

2020-2022



# GAAT

Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organizations

## BIANNUAL REPORT 2020-2022



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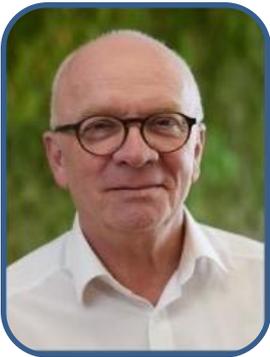
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Figure 1. Image of TREATS (Taiwan Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society) Assistive Technology Hackathon in Taipei 2019

## Presidents Forward



Persons living with disabilities and older people face many challenges in leading self-determined lives and participating in society on an equal basis. Assistive Technology has a huge potential to change that. And for many years, organisations like RESNA, AAATE, ISPO and other professional organisations have tried to work on the advancement of Assistive Technology, thus trying to contribute to a world in which persons with disabilities have equal opportunities. These efforts have resulted in a large number of fantastic assistive products for a wide range of functional domains, but much more remains to be done. One of the most important challenges is to make sure that everyone who might benefit from Assistive Technology has access to it. The recent Global Report on Assistive Technology, published by UNICEF and WHO, demonstrates in an undeniable way that the reality in the world is very far from that goal: about 30% of the world population might benefit from Assistive Technology, including spectacles, and only a relatively small proportion of these people have access to it. Changing this requires truly global efforts. The WHO with its GATE programme has strongly stimulated and

triggered such global efforts. GAATO as a global umbrella organisation of established regional, national and international professional organisations in this field, aims to contribute to these global efforts by bringing together the wealth of expertise of more than 15,000 professionals and academics in the field of Assistive Technology, to channel and use that expertise towards breaking down barriers and building bridges to help realise the dream of an inclusive world where persons with disabilities have equal opportunities.

GAATO wants to work with any other organisations that share the same mission, on the basis of respect, openness, dialogue, mutual learning and trust. This biannual report describes what GAATO has achieved in the first two years of its existence. The report demonstrates a combination of moderation with ambition; our contribution to the major challenge is of course limited, but the organisation has proven its relevance and its ability to undertake global initiatives with visible impact. For the board of GAATO this is a strong motivation to continue its work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. de Witte'.

PROF. LUC DE WITTE  
GAATO President

## GAATO Mission Statement

**Our mission is to advance the field of assistive technology and rehabilitation engineering to benefit people with disabilities and functional limitations of all ages.**



We are committed to working towards equitable and reliable access to assistive technology. We do this through collaborative research and innovation, policy advocacy, education and training, information provision, awareness raising and knowledge exchange.



We foster collaboration among our member organisations and with other stakeholders at the global/international level, and we support the development of professional assistive technology organisations in low- and middle-income countries.



In all our activities we are guided by the following key values: respect, openness, dialogue, mutual learning and trust.



Figure 2. Image of GAATO founders August 2019



## A bit of history

By Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf,  
GAATO Secretary-General

The seeds for GAATO were laid in 2000, when four organisations (AAATE, ARATA, RESNA, RESJA) decided to join forces to move forward the agenda on assistive technology (AT) with the signing of the Tokushima Agreement on 26th August. The signatories were presidents Christian Bühler (AAATE), Barry Seeger (ARATA), Osamu Sueda (RESJA) and Mary Binion (RESNA). The Agreement listed the area of collaboration, among which the recognition of mutual membership benefits, mutual conference participation benefits, a shared events calendar and web links. The intention to come to a joint conference was expressed as well, but never realised.

The agreement was implemented, but collaboration basically remained at administrative level. This changed in 2013, when following a policy session on global challenges in AT at the AAATE conference, a joint statement was prepared and signed by the presidents of AAATE, ARATA, RESJA, RESNA and AITADIS and read on 23rd September of that year in New York at a unique multi-agency event, 'Assistive Technology Opens Doors', hosted by the Government of Philippines in partnership with United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the World Health Organization.

The main aim of the side event was to draw on good technical and economic practices from a broad range of stakeholders and reflect on possible mechanisms for improved international cooperation on AT as part of the global development goals and its inclusion in the forthcoming international normative framework on disability and development. The event ended with a chorus of commitment to develop Global Cooperation on Assistive Technology (GATE), which will open the door for millions of people to be active, productive, independent, enjoy a better quality of life and ultimately to live with dignity. This would also fulfil the ultimate aim of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and inclusion of persons with disabilities, especially in a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.

The organizations met again in Budapest in 2015 during the AAATE conference. This meeting was preceded by a meeting at the RESNA 2015 Denver conference and organised by Ray Grott, president of RESNA, who proposed to further enlarge and intensify the collaboration. At the Budapest meeting it was agreed to update the Tokushima Agreement and to include

RESKO and TREATS as members of what was called the Alliance of Assistive Technology Professional Organizations. Beside the mutual membership benefits it was decided to, *'work to identify areas and issues of joint concern and opportunity, and to develop joint strategies to address these issues. In particular, strive to have greater influence with international bodies including the United Nations, its World Health Organization and UNICEF, the World Bank, the European Union, international philanthropic foundations and other NGOs, as well as the national and regional governments of Alliance organizations' home countries and regions'*. The Agreement was signed in 2016.

