



ISSUE 7

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN DISABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Valuable 500 Global Trends Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Identifying the most
significant changes in
this quarter



Top global trends

Varied representation

Brands are diversifying their representation to create a more inclusive community, whilst employers are seeking to increase opportunities and nurture skills.

Inclusive sustainability

Amidst the clamour to address climate change, policy and product makers are taking a more protective and inclusive approach across solutions and innovations.

Technology for all

Across supermarkets, homes, cities and virtual worlds, communication innovation is opening up and creating new spaces, experiences and freedoms.

Supermarkets are being transformed

Supermarkets around the globe, are making an attempt to create an accessible shopping environment. Through technology and by the modification of spaces.

Media representation

On-screen representation is diversifying, and new on-screen releases make a successful attempt to empower people with disabilities, by accurately portraying a deaf superhero on screen.

Entrepreneurs innovate

Businesses make an attempt to bridge the gap between disability and sustainability, by combining the two together to create empowering products and services.



LET'S DISCUSS

*A more inclusive fight
against climate change*



A more inclusive fight against climate change

COP26's scandalous shortcomings in infrastructure grabbed the headlines, with Israeli minister, Karine Elharrar, unable to access the venue in her wheelchair. However, the disproportionate threat posed by climate change to people with disabilities and their exclusion from the solutions on offer represent a much bigger issue.

Some **15%** of the global population have some form of disability, with this figure rising to **20%** across the poorest countries. People with disabilities are disproportionately at risk from injury, death and impairment and all too often excluded from policies, as well as access to the information designed to mitigate this and protect them.

In the event of natural disasters, access to food, safe drinking water, sanitation, health care, assistive devices, housing, education and work are all disproportionately limited for marginalised members of society. More specifically, people with a disability are more exposed to heatstroke, dehydration and power outages. During the Montreal July 2018 heatwave, people with schizophrenia - who in Canada have been shown to have a tendency to be both poorer and with more limited social networks - were **500 times** more likely than average to have died in hospital.

The UN reports that **79%** of people with a disability would not be able to evacuate immediately without difficulty in the event of a disaster and in 2021, when Sinzig in Germany was hit by sudden flooding, 12 disabled care home residents died for this very reason.

Energy is a pertinent issue as some disabled people spend long periods in their homes or use assistive technology, but the UN reports that in 17 countries, less than **50%** of households with people with disabilities have access to electricity, whilst in many countries over half of these households still use wood and coal for cooking. In 2019, Californian companies like Pacific Gas and Electric shut off the power to arrest the spread of wildfires without notifying customers, leading to the deaths of people dependent on oxygen ventilators.



Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of disasters and are at greater risk of death, injury and additional impairments owing to their general exclusion from disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes.

The UN's SDGs stipulate inclusivity

The **UN Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) are at the core of any business's environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategy and assert the need for people with disabilities to have equal access to:

- quality education (Goal 4)
- decent work and economic growth (Goal 8)
- reduced inequalities (Goal 10)
- sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11)
- global partnerships for sustainable development (Goal 17)

Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RiDC) data (opposite) shows that in particular, people with disabilities are being excluded from Goals 4 and 11 when it comes to making informed choices and engaging in environmentally beneficial choices.

The fact that disability was finally on the agenda of COP26 raises the prospect for positive action from policy makers and businesses. McGill University's DICARP hosted a Disability-Inclusive Climate Action event and the Global Disability Innovation Hub staged another, entitled Disability, Resilience and Inclusion in our Cities.

57%

of disabled and older people feel excluded from being able to reduce their environmental impact through using greener transport modes.

