

AT news from across Europe 2022-2023

News from *Albania*

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris

“We all matter” (2019) UNICEF, Albania

- There is no systematic access to assistive devices and technology at affordable cost for children with disabilities;
- The legislative provision to support access to assistive devices and technology for children with disabilities is opaque;
- Lack of access to assistive devices and technology at affordable cost is not only a major rights violation, but also represents a major bottleneck in supporting inclusion and accessibility and fulfilment of rights to inclusive education, independent living, personal mobility, etc.

<https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/811/file/We%20All%20Matter.pdf>

Legislation:

National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities

- Completion of the legal framework to enable the provision of assistive technology equipment for persons with disabilities and increasing capacities for its recognition, evaluation and application, in compliance with the needs of persons with disabilities;
- the Albanian Government should: “Effectively ensure and monitor, in close consultation with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, that healthcare service providers provide health services for persons with disabilities, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, including by making available and accessible the necessary equipment and instruments, including assistive technologies

https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Plani-Kombetar-2021-2025_ENG.pdf



In June 2022, GAF organized the first multi-sensory exhibition in Albania dedicated to the visually impaired individuals. Using Braille and basic assistive technology, "See through my eyes" exhibition displayed a number of paintings by the artist "Honor of the Nation" Sadik Kaceli.

Next step: creating “Guide me”, an app to support individuals with hearing & visual impairments in Albania; looking for collaborators.

<https://www.growalbania.org/en/>



Mostly using basic assistive technology



Picture taken at Albanian Centre for Integration of People with Special Needs.

National Contact Person



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AAATE-SIG on Standardisation

Austrian AAATE members promote a SIG on standardisation

- Comment, annotate and influence standards in process of updating
- Cross-referencing eAccessibility and AT in existing standards
- Online-platform for access and cooperation
- 2 to 3 annual meetings in the Austrian Computer Society

Web Accessibility Certificate Austria

An independent certificate for promoting web accessibility

- www.waca.at
- Hosted and run by the Austrian Computer Society
- Supported by industry and accessibility experts
- Cooperation with TuV



Web Accessibility Expert Certificate

A certification for experts in Web Accessibility for quality consulting, development and evaluation

- <https://www.incite.at/de/zertifizierungen/certified-webaccessibility-expert/>
- Launched and offered by Incite, a company of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce
- Certificate provides access to publicly supported consulting on accessibility in industry and administration



DigiComp Framework Accessibility

- Analysing, annotating and expanding the DigiKomp Framework for AT and Accessibility
- Recommendations for Schools for online meeting and online learning systems
- Developing Train the Trainer Courses

Smart Home – Domestic Appliances

- Initiative of the University for Applied Sciences Vienna, Technikum
- Cooperation to work on standards and interface concepts for accessible smart home interaction
- AAL-Austria Event planned for December 2023

News from AUSTRIA (AT)

International Camp for Communication and Computers

ICT – AT – Accessibility – Peers - Studying – Work - Social Skills – International Exchange – Advocate for your own interest - FUN!!!

- 10 days summer event for blind and low vision youngsters aged 16-20
- 26 countries
- 30+ 3h workshops on important and cool topics
- Online due to pandemic 21/22
- <https://www.icc-camp.info/>



IKT-Forum 2018/19

Annual German spoken event on AT, eAccessibility and Inclusion

- 300+ participants
- Johannes Kepler Universität Linz
- 50+ presentations and workshops
- A unique place for exchange for users, practitioners, policy makers, administration, experts, researchers, ...
- <https://www.iktforum.at>
- Cancelled 2021/22 due to COVID

ICCHP24 Linz, Austria, <https://icchp.org/>

- Digital Accessibility
- Assistive Technology
- Digital Inclusion
- **Proceedings ICCHP 2022:** ([LNCS 13341 - ICCHP 2023, Part I](#)) ([LNCS 13342 - ICCHP 2020, Part II](#)), [Open Access Compendium](#)

Projects

- [Athena](#): Accessibility in HE Curricula
- [EasyReading](#): Cognitive Accessibility on the Web
- [RTCN](#): Right to Connect; Digital Inclusion for People with intellectual disabilities
- [IPIP](#): Inclusive Publishing, www.bookaccess.at
- [DigiReady](#): Digital Readiness for Inclusive Teaching
- [eTeachers](#): Toolkit to Support and Empower HE-teachers
- [Bwise](#): Skills Needs in Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs)
- [AccessibleEU](#): Implementing Accessibility in Europe

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris



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News from Belgium

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris

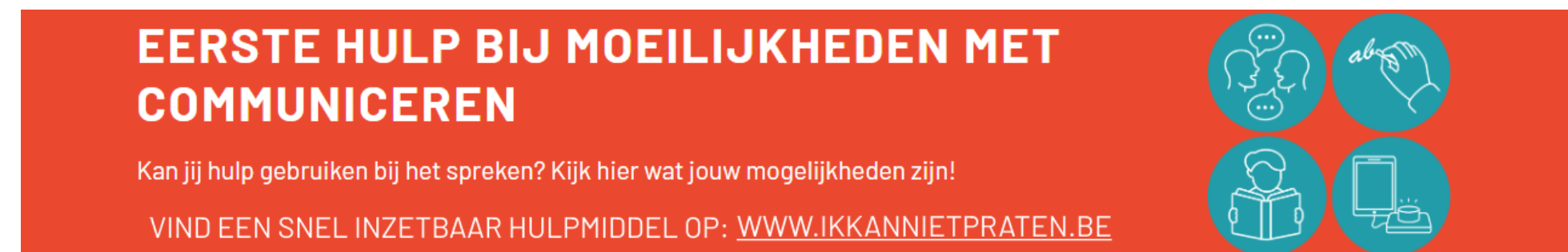


SKATE stands for Skills & Knowledge on Assistive Technology in Early childhood inclusive education

In the Erasmus+ project SKATE we want to:

- Foster new skills and knowledge of teachers and educators for the appropriate use of technology and digital solutions.
- Increase the quality of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) by promoting an early intervention with appropriate assistive technology for children with special needs or at risk of exclusion.
- Create an increasingly inclusive learning environment.

Skate compiles information on innovative technologies that can be used for the inclusion of young children with disabilities (0 to 6 years). In addition, guidelines and curricula are developed to guide preschool teachers and childcare workers in the use of these technologies. <https://skateerasmus.be>



Thanks to financial support from the King Baudouin Foundation, Modem was able to launch the website: ikkannietpraten.be. The website is first aid for those who have difficulties communicating. The tools on this website are simple, cheap, low- or non-technological and can be used quickly. So everyone can start using them right away.



Modem is an independent expert network in innovative assistive technology that aims to maximise participation for everyone with a disability in Flanders (Belgium). Modem helps everyone with tools that written, spoken or digital communication support.



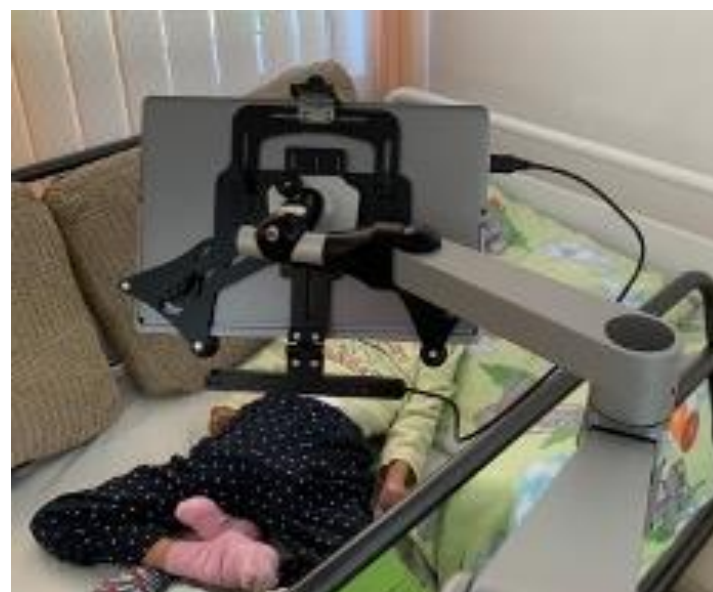
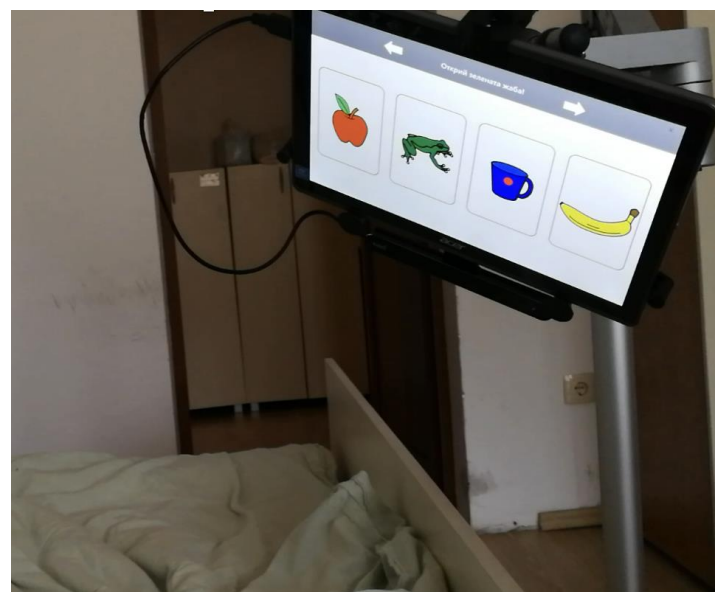
National Contact Person



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Providing education to children with severe impairments in residential care

In 2021 ASSIST – Assistive Technologies successfully completed the project “Development of communicative and learning competencies for children and youth with severe motor impairments using eye-gaze control”, funded by the European Social Fund. The project involved the participation of 34 children from 6 home-like residential centers in 4 big cities in Bulgaria. These children live in the centers since the deinstitutionalization process and have never left them due to their severe motor impairments. More than 600 interactive activities for TD Communicator 5 were created and a guide published. The project has been included in the Zero Project Call for Nominations 2024 shortlist.



News from Bulgaria

4th International Conference on AAC

The Annual International Online Conference on AAC was organized by ASSIST – Assistive Technologies for the fourth time in 2022. The topic of the conference was “AAC Across the Lifespan”. The conference was funded by UNICEF Bulgaria and supported by the Ministries of Education and Science and of Labour and Social Policy and the National Agency for Child Protection.



