

GATE round-up

Dear **GATE members**,

Welcome to the GATE round-up featuring GATE members' assistive technology actions across July and August 2025. If you would like to highlight a significant event in our next round-up, send us an email: assistivetech@who.int. Remember you can also post updates at any time on the GATE platform on VIVA Engage and follow [GATE on LinkedIn](#).

July and August 2025 round-up

Launch of Bhutan's programme to integrate assistive technology into health systems

In July, with the support of WHO, Bhutan launched a two year programme to systematically integrate assistive technology into health systems, focusing on primary health care. Launch activities involved site visits, a planning workshop, and a three day master trainer workshop on [Training in Assistive Products \(TAP\)](#), co-delivered by WHO HQ and SEARO. This workshop equipped lead clinicians and educators to roll-out TAP training to district hospitals and primary health care personnel in identification, referral and provision of essential assistive products for vision, hearing, mobility and self care. Next steps include finalizing the programme design and engaging with partners to secure support for more specialized services such as prosthetics, orthotics, and wheelchairs.

ATscale and ILO policy brief on assistive technology and employment

Following the [launch of the Assistive Technology and Employment policy brief at COSP18](#), [ATscale](#) and [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#), co-hosted a webinar to discuss the key findings of the brief for inclusive employment in July. The session explored the role of assistive technology in expanding employment opportunities for people in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), showcased good practices and innovative solutions, and presented actionable policy recommendations to improve access to and integration of assistive technology in employment. Read the policy brief [here](#).

Georgia regional outreach campaign to raise awareness on assistive technology

In July, WHO Georgia, with support from ATscale, organized a regional outreach campaign across five regions of Georgia to raise awareness and improve access to assistive technology. Regional meetings brought together 172 participants, including persons with disabilities, healthcare providers, local officials, civil society, and community leaders. The initiative addressed knowledge gaps about state-funded assistive technology, eligibility criteria and application procedures, generating overwhelming local interest, requests for further trainings, and recommendations for building a more inclusive assistive technology system nationwide. Read more about this initiative [here](#).

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Online consultations and survey results to update the WHO Priority Assistive Products List

WHO hosted a [series of open online stakeholder consultations](#), including six regional and one global session, and launched a public survey open for over three weeks as part of the process to update its [Priority Assistive Products List \(APL\)](#). The APL is a vital tool that supports countries in improving access to priority assistive products. The consultations and surveys gathered stakeholders' feedback on the preliminary updates to the APL. Participants were invited to share their views on the proposed products, offer suggestions for WHO guidance to countries on developing and implementing national APLs, and provide input on desired features for an APL digital platform. 618 people including representatives from government, UN agencies, assistive technology users, advocates, service providers, manufacturers, researchers, and development partners participated in the consultations and 318 people responded to the survey. Next steps are to consolidate the feedback for review by the [Technical Advisory Group on assistive technology](#), as a final step in the APL update. Warm thanks from the WHO team to everyone who contributed.

Advancing integration of priority assistive products in India leveraging digital health infrastructures

On 3 July, WHO and the [Indian Council of Medical Research \(ICMR\)](#), convened a round table discussion to explore pathways for implementing the [National List of Essential Assistive Products \(NLEAP\)](#), with a focus on strengthening access to assistive products through primary health care and public health financing, drawing on India's digital public health infrastructure.

The event brought together key stakeholders, including Dr Sanghamitra Pati from ICMR, Dr Yutaro Setoya from WHO India, Dr Sunita Sharma from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Dr Jagdish Chandra from the Directorate General of Health Services. Representatives from WHO, ICMR, and national experts in assistive technology also participated in the discussion.

Participants emphasized the need to embed assistive technology within existing digital health platforms such as the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, while reinforcing public financing to ensure equitable access. There was strong consensus on the importance of collaborative policy development, capacity-building of the health workforce, and integrated service delivery to advance this agenda.

Looking ahead, the next phase will focus on defining national research priorities to support implementation research, mapping the provision of priority assistive products, and integrating them into health benefit packages. These efforts aim to ensure accessibility, equity, and sustainability in service delivery across India's health system.

