

2025

Annual Review

Executive Summary

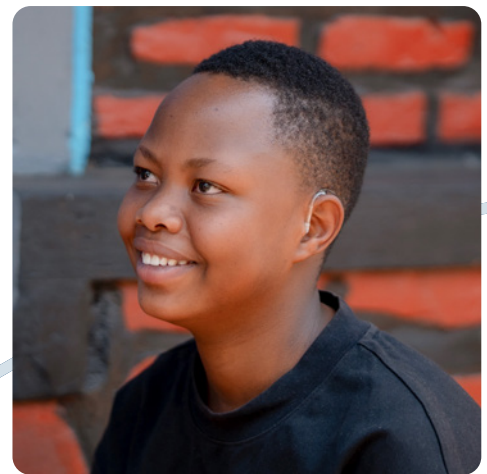
Strengthening systems,
scaling momentum



ATscale

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Hosted by
 UNOPS



Annual Review contributors

The ATscale Annual Review 2025 was produced by the ATscale Secretariat team under the guidance of Pascal Bijleveld, ATscale Chief Executive Officer, and the leadership of Barbara Goedde, Ceridwen Johnson, Aurelie Rigaud and Tabitha Icuga Topp. The report benefited from valuable contributions from ATscale Secretariat colleagues: Mujib Ahmad, Julia Amadio, Ranjavati Banerji, Henri Bonnin, Anil Kashyap, Satish Mishra, Karen Reyes, Leah Sakura, Eduardo Sanchez Mera, Kinley Wangmo and Elaine Zameck. Information and data management support by Hashmat Hanifi, editing by Jennifer Ferguson-Mitchell, graphic design by Luciana Belén Centurión Racciatti.

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The results presented in this publication were reported by ATscale-supported partners, then consolidated and quality assured by the ATscale Secretariat. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the United Nations, its donor agencies or United Nations Member States. Furthermore, the boundaries, names and designations used in the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations, ATscale or partner countries.

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Acknowledgements

This report reflects the progress achieved in 2025 through the shared commitment of a broad community of partners working to increase access to assistive technology globally.

ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, expresses its sincere appreciation to its donors for their sustained support and generous contributions, which enable the Partnership to advance its strategic priorities and deliver results.

ATscale is equally grateful to the members of its Board for their continued engagement, strategic counsel, leadership and advocacy over the past year. Particular thanks go to Board Chair Jon Lomøy, as well as to those members who have accompanied ATscale since its inception, including the International Disability Alliance (IDA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Their long-standing commitment has helped shape the Partnership's direction and strengthen its impact.

The Partnership also recognizes the essential contribution of its implementing partners. Their technical expertise, contextual knowledge and dedication are fundamental to translating strategy into meaningful change, ensuring that assistive technology reaches those who need it most. National governments in partner countries remain central to this work. Their

leadership in fostering enabling policies and financing environments, and in elevating assistive technology on national agendas, underpins sustainable and lasting progress.

ATscale further acknowledges the vital role of assistive technology users and organizations of persons with disabilities. Their lived experience, insight and advocacy inform and strengthen every aspect of the Partnership's work, helping to ensure that interventions are relevant, appropriate and responsive to real needs.

As ATscale's host organization, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) continues to provide indispensable operational support, enabling the efficient and effective delivery of ATscale's initiatives. The Partnership extends its appreciation to UNOPS for its ongoing collaboration and stewardship.

To all who have contributed their expertise, time and commitment over the past year, ATscale offers its sincere thanks and looks forward to continued partnership in the shared endeavour to increase access to assistive technology and to unlock opportunity for all.

Donors



Board members



**Jon Lomøy and
Phyllis Heydt**
Unaffiliated
board members

Manfred Stoifl
Private sector
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**ATscale Chief
Executive
Officer**
Pascal Bijleveld

Implementing partners



¹ USAID funding ended in March 2025 with the agency's dissolution.

Executive summary

Today, 2.5 billion people worldwide require at least one type of assistive product – from eyeglasses and hearing aids to wheelchairs and digital tools. As this number is projected to exceed 3.5 billion by 2050, ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, continues its mission to ensure that, by 2030, an additional 500 million people in low- and middle-income countries receive the life-changing technology they need. In 2025, the second year of its 2024–2027 Strategy, the Partnership achieved a decisive shift from building foundations to delivering results at scale while navigating a challenging financial landscape.



ATscale works to raise awareness of the transformative potential of assistive technology in everyday lives. Policies and investments are needed to ensure that everyone can get the assistive technology they need, amputee athletes included.