Notwithstanding the good intentions it remained a bit silent until in 2018 representatives of several organisations met in Korea upon invitation of Inhyuk Moon, the president of RESKO. Also, Chapal Khasnabis of the WHO was among the invitees, and he warmly invited the Alliance members to go a step further and to formally establish an organisation which for the WHO and the GATE programme in particular could act as a global speech partner. "Too much fragmentation in the field of AT" according to Khasnabis, "is not helpful for advancing access to AT" and he made the comparison with the Disabled People Organisations that joined forces under the International Disability Alliance. At that meeting representatives of AAATE, RESNA, RESKO, RESJA, ARATA, TREATS and CREATE ASIA took part. AAATE took up the challenge and asked its Secretary General, Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf, to investigate the implications of further formalisation of the Alliance and the interest among Alliance members and others to join. At the 2019 AAATE conference in Bologna the decision was taken by the represented Alliance members to prepare the formal constitution of the Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organizations (GAATO) as an independent member organisation, a process which was entrusted to Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf of AAATE and Roger Smith of RESNA. Other organizations, such as ATIA and EASTIN were present at that meeting as well.



Figure 3. Image of GAATO member logos November 2022.

## Foundation

GAATO was officially constituted by AAATE, AATA, ARATA, ATIA, BATA, RESJA, RESKO, RESNA, TREATS, on June 24th, 2020, during the constituent assembly. That moment was preceded by intense preparatory work during which legal and governance issues were sorted out and the statutes of the organization written, reviewed and finalised. During that process the following main decision were taken:

- The legal nature: Non-for-profit association according to Swiss law
- The place of registration: Geneva, Switzerland
- Scope of the Alliance: Mission and aims were codified and included in the Statutes.
- Membership categories and criteria: Full member organizations, Candidate member organizations, Affiliate Organizations.
- Governance: Roles of the General Assembly, the Board of Directors, the Auditors and the Secretariat. It was further decided that each full member would have the possibility to appoint a member and an alternate member to the Board.

During the first official Board meeting on July the 1st, 2020, Luc de Witte (AAATE) was appointed President, Andrea Van Hook (RESNA) appointed as Vice-President, Inhyuk Moon (RESKO) appointed Treasurer, Esther Dakin-Poole (BATA) appointed as Secretary and Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf (AAATE) was appointed as Secretary-General.

In the course of 2021 GAATO welcomed IAAT (Indian Association of Assistive Technology) and ISPO (International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics) as full members.



Figure 4. TREATS representatives at iCreate Conference, Canberra Australia 2019

## GAATO aims

- To advance at global level the field of assistive technology (AT) and rehabilitation engineering (RE) to benefit people with disabilities and functional limitations of all ages
- To foster equitable and reliable access to assistive technology and rehabilitation for all people in the world that might benefit from it
- To promote at global level research, policy advocacy, education and training, communication and information provision, knowledge exchange
- To foster collaboration among the members and with supranational and international organisations and organisations having similar or complementary goals
- To support assistive technology professional organisations in low- and middle-income countries.

To reach these goals the Association may develop activities of scientific, educational, medical, social, humanitarian, promotional and advocative nature in all parts of the world.

## Strategy 2021-2025

On March 24th, 2021 the Board of GAATO adopted the Strategy 2021-2025 document to further the organisational mission. This document outlined the proposed strategy objectives for GAATO over the next five years based on the statutes, input obtained during meetings with member organisations and reviews by Board members. The Strategy will be periodically reviewed, and fully reevaluated in 2025.

## The Strategic objectives

The table below identifies **activities areas** relating to the organisational core aims and objectives:

Objectives (What)	Envisaged activities (How)
Awareness Raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain an active and informative website</li> <li>● Distribute newsletters and other high quality relevant information produced by members and partners</li> <li>● Engage strategically on social media</li> </ul>
Knowledge Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Invite members of member organisations to conferences and events</li> <li>● Organise an international track at selected conferences about globally relevant topics</li> <li>● Organise workshops/webinars about topics relevant to a global audience</li> <li>● Maintain an active 'resources' page on the website with relevant documents, activities, etc.</li> <li>● Encourage and support knowledge exchange among member organisations through on-line networks</li> </ul>

Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to existing education and training programmes that are relevant to a global audience</li> <li>• Advertise programmes through digital media</li> <li>• Develop and initiate education and training programmes at a global level where needed and not done by others</li> <li>• Initiate (student) exchange programmes between our members</li> </ul>
Collaborative Research and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as a platform/network to find partners for research and innovation initiatives of the member organisations or external organisations</li> <li>• Initiate research and innovation projects on major topics that are globally relevant</li> </ul>
Information Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development and maintenance of global information system(s) in the field of AT</li> <li>• Take coordinating initiatives where needed to ensure coherence and alignment of information provision in this field</li> <li>• Include the EASTIN system and other information systems that align with the mission as (a) resource(s) on the GAATO website</li> </ul>
Policy Advocacy and Influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop joint policy papers about topics of global interest, where possible and relevant in collaboration with other stakeholder organisations</li> <li>• Respond to policies that are globally relevant and participate in international debates about these</li> <li>• Take an active role in discussions with global stakeholders</li> <li>• Support the efforts of member organisations in policy efforts that have global implications</li> </ul>
Support new AT organisations in LMICs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify 'emerging' AT organisations in LMICs and provide capacity building support</li> </ul>

## Collaboration routes

GAATO works towards achieving its core aims and objectives through a combination of the national/regional activities of its members, joint global GAATO endeavours and collaboration with external organisations.