During the conference, talks were given by 45 speakers, and it was attended by 1200 participants from 48 countries. The largest number of participants came from Bulgaria (652), Ukraine (226), and Lithuania (105). A central event during the conference was the symposium on the role of AAC in the prevention of violence against children with communicative impairments.

More info at: <https://en.aac2022.assistfoundation.eu>

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris



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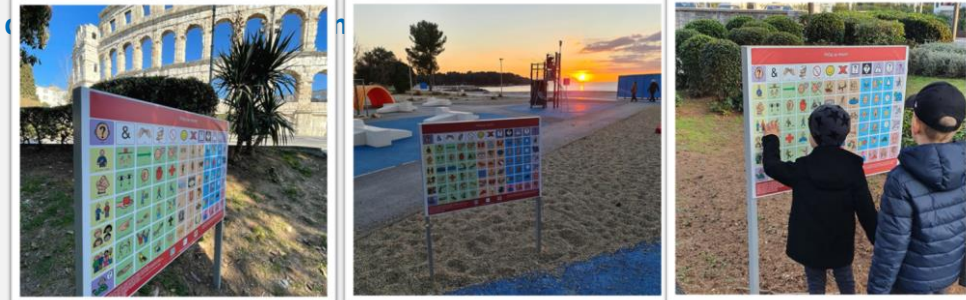
News from Croatia

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris

Project by the Veruda Pula Daily Rehabilitation Center „Pula Talks In Pictures” continues through phase II

The project, realized in cooperation with the City of Pula, has set up communication boards for augmentative communication in public areas and public institutions in Pula to support non-verbal children and adults. Communication boards were made and placed on the children's playgrounds, the city beaches, kindergarten Mali svijet, the amphitheater Arena. In addition to important public areas, all public institutions in Pula whose services are used by children (city swimming pool, libraries, hospital, every pediatric and dental practice etc.) are in the process of symbolisation, too (phase II of project). With this project, the city of Pula becomes a pioneer in the symbolization of the entire city. Veruda Pula Day Rehabilitation Center has the first specialized office for assistive technology in Croatia with its program goals and international recognition. Everything planned for the city of Pula is intended to be transferred to the entire Istria County (phase II) and thus become the only fully symbolized county in this way in the world.

<https://www.total-croatia-news.com/lifestyle/59168-augmentative-communication-boards-in-pula>



Permanent spreading of awareness of assistive technology in Croatia

The Association of Persons with Disabilities (SOIH) conducts comprehensive education on assistive technology. A set of educations is being conducted in the first quarter of this year through a package of four modules within the SOIH - Virtual Learning Forum on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under the motto "Let's dare to find out" and is conducted by Ines Delzotto, the founder of the first Laboratory for AT in Croatia located in Daily carerehabilitation centre Veruda Pula. The participants were presented with different types of assistive technology that improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and enable them to live independently.

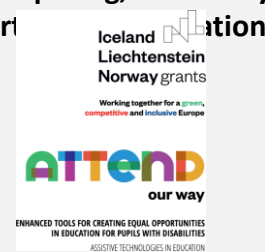


Project „Enhanced Tools For Creating Equal Opportunities In Education For Pupils With Disabilities – ATTEND” continues

The goal of the ATTEND project is to equip 34 Centres/Schools for Training and Education in the Republic of Croatia with assistive technology in order to create preconditions for children with disabilities for equal educational opportunities and successful inclusion in society. The total value of the project is 3,5 million EUR, of which the largest part (85%) is financed from the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area, and a smaller part (15%) from the state budget.

CARNET is the project promoter of the ATTEND project, which will be implemented from 2021-2024 in partnership with the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb (ERF) and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb (FER), with Icelandic partners – Depart and Youth of Reykjavik.

<https://www.carnet.hr/en/projekt/attend/>



PLATFORM 50 +

As part of the implementation of the Platform 50+ project, which is being carried out under the Operational Program Efficient Human Resources of the European Social Fund in cooperation with the Community of Associations of Persons with Disabilities in Croatia (SOIH) and 11 associations, as well as the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Zagreb, research is being conducted on the topic "Assistive Technologies in the 21st Century - Applications and Perspectives". The participants in the conducted research were persons with disabilities, experts from various disciplines (educational rehabilitators, teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, educators, doctors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists) and parents of children with developmental difficulties.

An insight has been gained into the experiences of parents of children with developmental difficulties and individuals with disabilities who are users of assistive technology, as well as professionals who use assistive technology in their work in areas related to experiences in assessing, acquiring, implementing and using assistive technology in the Republic of Croatia. Users of assistive technology have also provided suggestions for mitigating or completely eliminating difficulties in using assistive technology. <https://www.ddz.hr/vijesti/predstavljeni-rezultati-istrazivanja-u-okviru-projekta-platforma-50>



ATAAC-Conference on the advanced technology for people with disabilities

The International Assistive Technology and AAC conference ATAAC was hosted in Zagreb, Croatia, 29-30 September 2022. Leading AT and AAC experts and manufactures were presenting information, research and products, sharing experiences and valuable advice on working with children and persons with communication support needs. There were 900+ attendees and 24 lecturers. ATAAC is EU's most important event in the field of AT.

<https://www.ataac.eu/>



ERASMUS +

Within the Erasmus+ project SDDH, a successful collaboration was established with the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Zagreb, Professor Dr. Renata Pinjatela, and students. The collaboration began with an online round table discussion on the application of assistive technology for young people with muscular dystrophy and continued with the celebration of Erasmus Day 2022 and participation in a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of using assistive technology and digital tools for young people with MD.

<https://erasmus.sddh.hr/erasmus-aktualnosti-pregled/sudionici-erasmus-projekta-sddh-uputili-snazne-poruke-za-buducnost-u-radu-s-mladima>

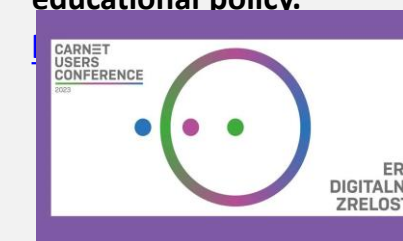


Carnet users conferece CUC 26. – 28. april 2023.

The International scientific and professional conference „Carnet Users Conference” has been organized by Croatian Academic and Research Network – CARNET which is a public institution operating within the Ministry of Science and Education in the field of information and communication technology and its application in education. The conference gathered over 1200 participants from all parts of Croatia and abroad, including representatives from schools, universities, and other educational institutions.

The attendees had the opportunity to hear a lecture by Ines Delzotto, the founder of the first Cabinet for Assistive Technology in Croatia, who revealed at the conference how assistive technology can help students with disabilities to respond to challenges and achieve academic success.

CARNET's Icelandic partners in the ATTEND project spoke about the application of assistive technology in the education of students with developmental difficulties. Through examples of good practices in the city of Reykjavik and the special school Klettaskóli, they presented the Icelandic educational system and educational policy.



The Assistive Technology Laboratory (AT Lab)

The AT LAB was founded in September 2022 at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation of the University of Zagreb. The establishment of AT Lab was one of the project activities of the ATTEND project. Teaching, scientific research, clinical, professional and advisory activities in the field of assessment, procurement, implementation and adaptation of assistive technology are carried out within the framework of AT Lab.

<https://www.erf.unizg.hr/hr/ot-nama/ustroj/laboratoriji/laboratorij-za-asistivnu-tehnologiju-at-lab>



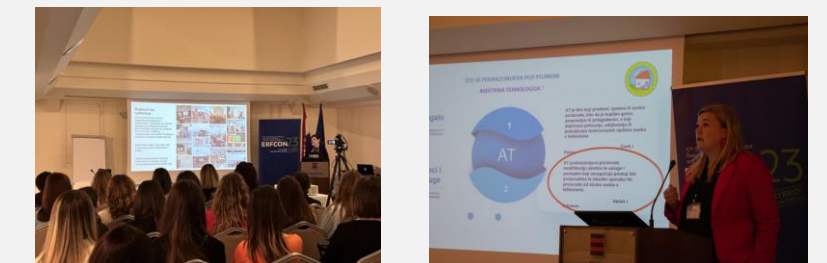
University of Zagreb
Faculty of Education and
Rehabilitation Sciences



ERFCON- Assistive technology section

The conference held from May 5-7, 2023 in Zagreb, Croatia. The participants have got an insight into contemporary knowledge in the field of assistive technology through presentations by recognized experts and a presentation of some of the research and projects currently being carried out in the Republic of Croatia. Experts will present the experiences and challenges they face when using assistive technology in their daily work through examples of good practice.

<https://erfcon22.conventuscredo.hr/asistivna-tehnologija-u-edukaciji-i-rehabilitaciji/>



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[Research on accessibility and assistive technology in Cyprus](#)

[The Assistive Technology, Disability and Inclusive Education Research Unit of the SoSocieAtH Centre of Excellence at EUC](#) is involved in several AT projects focussing on digital and social inclusion, and inclusive education



Examples of New Projects



[Right to Connect: Digital Inclusion for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities](#): the aim is to provide an e-learning platform that will help in achieving the goal of improving social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. The platform will be co-designed with people with intellectual disabilities.



[ATHENA: Bringing Accessibility and Design for All into Higher Education Curricula](#): the aim is to develop a set of recommendations on integrating accessibility and design for all into the HE curricula in order to promote equal opportunities, access and social inclusion of people with disabilities.

News from Cyprus

Legislation

Third National Disability Action Plan 2021-2023

The [Third National Disability Action plan 2021-2023](#) was approved by the Council of Ministers on the 26th of January 2022, as the 3rd action plan supporting the first [National Disability Strategy 2018-2028](#). Among other priorities, the Third action plan aims at a legislative framework for accessibility to goods and products.



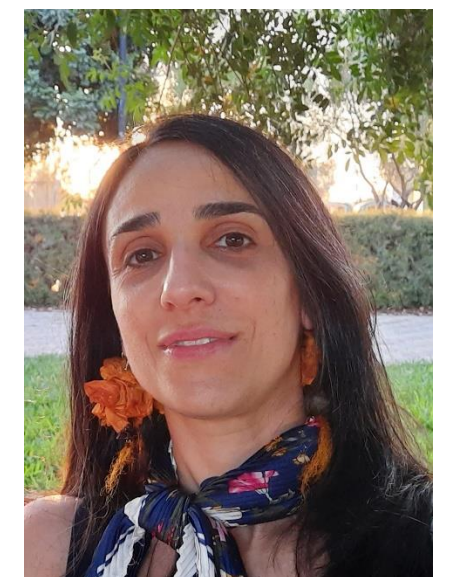
[Introductory AccessibleEU Centre workshop organized in Cyprus](#)

Cyprus is represented in the [AccessibleEU Centre](#) initiative of the European Commission by national experts based at the European University Cyprus. On the 19th of May an event introducing the AccessibleEU Centre was organised in Cyprus, hosting about 100 participants. The event focused on Accessibility and AT in Education. Three workshops were held on different aspects of accessibility including the use of AT for assessing the accessibility of mainstream technologies and access to technology, accessibility and AT in Early Childhood Education and accessible videos and caption in education.

