



2022 A Year in Review

Together, transforming lives through AT



ATscale
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



Habiba

14, learning at her school in Uganda.

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Transforming lives

Habiba, 14, is learning to use an optic braille reader at her local school in Uganda. Her teacher, Catherine, also has a vision impairment and understands the value of this device, as few resources existed when she was young. Habiba's access to assistive technology (AT) means she has more opportunities to learn, develop, live a fulfilling life and one day find employment.

AT is an umbrella term for assistive products such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, prostheses, eyeglasses or digital devices, and their related systems and services. Sadly, Habiba's success story is rare; only a minority of people in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) can get the AT they need. Nearly one billion are denied access to the AT they need.

“In some low-income countries, as many as 97% of people do not have access to the AT they need. This gross inequity is unacceptable.”



Chapal Khasnabis

Head of Access to AT and Medical Devices Unit, WHO.

This is why ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, began work to address the growing problem of lack of access to AT. It aims to catalyze action to reach an additional 500 million people with AT in low- and middle-income countries by 2030.

ATscale is an exciting and dynamic global partnership aiming to improve people's lives through AT. Foundational work to build ATscale took place between 2019-2021. With financial support from USAID and FCDO, and a hosting arrangement by UNOPS in place since late 2021, 2022 marked ATscale's first year of full operations. ATscale is now proud to report on the early stages of implementing its ambitious agenda.

Key achievements

In 2022, the first year of significant investments, ATscale and partners have collaborated across sectors to build stronger systems to improve the lives of people in need of AT.

● **US\$ 14 million was approved to implement 3-year AT joint investment plans** in 6 countries across 3 regions, aiming to strengthen delivery systems and provide nearly 600,000 people with AT.

● **4 critically strategic board meetings** took place and **4 new board members** joined.

● **2,200 internally displaced persons** in Ukraine received essential assistive devices.

● **6 new staff members** joined a previous team of 2 in the ATscale Secretariat to deliver the partnership's ambitious agenda.

● **11 high-profile global events** helped raise the profile of AT, with ATscale hosting, participating, or presenting.

● **64% increase in Twitter followers** and LinkedIn followers more than doubled.

● **5 global public good products on AT** that bridge important gaps in knowledge and evidence were completed.



Eva Kadilli

Director, Supply Division, UNICEF.

“Strong momentum is gathering within the AT space. It is our shared responsibility to build on this and accelerate equitable access to AT.”



▼
Nguyen Trang Thanh Thang

5, in Vietnam, learns life-long skills.

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Three reasons why AT matters

1. AT transforms lives

A wheelchair, an artificial limb, a pair of eyeglasses or a hearing aid can make the difference between failure or success at school, between a job or unemployment, between a life of opportunity or a life of dependency.

In Vietnam, 5-year old Nguyen Trang Thanh Thang who has a hearing impairment (pictured above) listens to his teacher beating a drum to help develop his skills in recognizing sound patterns. Early access to AT and related services has the potential to transform his life, as he learns and prepares for his future.

2. AT yields high return on investment

In 2022, ATscale disseminated evidence globally that demonstrates the powerful case for investing in AT. Providing just four assistive products - hearing aids, prostheses, eyeglasses, and wheelchairs - would result in a return on investment of 9:1. For a child in a low- or middle-income country, access to AT can later make a difference of US\$100,000 in lifetime income.

Investing in AT has a transformative impact on people's wellbeing and makes sound economic sense for funders and governments. It is both the right thing and the smart thing to do.

3. AT will advance global development agendas

In 2022, ATscale urgently advocated AT as integral to achieving global commitments such as universal health coverage, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable SDGs pledge to 'reach the furthest behind first', including people with disabilities and other groups.



Vladimir Cuk

Executive Director,
International Disability Alliance.

“Inclusion is key to realize the promise of the SDGs and leave no one behind. There will not be full inclusion while people are unable to access AT.”



Abdoulmajid

17, outside
Banagabana school
in Niamey, Niger.

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Country-led approaches

ATscale's vision is to enable a lifetime of potential where every person can access and afford the life-changing AT they need. To do this, the systems by which AT reaches those most in need must develop and grow stronger. ATscale provides governments and relevant AT stakeholders with support to co-create integrated national AT strategies and plans. It then provides catalytic investment to implement the plan over three years initially, inviting other partners to collaborate.

“Being part of ATscale is important and timely as the government is rolling out universal health coverage which envisages that no one is left behind, including people with disabilities. We hope to embed AT in community-based services.”



Zeinab Gura

Acting Director,
Directorate of
Health Care
Services,
Ministry of
Health, Kenya.

What has ATscale achieved in countries in 2022?

In 2022, ATscale approved funding for a three-year Joint Investment Plan to the Government of **Kenya** to help them strengthen AT systems to reach more than 275,000 additional AT users by 2025.