© World Amputee Football

Supporting country plans

ATscale’s country engagement represents the majority of its investments, reflecting a commitment to sustainable, government-led system strengthening. As of 2025, the Partnership has reached nearly 2.6 million people (46 per cent women and girls) with assistive technology, engaging with 29 countries, through a comprehensive package of interventions, including 14 scale-up, 12 foundational and three humanitarian programmes.

In 2025, significant progress has been achieved in ATscale’s main areas of interventions:

- **Increased assistive technology availability and access.** ATscale has been addressing both supply-side and

demand-side barriers by expanding services and infrastructure. Progress in 2025 included the launch of Kenya’s first public optical laboratory at Kenyatta National Hospital. In Cambodia, the strengthening of 21 vision centres significantly improved access in rural communities.

- **Fostering governance and assistive technology frameworks.** In 2025, eight regional multisectoral committees on disability and assistive technology were established in Senegal, while other countries such as Cambodia officially adopted their national priority assistive product list (APL).
- **Increased financial coverage and funding for assistive technology.**

ATscale advocated for policies that safeguard assistive technology in national budgets and insurance structures. Successes this year include Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan achieving budget increases for assistive technology of over 30 per cent, while Senegal demonstrated strong ownership by allocating approximately US\$4.3 million to its General Directorate of Social Action.

- **Workforce shortages addressed.** ATscale partners continued to build workforce capacity, training a cumulative total of 13,300 people (51 per cent female) such as community health workers, health and education personnel, and representatives of government and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).
- **Strengthening national data systems.** ATscale worked to integrate assistive technology indicators into existing national frameworks to inform evidence-based decisions. Progress in 2025 was exemplified by Kenya's launch of the National Assistive Technology Dashboard, which integrates facility-level and real-time data from the national health information system to track service delivery.

- **Integration of assistive technology into humanitarian settings.** ATscale worked in 2025 to ensure that essential assistive products are available within days of a crisis. Following the March 2025 earthquake in Myanmar, UNICEF deployed four pre-positioned assistive technology kits containing over 2,000 products, such as wheelchairs and crutches, to benefit displaced populations.

In addition, in 2025, ATscale **gathered lessons from its foundational support programmes** conducted in 12 countries. These show that while ATscale partners successfully mobilized political will, future efforts require longer commitment periods and early government engagement to ensure lasting policy uptake.

Finally, ATscale generated significant new momentum in **Pacific Island countries** through the launch of the SPARK programme under its Unlock Healthy Learning initiative. Backed by a US\$10.5 million investment from Australia, this three-year initiative coordinates assistive technology and rehabilitation services for school-aged children across seven countries in the region.

Strengthening global enablers



Global enablers address systemic barriers – such as fragmented markets and weak evidence – that no single country can solve alone. ATscale develops shared tools, standards and guidance to move from ad hoc provision to integrated, nationally led systems.

ATscale has been working towards developing **policy briefs with UN agencies** to position assistive technology as a fundamental requirement for global development.

The findings of four briefs produced in 2025 indicate that:

- **Employment.** Assistive technology combined with universal design, inclusive workplace policies and culture plays a key role in facilitating equitable access to employment.
- **Education.** Assistive technology can remove most of the physical and communication barriers that prevent learners with functional difficulties from participating in their schooling.
- **Disaster risk reduction.** Assistive technology is a tool for survival, evacuation and resilience and needs to be included in international and national emergency preparedness and response systems.
- **Gender equality.** Assistive technology empowers women's autonomy and reduces the disproportionate unpaid care burden often borne by female family members.

To translate evidence into impact, ATscale continued in 2025 to develop its four priority action areas.

- **Build sustainable assistive product markets.** ATscale published its 2025 assistive products market report which covered 25 organizations, 170 suppliers and 200 products. Together with earlier reports, it will enable governments and partners to make more informed, cost-effective procurement decisions, as well as to estimate the size of the unmet demand and analyse the cost of drivers. In Cambodia and Togo, ATscale supported regional distribution hubs to localize supply chains and increase sustainability.

- **Bring services to everyone, everywhere.** A study on handheld autorefractors – portable vision-screening devices – was carried out, while the WHO implementation handbook for integrated school screening to simplify care models was published. In parallel, the online platform ATconnect was launched, featuring more than 450 resources and 400 global programmes related to assistive technology.
- **Remove financial barriers.** Work was undertaken on domestic financing strategies and an investment case methodology to help governments move from viewing assistive technology as a 'charity cost' to a high-return socio-economic investment.
- **Leverage the power of digital assistive technology.** A joint study with Google and GDI Hub demonstrated that smartphones are affordable, scalable assistive tools that increase independence when combined with digital skills training.