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris



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News from Czech Republic

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris

New Living Laboratory

The new living laboratory <http://healthlab.vsb.cz/en> has started operations. With excellent equipment such as a sensory floor, a marker less mocap system and a system for precise measurement of biological signals, it is used for projects requiring long-term monitoring of residents.

The laboratory also serves as a showroom for assistive technology for social service providers in the Czech Republic.

The laboratory is also a key teaching element in the first bachelor's degree programme in the Czech Republic to focus exclusively on Assistive Technology. The curriculum includes skills in technology, nursing and social work.

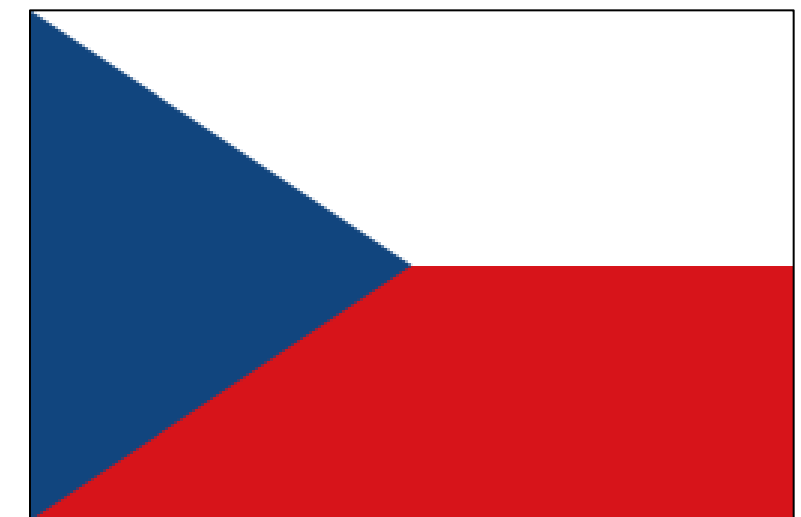


Examples of good practice – fall detection

Although precision systems for fall detection using sensor floors have been known for many years, it is surprising that it was only this year that this system was installed and put into operation for the first time in a Czech social service provider. Hopefully, thanks to this installation in [Domovy na Orlici](#) will become an example of good practice for other social service providers in the Czech Republic.

The Smart Care Project at Zlin Region

Researchers from [CTU Prague](#) in cooperation with representatives of the Zlín Region tried to find an answer to this question. Within the project they implemented their own technical solution at selected social service providers. The basis of the system is a custom solution for fall detection and a set of sensors for monitoring other environmental parameters or biological signals.



National Contact Person



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News 1- ATS qualification system renewing



Estonian Occupational Qualification Council

Estonian Qualifications Framework (EstQF) started in 2005, established for implementing European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) ideas and to link Estonian 5-levels occupational qualifications framework to the EQF.

Assistive Technology Specialist (ATS) Qualification standard and occupational exam system were established on 2013. The updated ATS professional standard on 2023 takes into account the WHO recommendation to use ICF-based description as a so-called common language in health-related fields. The new standard stipulates that the ATS specialist describes the functional capacity and activity limitations of the person in need of an assistive device using the terms and scales of the RFK classification.

<https://www.kutsekoda.ee/en/>

News from Estonia

News 2 – New Guideline „People with long-term illness –return to work“



Estonian Society of Occupational Health Physicians

In Estonia, a guideline is being developed for assessing and describing the need for adaptations and restrictions in the work environment and work organization "People with a long-term illness-return to work under adapted conditions". Guideline is prepared by the Estonian Society of Occupational Health Physicians and commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Aids used in the work environment may be necessary:- for moving weights; to improve ; for medical; for individual adaptation of the workplace due to functional or to guarantee accessibility in the work environment.

In the case of specific individual working aids, the general prerequisite is a permanent or long-lasting health impairment. In the case of such measures requiring the adaptation of aids and premises, the Unemployment Insurance Fund is involved.

<http://ettas.ee/>

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris



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News from France

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris



Most French laboratories working in the field of AT are members of the IFRATH association (“Institut Fédératif de REcherche sur les Aides Techniques pour les personnes Handicapées”). After 2 years of interruption due to COVID, IFRATH started again the day workshops which had been organised regularly 3 times a year since 2000. IFRATH is involving more and more partner scientific associations to co-organise events (Cortico, Arpege,...).

<https://ifrath.fr>

Handicap 2024 French Speaking Conference

Organised by IFRATH, with several French universities, the 13th French speaking conference Handicap 2024 will take place in the Contre de Colloques du Campus Condorcet, Paris-Aubervilliers from June 5 to 7, 2024. Research works about Assistive Technologies will be presented.
<https://ifrath.fr/handicap2024/>

Challenge Handicap et Technologie 2023

This competition of students projects, about assistive technologies and accessibility, took place in Metz on May 11 and 12, 2023. Around the booths of participants, 2 days of conferences and demonstrations. With of course a few prizes awarded projects selected by a panel of experts.



Étude Homère

Homère is a large-scale study designed to obtain unprecedented data on the visually impaired population in France and to gather a range of relevant information on people's living environments. The study was conducted by the DIPHE Laboratory (Lumière Lyon 2 University), Médialis, VAA Conseil and the Institute of Ergonomics and Ecology (INEREC/Paris 8 University). Its aim was to gain a better understanding of visually impaired people and their day-to-day difficulties, so as to help target assistance more effectively according to their different profiles.

The HOMÈRE survey ran from February 2021 to May 2022 and its results were presented at a symposium at the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council.

<https://etude-homere.org/>

Master Technologies and Disabilities

The Master MIASHS “Technologies and Disabilities” started 22 years ago. Based on series of lectures and conferences about disabilities and their consequences on life, on one hand, and on practical teaching of technologies development (including mobile, electronics, web), and on accessibility, the Master trains students to different kind of professional activities from research to software development, but also specialists of digital accessibility or AT specialists.

Teaching language is French, and we hope to open an English speaking group in next years (at level Master 2).



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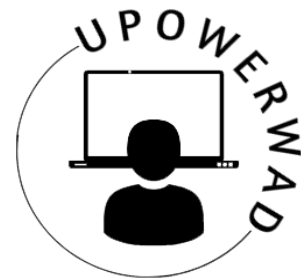


News from Germany

**AAATE 2023
Conference
Paris**

Projects

UPowerWAD



The EU-funded UPowerWAD project emphasizes the need of engaging, empowering and training end users with disabilities on how to provide constructive feedback regarding accessibility issues of public sector websites across Europe.

<https://www.funka.com/en/projekt/upower-wad/>

SHUFFLE



The aim of SHUFFLE is to systematically improve digital accessibility at German universities. Teachers and students are involved in the analysis and implementation of the measures and a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach is used. <https://www.shuffle-projekt.de/project>

AutARK



The aim of the AutARK project is to improve and maintain the employability in the primary labor market of people on the autism spectrum by developing technical assistance systems for their everyday work. <https://autark.inf.tu-dresden.de/en/about-the-project/>

Legislation

Regulation on accessibility requirements for products and services in accordance with the European Accessibility Act

In June 2022, the Ordinance on the Accessibility Reinforcement Act (Barrierefreiheitsstärkungsgesetz) was enacted. With this, the Federal Republic of Germany fulfils the implementation obligation regarding Annex I of the European Accessibility Act.



Fairs and Conferences



As in every year, a wide range of trade fairs and conferences take place in Germany or abroad with contributions of German engineers and researchers.

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The Region of Crete ecosystem awarded a “4 Stars” Reference Site status in the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing

In October 2022, the Reference Site Collaboration Network (www.rscn.eu) of the European Commission awarded the coalition of the references sites of the Region of Crete, the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas (FORTH), and the University of Crete, a “4 Stars” Reference Site status, the highest possible ranking, in the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing. This distinction highlights the quality of digital health innovation actions implemented throughout the years in the Region of Crete, delivering creative and workable solutions that improve the lives and health of older people and the whole community. It also highlights actions that promote innovation and address the challenges of health care provision for the elderly.

News from Greece

The National Accessibility Authority of Greece at the 16th session of the UN Conference of States Parties to the CRPD



The **Conference of States Parties (COSP)** is held annually at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Conference covers a range of themes and issues in round-tables, interactive dialogues and side-events.

The 16th session of the Conference (COSP16) took place from 13 to 15 June 2023, with the overarching theme **Harmonizing national policies and strategies with the CRPD: achievements and challenges**. The Sub-themes were:

- **Sub theme 1:** Ensuring equal access to and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services for persons with disabilities
- **Sub theme 2:** Digital accessibility for persons with disabilities
- **Sub theme 3:** Reaching the under-represented groups of persons with disabilities

The National Accessibility Authority of Greece participated and contributed to the round table discussions for Sub themes 2 and 3.

The National Accessibility Authority and the National Confederation of Persons with Disability of Greece represented in the AccessibleEU launch event

The European Accessibility Resource Centre - Accessible EU, launched in July 2023 is a common European one-stop-shop on accessibility offering cutting edge experience, knowledge and practical skills for a range of actors including policymakers, legislators, and the representatives of accessibility beneficiaries, such as older people, persons with disabilities and others. It focuses on training, raising awareness, disseminating good practices, promoting the development of standards on accessibility and the participation of OPDs in their process, managing knowledge and mutual learning among all stakeholders.