Routes for **activity development and implementation** are identified as:

1. To provide the opportunity for members to involve GAATO in their activities, e.g., workshops, webinars, and conferences.
2. Encourage collaborative work between members, eg. individual members initiate projects or other activities that fit within GAATO's strategy and seek collaboration with other members (or their members).
3. GAATO initiates joint projects, e.g., research on AT Outcome and Impact Measurements.
4. GAATO responds to external developments and issues e.g., international guidelines or crisis response.

An **annual work plan** is developed at the beginning of each year, discussed by the Board, and is updated where significant new activities are developed.



## Partnerships

By Esther Dakin-Poole  
Policy & Partnerships Advisor

GAATO has been active in building relationships with organisations that share aligned objectives. The core partnership objectives for 2020-22 have been:

- **To make GAATO known to other global stakeholders**
- **To better understand the role that GAATO could play as a global actor representing the AT professional and research community**
- **To seek partners for the development of collaborative action promoting the global AT agenda**

Since 2020 exploratory meetings have been held with international governmental organisations, development agencies, non-governmental and civil society organisations and emerging AT organisations. As a pan-AT organisation, representative of health, education, workforce, and innovation sectors, GAATO looks to connect with representative experts across all fields of assistive technology furthering the interdisciplinary and international nature of its members' interests.

We are pleased to have begun formal relationships with several organisations, expressed through memoranda of understanding with the World Health Organization (WHO), World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), Essl Foundation (Zero Project) and the International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO), whom we are also pleased to have welcomed as a full GAATO member. An additional letter of agreement has been exchanged with CREATEAsia and other similar arrangements are in progress.

Collaborative reporting activities have included contributions towards:

- [WIPO Technology Trends 2021 Report on Assistive Technology](#)
- [WHO-UNICEF Global Report on Assistive Technology 2022](#)
- [Zero Project Sector Report on Assistive Technologies 2022](#)
- [AT Outcomes and Impact Grand Challenge Report 2022](#).

Successful international 'Learning Café' training workshops were organised and hosted in collaboration with Save the Children International (SCI) with generous voluntary contributions from global members of the GAATO network, reaching SCI field staff and facilitating direct connections with GAATO AT experts.

GAATO was established during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and has since developed as a dynamic, remote-collaborating organisation. Despite the historic challenges, in September 2020 GAATO launched the first Global Grand Challenge in AT, inspired by Professor Roger O. Smith of The Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA).

We are grateful to over 370 voluntary international participants of the AT Outcomes and Impact Grand Challenge, with additional thanks going to Global Action on Disability (GLAD) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) for hosting the final global consultation event at the Second Global Disability Summit 2022. Further details of this research project can be found below on page 15.

GAATO have presented at over twenty high-level conferences and webinars since 2020, some of which are detailed in the International Presentations chart also found below.

As pandemic restrictions lift our members have again hosted in-person conferences and travelled to participate in international multilateral and bilateral meetings. We look forward to connecting with new partners and further developing our strategic collaborations over the year ahead.

## Advocacy, awareness and research

### 2020

#### *RESNA Hosts the First GAATO International Conference Event*

RESNA generously hosted two sessions at their 2020 Online Conference. In a session led by Roger O. Smith the AT Outcomes and Impacts Measure, Global Grand Challenge was launched. Both the main conference event and the open international session attracted a wide global audience and initiated the debate and research project around outcome and impact measures completed in 2022 (see below). Facilitated by Andrea Van Hook.

### 2021

#### *Online Seminar Series on Emerging Assistive Technology*

GAATO supported the organisation of three seminars on emerging assistive technologies, held in April 2021. The seminars were organised by AAATE and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Users, professionals, researchers, innovators, and developers around the world were invited to explore how emerging technologies are shaping the landscape of the assistive technology field. Each seminar was focussed on a specific area of assistive technology application, including communication, cognition, and self-care. [Link](#).

#### *International Paralympic Committee - #WeThe15 Campaign*

GAATO attended the monthly meetings and all additional planning meetings of the IPC #WeThe15 Sub-Committee through 2021 and 2022, facilitated by Esther Dakin-Poole. Luc de Witte took part in and was featured in a broadcasted message during the closing ceremony about the importance of assistive technology and the rights of persons with disability. An online AT conference was hosted by the IPC and Luc de Witte spoke at this international event alongside representatives of numerous organisations such as the WHO, World Bank, IDA, GDIHub and ATscale.

