

GAATO@RESNA

Event Summary

RESNA Virtual Conference
September 23-24th



SEPTEMBER 2020

Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organizations
Authored by: Esther Dakin-Poole &
Roger O. Smith



Global Alliance of
Assistive Technology
Organisations

This event was developed as part of the founding activities of the Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organizations (GAATO) funded by the GAATO membership and generously supported by Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA). The conference was led by the GAATO Board and hosted by RESNA, USA and Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

Cover Photo: Prosthetics being manufactured in Tanzania.

Photo credit: Courtesy of ARATA, Australian Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Association.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF



Forward

Congratulations to the Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organizations (GAATO) on the success of their Assistive Technology Outcomes and Impact Summit! RESNA was honored to host GAATO's first Summit during its 2020 Annual Conference, a particularly fitting circumstance during our 40th Anniversary Celebration. RESNA has a long-standing history leading work that improves access to assistive technologies around the world. In 1993, our Special Interest Group on Internationally Appropriate Technologies began discussing best practice around providing technologies to individuals with disabilities in less-resourced nations. RESNA's Assistive Technology Standards Board has served for more than three decades as the United States Technical Assistance Group on assistive technology to the International Standards Organization, helping to ensure the quality of assistive technology products worldwide. Twenty years ago, RESNA joined with AAATE, ARATA, and RESJA in signing the Tokushima Agreement, which was the first international collaboration to improve the quality of assistive technology around the world.

As a GAATO founding member, RESNA finds it gratifying to see a focus on complicated topics that have long been an issue for those of us working internationally. Assistive technology outcomes research faces ongoing challenges related to the multi-stakeholder nature of services provided across a vast and rapidly changing technological landscape. Stakeholders, along with their perspectives and motivations, are far from consistent and are influenced by the multi-cultural contexts and resources present within an international scope. Increasing awareness of the impact that assistive technology makes in the lives of people with disabilities is a necessary first step in realizing a world where people with disabilities have access to the technology they need. RESNA supports GAATO's initiatives in changing the face of technology that supports people with disabilities around the globe. We look forward to continued collaboration and advancing access to much needed assistive technologies to people all over the globe.

Congratulations again,



Maureen A. Linden, MS
President, Board of Directors
Fellow
RESNA

Outcomes and Impacts

A priority area in assistive technology research

Professor Luc de Witte – GAATO President

The RESNA conference was the first opportunity for GAATO to organise a substantive meeting about a truly global AT related issue: the measurement of outcomes and impact of AT. Thanks to the generous support of RESNA we were able to bring together a large number of practitioners, researchers, developers and policymakers to listen to and discuss experiences and approaches from different parts of the world. Triggered by a keynote lecture of Marcia Scherer, the 'grand dame' of AT, and Roger Smith, and a series of very good presentations about specific countries or regions, there was a very active exchange of ideas and approaches. I have experienced this as very stimulating. There is so much we can learn from each other! That is exactly why GAATO was established: to share, exchange, discuss, learn, and to meet colleagues and friends from elsewhere. This meeting strengthened my vision that global collaboration in AT is worth the effort. It was great to meet, be it online, so many like-minded people who share the goal of realising a world where everyone can access the assistive technology they need.

Based on this first experience, GAATO will keep organising such events. I sincerely hope this is the beginning of many more events with a global character. Preparations for RESNA2021 have already started AAATE2021, and I sometimes dream of a global conference.

The GAATO@RESNA event was also the start of the first global project initiative of GAATO. We are in the process of creating a taskforce to prepare the 'global agenda' of challenges related to outcome and impact measurement of AT. With such an agenda we hope to give research groups, funders and policy makers worldwide clear directions of where the most important challenges lie. I hope this initiative will meet the same enthusiasm as the GAATO@RESNA meeting.

“We are in the process of creating a taskforce to prepare the global agenda”

Featured Themes Summary

Three themes emerged: Outcomes research methods & instrumentation, provision of services to improve outcomes, and shared language for improved outcomes.

The 2020 Annual RESNA Conference continued the tradition of hosting an international session exploring global assistive technology (AT) from researchers and practitioners in the fields of AT worldwide. The GAATO international summit session promoted contributions that explored the following potential themes: quantitative and qualitative AT outcome and various study methodologies, an examination of the impact of AT on policies and other AT contributions. The twelve submissions that were accepted highlighted the role of AT throughout the world, with primary paper themes focused on three the areas of *research methods, provision and communication*. These contributions demonstrate AT's critical role in the lives of individuals throughout the world, and the continued need for innovative research that explores all of AT's multitude of possibilities.

Research methods

Outcomes research methods and instrumentation was one of the common thematic areas, with particular focus on the benefits of international collaborative research between practitioners and researchers and how this must be encouraged. Additionally, the development of international partnerships to address the supply of AT was also identified as an innovation that would help strengthen outcomes. Measurement of outcomes or impact and the challenges of this work were discussed along with some new ideas on how best to develop the necessary outcome tools, particularly in low-income settings.

Provision

The second theme, provision of services to improve outcomes, was revealed as practitioners sought to advocate for individuals in communities and their need for the provision of assistive products and services. Papers included knowledge researchers acquired through providing services in these countries through collaboration with companies, organizations, and educational systems.