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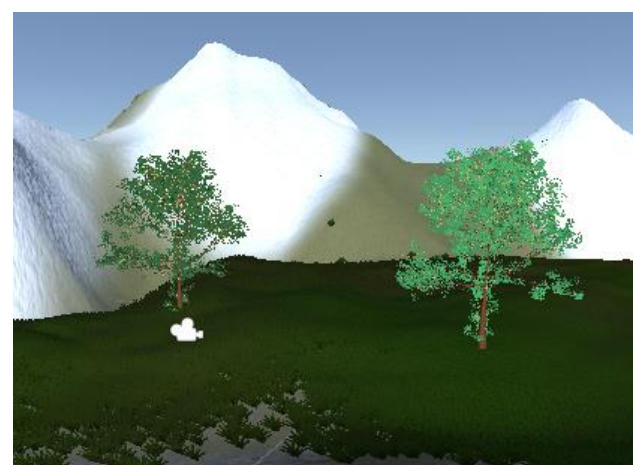
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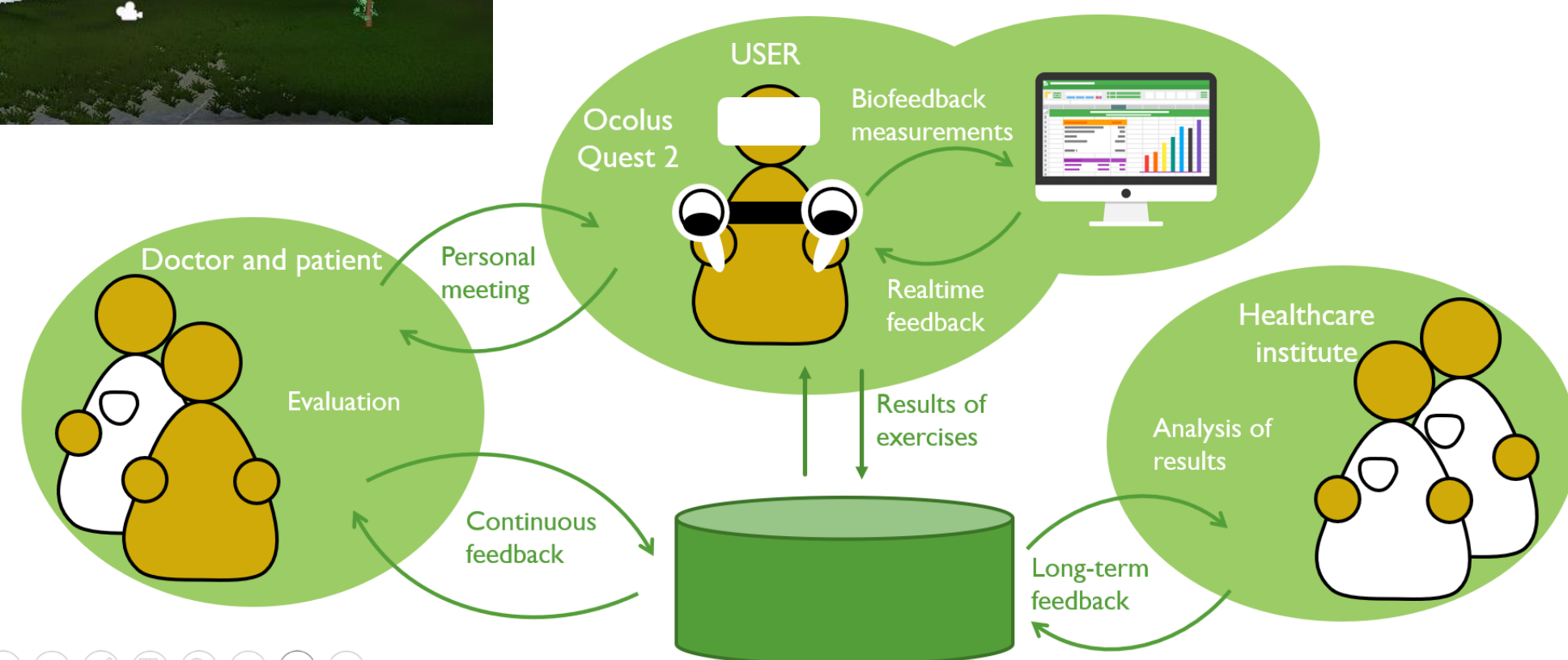
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Collaboration between the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE, Budapest) and the University of Pannonia (UP, Veszprém)

The EMIND <https://elteneuropsychology.wixsite.com/emind>
and the VEAMR <https://mik.uni-pannon.hu/en/research-development/research-laboratories/virtual-enviroments-and-applied-multimedia-research-laboratory> research laboratories developed together Virtual Reality based games for helping Post-COVID patients' rehabilitations.



With the intensity of breathing, users can virtually grow a tree, fly a bird and blow up a balloon.



News from Hungary

SMART-app for wheelchairs users in EU cultural capital city

The University of Pannonia together with the "Associations of People with Physical Disabilities" in Balatonfüred and Veszprém developed a smart application to help people, who use wheelchairs plan their routes. In the app, you can indicate the "easy" accessibility of disabled toilets, and parking lots, moreover, whether a route is easy "to roll" for wheelchairs. More features, like restaurants, hotels will be added in the future.



Cost Action CA19104:

www.a-step-action.eu/project/

Under the umbrella of the a-STEP project leading WG5: Dissemination and Education, where education materials for educators, healthcare professionals, AT-IT developers, users and society were developed.



AAATE 2023 Conference Paris



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News from Iceland

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris

Iceland Health

[A change in the organizational chart](#)

The name of the institution is now Iceland health and no separate assistive technology centre exists. Our units have been split up in two departments, one part is under health service division and the other one service division.

University of Iceland

University of Iceland has produced two Thesis for the degree of Masters of Science in Physical Therapy in cooperation with Iceland Health: **Epidemiology of falls among personal emergency response system (PERS) users** and **The opinions of health-care professionals on the commissioning policy of prosthetic knees in Iceland**

- Research results will be taken into account in the ongoing development of assistive technology services in Iceland

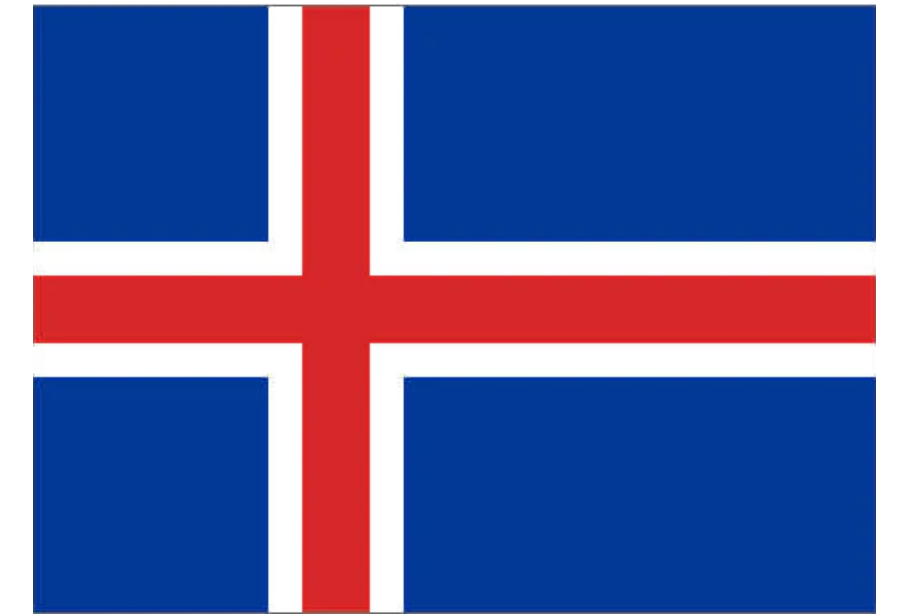
Iceland Health

In 2022 Iceland Health received a request to help provide necessary equipment for children and young people that were living in orphanage homes in Ukraine but heading to Poznan in Poland. Two days later, 9 pallets of various assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, walkers, standing frames and workchairs were shipped to Poland. In addition to Iceland Health, the Rehabilitation knowledge centre and the SLF Training centre donated equipment

Legislation

Changes are being made in the regulation to simplify work procedures and put more emphasis on therapists to apply for assistive devices, not just doctors.

A lot of work has also been done to increase automation of application renewals to speed the process and to simplify the it for users



National Contact Person



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FreedomTech: National advocacy initiative to develop an AT ecosystem

CHAT: cross-sectoral Community of Practice on Digital AT.



2021: HSE Create fund: €2 million to Digital Assistive Technology (DAT) projects:

Common themes are to Create:

- Support structures for DAT
- DAT Loan Libraries
- DAT Capacity building across service providers
- Smart Home Projects



One of the most ambitious projects is the establishment of an AT Passport Prototype, led by a strategic alliance between Enable Ireland, MS Ireland, Headway Ireland and the Disability Federation of Ireland.

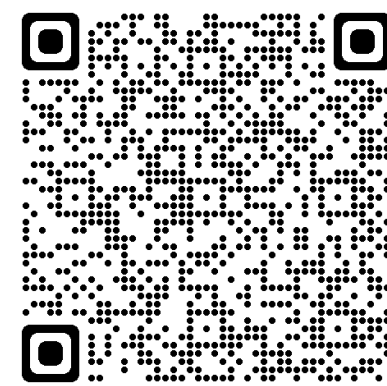
77 individuals funded for DAT and will be trialling the AT Passports prototype shortly.

News from Ireland

The AT8

Effectively communicating the potential benefits of AT can be a challenge, partially within the area of Education. Trevor Boland of Dublin City University developed the AT8 to help overcome this and promote the use of AT in higher education.

[AT8 on Google Docs](#)



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Building assistive technology competency and adoption in schools



Assistive Technology guide

App development



Interprets emotions of non-verbal people



Ailim Healing
Stroke Support tool

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris



National Contact Person



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News from Israel

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Geha Innovation Center

"C-Me"



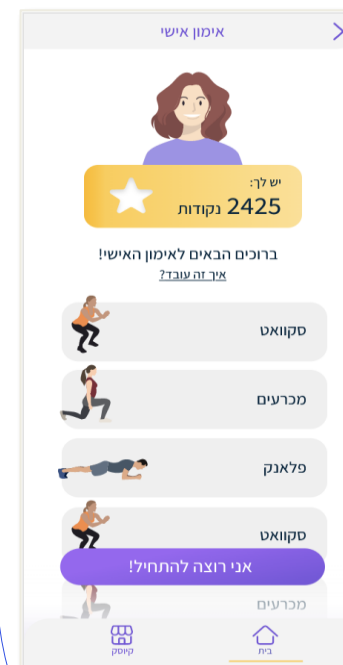
In 2020, **Geha Innovation Center** was established with the goal of **promoting mental health innovation** in Israel and around the world. This is done by promoting development products in the field and changing policies.

Nothing about us without us: Our product development processes always include patients and staff.