#### *Save the Children International - GAATO Learning Cafés*

Save the Children (SCI) - GAATO Learning Cafés - AT Solutions for low-resource settings with special focus on AT for education and early childhood. Four multilingual, globally accessible training sessions were hosted by Save the Children International and contributed to by around 12 GAATO expert members provided to SCI ground staff in November 2021. GAATO expert members prepared and presented technical content, related to AT to support young children (especially with positioning, mobility, and feeding challenges) and AT to support children with invisible difficulties in school settings. GAATO expert members interacted with over 210 global Save the Children staff during the event's interactive panel discussions. This was an initiative led by Esther Dakin-Poole and Lori Baxter, Disability Inclusion Consultant, SCI with presentation teams led by Kathy Cheng (TREATS), Silvana Contepomi (AATA), Dianne Chambers (ARATA) and Shona McDonald (RESNA).

#### *Global Consultation: Grand Challenges AT Outcomes and Impact*

Launched by Prof. Roger O. Smith at RESNA 2020, GAATO invited stakeholders from around the world to share views on AT Outcomes and Impacts through a Grand Challenge process. It aimed to identify and clarify the set of current challenges that needed to be addressed to successfully measure assistive technology outcomes and impact at the individual, community, local, national, and global levels. Capturing the outcomes of assistive technology (AT) is essential to knowing what works and what does not, and to enable AT professionals and users to share knowledge and demonstrate effectiveness for policy makers and inform resource allocation. Over 300 AT stakeholders across all global regions took part in a collaborative consensus building process coordinated by Roger O. Smith (RESNA), Natasha Layton (ARATA), Emma Smith (RESNA),

Silvana Contepomi (AATA), Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf (AAATE) and Esther Dakin-Poole, to identify the AT Outcomes and Impacts Grand Challenges of our time. The outcomes were presented at a dedicated session of the Global Disability Summit 2022 side event and at the ICCHP-AAATE conference 2022 and at a dedicated RESNA webinar in October 2022. For further information see page 15.

## 2022

### *Global Disability Summit - Oslo 2022*

GAATO held a discussion of their Global Consultation to identify the Grand Challenges in AT Outcomes as a side event of the 2022 Global Disability Summit, hosted online by the International Disability Alliance and the Norwegian Government in Oslo on 15 - 17 February 2022. This event provided additional traction and drew new participants to the consultation process which featured discussion on tools for data collection, data storage and use, outcomes related systems and their implementation, best practices, and policies. Around 400 people registered from 57 countries and nine languages, some participating in follow up surveys which contributed to data collection. Esther Dakin-Poole facilitated the opportunity and ran communications with Natasha Layton and Emma Smith who hosted the event, pre and post-event surveys co-ordination and data analysis. Also supporting were other members of the Outcomes Team.

### *Zero Project-GAATO Joint Report on Assistive Technology*

Following the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Zero Project and GAATO in September 2021, the two organisations have come together to produce a Zero Project-GAATO Report on Assistive Technology. These two large accessibility and technology expert networks launched their Sector Report on Assistive Technologies during a joint session at the ICCHP-AAATE 2022 conference in Lecco, Italy in August 2022 entitled: The Challenges of Scaling Up Innovative Practices in Technology and Disability. The GAATO authors were from Luc de Witte, President and Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf, Secretary-General.



*Figure 5. AAATE-ICCHP conference delegates at GAATO, AAATE, WHO, UNICEF hosted panel, Lecco, Italy July 2022*



Figure 6. Participants to the session on measuring population access to assistive technology co-organised by WHO and GAATO during the ICCHP-AAATE Conference, Lecco, Italy, July 2022

## The WHO-UNICEF Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT)

In May 2022 the first Global Report on Assistive Technology was launched by the WHO and UNICEF. Over 500 experts worldwide have contributed to the writing of this report which was commissioned by the WHO General Assembly in 2019. The report signs a landmark in the efforts of the global community of stakeholders to present the global situation and challenges on access to assistive technology. Numerous GAATO Board members were editors and contributors to the report.

GAATO was involved at various levels:

- A textbox in the report (page 15) is dedicated to the AT Outcomes and Impact grand challenges consultation.
- GAATO co-organised with AAATE, WHO and UNICEF a high-level meeting at the ICCHP-AAATE conference under the title: Moving forward together. The meeting was held to discuss the next steps, and how different stakeholders contribute to advancing access to AT worldwide. In a final section the report makes relevant recommendations that are worth to be discussed and transformed into action. During the policy session the report and its recommendations have been discussed and the priorities for action have been explored. The session was co-chaired by Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf and Laura Alčiauskaitė (ENIL). RESNA conference participants have been able to attend the session in live streaming. The following speakers/panellists participated as panellists: Thomas Bignal (EASPD), Johan Borg (WHO), Jamie Danemayer (UCL/GDI hub), Giampiero Griffo (EDF/DPI), Chapal Khasnabis (WHO), Malcolm MacLachlan (Irish Health Service), Katerina Mavrou (AAATE), Henk Herman Nap (ISG), Dennis C. Søndergård (UNICEF - Supply Division), Luc de Witte (GAATO), Wei Zhang (WHO). Additional information is available about this event on the WHO website: <https://www.who.int/news/item/03-08-2022-global-report-on-assistive-technology--moving-forward>



Figure 7. Assistive technology person-centred 5P model, 2022 version from the WHO-UNICEF Global Report on Assistive Technology

## GAATO presentations at international events

(Additional presentations to those mentioned here were delivered as part of advocacy, awareness raising, partnership development and research.)