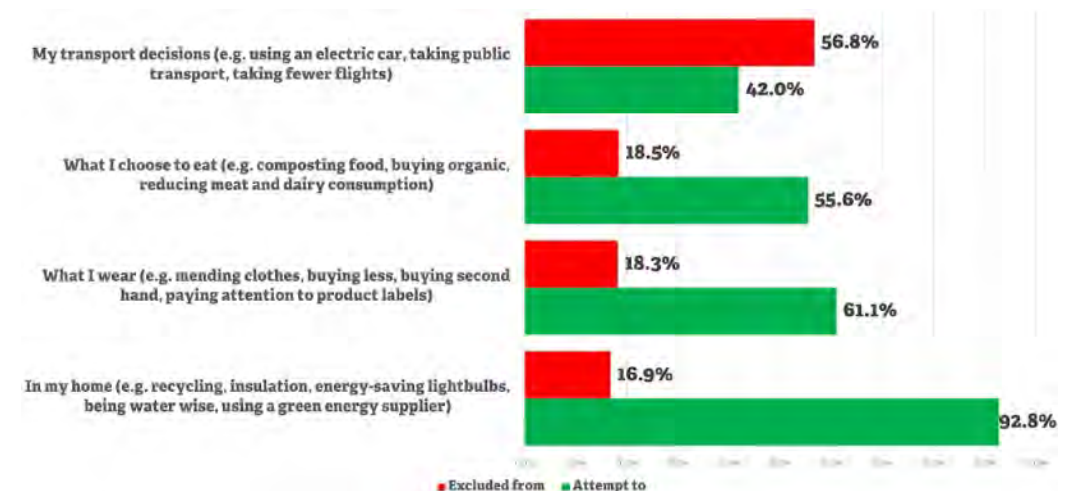
- **Research Institute for Disabled Consumers**

...But people with disabilities are excluded from the solutions

The research by RiDC shows that accessibility issues are also frustrating people's efforts to reduce their emissions by using public transport or electric vehicles (EVs), with **57%** feeling excluded from these options due to issues like a lack of staff awareness or an absence of convenient charging points.

Whilst **93%** of surveyed people tried to be greener at home, **17%** could not contribute as much as they would like. Elsewhere, we see challenges around pre-prepared food ingredients, single use plastic in medical goods, packaging that only carries visual recycling information, and a lack of home collections for clothes recycling.

Aspects where people with disabilities attempt to reduce their impact on the environment and feel excluded



'Eco-ableism' sees solutions disregard disability

Well-intentioned, but ill-considered actions in the name of sustainability can fail to take account of wider considerations around inclusivity and practicality.

"Eco-ableism" refers to how designers, activists and legislators make decisions that discriminate against people with disabilities, with the ban on plastic straws being a case in point.

Although legislation against straws has made exemptions for people with a disability needing to use them for medical reasons, it has impacted upon their availability, whilst alternatives made from materials from metal, paper or pasta are unsuitable due to them being too weak or potentially dangerous.

”

Disabled people [who use straws] are a very small group, but this ban has a real impact on them – while having a minimal actual real impact on the structural effects of climate change and global warming.

Andy Greene, from Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC)

What needs to happen?

The **RiDC** research reveals a need for an overhaul of vehicle charging and public transport infrastructure; the need for training of transport staff to offer people assistance was also highlighted. Respondents are also demanding that 'talking buses' be made accessible to wheelchair users, recycling instructions are available in braille and home collection services are offered to help people recycle goods or donate clothing.

Governments and businesses need to make expensive food, energy or transport options realistically affordable through tax relief or subsidies for those people who may already be having to cope with disproportionately high utilities costs.

Recycling must become more accessible in-store and at home, whilst recyclability in medical packaging needs to catch up with improvement rates in food, and on-pack and public facility communications need to speak to non-visual people.

Ecopreneurs with disabilities

When it comes to sustainable innovation, there are increasing examples of the disabled community having to lead in delivering the insightful action required. We're seeing the **Global Disability Innovation Hub** - 'a research and practice centre that drives disability innovation' - explore how assistive technology might adopt more localised and circular models that incorporate repair, re-use and recovery into design.

Marcus Lansky was born with a spinal condition and works to help people with disabilities to start their own businesses through training and mentorship. He offers tips on home-based business opportunities, loans, grants and accounting systems for people with disabilities looking to start their own green businesses.