ATscale is supporting research to recognize smartphones as digital assistive technology, and efforts to make them more affordable and accessible to users.

© GDI Hub

Advocating for change



Advocacy efforts in 2025 focused on building the political will and public awareness necessary to mobilize resources and increase access to assistive technology globally.

- **Catalysing advocacy and global momentum.** The second World Day for Assistive Technology (4 June 2025) reached over 42 million people – an 18-fold increase over the previous year. The campaign featured user-led storytelling through the MeAndMyAT Challenge.

- **Developing strategic partnerships and high-level engagement.** The appointment of ATscale’s first Goodwill Ambassador and high-profile engagement at the Global Disability Summit, World Health Assembly, World Summit on Social Development and COSP18 positioned assistive technology firmly within mainstream development agendas.

Looking ahead

The progress achieved in 2025 confirms that a systems approach works – but sustaining momentum requires continued investment and collective action. ATscale will deepen engagement in priority countries, moving from foundational support to implementation at scale with a stronger emphasis on integrating assistive technology into national systems for health, education and social protection. Strengthening government ownership and co-financing will be central to ensuring sustainability.

At the global level, ATscale will prioritize the uptake of tools, guidance and market-shaping efforts, ensuring these drive tangible change. From a resource mobilization perspective, ATscale will also diversify its funding base to mitigate the risks exposed by the loss of key donors in 2025.

Critically, ATscale will continue to amplify the voices of assistive technology users and strengthen partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities, ensuring lived experience shapes policy and programme design. The growing global movement – evidenced by the strong engagement around World Day for Assistive Technology and ATscale’s expanding partner network – provides a solid foundation.

By strengthening systems, deepening partnerships and sustaining collective advocacy, ATscale will accelerate progress towards a world in which everyone who needs assistive technology can access it through a supportive ecosystem – and gain the life-changing ability to participate fully in education, employment and community life.

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.

The Partnership brings together governments, assistive technology users, non-governmental organizations, bilateral donors, the private sector and multilateral organizations to increase awareness and political will, and encourage innovation and investment in assistive technology markets, systems and services. Today, 2.5 billion people globally need at least one type of assistive technology. In low- and middle-income countries, 65 to 95 per cent of those needing products, such as wheelchairs, eyeglasses, hearing aids and prostheses, remain without access, while in high-income countries this drops to only ten per cent. The need is growing fast, with the number of people who require assistive technology globally likely to rise above 3.5 billion by 2050.

ATscale 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 through a multisectoral systems approach. Since its concept launch at the first Global Disability Summit in July 2018 in London, the Partnership has advanced from building a strong foundation for the advancement of assistive technology to realizing sustained momentum.



Assistive technology transforms lives: Meerab, 14, hears audible words for the first time through her new hearing aids in Pakistan. ATscale works with partners to ensure that millions more children like Meerab can access the assistive technology they need.

© UNICEF/UNI561149/
Aliraza Khatri

The 2024–2027 Strategy marks ATscale’s scale-up phase. Its second year of implementation completed, strategic ambition is now being translated into concrete actions, expanding the Partnership’s country and global reach, while deepening impact. Through this, it is accelerating delivery and strengthening the systems and partnerships needed to achieve steady progress through 2027 and beyond.

ATscale drives progress across three mutually reinforcing strategic pillars:

Pillar 1

Supporting country plans and their implementation to strengthen assistive technology policies, systems, services and financing in 38 countries.

Pillar 2

Strengthening global enablers through tools, resources and market development that countries need to ensure reliable access to quality, affordable products.

Pillar 3

Advocating for change to advance political will, build public awareness and increase investment in assistive technology.



What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology is an umbrella term covering the systems and services related to the delivery of assistive products. Assistive products include 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. Access to assistive technology can enable people to move, communicate, hear and see.