A wide breadth of AT was identified spanning most functional domains which commonly identifies the need for a person-centred approach in both research and service provision. Through exploring the condition and current needs of each population, researchers highlighted the necessity for the continuation of services and support to low- and middle-income countries to improve the quality of life of individuals living with disabilities in their communities.

Communication

A final prominent theme within three of the submissions was that of shared language and communication for improved outcomes regarding assistive technology. This theme was illustrated with ideas of crafting frameworks, which enable AT users to evaluate and communicate their experiences with AT in a linguistically cohesive way. Presenters discussed the creation of an international vocabulary and language that would define common AT terms, services, and concepts to inform documentation and standard setting across the globe. Communication within data collection and indexing tools and evaluation were also commonly seen as ways to better inform outcomes. Language was seen to be essential in increasing awareness and access to AT and improving outcomes at the global level, through the development of globally standardized language and documentation that communicates the unique experiences and needs of those who use AT in their everyday lives.



Attendees

36 countries were represented by attendees and speakers. Particularly strong representation was welcomed from GAATO founding member AATA - Asociación Argentina Tecnología Asistiva and their colleagues from across Latin America.

Speakers and Authors

Opening Forum – Hosted by Monash University

Hosts: Dr. Natasha Layton and Prof. Luc de Witte, President of the GAATO Board
A subtitled video in English can be found on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/GNydhvXI2mM>

Keynote: Different Strokes for Different Folks: Different Outcomes are Valued by Different Stakeholders

Marcia J. Scherer, PhD, MPH, FACRM, RESNA Fellow. *Institute for Matching Person & Technology*

Prof. Roger O. Smith, Ph.D, OT, FAOTA, RESNA Fellow. *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

Conference Days 1 & 2 – Hosted by RESNA

Plenary speakers

Dr. Antony Duttine BSc, MSc, PhD

Advisor, disability and rehabilitation at Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

Prof. Malcolm MacLachlan BSc, MSc, MA, PhD, DipBA, C.Psychol. FPsSI, FBPS, FRESNA, MRIA

Professor of Psychology and Social Inclusion, and Co-director of the ALL (Assisting Living & Learning) Institute at Maynooth University, Ireland

Authors

- L. Ackers
- Giulia Barbareschi
- Libby Callaway
- Emiliano Díez
- S. Daymond
- Linda-Jeanne Elaesser
- Thais Pousada García
- Betania Groba
- Cathy Holloway
- D. Howard
- Estíbaliz Jiménez
- L. Kenny
- Sheryl Maier
- N. Mbugua
- D. Noble
- Jonathan Pearlman
- Larry Raymond
- Virginia Roderiguez
- Kenneth Rubango
- Jeanne Sowers
- Marcia Scherer
- Timea Tozser
- Sajay Artanat
- Stephen Bauer
- Jamie Campeau
- Megan D’Innocenzo
- Nancy Dukelo
- Emma Friesen
- Yasmin Garcia-Mendez
- I.Harris
- J. Honeywill
- Takenobu Inoue
- Srinivasan Kannan
- Natasha A Layton
- Amy Pacos Martinez
- Laura Nieto-Riveiro
- Laryn O’Donnell
- Thais Pousada
- Karen Rispin
- Perth Rosen
- Vicki Sheaffer
- R. Ssekitoleko
- Chitra Chander Shekhar
- Lisa Walther

Proceedings

Full Proceedings can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3ILp6C4>

Additional Resources

Literature links: (to WHO GATE globally collaborative work)

Assistive products and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Tebbutt, E., Brodmann, R., Borg, J., MacLachlan, M., Khasnabis, C., & Horvath, R. (2016). Assistive products and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Globalization and Health*, 12, 1-6. [doi: 10.1186/s12992-016-0220-6](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-016-0220-6)

Opening the GATE to inclusion for people with disabilities.

Khasnabis, C., Mirza, Z., & MacLachlan, M. (2015). Opening the GATE to inclusion for people with disabilities. *The Lancet*, 386(10010), 2229-2230. [doi:10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)01093-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)01093-4)

Opening the GATE: systems thinking from the global assistive technology alliance.

Layton, N., Bell, D., Buning, M. E., Chen, S.-C., Contepomi, S., Delgado Ramos, V., Hoogerwerf, E.-J., Inoue, T., Moon, I., Seymour, N., Smith, R.O & de Witte, L. (2020). Opening the GATE: systems thinking from the global assistive technology alliance. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 15(5), 484-490. [doi:10.1080/17483107.2020.1738565](https://doi.org/10.1080/17483107.2020.1738565)

[Free to download](#)

Impacts and Outcomes Proposal

Roger O. Smith introduced the new GAATO global initiative.

Overview

GAATO proposed a process to identify global grand challenges in the area of assistive technology outcomes. In particular, GAATO aims to identify a set of challenges which address what is needed to be able to measure assistive technology outcomes and impact at the individual, community, local, national, and global level. Global Grand Challenges may address tools for data collection, data storage and use, outcomes related systems and their implementation, best practices, and policies.