In this edition's **Global Trend Drivers** section, our 'Surroundings: Ecopreneurship by - and for - disabled people' piece looks specifically at examples of new companies addressing these environmental issues head on.



Ecopreneurs are needed to improve the air we breathe, water we drink, and food we consume — and the green values they hold can help to save our oceans, forests, lakes, and landfills. And while the road to entrepreneurship is rarely a quick and easy process, these tips will help ecopreneurs with disabilities to come up with an environmentally friendly business idea, find financing opportunities, and manage their small business finances.

Marcus Lansky



THE GLOBAL VIEW

Analysis of notable moves,
changes or development



The global view

Business leadership

Unity in the workplace

In this quarter, organisations have placed emphasis on providing employees with equal opportunities to create a more inclusive workplace culture. New initiatives such as HR systems, digital assistance and streamlining supply chains have been adopted to create a more disability inclusive workplace culture.

Enabling equal opportunities

Organisations have made strong attempts to form partnerships with industry specialists to provide schemes specifically targeting people with disabilities. This representation is being adopted by corporations globally, marking a clear investment in achieving equal opportunities for future generations.

Corporations around the world launch disability inclusive initiatives

The UK disability employment rate grew 0.3% in the year to Q2 2021 to 52.7%.

As the UK economy has improved in 2021, so have disability employment rates.

Additionally, in Asia Pacific, global organisations have made an attempt to integrate and create a more disability inclusive environment. Despite this however, only **28%** of the region's **472 million** people with disabilities of working age are employed.

In the US, the CDC reports that **77%** of workers with disabilities say their employer has done a better job of supporting them since the pandemic started.

This last quarter, organisations globally have actively made concrete commitments to create equal opportunities and integrate a more inclusive work culture environment. Three key global initiatives have been adopted by global organisations that aim to support, mentor and retain staff with disabilities.

KFC, in Pakistan, is actively recruiting people with disabilities. The American fast food chain has partnered with the Dewa Institute to educate 1,000 Deaf students and now employs 200 Deaf employees and operates 9 Deaf-run restaurants in Pakistan.

This initiative has created a growing awareness within the community, where employees who are Deaf are able to build transferable skills in areas encompassing customer service, team work and career building.



Employment programmes for equal opportunities

In 2020, life insurance firm, **Manulife**, announced a global commitment of **\$3.5 million** to increase its 'Diversity, Equality & Inclusion' efforts.

Manulife, in conjunction with **Grand Hyatt** and **Herbert Smith Freehills**, in Hong Kong launched a 'Diversity Champion Internship Program', hiring six candidates, as part of its intention to invest in future generations of people with disabilities to grant them the same opportunities as everyone else.



Rex Cheuk
Summer Intern

Sudesh Thevasenabathy
Head of Diversity, Equity
& Inclusion Asia

Target Udaan's inclusive ecosystem

Josith Padmanabhan, Director



The American department chain **Target Corporation** has created nine Diversity & Inclusion programmes to support, guide and equip staff with the relevant skills required at Target India.

In 2020, this Target Udaan programme produced its first batch of graduates. The initiative is "an investment in creating an inclusive ecosystem" and gives participants a secured job at Target once graduated, states Josith Padmanabhan Director, Indirect Sourcing & Procurement.