Two example of our newest projects:

1. **"C-Me"** app: Distress button to reduce suicidality. Pressing the button leads to an alert to significant others in moments of danger. In addition, there are other features such as photos, music and links to relevant organizations.
2. **"E-motion"** app: a personalized training application intended to increase patients' participation in our fitness program. The application includes a personalized training program, direct feedback from the trainer, a set of rewards, videos and more. The app can be used during and after hospitalization

"E-motion"

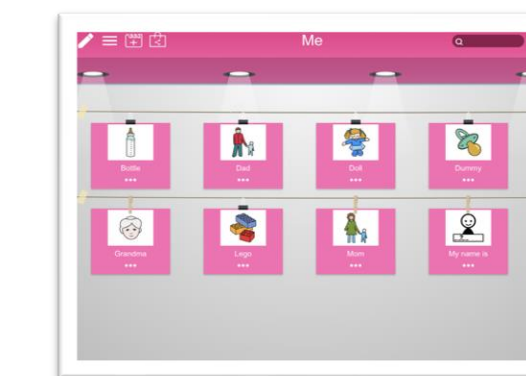
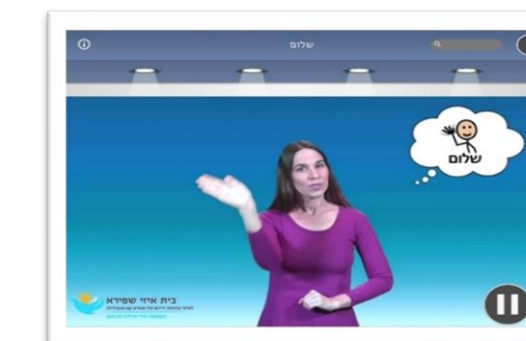
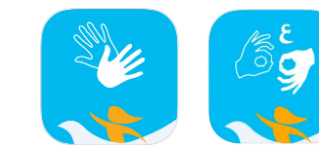


IssieSign is a suite of apps that provides a simple solution for introducing and teaching signs and gestures using an intuitively designed and customizable library.

It is available in three versions:

- [My IssieSign](#) – an open platform version allowing the user to create their own sign language library in any language
- [IssieSign](#) for Hebrew speakers
- [IssieSign for Arabic](#) speakers
- The IssieSign apps have a simple, clear inclusive design allowing for easy access and navigation by people of all abilities
- The IssieSign apps were developed in collaboration with The Technology Center of Beit Issie Shapiro and SAP Labs, Israel.

IssieSign



National Contact Person



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[ALYN Hospital](#) specializes in the integration of innovative assistive technologies to empower children with disabilities in treatment, at home, and in their daily lives.

Some 2022 highlights:

2 new therapeutic platforms were launched by young tech startups following successful multi-stakeholder design partnerships with [ALYNnovation](#), ALYN Hospital's innovation track for the development and global commercialization of pediatric assistive technologies.

[PELE](#), program for creating affordable tailor-made solutions for children with disabilities, is proudly celebrating 5 years of activity and the development of over 500 personalized products to enhance children's abilities and independence. [Click here](#) to watch their new video about the program [contains English subtitles].

Assistive technologies, towards a permanent institutional observatory

January 2023. For Italy, the implementation of the rATA (rapid Assistive Technology Assessment) has been entrusted by the WHO to a consortium of organizations composed of the Higher Institute of Health, CENSIS Foundation, the National Network of Assistive Technology Centers (GLIC), and AIAS Bologna.



The Higher Institute of Health and the consortium aim to establish a permanent observatory on assistive technologies to gather relevant information for the improvement of assistive technologies, their accessibility, and lay the foundations for new policies aimed at supporting vulnerable individuals and people with disabilities.

News from Italy

Legislation

Agreement on the revision of prothetic assistance nomenclature

April 2023. With reference to the Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers (DPCM) dated January 12, 2017, this agreement has updated the nomenclature and numerous technologies are now eligible for prescription under the National Health Service (SSN). Some examples: computer and communication aids (including eye communicators and adapted keyboards for individuals with severe disabilities); digital hearing aids; home automation equipment and environmental command and control sensors (alarm and telecare); adapted cutlery and utensils for motor disabilities; adapted shower stretchers; four-wheel scooters; wheelchairs with verticalization systems; wheelchairs for major and complex disabilities; fixed and bathtub lifts; support systems in the bathroom (grab bars and armrests); indoor stairlift trolleys; advanced artificial limbs; and voice recognition and eye-tracking systems.

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National Contact Person



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News from Lithuania

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Changes in National AT service delivery system

- **Most of movement AT are compensated now.**

New policies were applied in. Now people with movement disabilities can choose if they want to receive their AT from our Center or to buy it and be compensated. This creates possibility for people to get most suitable AT for them and gives bigger variety to choose them from.

- **Procedures and documentation to receive AT are easier and more accessible.**

Our Center was working with national organizations in order to receive information from their databases, so that there would be less documentation needed to collect for people before applying for AT. Collaboration was successful and this helps people to receive their AT easier and faster.

- **Mobile teams.**

Experimental mobile teams which were working last year in our country were approved and became permanent mobile teams. The purpose of the mobile team is to help people in their homes. On person's request our employees go to his/her home, they evaluate which AT is best for the person, adjust it to person's needs, show how to use it and provide it.

Center of Technical Aid for Disabled People

under Ministry of Social Security and Labor

Our work procedures and Assistive Technology assortment is determined by the Ministry of Social Security and Labor. Center works in partnership with municipal offices and non-governmental organizations. AT is provided to disabled people and pensioners. Center and municipal offices provide AT of movement disability and organize maintenance and repair of it. Center compensates or provides AT of movement, hearing, vision, communication and sensorics disabilities.

Interested in Collaboration

Our Center is interested in collaboration with other organizations regarding AT adaptation and exchange of good experience in AT delivery systems.

If you are interested too, please contact me.



National Contact Person



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News from **MALTA**

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ACTU: Malta's national AT service

The National organisation for AT services in Malta is the Access to Communication and Technology Unit (ACTU) . <https://sapport.gov.mt/services/access-to-communication-and-technology-unit-actu/>

ACTU is part of the national disability organisation Agenzija Sapport

ACTU provides the following services to under 16s:

- AAC
- Electronic Assistive Technology

Recently ACTU began to provide services to over 16s including those who have acquired disabilities

Current projects:

- AAC and autism. Publications under review & ongoing research
- Erasmus project: Emergence of the International Forum of Inclusive Practitioners
- Working with the University of Malta IT department to develop novel solutions for access to AAC as well as AAC apps
- Working towards a TTS solution for the Maltese language



ACTU's 3rd International Conference: Digital Assistive Technology: The current situation & the way forward

November 22nd 2023 is the date of this online conference.

Objectives are:

- To explore international developments in the field of AT which support access to education, employment and leisure
- To discuss the current situation on Digital Assistive Technology in Malta
- To discuss the work that is being done locally in the field of AT
- To discuss a way forward to ensure seamless access for all persons with disabilities in Malta

This is an online conference open to AT Practitioners, therapists, educators and anyone with an interest in inclusion



National Contact Person



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News from The Netherlands

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Paris

5 Academic Centers for Assistive Devices ZonMw

From July 2022, the Dutch Organization for Health Research and Development **supports 5 Academic Centers for Assistive Devices** in order to increase research into (cost) effectiveness of assistive devices. Each network involves knowledge centers, client organizations and care organizations. Output of these academic centers include knowledge, as well as tools, training or other means to support professionals or users, as well as educational material for schools/universities.

All academic centers for assistive devices experience **challenges in selecting good research designs** and joined forces. Traditional research designs are often not appropriate due to ethical and practical challenges. Moreover obtained outcomes in terms of averages do not inform policy makers and health care professionals sufficiently as the average user does not exist. Together we describe challenges in doing research, describe research principles for assistive devices and search for appropriate designs.

MDR proof 3D printing of Assistive Devices



Researchers of Zuyd University of applied sciences published a study in Disability and Rehabilitation AT about 3D printing and the Medical Device Regulation (MDR). It **describes a procedure for occupational therapists to, MDR proof, 3D print, tailor made assistive devices** for their clients. Tools are also provided.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17483107.2023.2187889>

Pressure governmental bodies to upscale technology

'I'm in a hurry, because the future has already begun', Dutch minister of long term care and Sport Conny Helder emphasized her rush to organize healthcare differently to keep it sustainable and attractive. The times when health care organizations were free to decide for themselves whether and with which e-health or healthcare technology they want to get is over. There is more and **more pressure** from governmental bodies and health insurances companies on health care organizations **to adopt, implement and upscale proven technology**, and to start regional networks to speed up the process.

Quality standard for the provision of assistive devices

In 2020, **a quality standard for provision of assistive devices** was presented as a result of discussions among governmental and professional bodies, client organizations, insurance companies and entrepreneurs aiming for improvement of the accessibility to and provision, use and maintenance of assistive devices. The standard intends to remove barriers as experienced by clients as well as foster collaboration between all stakeholders involved. A key point is that the provision process follows the occupational therapists' or rehabilitation physician's advice. Although the standard has been in place for more than three years now, implementation is a struggle and it requires a lot of effort to implement the standard in municipalities (responsible for the provision of wheelchairs and housing adaptations).

National Contact Person



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Drafting of National Strategy for Disability Rights

During 2022 and at the first half of 2023, supported by [GIZ](#), the [National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023 - 2030](#) was drafted which includes adoption of the European Directive 2016/2102 which mandates the public sector bodies within the country to comply with the WCAG standards on web accessibility until 2030. It is expected that this will bring improvements in terms of access to information and governmental services to the persons with disabilities in the country.

OPD's Initiative for Availability of High-Tech Assistive Technologies

Starting in 2022, organizations representing individuals with disabilities embarked on an initiative directed at the Health Insurance Fund of the Republic of North Macedonia, which aims to secure funding from the country for high-tech assistive technologies that will empower individuals with disabilities to be more productive at school, at work and have more fulfilling life. This initiative is promising, but still ongoing.

News from *North Macedonia*

"Open the Windows" Collaborates with UNICEF to advance AAC in the country

The only organization in the country which focus is exclusively on the advancement of the assistive technology, ["Open the Windows"](#) has collaborated with UNICEF North Macedonia to localize the AAC [Cboard app](#) into Macedonian and Albanian languages, translate [textbooks](#) on implementing AAC, as well as create guidelines, [booklets](#) and [video tutorials](#) on how to use AAC with in the preschool and primary education setting. Throughout this collaboration, 402 professionals have increased their competences on using AAC in educational setting, more than 921 children experienced improvement through AAC and a new [Macedonian female text to speech voice](#) was developed.

