitarian emergency responded to with pre-positioned stock

Timely logistics response between the crisis onset and receipt of kit to geographical area(s) affected by an emergency

Objectives and Activities

The goal of the project is to improve access to essential, life-saving resources during humanitarian emergencies by piloting a system for pre-positioning, dispatching, then replenishing AT kits. Wheels for Humanity will stockpile high-quality mobility aids and self-care products, ensuring they are ready for rapid deployment to meet urgent needs.

Procure and Preposition

At the start of the project, Wheels for Humanity will procure enough stock to meet the needs of an estimated population of 40,000 people affected by a humanitarian emergency—equivalent to a minimum of four kits containing products based on WHO's AT10 list of essential assistive devices. The kits will be pre-positioned at a strategically located warehouse, ensuring they are ready for immediate deployment to crisis-affected areas.

Dispatch

At the onset of an emergency, Wheels for Humanity will transport products to the affected region in coordination with ATscale, UN agencies, and other humanitarian partners. Priority will be given to the most severe crises, classified as Level 3 emergencies by UNICEF.

Wheels for Humanity will quickly identify qualified in-country partners capable of supporting with customs clearance, inland transportation, and storage, as well as with appropriate provision of the products in line with WHO's service guidelines. Wheels for Humanity has direct experience working in emergency contexts and pre-positioning products to respond to humanitarian emergencies, as well as a network of global staff and consultants that are highly skilled at appropriate wheelchair provision and training in appropriate provision of AT.

What is the AT10?

The AT10, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a list of essential assistive products designed to support people in need during emergencies. Originally created as part of WHO's emergency response in Ukraine, the AT10 serves as a flexible model that can be adapted for use in various crisis contexts. It addresses the needs of both individuals with pre-existing disabilities and those newly injured during emergencies. WHO's AT 10 list includes:

- Active Wheelchairs
- Transport Wheelchairs
- Walkers
- Underarm Crutches
- Elbow Crutches
- Canes
- Toilet-Shower Chairs
- Pressure Relief Cushions
- Catheters
- Incontinence Pads

Previous page (left to right): Sharon is fitted into her new wheelchair; after a war-related injury, a patient learns how to walk using a walker; wheelchairs ready to ship out from our warehouse near Shanghai.