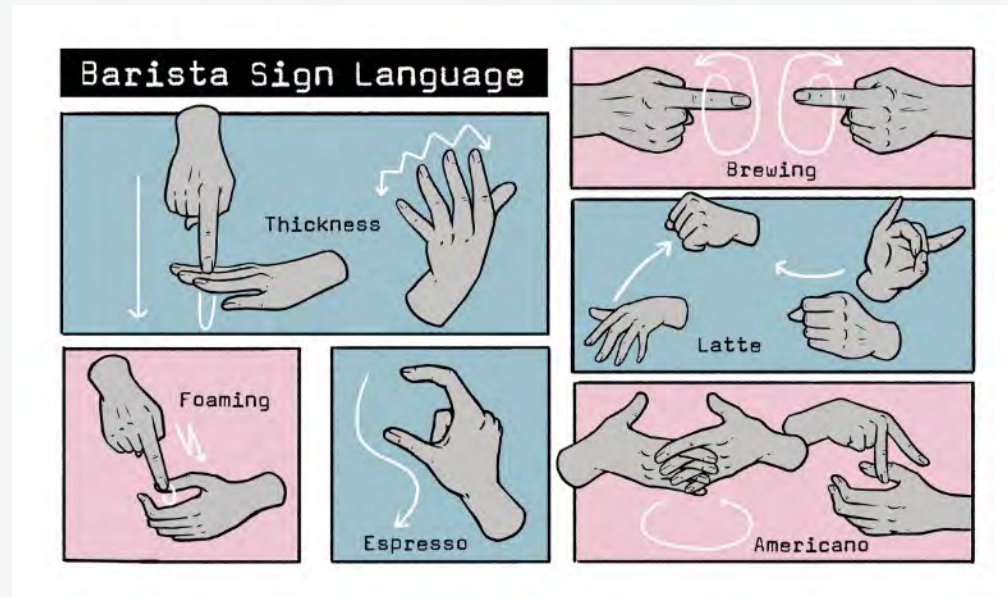
Oatly breaks stigmas by creating a specialised enterprise

There are over 20 million Deaf people living in China, and a large proportion are excluded from the labour market.

In 2020, Oatly set up a Silent barista educational initiative with the Unibrown Cafe in Shanghai to provide officially-certified barista training and job opportunities for the Deaf community.

This began in 2020, with 34 participants, when Universal Sign Language for coffee making was non-existent. Oatly seized the opportunity to collaborate with signing experts and develop a new local barista sign language.

Since then, 60 students have graduated in the first cohort. By equipping them with relevant skills, this has empowered them to find their own path and opened up new career networks within the coffee industry. As a result, whilst many graduates enjoy part-time barista jobs, some can now be found running their own silent coffee shop businesses.



Partnerships in the medical field forge a more united workplace culture

Medical manufacturer, **Boston Scientific**, has launched LEAD, a design accessibility framework that enables the company to operate a more inclusive physical and digital workplace for staff.

LEAD has helped the company expand employee benefits, to include greater digital accessibility, and raise levels of hiring people with disabilities and wider disability awareness.



In the US, Biopharmaceutical company and Valuable 500 member **Merck's** partnership with the capABILITY Network has led to it being awarded **Disability:IN's 2020 Employer of the Year Award**. This recognised Merck's high standards in regard to disability inclusiveness across the workplace, marketplace and supply chain, as well as its implementation of accessible standards, training of staff on mental health and designing innovative outreach solutions to facilitate the hiring of individuals with disabilities. These capABILITY initiatives have **grown by 30%** and are now incorporated in other brand subsidiaries.

The global view

Culture + Brand

Technology opens up surroundings

Shops are being 'digitally democratised' and transformed into safer and more convenient spaces for people with disabilities.

Attitudes are changing

Retailers are re-training staff and re-configuring opening times to create more inclusive shopping environments.

Trending topics on social media

International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPD), 3rd December 2021.

The **International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPD)** serves to promote an understanding of disability issues, and mobilise support for the dignity, rights and wellbeing of disabled people.

On LinkedIn, IDPD-related posts by Valuable 500 members alone drove over **80 million** impressions – a year-on-year growth that demonstrates the increasing importance of the event to businesses.

There were a number of trending hashtags associated with the day, including: #IDPWD2021, #IDPWD2020, #IDPD2020, #IDPD2021, #Disability, #Inclusion, #DisabilityAwareness, and #DisabilityInclusion. The most popular hashtag used was #IDPWD2021.