ATscale highlights

Overview of impact from inception to 2025

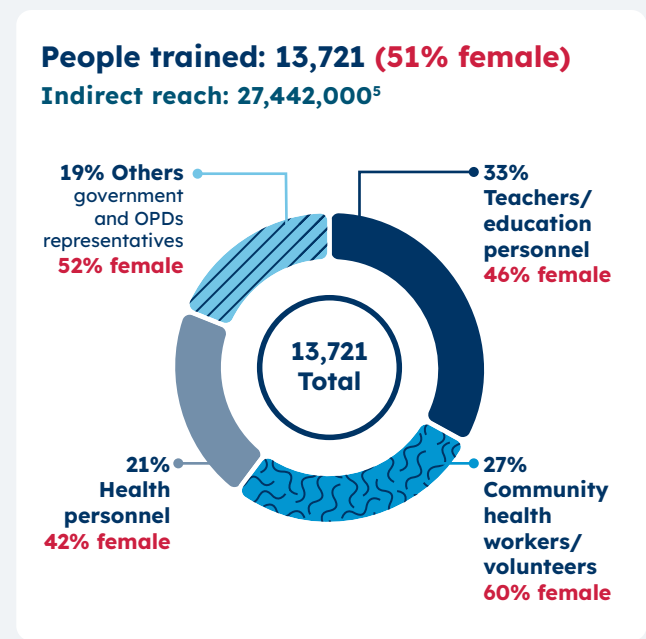
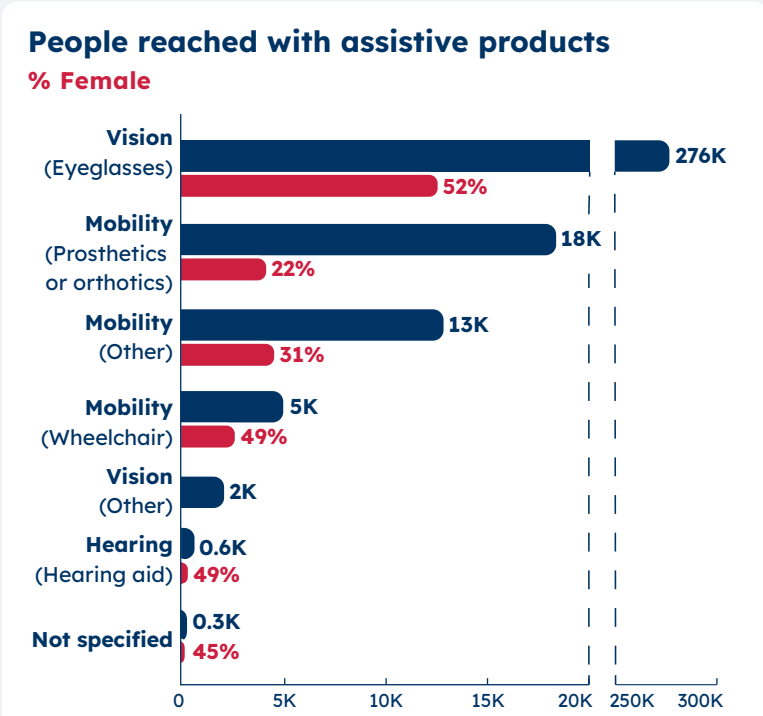
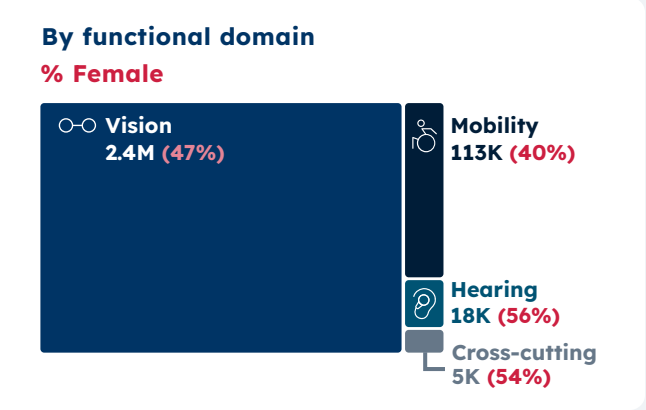
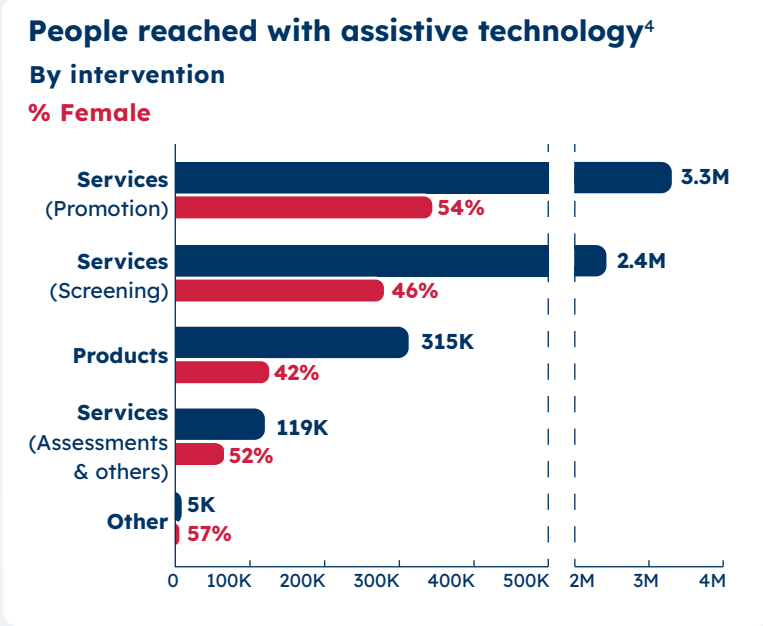
People reached with assistive technology