Date	Place	Title	What
2020.12.5-7	i-Create 2020 conference (Taiwan)	REAT Light up Lives	Presentations by Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf, Luc de Witte, Roger Smith (RESNA), Hsin-Yi Kathy Cheng (TREATS), Congo Tak-Shing Ching (TREATS)
2021.9.25	International session of the 35 <sup>th</sup> Japanese Conference on the Advancement of Assistive and Rehabilitation Technology (JCAART) in Kyushu (Japan)	Online international session	A video message from Mr. Luc de Witte, President of GAATO, was released by RESJA.
2021.10.21	CIS Health Committee Annual Conference	Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS member states.	Opening address by Luc de Witte and presentation by Esther Dakin-Poole.
2021.10.~ 2022.01.31 (Delivery Period)	Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's project (Japan)	Grand Challenge Western Pacific Regional Conference	RESJA reported on the Grand Challenge Western Pacific Regional Conference on the seeds and needs matching web exchange meeting site held every year in the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's project to promote the development of equipment to support the independence of persons with disabilities.
2021.11.27	TREATS internet conference (webinar) Taipei, (Taiwan)	The trend of innovation and development in assistive technology	Presentation by Esther Dakin-Poole.
2021.12.2-3	International Paralympic Committee (Japan)	IPC AT Online Conference	Presentation by Luc de Witte
2022.02.16	Global Disability Summit, Oslo (Norway)	Grand Challenges in Assistive Technology Outcomes and Impacts.	Presentation by different speakers involved in the implementation of the global consultation.
2022.02.23	Zero Project Conference. UN building Vienna (Austria)	Session: High-Tech in Assistive Technologies	Keynote: Luc de Witte Chair: Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf
2022.04.28	NILD Webinar (India)	P&O and Multidisciplinary Approaches (Indian MOH & ISPO webinar)	Presentations by Esther Dakin-Poole and Natasha Layton (ARATA)

2022.07.14	ICCHP-AAATE conference, Lecco (Italy)	GAATO Global Grand Challenges in Assistive Technology Outcomes and Impacts: what are they and what must we do.	Presentation of the final report of the Grand Challenges consultation by Esther Dakin-Poole and Luc de Witte and discussion with the audience.
2022.07.15	ICCHP-AAATE conference, Lecco (Italy)	Measuring population access to assistive technology (WHO/GAATO)	Discussion on the further development of global data collection strategies and tools.
2022.08.20	36th Japanese Conference on the Advancement of Assistive and Rehabilitation Technology (JCAART) (Japan)	The Six Important Issues Concerning. The Effects of Assistive Technology. From the Results of the GAATO AT Use Effects Grand Challenge 2022	Chugoku/Shikoku Branch, Mr. Inoue, board member of GAATO, reported on his activities.
2022.09.29	Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nation, New York (USA)	Using Assistive Technology to Promote Social Inclusion for People with Disability through Collaboration and Partnership between Africa, America, Asia and Europe.	Presentation by Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf about Social Inclusion in Employment Setting for Individuals with Disabilities in Europe. The role of Assistive Technology.
2022.10.05	Indigo Festival, Inclusive Digital Governance Festival 2022, Rome (Italy)	Unlocking human potential	Presentation by Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf
2022.10.05	RESNA WEBINAR (USA)	GAATO Grand Challenges	Presentation by Emma Smith (RESNA) and Natasha Layton (ARATA)
2022.10.24	AATC (Australia)	Six Grand Challenges in AT Impacts: A Call to Arms for Australia	Presentation by Natasha Layton and Melanie Hoyle (ARATA)
2022.10.26	AAA ISO Leaders meeting London (United Kingdom)	Cultivating age friendly neighborhoods	Presentation by Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf



Figure 8. AAATE-ICCHP International conference delegates dinner, Lecco, Italy July 2022

# GAATO AT Outcomes and Impacts Grand Challenge

Leading up to the Global Report on Assistive Technology, the Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organisations (GAATO)<sup>1</sup> invited stakeholders from around the world to share views on AT Outcomes and Impacts through a Grand Challenge process. We aimed to identify and clarify the set of current challenges that needed to be addressed to successfully measure assistive technology outcomes and impact at the individual, community, local, national, and global level. For more details and links to the full report see: <https://www.gaato.org/grand-challenges>

## Results: The Six GAATO AT Outcomes Grand Challenges

This shortlist of 6 Grand Challenges has been achieved through a global consultation process. The shortlist represents a longlist of 39 Challenges drawn from locally led regional consultations across each WHO region, including 307 stakeholders, 57 countries and nine language groups, who initially identified 109 challenges.