Continued Support for Provision of Assistive Technology

During 2022 and in 2023 "open the Windows" continued its support to the national legislation on provisioning assistive technology to the students with disabilities through another collaboration with the Swiss ["Pestalozzi" Children's Foundation](#). Within this project, 13 resource and school support centers nationwide were equipped with assistive technology that is further loaned to the students with disabilities through regular schools where they study.

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National Contact Person



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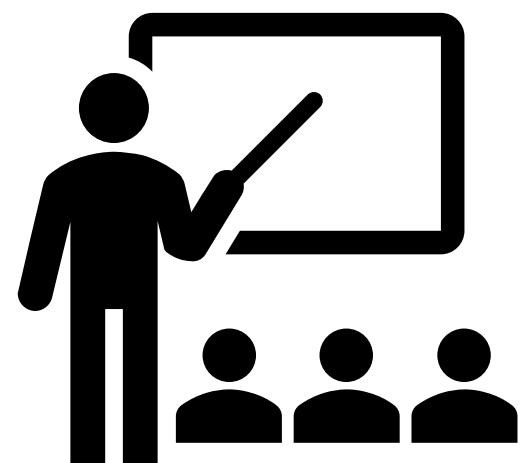
News from Norway

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Paris

Universal Design in Kindergarten and School, Guidelines and Universal Tools

This is a project in cooperation between Rehabilitation International (RI) Norway and the Education Commission in RI International. The project is funded by grants from Global Disability Development Fund of RI. The aim for the project has been to make a set of universal tools for use in all countries, both countries with poor economy and wealthy countries.

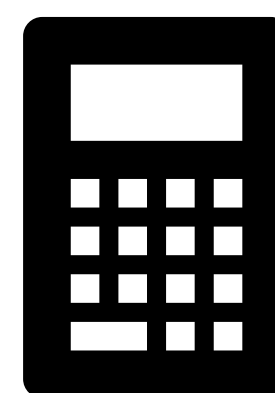
<https://www.riglobal.org/universal-design-in-kindergarten-and-school-guidelines-and-universal-tools/>



Spectacles for children covered by the National Insurance scheme



Last year a political decision was made to cover spectacles for children by the National Insurance scheme. Within two months the Norwegian labour and welfare service- NAV developed a digital application form for the Optometrists. They also developed a calculator on the internet where the parents can calculate the deductible depending on the power of the lenses.



National Contact Person



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News from **Poland**

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[Accessibility Plus Program - good practices](#)

The Integracja Foundation, commissioned by the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, has developed an information material entitled ["Catalogue of examples of the use of Accessibility Standards"](#). It contains good examples of the application of accessibility standards in different buildings and locations to ensure that people with special needs can use the services and manufactured products provided by the projects.

[Academy of the Third Age On-line](#)

The Academy is a platform where Seniors can learn something new, listen to trivia and advice, talk to specialists in various fields.

An important element of the portal is the "talk to me" forum and psychologists' advice, as well as the possibility of talking to a psychologist online or by phone.



[European Funds for Accessibility Conference.](#)

[5 Years of the Accessibility Plus Programm](#)

On April 19-20, 2023, a conference presenting the results of the Program was held at the headquarters of the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy in Warsaw. During the conference, the Prime Minister will deliver a speech. Everyone could take part in the workshops and listen to the presentation of the accessibility project. The theme of the conference is accessibility in business, including the European Accessibility Act. The opportunities and challenges of accessibility in business and the economic value of accessibility were discussed with invited speakers - representatives of Polish and international organizations and business.

[Winner of the 8th edition of the Accessibility Leader competition!](#)

This year, the title of "Accessibility Leader" was awarded to the design office OVO Grąbczewski Architekci. The 8th edition of the Competition shows that Polish architects and urban planners are getting better and better at this most noble task. The competition was held for the first time in 2016. From the very beginning, it has been promoting universal design and the best urban and architectural solutions in the field of adapting buildings and spaces to the needs of all user groups.



National Contact Person



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Birth centenary of [Jaime Filipe](#)



Jaime Filipe, born on May 31st, 1923, was a distinguished Portuguese inventor and pioneer in the field of Assistive Technology in Portugal. With a background in Electrical Engineering, Jaime Filipe founded CIDEF in 1974, an innovation centre for people with disabilities, as part of the Portuguese Association for Invention and Innovation. He developed several assistive products that were awarded at international invention fairs. From 1978 and 1986, Jaime Filipe hosted a regular TV program, totalling over 250 episodes dedicated to rehabilitation engineering, showcasing many assistive products. He was the Portuguese representative at the International Commission on Technical Aids, Building and Transportation (1979) and a member of RESNA. Jaime Filipe passed away in 1992 after battling a prolonged illness.

The enduring legacy of Jaime Filipe's pioneering spirit and contributions to Assistive Technology in Portugal has been commemorated regularly since 2001 through the award 'Jaime Filipe Technological Innovation Prize' organized by the Portuguese National Institute for Rehabilitation.



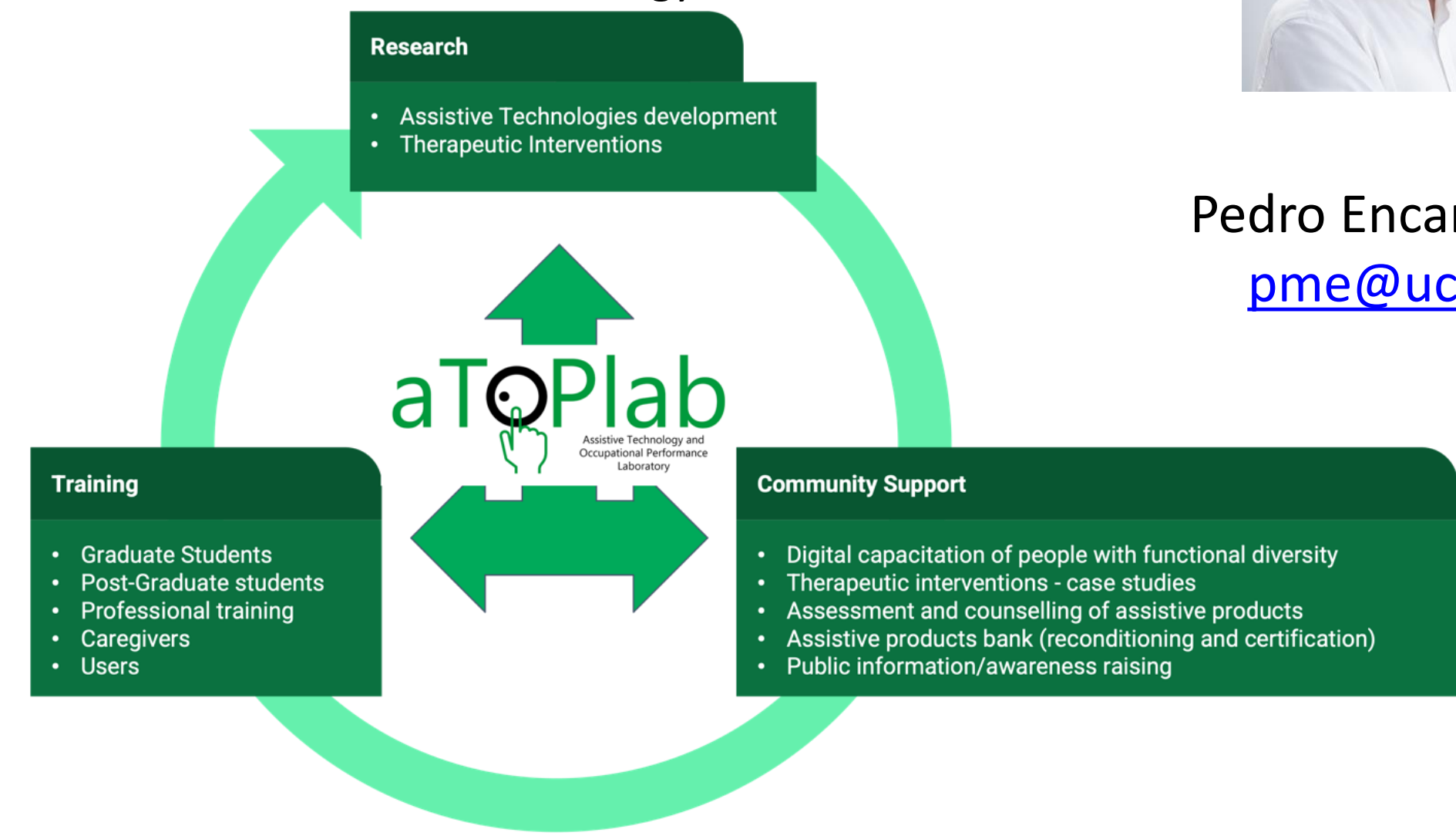
[CRID – Resources Centre for the Digital Inclusion](#)

The CRID of the [Instituto Politécnico de Leiria](#) developed a range of communication materials to support World Youth Day 2023 pilgrims with disabilities. These materials include audio, braille, sign language, and pictographic language versions of the daily prayer, daily challenges, examination of conscience, itinerary and spirituality, as well as rosary meditations. Printed copies will be distributed during the event and will be available on the [event's website](#).



[aTOPlab – Assistive Technology and Occupational Performance Laboratory](#)

Established in December 2021, the aTOPlab of the [Instituto Politécnico de Leiria](#) congregates within the same structure assistive products research, training, and community services. The aTOPlab welcomes international partnerships for projects in the field of Assistive Technology.



National Contact Person



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News from **Romania**

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BlindHUB

The National Association of Blind People in Romania has developed an application (BlindHUB) to provide information, career guidance and counselling and digital mediation in the labour market between blind and partially sighted people and employers. The app containing tools such as video CVs and the possibility to conduct online interviews through a simple employer account, the BLINDHub app represents an innovation for business and recruitment and selection processes. The app is accessible on Android and iOS.

More information, downloads and contacts:

<https://blindhub.ro>



.lumen - builds glasses that help the blind live a better life

It was founded as a research startup with the mission of empowering the blind. The .lumen glasses offer a solution for the 40 million blind individuals which can't have an advanced mobility solution. This innovative solution replicates the main features of a guide dog in a scalable product.

The .lumen glasses can understand the world and guide blind individuals through it by navigating around obstacles, keeping the user on safe areas and leading them to their intended destination.