2,568,109² (46% Female)
 Indirect reach: 8,149,682³

People reached with assistive products

314,950 (42% Female)
 Indirect reach: 995,983

Supporting country plans
 Strengthening assistive technology policies, systems, services and financing.



² People reached with assistive technology are those receiving products and/or services - including screening, clinical assessment, fitting and maintenance.

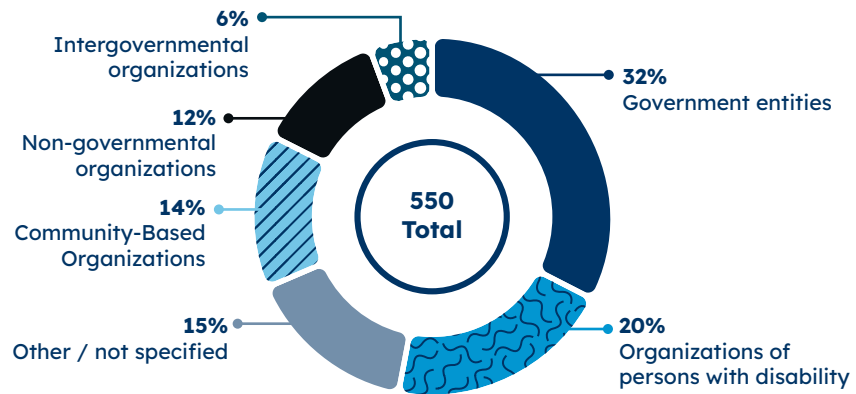
³ Estimated indirect reach reflects additional individuals within the households of those directly benefiting from assistive technology, and is calculated using a country's average household size.

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 the average estimated number of individuals served by each trained person during a one-year period.

Humanitarian aid
 Over 2,000 assistive products provided in Myanmar

Organizations strengthened: 550



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.



4 landmark policy briefs produced in partnership with UN agencies set out the cross-cutting relevance of assistive technology for:

- Employment
- Gender equality
- Education
- Disaster risk reduction and climate action



8 reports published including:

- The 2025 Assistive Products Market Report
- Guidance for market entry
- Study on handheld autorefractor technologies
- The Vision and hearing screening for school-age children implementation handbook



ATconnect launch:

A global platform for assistive technology:

- **450+ resources**
- **400 programmes**
- **2,600+ visitors** in its first month



Global reach:

- **6 webinars** organized
- **2,000+ participants** from **50+ countries**

Assistive Products Market Report 2025

- **25 organizations**
- **170 suppliers**
- **200 products**

Advocating for change

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



Digital platforms

11,000+ followers across all social media platforms

2,750 new followers

↑ **33% growth**

60,000 website visitors

↑ **41% increase from 2024**



Strategic engagement

25 global events had assistive technology on their agendas.

14 users of assistive technology

participated in high-level events, with ATscale support

Appointed ATscale's inaugural **Goodwill Ambassador**

↑ **high-profile appearance at the Global Citizen Festival**



Unlock The Everyday

42+ million people reached on World Day for Assistive Technology

↑ **18x increase from 2024**

200+ assistive technology users shared their personal stories through the MeAndMyAT challenge

50+ countries celebrated the day

11 languages used to communicate digital content

World map of ATscale-supported programmes

ATscale footprint as of 31 December 2025

Programme types:

- Scale-up: 14
- Foundational: 12
- ▨ Humanitarian: 3

Lower-middle-income countries: 22

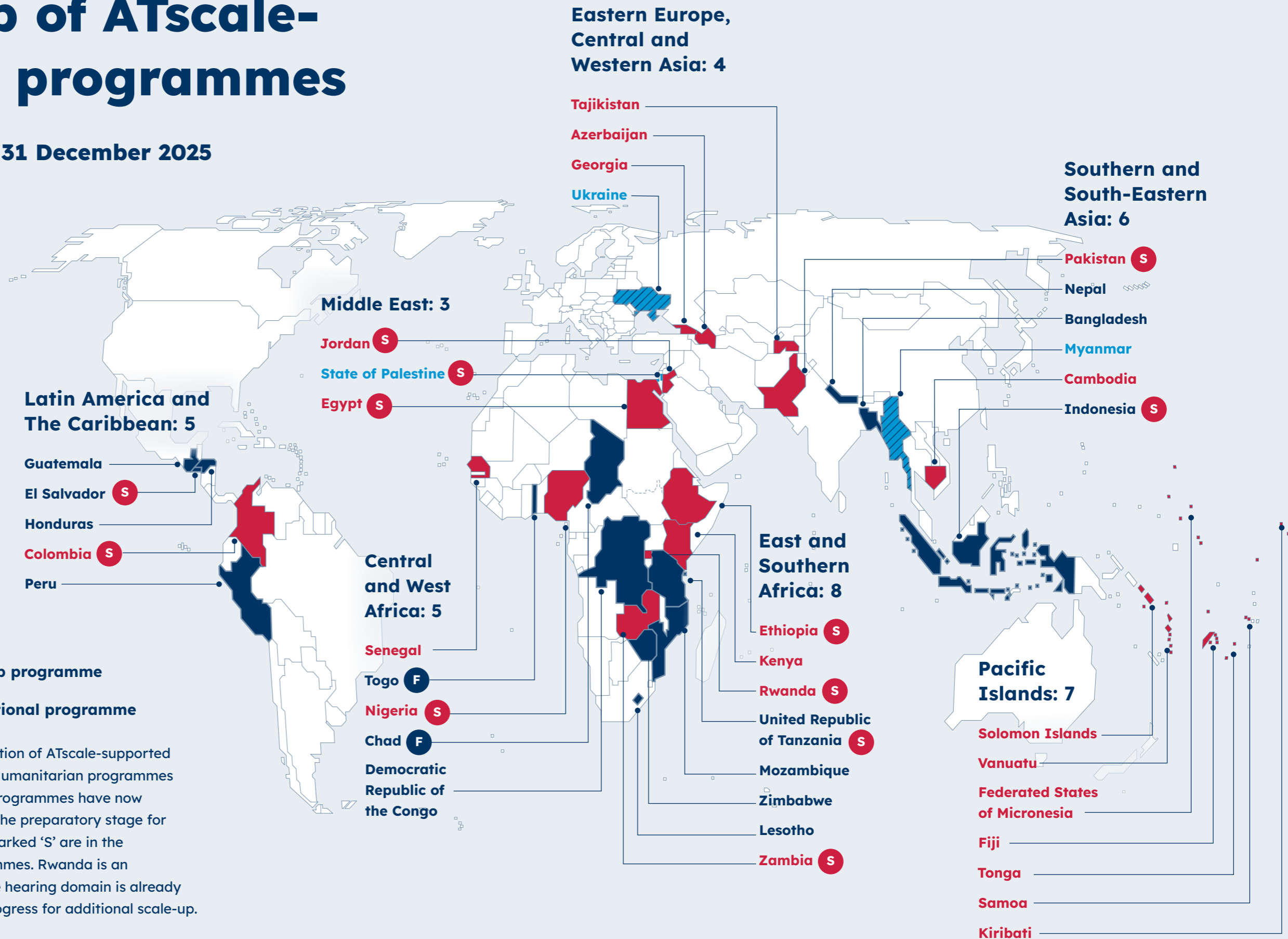
Upper-middle-income countries: 10

Low-income countries: 6

● S Preparatory stage for scale-up programme

● F Preparatory stage for foundational programme

The map shows the geographic distribution of ATscale-supported programmes as of 31 December 2025. Humanitarian programmes were completed, and all foundational programmes have now concluded. Countries marked 'F' are in the preparatory stage for foundational programmes. Countries marked 'S' are in the preparatory stage for scale-up programmes. Rwanda is an exception: a scale-up programme in the hearing domain is already underway, while preparations are in progress for additional scale-up.



For more information, visit atscalepartnership.org

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