### The 6 Grand Challenges

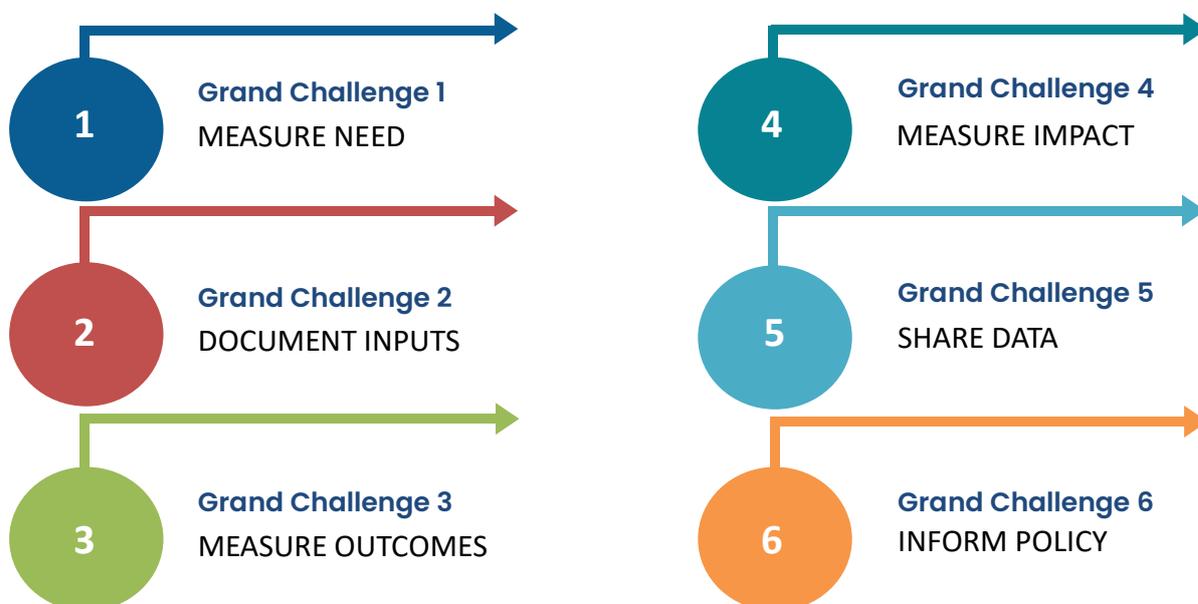
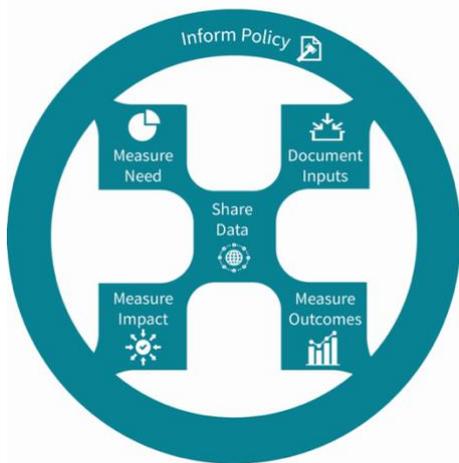


Figure 9. Top six grand challenges in assistive technology according to the results of the GAATO survey 2021-22

### Impact potential

- Develop and describe a snapshot of what is needed to be able to measure assistive technology outcomes and impact at the individual, community, local, national, and global level.
- Clarify what people think is needed as tools for data collection, data storage and use, outcomes related systems and their implementation, best practices, and policies.
- Inform the WHO / UNICEF Global Report on Assistive Technology (2022)
- Create and provide a blueprint to ensure AT outcomes actions are appropriate for AT stakeholders in the specific regions.

<sup>1</sup> [www.gaato.org](http://www.gaato.org)



*Figure 10. GAATO Outcomes and Impact Model - 'Drive the Change' illustrating the connectivity of the 6 Global Grand Challenges in measuring AT outcomes and impacts as determined by the GAATO global consultations 2021-22.*

To address these Grand Challenges, multilevel actions will be required:

- Commitment from governments to evaluate outcomes and impact of AT provision.
- Commitment from funders and global coordinating bodies to address challenges in AT Outcomes.
- Establishment of regional or international research teams to address key challenges through an interdisciplinary approach.
- Development of a global initiative to share comparable AT need, use, and outcomes data on a regional or global level.
- Development of novel, or cross-cultural adaptation and validation of existing, AT outcomes tools.
- Implementation and knowledge translation of existing AT outcomes tools.

## Resources

The resources used to date by GAATO to implement its activities are:

- Membership fees (approximately 5.000 CHF annually).
- In kind contributions by the GAATO members (e.g., working time of volunteers, free access to events for GAATO representatives, use of rooms, use of Zoom platform).
- 6h a week of working time of the Secretary-General paid by AAATE.

## Outlook towards the future

After two years of exploratory meetings and initial projects between membership organisations and external stakeholders, we have established the pressing need for GAATO to exist. We now look towards strengthening our internal systems, broadening our capacity to collaborate through network growth and furthermore, to continue actively developing our programmatic activities. To achieve lasting impact on our global mission of providing equitable access to assistive technology around the globe, we invite our members, partners, and the global network to reach out to us and collaborate in areas where our workplans align. We are stronger when we work together.