What are some of the questions?

- Should we define a minimal data set about comes in impact variables?
- Should we identify the key demographic global variables?
- If we are collecting data, what should be the demographics?
- Should we create a common terminology of assistive technology interventions.
- How to create a plan to include and build participation for lower and middle resource countries?

What should be our actions?

- Convene a core working group of four to five of us to meet plan and oversee a global scan of the field.
- Run a Delphi methodology that reaches methodologists and practitioners and policymakers and people with disabilities to identify the 20 grand challenge priorities for outcomes and impact research.
- Need everybody to be participating within this Delphi perspective.
- Please volunteer, now, GAATO plans to identify the 20 grand challenges and AT outcomes. We'd really like to see a lot of participation throughout all sectors across the planet.

What is next in 2021?

A. Global Grand Challenge in Assistive Technology

Leading up to the Global Report on Assistive Technology, GAATO invites you to share your views on AT Outcomes. The Grand Challenge Regional Consultations will be held across all WHO Regions between June and September 2021.

In particular, GAATO aims to identify a set of challenges which address what is needed to be able to measure assistive technology outcomes and impact at the individual, community, local, national, and global level. Global grand challenges may address tools for data collection, data storage and use, outcomes related systems and their implementation, best practices, and policies.

How to Participate

Regional Consultation Teams are coordinating individual events in your region. If you are interested in participating in one of these events, please fill out the following form, and we will put you in touch with the team coordinating the event in your region.

Participant Expression of Interest Form: <https://forms.gle/JdUB7BRJHJHsmNep9>

STAGE I: Regional Consultations Overview

Each regional consultation will follow a similar format (example below).

- 1 5 min Introduction to the GAATO Grand Challenges Project
- 15 mins AT Outcomes: State of the Field
- 40 min Breakout Session 1: Brainstorming and group prioritisation
- 30 min Reporting to Group and Voting
- 20 min Break
- 10 min Presentation of Prioritised List and Instructions
- 45 min Breakout Session 2: Refinement
- 30 mins Reporting to Group
- 20 mins Group Feedback
- 15 mins Next steps and wrap-up

STAGE 2: Global Consensus Process

GAATO leadership team will review the grand challenge lists from each of the regional consultation events and convene a Global Consensus Meeting.

The overall outcome is to describe and define each of the prioritised Global Grand Challenges, with relevant background information.

The resulting 2021 Global Grand Challenges in Assistive Technology Outcomes will serve as a guide for future conversations and research in the area of assistive technology outcomes.

B. RESNA@GAATO Conference 2021

AT Outcomes and Impact (GAATO)

Part 1.

Date: Wednesday, July 7, 2021 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM ET

Location: Online

Lead/Instructor: Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf, GAATO Secretary General

The session will update participants on the progress made with the AT Outcomes and Impact Grand Challenges initiative that was launched last year by GAATO during the RESNA conference. Following a brief overview of GAATO the session will provide information about the state of the art of the Grand Challenges initiative and explain how participants can contribute.

You can register here:

[Register Now](#)

Special registration rates for high, middle, and low-income countries.

[Click here to see special rates.](#)

For high-income countries, use the code 'GAATO' for an additional discount.

Part 2.

Date: Thursday, July 8, 2021 9:15 AM- 10:15 AM ET

Location: Online

Lead/Instructor: Maureen Linden, MS, RESNA Fellow – President of RESNA, Luc de Witte, President, GAATO

RESNA and GAATO are cohosting an International Reception.

This reception is free and open to everyone, even if you are not attending the RESNA Virtual Conference. Because it is virtual, the organizers have a special agenda request.

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- 1) Please bring a snack and drink that represents your local region.
 - 2) Be ready to start conversations with your food and beverage in hand and what organization or program you represent.
 - 3) Be ready to engage in conversations with others in large or small groups.
 - 4) Bring ideas for International collaborations.

RESNA President Maureen Linden and GAATO President Luc de Witte will welcome everyone. Separate registration is required, you can find the link here:

<https://www.resna.org/Events/Annual-Conference/Program-by-Day/July-8-2021/202-international-reception-co-hosted-by-resna-and-gaato-1>

Acknowledgements

Core Summit Planning & Management Committee

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Full Paper Review and Advising Committee

Mary Ellen Buning, Silvana Contepomi, Stephanie Vasquez Gabela, DP Gayton, Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf, Jim Lenker, Perry Loh, Natasha Layton, MacMacLachlan, Inhyuk Moon, Jonathan L Pearlman, Marcia Scherer, Emma Smith, Roger O Smith, Luc de Witte

GAATO Board Members

AAATE: Luc de Witte and Katerina Mavrou

AATA: Silvana Contepomi and Sebastian Salice

ARATA: Natasha Layton and Libby Callaway

BATA: Esther Dakin-Poole and John Lamb

RESJA: Ritsuya Katsura and Takenobu Inoue

RESKO: Inhyuk Moon and Bong-Keun (Andrew) Jung

RESNA: Andrea Van Hook and Roger O. Smith

TREATS: Hsin-Yi Kathy Cheng and Congo Tak Shing Ching