Source: LinkedIn, Infegy, Mintel

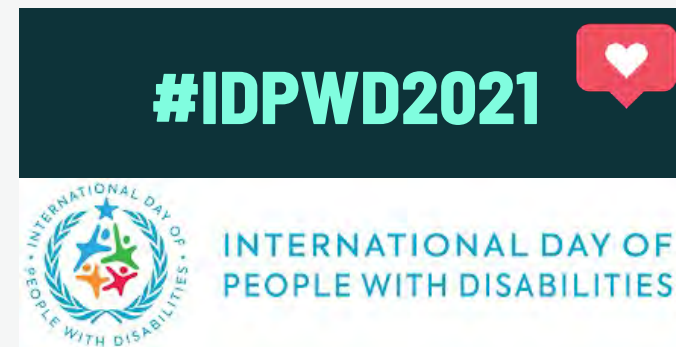
IDPD in numbers

80 million

LinkedIn impressions generated from Valuable 500 member posts

212,000

Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter and TikTok posts



Creating safe shopping experiences

Grocery shopping can be an exhausting and stressful experience...



Paul White, CEO of The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme

Retail stores all over the world are offering 'quieter shopping hours', giving customers with disabilities the opportunity to browse for and buy their groceries in a safe and comfortable environment. These initiatives are receiving positive feedback from customers.

In Australia, the department store, **Kmart**, has launched a two-hour shopping window dedicated to people with autism each Wednesday. This shopping experience is available in seven locations within the region. Additionally, **Woolworths** stated that during its designated 'quieter hours' across its 260 stores there will be a reduction of volume on the trading floor, no PA announcements and roll cages will be removed.

New Zealand supermarket giant, **Countdown**, has launched its own quieter shopping initiative across 180 stores, with the aim of reducing anxiety and sensory stress for customers with specific needs, such as autism.

In the UK, **Asda** has announced it will be training 85,000 staff to help serve customers with disabilities and it has partnered with The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme to offer support to customers and staff that have invisible disabilities across its 630 stores.

It highlights how some small changes can create a more inclusive environment that will impact people significantly...

Dane Dougan, Autism New Zealand's chief executive

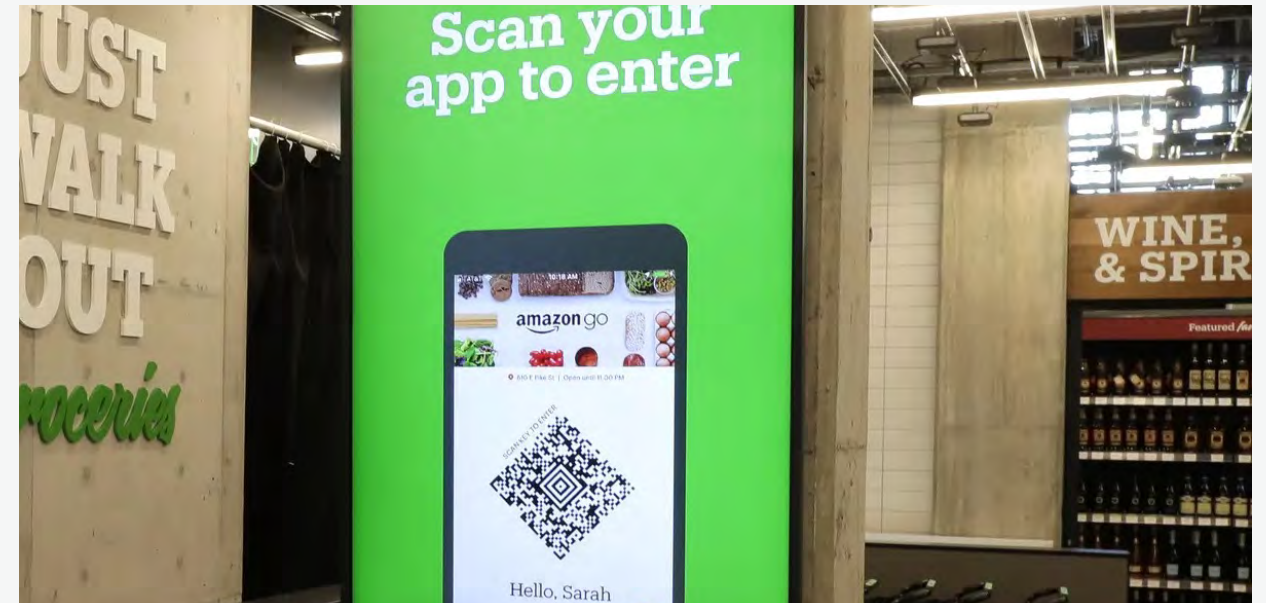
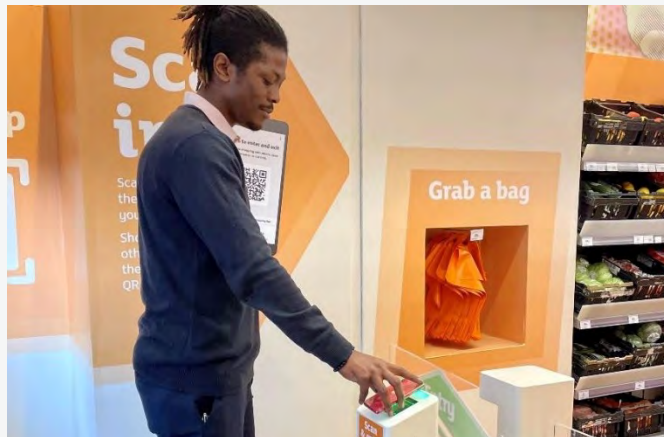