Washable absorbent continence product research findings

Results of WHO commissioned research to explore the potential of washable absorbent products are now available. This research involved a multi-country study led by Professor Cathy Murphy from [Southampton University](#), with in-country partners in India, Papua New Guinea, and Romania and has been concluded with a [report](#) and two open access research papers. One [research paper](#) focuses on understanding user experiences of providing and utilizing washable absorbent continence products and [the second](#) on the challenges associated with using these products.

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The research found that provision of washable absorbent continence products can substantially improve the quality of life of many people living with long-term incontinence, however the currently available designs do not work well for everyone. Appropriate assessment, access to clean water and the opportunity to try products are key to successful product use. Washable absorbent products are currently under-used and there is a need for improved awareness of the potential benefit, as well as innovation in product design and service delivery to increase safe and appropriate access to more sustainable and acceptable methods for continence management, in particular in LMICs.

Indian Council of Medical Research implement a national Rapid assistive technology assessment (rATA)

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in collaboration with WHO, are in the midst of a large national Rapid assistive technology assessment (rATA) survey. This initiative will generate high-quality data on the access, need, unmet need and satisfaction for assistive technology among the general population in India. The survey sample size is 180,000, encompassing 25 survey sites across six national categorized regions. Training for 150 data collectors was divided into three phases including preparatory training; regional workshops; and site level operational orientation. Data collection began in February, using an online survey platform with comprehensive built in features and a centralized dashboard enabling real time data tracking. Findings from this survey will not only inform national policy but also contribute significantly to the global assistive technology evidence base and establish a new benchmark for inclusive data collection in LMICs. Stay tuned for the end of the survey and the



WHA78.9 resolution fostering social connection for global health

The 78th World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA78.9 on the essential role of social connection in addressing loneliness, social isolation and health inequities.

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This [resolution](#) establishes social connection as a critical public health priority, highlighting its integral role in overall wellbeing and the adverse health outcomes caused by loneliness and social isolation. The resolution recognizes the importance of assistive technology and digital tools as key enablers for fostering social connection and reducing barriers to inclusion to leave no one behind.

Upcoming events

- ATscale and WHO Europe will hold their third webinar in their Market Shaping Series on Tuesday, 23 September 2025, from 11:00 to 12:30 CEST. The session will explore [WHO Europe's new Guide for Assistive Technology Market Assessment and Shaping](#), with insights from [Azerbaijan](#), [Georgia](#), and [Tajikistan](#). The webinar will include contributions from government officials and assistive technology providers. Interpretation will be available in English and Russian. Visit the [ATscale Events page](#) for more information and register [here](#).
- [The Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organizations \(GAATO\)](#) will hold their [Annual General Assembly](#) on 7 October at 1 pm CEST. All global assistive technology stakeholders are welcome to attend the open webinar. The 2025 General Assembly features guest speaker Mr David Constantine, Founding Chair and Board Member of the [International Society for Wheelchair Professionals](#), in conversation with a selected panel of GAATO stakeholders. Please email the [GAATO secretary](#) if you would like to attend and visit the [News and Events website](#) for updates.
- [AT2030 Frontiers Symposium "Inclusive Innovation in Action: Community-led Assistive Technology Solutions in the Local Context"](#) will be held from 8–10 October 2025 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The event will convene a global and interdisciplinary community to explore inclusive, community-led innovation in assistive technology and is a collaboration between the [Royal Academy of Engineering](#) and [GDI Hub's AT2030](#) programme, in partnership with [Kathmandu University](#) and funded by UK Aid. Expressions of interest from researchers, practitioners, disabled leaders, and innovators across disciplines and sectors can be submitted. All costs related to travel, accommodation and subsistence are covered for participants. here. All costs related to travel, accommodation and subsistence are covered for participants.
- The [Indian Association of Assistive Technologists](#) will hold their International conference at Varanasi dated 22-23 November 2025, with the theme "Assistive technology empowering ageing".