## Members

In 2022 the following organisations were members of GAATO:

### AAATE (Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe)



AAATE is represented on the Board of GAATO by Luc de Witte and Katerina Mavrou (Alternate Board Member)

Address: % University of Linz, Altenberger Str. 69, 4040 Linz, Austria. [office@aaate.net](mailto:office@aaate.net)

Short description: AAATE represents approximately 40 institutions and 200 AT professionals in different countries in Europe. Its mission is to foster the role of Assistive Technology (AT) and inclusive design to create a world where all people can equally enjoy their human rights. It aims to realise this mission by connecting different stakeholders in Europe and to participate actively in the scientific, political, and cultural debate about the role of technology in creating more inclusive societies in Europe and worldwide. It also promotes the collaboration of stakeholders to acknowledge responsibility for the development of quality AT service delivery frameworks and educational programmes. AAATE organises a biannual international conference, the next one being held in Paris in 2023, and publishes the journal Technology and Disability.

Information: [www.aaate.net](http://www.aaate.net), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#)

### AATA (Argentinian Assistive Technology Association)



AATA is represented on the Board of GAATO by Silvana Contepomi and Sebastian Salice (Alternate Board Member)

Address: Buenos Aires, Argentina. [info@aata.inclusion.org.ar](mailto:info@aata.inclusion.org.ar)

Mission: To Ensure the access to AT Services and the effective use of AT products to promote inclusion, participation, and wellbeing to people with functional limitations.

Vision: Strengthening the workforce of the different stakeholders related to AT, and supporting education and research, people with functional limitations will have a benefit for their lives in the access to AT services.

AATA has organised every two years the Latin American Seating Symposium since 2011 and advocates in the rest of Latin America the need of developing more AT regional organisations. We have a collaboration with ISWP to train people in our country to become certified Wheelchair Service Providers.

Instagram: [@aata.inclusion](#) web: [www.aata-inclusion.org.ar](http://www.aata-inclusion.org.ar)

## ARATA (Australian Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Association)



ARATA is represented on the Board of GAATO by Natasha Layton and Libby Callaway (Alternate Board Member)

Address: PO Box 7345, Beaumaris, 3193 Victoria, Australia. [office@arata.org.au](mailto:office@arata.org.au)

Short description: ARATA is the national peak body in Australia for assistive technology stakeholders. ARATA's mission is to build and sustain an inclusive assistive technology community of practice. The Association's purpose is to serve as a forum for information sharing and liaison between people who are involved with the use, advice or assessment, customisation, supply, and ongoing support of assistive technology. ARATA's focus is the advancement of assistive technology in Australia and internationally, through activities including special interest groups, website, listserver, membership directory and a newsletter. ARATA hosts a biannual international assistive technology conference and product exhibition, the next one being held in Adelaide in November 2022. ARATA also hosts various live and on demand online assistive technology education events each year.

Information: [www.arata.org.au](http://www.arata.org.au), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#)

## ATIA (Assistive Technology Industry Association)



ATIA contact person for GAATO is David Dikter

The ATIA is the premier organization for manufacturers, sellers and providers of assistive technology (AT) — products, equipment and systems that enhance learning, working and daily living for persons with disabilities.

Information: <https://www.atia.org/about-atia/>

## IAAT (Indian Association of Assistive Technologists)



IAAT is represented on the Board of GAATO by Prakash Mehta and Hetal Tripathi (Alternate Board Member)

The Indian Association of Assistive Technologists (IAAT) is an independent, non-political, secular, not-for-profit Members Association of Rehabilitation (health) Professionals and providers of Assistive Devices and/or services to people with disabilities and elderly people to live independently.

IAAT is a National Association registered under the society registration act, established in 2016 with the vision to be a national leader in the area of Assistive Technology (AT) and evolve the state-of-the-art approaches for the care of the differently-abled people, and Geriatric Population, through services, education, and research.

Information: <https://www.iaat.co.in/>

## ISPO (International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics)



ISPO is represented on the Board of GAATO by Claude Tardif and David Constantine (Alternate Board Member)

ISPO is a global, multidisciplinary, non-governmental organisation aiming to improve the quality of life for persons who may benefit from prosthetic, orthotic, mobility, and assistive devices. ISPO provides an effective platform for the exchange and communication on all aspects of the science, practice, and education associated with the provision of prosthetic and orthotic care, rehabilitation engineering, wheelchairs and therapy, and related areas.

Information: <https://www.ispoint.org/discover-ispo/>

## RESJA (Rehabilitation Engineering Society of Japan)



RESJA is represented on the Board of GAATO by Ritsuya Katsura and Takenobu Inoue (Alternate Board Member)

The RESJA is an organization concerned with the application of science and technology in the rehabilitation process. The membership includes rehabilitation professionals (engineers, medical staff, teachers for children with disabilities, providers (makers and dealers), and consumers (disabled persons).