How in-store technology can support people with disabilities

For people with limited motor skills, hand tremors or other disabilities, the checkout experience can be an “uncomfortable” one, according to the **Assistive Technology Blog**. Apps present one potential solution to facilitate shopping in a convenient and non-invasive way.

Amazon's Just Walk Out technology is being overtly presented as a means of empowering people with disabilities to shop at a physical store without any manual help. Just Walk Out technology is already available in 22 locations across North America and will soon be integrated at US **Whole Foods** stores as well.

In the UK, **Sainsbury's** has just launched its own digital contactless shopping service, using Just Walk Out technology, named SmartShop Pick & Go. SmartShop is available in 1,400 Sainsbury's stores and as of 2021, 30% of sales are generated through its app in SmartShop locations.



Technology is also enabling customers with hearing disabilities to shop in-store. For example, **Kmart** in Australia also offers shoppers a sensory store map online, to help people plan their shopping trip in advance.

Asda is trialling new technology to help shoppers who are partially sighted to navigate around its store in Stevenage, UK. This will be integrated with the GoodMaps smartphone app, which is specifically built for people who are partially sighted. GoodMaps helps shoppers to find landmarks like pharmacies, bathrooms and tills, and pinpoints specific goods and items on-shelf.

Pharmacy giant, CVS, first to integrate new technology developments

125,000 deaths occur each year from people taking their medication(s) incorrectly; these wholly preventable deaths happen in part because someone can't read (or misreads) the directions.

Jared Tancrelle – Senior Vice President,
Store Operations at CVS Health

CVS has collaborated with the American Council for the Blind in developing Spoken Rx

In November 2021, drug store giant, **CVS**, made audio prescription label technology available for free to all of its customers. This technology has been specifically designed for people with visual impairments who are unable to read standard print labels and presents audio prescription information - including patient name, medication name, and directions - in English and Spanish. Spoken Rx is available in 10,000 CVS locations nationwide and includes more than 1,700 CVS Pharmacy locations within Target.



The global view

Innovation

A metaverse for all

The metaverse represents a virtual world where individuals are empowered to trade goods and services, play games and interact on social platforms. We look at how developers and charities are working to extend its liberating opportunities to players with disabilities.

E-health accelerates

It's taken a pandemic to make it happen, but the mainstreaming of remote consultation, diagnosis and monitoring software and hardware presents the disabled community with wider and better access to interfaces and services that promise better services and greater independence.