This is only possible today due to significant advancements in autonomous driving and artificial intelligence. The .lumen system can be considered as the most advanced wearable in the world, capable of achieving autonomous driving capabilities similar to those found in cars, all within a comfortably wearable system positioned on the user's head.

More information and contacts:

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National Contact Person



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Strategy of the inclusive approach in national education and training

The inclusion strategy is the document aiming to improve inclusion at all levels of education in Slovakia. It is not only about schools, but also other educational institutions; not only formal, but also informal education, including childhood and life-long learning. The long-term intention of Ministry of education, science, research and sport is to create an environment that will motivate schools to become inclusive while motivating parents to perceive schools on the path to inclusiveness education.

Details of the strategy plan implementation are described in the Action plan for 2022 - 2024.

Role of the Access Centre TUKE in HE

The period 2022 – 2024 at the higher education is characterized by the development of new supporting services for students with special needs almost at all universities in Slovakia, often with establishing special supporting centres for such students. Our Access Centre plays important role in the training of staff for such centres in all Slovak universities trying to enlarge knowledge on Assistive Technology, and methodology concerning students' assessment, and individual plans development for the effective study support. Our centre has 140 AT products, and 64 items of PC technology that we use in our supporting centres staff trainings, and for personal support of individual students (lending to students with SN).

News from Slovakia

Conferences, Trainings

Workshop “Support for students with specific needs at university and pupils with SEN at secondary school - smooth transition to university” in Podbanské, October 2022 devoted to coordinators for support of students with special needs at Slovak Universities, and special educators and educational advisors at the secondary schools, and other professionals.

Seminar “Join Us and Be Without Pressure” in Stará Lesná, High Tatras, June 2023, devoted to the support of Ukrainian students - refugees coming to Slovakia in last years. Financed by the Erasmus+ project “No Pressure”
<https://accesscentre.tuke.sk/projekt-bez-tize/>

Braille Memorandum

Memorandum to support blind persons using Braille in Slovakia between: Slovak Library for the Blind Matej Hrebenda in Levoča, Institute of the Slovak Braille Authority; Union of the Blind and Visually Impaired of Slovakia, Access centre, Technical University of Košice; Support centre for students with specific needs, Comenius University in Bratislava; Joint boarding school in Levoča aiming at improvement quality and continuity of the education of blind persons in Slovakia, mainly by: a) cooperation in the areas of: research, development, innovation, technology transfer; b) to provide mutual cooperation in the design and implementation of joint projects, as well as to cooperate beyond the scope of such joint projects.

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National Contact Person



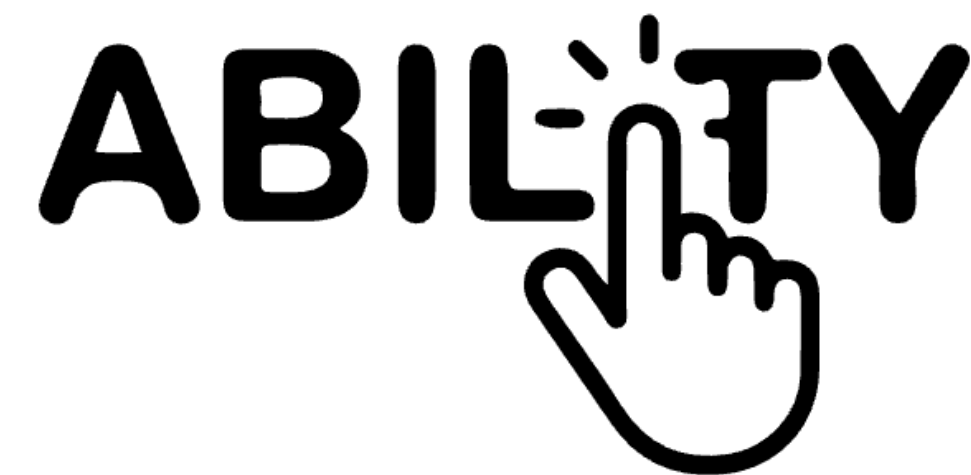
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News from **Sweden**

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ABILITY – Haptic tablet for the accessibility of digital content

The ABILITY Project is an EU project with the goal is to eliminate the existing barriers for blind and visually impaired people in education, employment and leisure and to promote cooperation with sighted people.



The Ability Project develops a tactile display through technical innovation in AI, sensor technology and multimodal information by working closely with users. This will open up for new ways to experience digital images through a combination of sensory experiences and sound.

More information can be found on [the ABILITY project's website](#).

SYNTAX – The Syntax of Equality



A hotel entrance with a red carpet that leads to two steps to get inside the hotel.

The [SYNTAX project](#) aims to develop "The Syntax of Equality", a tool that can support municipalities' work with equality goals and how to achieve them in their development processes. The 4-year project will 1) identify patterns in the physical environment that support equality and inclusion, and 2) define and test the patterns in ongoing and planned planning and construction projects. At the end of the project, they will compile and publish "The Syntax of Equality".



National Contact Person



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News from Switzerland

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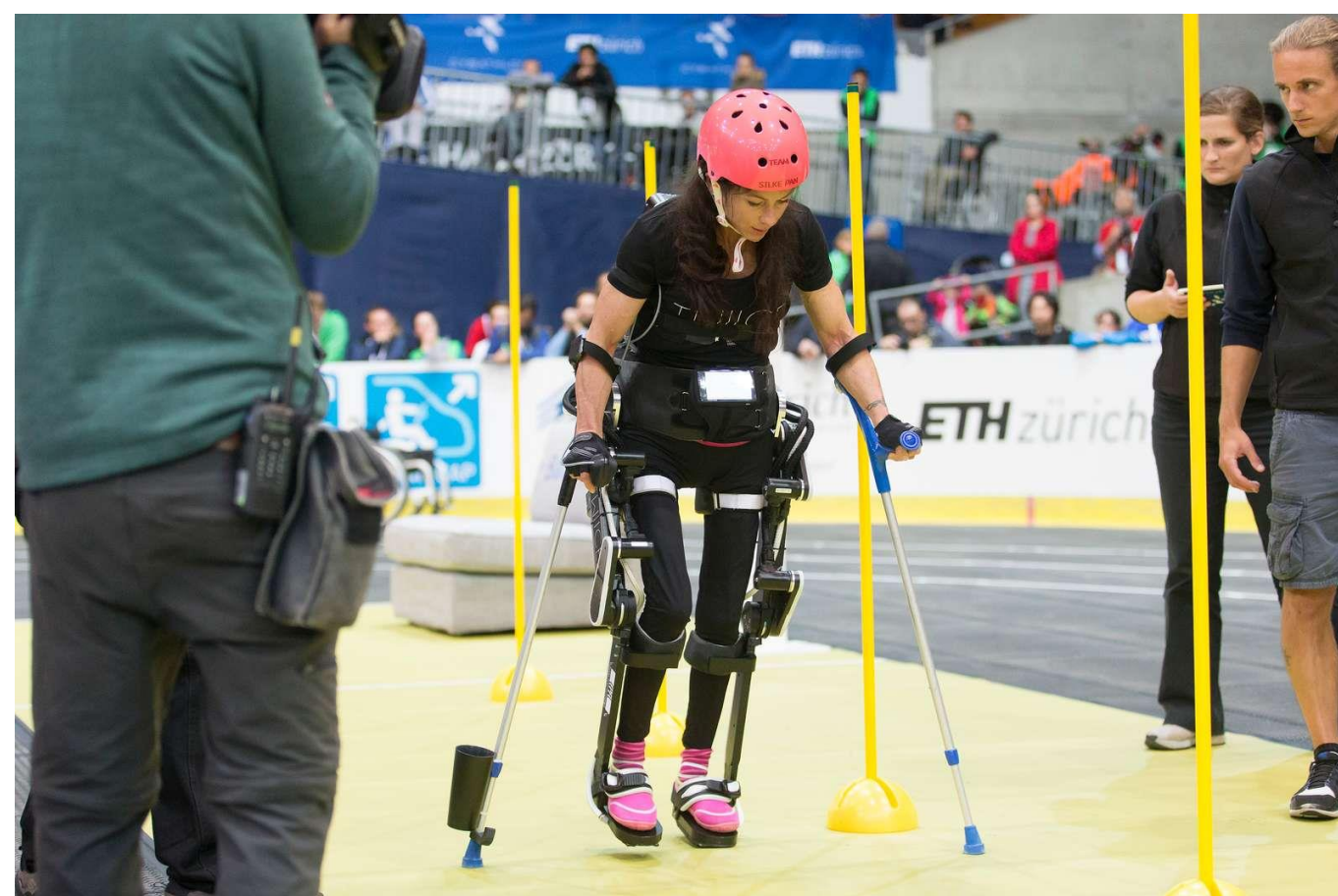
CYBATHLON 2024

Join our unique competition and register a team!

We cordially invite you and your team to participate in [CYBATHLON 2024](#)! Our extraordinary platform brings together the brightest minds, cutting-edge technologies, and a shared passion for advancing the field of assistive technology development to revolutionise the lives of people with disabilities. We have added [two more disciplines to the original six](#): a race with smart visual assistance technologies for people with severe visual impairment and a race with assistance robots for people with severe impairment of the upper and lower extremities.

Please see on the following links to get more information about registration, and please contact us on teams@cybathlon.com, if you have any questions!