ATscale is supporting the governments of **Tajikistan, Georgia, and Azerbaijan** with a three-year project to integrate AT into primary health care services.

ATscale has also facilitated a three-year catalytic AT investment plan in **Cambodia**, with an ambitious focus to scale up access to eyeglasses and strengthen physical rehabilitation services.

In **Senegal**, ATscale worked closely with the government and other stakeholders to develop a plan, which is yet to be finalized and approved.

In **Ukraine**, ATscale supported the Ministry of Health, through the WHO European Regional Office, to provide WHO's 'AT10', a kit of 10 assistive products most needed by people displaced due to emergency. To date 2,200 people have received the AT they need through these kits, and ATscale's support encouraged other donors to provide 5 additional kits.



Global approaches

▼
**Rt. Hon.
Helen Clark**

Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, and Chair of the Board, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), opens ATscale’s breakfast roundtable at the World Health Summit, October 2022.

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Global public goods

In 2022, ATscale supported the development of a suite of global public goods with progress made towards:

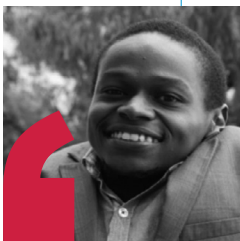
- A handbook for technical guidance to countries providing quality eye screening, referral and eyeglasses provision
- A paper about combining hearing and vision screening for targeted public health interventions
- Support to WHO to develop service delivery models for high-quality hearing aids.

ATscale is proud to have co-sponsored and promoted the first ever WHO and UNICEF Global Report on AT (GReAT) that demonstrates the vast unmet need for AT. ATscale will build on this evidence, and promote tools, guidance and expertise to assure quality service delivery.

Market building and shaping

In 2019-2021, ATscale, AT2030, and the Clinton Health Access Initiative conducted in-depth analyses to identify key barriers and promising AT market interventions. The findings from this work were published in five priority product narratives for wheelchairs, hearing aids, prostheses, eyeglasses, and digital AT. In 2022, ATscale used these to inform strategic investments and develop new projects and partnerships.

In 2022, ATscale conducted a scoping study to improve market intelligence and transparency in AT markets. This informed work to develop an annual AT market report and data sharing tool on AT supply and demand in LMICs in 2023.



“We have to do more in Africa to secure AT products and services. One of the most impactful ways to achieve this is by investing in and supporting small AT businesses and start-ups.”

Bernard Chiira

Kenya –
Innovate Now
Director, and AT
user.

Advocacy and communications

In 2022, ATscale focused on increasing its visibility and promoting AT in the global arena through communication and advocacy. ATscale held a range of events including: organizing the high-level forum Mobilizing for Assistive Technology - Towards the 2nd Global Disability Summit, and holding events at the the Global Disability Summit 2022; 15th Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; REHACARE trade fair; and the World Health Summit.

What next for 2023?

In 2023, ATscale will focus on ensuring its first country-level investments deliver results and reach as many people as possible. With partners, ATscale is developing a 'pipeline' of 12 or more countries ready to receive larger ATscale support, and plans to work with demonstration countries to bring particular products and services to scale.

ATscale will develop additional global public goods to help 'build markets' across the AT sector, and also plans to strengthen engagement with the AT industry. A project will develop market entry guidance for AT providers in LMICs, and improve data on AT tariffs and taxes. ATscale will participate at the World Economic Forum to engage with the private sector, and advocate a UN General Assembly Resolution on AT. ATscale will continue to increase awareness globally, making the compelling case that access to AT advances the achievement of the SDGs, inclusion, human rights, and economic development. In partnership with Google and Global Disability Innovation Hub, ATscale will carry out research to investigate the feasibility and impact of providing smartphones to people with a visual or hearing impairment.

Pascal Bijleveld

ATscale CEO.



ATscale continues to mobilize resources to achieve its ambitious target of raising USD\$300 million. It is fundraising to expand into additional countries and welcomes new partners and donors to engage with future activities.

“We can only hope to transform lives, and move closer to an inclusive and accessible world if we accelerate access to AT for all who need it. We invite you to join the movement.”

ATscale continues to strengthen the partnership and build the movement for AT and invites all interested stakeholders to:

- Engage with the partnership to drive the agenda forward
- Invest to build the data, identify gaps and contribute to joint action plans
- Integrate AT-specific interventions in ongoing policies and projects
- Join the group of core AT funders to help steer this agenda forward.

Srnivas Reddy

Tending to crops in India

© David Constantine - Motivation



Front cover photo:
Young girls in China

© China Disabled Persons' Federation

ATscale would like to thank its partners on the Board: Government of Kenya, International Disability Alliance, Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled, UNICEF, World Health Organization, China Disabled Persons' Federation, and including donor representatives USAID and UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, as well as our three unaffiliated board members.

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