Information: <https://www.resja.or.jp/english/index.html>

## RESKO (Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of Korea)



RESKO is represented on the Board of GAATO by Inhyuk Moon and Bong-Keun Jung (Alternate Board Member)

Address: 1-171 College of Engineering, Jeonbuk National University, 567 Baekje-daero, Deokjin-gu, Jeonju-si, Jeollabuk-do, 54896 Republic of Korea

Short description: RESKO, is a professional and academic society for researchers and professionals in rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology, was established in 2007 as the first academic society for rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology in South Korea. RESKO holds its academic conference twice a year in different locations in the Korean Peninsula. Usually, the fall conference is larger than the spring conference. RESKO publishes academic journals quarterly, which cover clinical outcome measures in AT, experimental studies in rehabilitation, and rehabilitation instrument and devices development.

Occasionally RESKO held short-term seminars and lectures and conducted research projects funded by domestic and foreign grant support. RESKO takes a pivotal role in AT standardisation and promotion of AT policies.

RESKO is a research and professional training hub in South Korea and envisions its global role to impact our society with inclusiveness and equity.

Information: [resko2014@naver.com](mailto:resko2014@naver.com) <http://resko.jams.or.kr>

## RESNA (Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America)



RESNA is represented on the Board of GAATO by Andrea Van Hook and Roger O. Smith (Alternate Board Member)

Address: 2001 K Street NW, 3rd floor N, Washington, DC 20006, USA

RESNA, the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America, is the premier professional organization dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of people with disabilities through increasing access to technology solutions. RESNA advances the field by offering certification, continuing education, and professional development; developing assistive technology standards; promoting research and public policy; and sponsoring forums for the exchange of information and ideas to meet the needs of our multidisciplinary constituency.

Information: [info@resna.org](mailto:info@resna.org) <https://www.resna.org>

## TREATS (Taiwan Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society)



TREATS is represented on the Board of GAATO by Hsin-Yi Kathy Cheng and Congo Tak Shing Ching (alternate board member)

Address : 4F., No.135, Nanxiao St., Changhua City, Changhua County 500, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Short description: TREATS was founded in March 2011. Professor Liang-Wei Zhang formed this society in partnership with a variety of interdisciplinary specialists to address unmet needs in assistive technology research and development and clinical practice. TREATS is prospering and has excellent global connections after ten years of management and hard effort by all our members. Our society 's goals include:

- (1) Assist the government to develop policies related to assistive technology
- (2) Participate in international affairs and related activities
- (3) Attend relevant conferences to improve knowledge and skills
- (4) Promote the alliance of "health industry, government and science research"
- (5) Promote the development of members related matters

TREATS also hosts a variety of assistive technology conferences, educational events, and other activities.

Information: Email: [treats2011.tw@gmail.com](mailto:treats2011.tw@gmail.com); Website: <http://www.treats.org.tw/>

## Affiliate Members

### EASTIN (The Global Assistive Technology Information Network)



EASTIN contact person for GAATO: Renzo Andrich

Address: Via del Piave 5, 32100 Belluno, Italy [eastinassociation@gmail.com](mailto:eastinassociation@gmail.com)

Short description: EASTIN is a non-for-profit association that includes 7 partner organizations, 7 affiliate organizations and other 14 national contact organizations, from 28 countries overall. The core of the network is the online information system [www.eastin.eu](http://www.eastin.eu), which provides – currently in 24 languages – information on assistive products available in various countries, supplying companies and other useful material such as fact sheets, case studies and manuals. This information is aggregated from eight public national information system that are independent of commercial interest, i.e., SIVA (Italy), REHADAT (Germany), ASSISTDATA (Denmark), PRO-ASSIST (UK), AT-AUST (Australia), HANDICAT (France), HULPMIDDELENDATABANK (Belgium) and AZARIM (Israel). Due to the continuous effort and collaboration among the network members, EASTIN is today's most comprehensive information system on assistive technologies and daily living equipment worldwide. Information: [www.eastin.eu](http://www.eastin.eu)

### RTF (Raising the Floor)



Raising the Floor contact person for GAATO: Eva de Lera

Address: Avenue des Arts 7– 8, B, 1210 Brussels, BE [info@raisingthefloor.org](mailto:info@raisingthefloor.org)

Short description: Raising the Floor (RtF) is an international non-profit organization committed to the advancement of social equity through digital inclusion. RtF has two branches in Europe, one in Geneva and one in Brussels. The office in Geneva was founded in 2010 to facilitate global collaboration amongst leading inclusive-centered professionals, designers, and developers. The office in Brussels was founded in 2016 and is the European division of the greater Raising the Floor (RtF) organization. RtF shares knowledge, methodologies, and staff with organizations such as the [Inclusive Design Research Center](#) (IDRC) at OCAD University in Canada and the [Trace R&D Center](#) at the University of Maryland.

Raising the Floor partners with collaborative, multi-sector, and applied research organizations and networks that proactively prevent barriers and promote greater inclusion. RtF facilitates adopting an open and collaborative inclusive approach to help design, develop, and promote resources and products that contribute to advancing digital equality, enhancing people's quality of life.

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*Figure 11. International delegates in Korea 2018 hosted by RESKO, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of Korea.*

Front cover image: Assistive technology professional (ATP) providing services. 'Injured child receives rehabilitation' ©William Daniels 2010, available through Creative Commons.

Back cover image: Sumatran woman walking in the street using a walking frame. ©Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf 2022

Report edited by Esther Dakin-Poole



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