[Registration form](#) / [Information about registration](#)



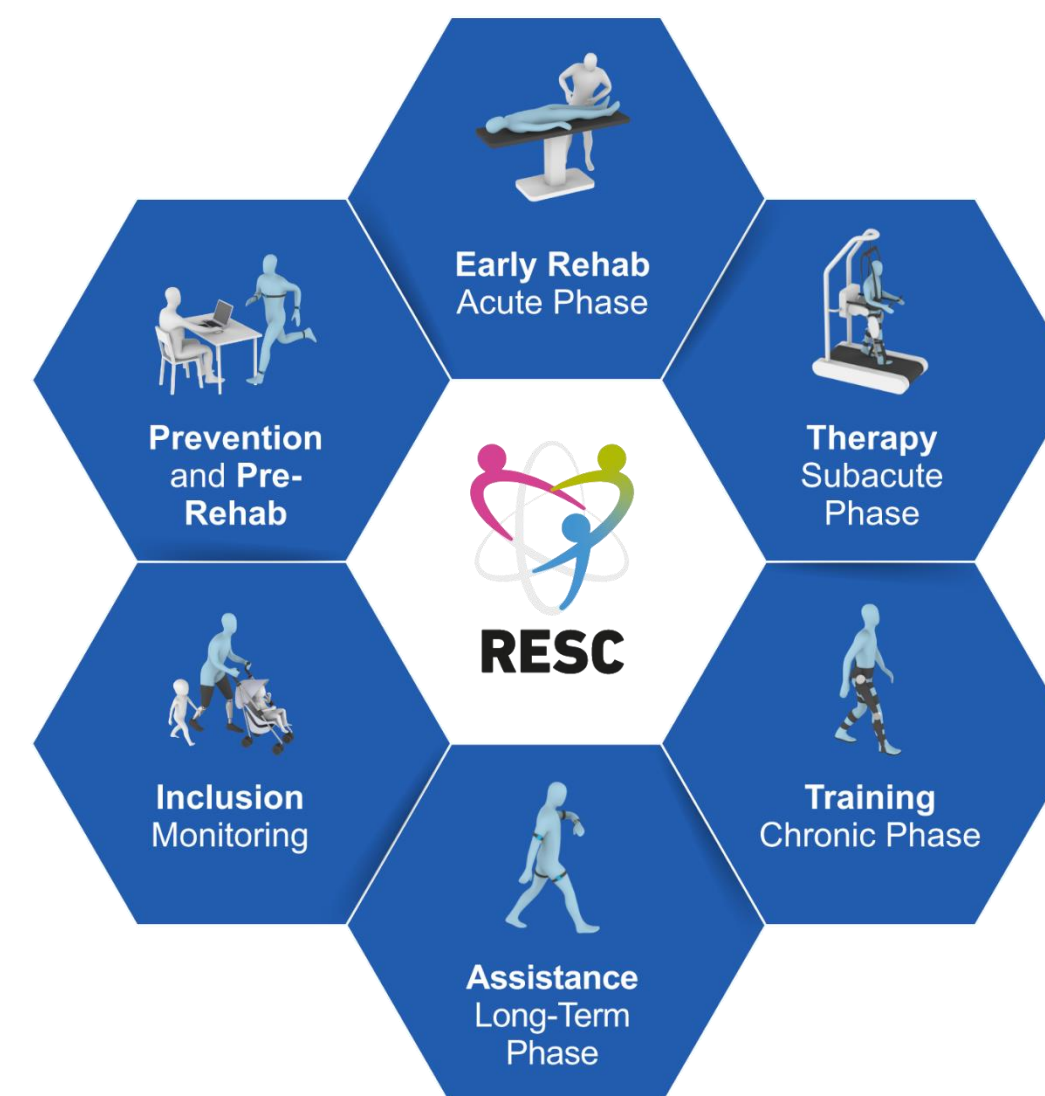
Silke Pan, Team TWICE, CYBATHLON 2016, ETH Zürich/ Nicola Pitaro

RESC ETH Index Rehabilitation & Inclusion

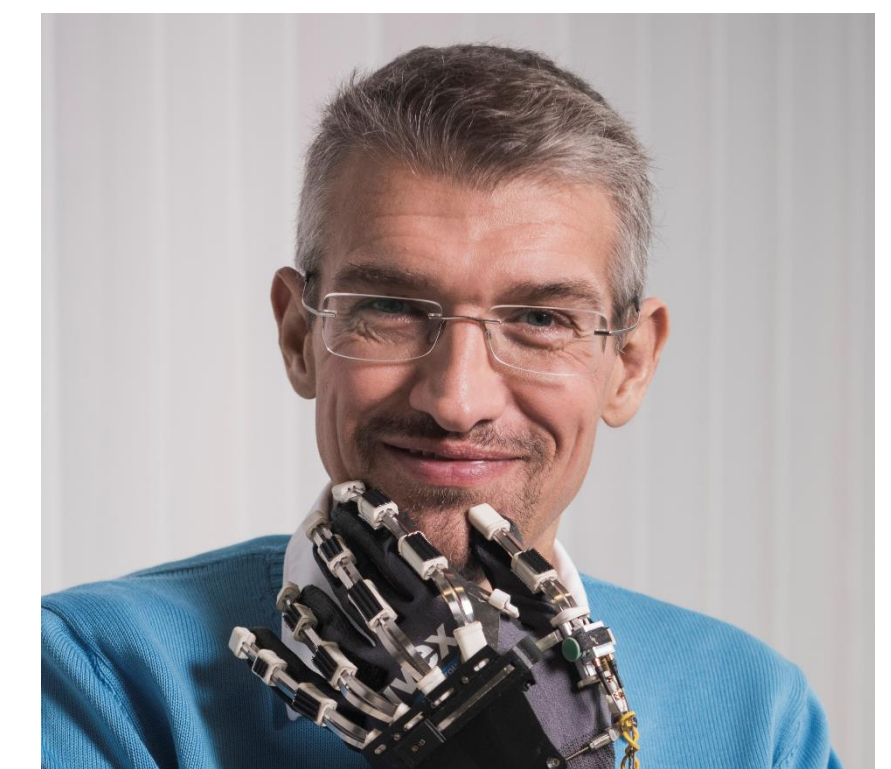
It is the vision of ETH Zurich's Competence Centre of Rehabilitation Engineering and Science [RESC](#) to restore and maintain independence, productivity, and quality of life for people with physical disabilities and to contribute towards an inclusive society.

We currently work to establish a sustainable and nationwide survey structure - the ETH Index Rehabilitation & Inclusion - to provide the Swiss society and governing bodies with comprehensive data on everyday challenges of people with disabilities. Our focus is therefore on the clusters of work, living, public services, and participation. The collected data will allow to identify the current status, improvement potential and long-time trends as well as benchmarking and in best case impact analysis.

To learn more about the ETH Index, contact us at: info@resc.ethz.ch



National Contact Person

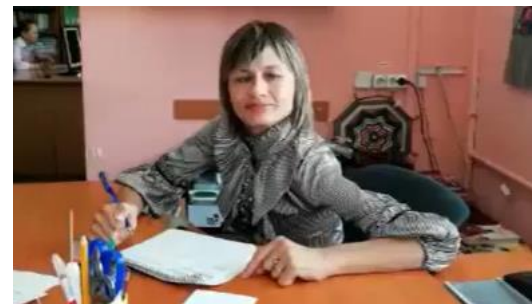


Roger Gassert, ETH Zurich
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Events

[Webinar in Assistive Technologies in Education, 06.2023](#)

Held by the Institute of Social and Political Sciences of Ukraine and DyvoGra Social Enterprise with the participation of user led NGO's, parent groups. Educators and Tetiana Lomakina, Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Barrier-Free Environment



[Rehabilitation, Assistive Technology and Disability Inclusion 03.2023](#)

WHO/Europe, the WHO Country Office in Ukraine and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine host a public event highlighting truly urgent issues: people's rehabilitation needs, disability inclusion, and the use of assistive technology in the context of the health response to the ongoing war.

[Assistive Technologies Hub \(Lviv\), 05.2023](#)

Opened for Rehabilitation by Momentum Wheels for Humanity with the cooperation of the Ukrainian Research institute of Prosthesis

Technologies

[Eye trackers](#)

UNICEF provided eye trackers for some children with cerebral palsy and educated caregivers how to use and calibrate it. And also supported Dzherelo Children's Rehabilitation Centre with PCS symbols for people with communication impairments



[Social entrepreneurship](#)

Invafishki – a social enterprise in Ukraine run by people with disabilities, creates stuff for everyday life of people with spinal injuries

News from Ukraine

AAC Community in Ukraine

[International cooperation](#)

Since 2018 AAC community of users, families and professionals. Together with ISAAC, AAATE, Ezer Mizion Israel National AAC Lending Center etc. provide free webinars is assistive technologies for communication

[Mitigating the risks of war](#)

AAC Community teams created 6 free posters with DyvoGra AAC symbols in Ukrainian to help people with communication impairments stay safe or evacuate smoothly or adapt in other country



Risks and challenges that war brings

- Risks of physical injuries,
- Lack of psychosocial support and resilience skills, dealing with loss and uncertainty
- Psychogenic loss of speech,
- PTSD assessment and treatment
- Continuous rehabilitation of people traumatised in the war ,
- Uninterrupted usage of assistive technologies if evacuated etc.

“Before the war, over 2.7 million people in Ukraine were registered as living with disabilities, but this number has likely increased amid the violence. Thousands of people with complex conflict-related injuries require short-term and long-term rehabilitation services.” (WHO, 2022)

Ukrainian Apps for communication

- [Digital inclusion](#) – social cooperation project.

Web and mobile versions, an ecosystem for communication, leisure and cultural development

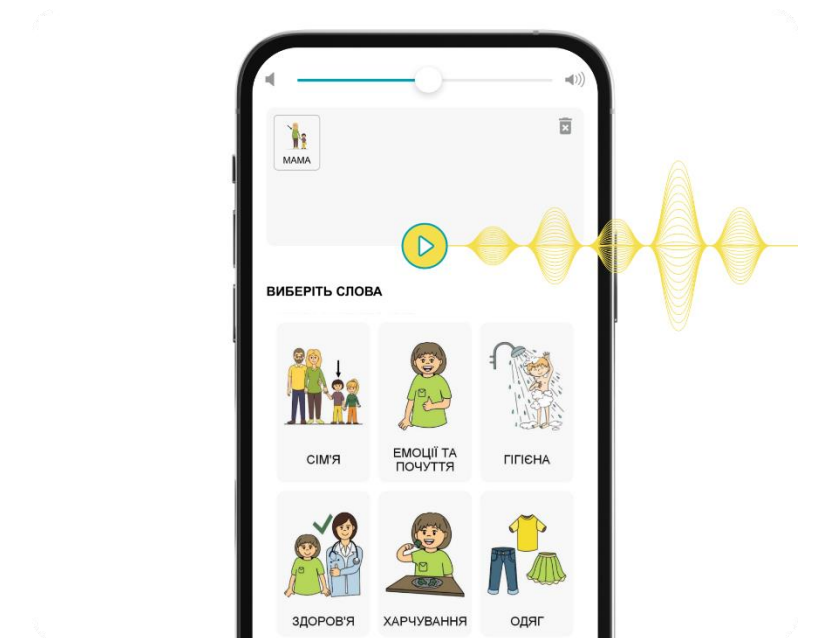
- [Tippy Talk](#) - CSR initiative.

Communicator and a chat.

- [Milla Says](#) - testing.

Social cooperation of NGOs, a Norway app using both symbols and manual signs, currently tested by Ukrainian community

AAATE 2023 Conference Paris



National Contact Person



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