Adapting technology to be universal

Brands like **Facebook**, **Forever 21**, **Warners** and **Nike** are expanding into metaverse content as a means of engaging with consumers and meeting their desire for personalisation and gamified experiences. The **Hyundai** Mobility Adventure platform on Roblox offers a prime example of virtual experiences where participants can customise their avatars and interact with fellow players. However, the medium's dependence on costly VR headsets and hand gestures, its lack of captions or accurate audio descriptions, and the rarity of eye-tracking technology interfaces are all limiting its inclusivity.

These barriers reflect wider issues in gaming as revealed by Scope research showing how participation can be hindered by the cost of assisted and adaptive technology (**30%**) or negative attitudes from other gamers (**40%**). Metaverse modes will need to deliver broader gaming solutions around accessibility features through hardware and software solutions.

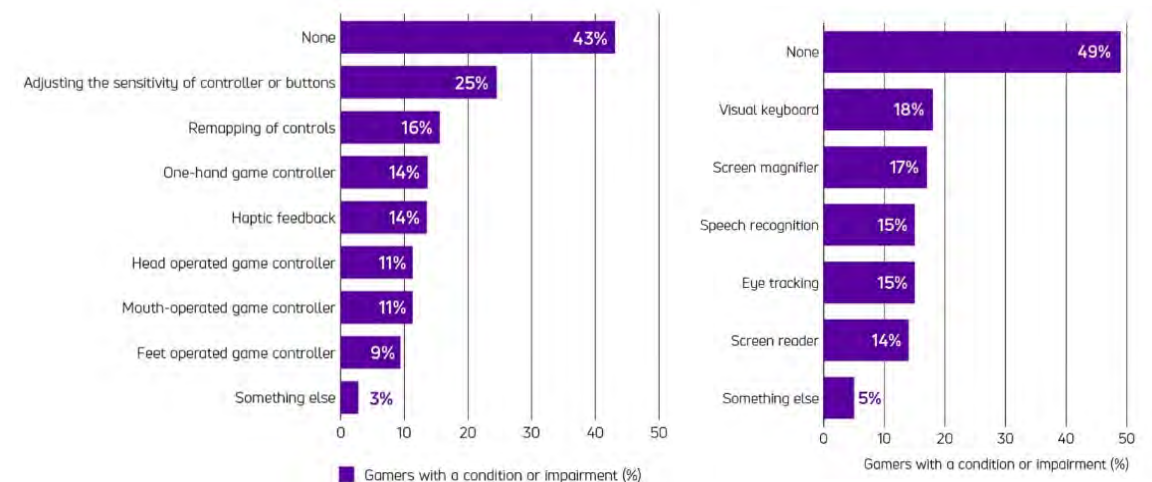
Research from **AbleGamers** on gamers with a wide range of disabilities found that people played primarily to have fun and personally challenge themselves, but also to manage stress and depression, to engage in physical therapy for their hands and to help with pain management.

66% of gamers with an impairment or condition say they face barriers or issues related to gaming
- Scope

Source: Hyundai Scope; AbleGamers



Assistive or adaptive hardware and software technology used by gamers with a condition or impairment



Source: Scope

Building an inclusive metaverse

Less than **2%** of the internet meets accessibility guidelines, but the metaverse is even more challenging, being inherently motor-dependent and visual. As a result, it will need to incorporate new interfaces - touchscreens, styluses, audio descriptions, 3D-audio location and Haptic Feedback - to become inclusive to all.

The good news is that the necessary enabling technology is there, but it needs building in more broadly.

Accessible, for example, is a company with an AI-powered platform that simplifies and optimises websites for use with assistive technologies (screen readers, keyboard navigation) that allows its Chief Vision Officer, Michael Hingson - who is blind - to seamlessly navigate online.

We've already seen **AbleGamers'** Engineering Research program create an Xbox Adaptive Controller for gamers in 2018, whilst **Special Effects** (another charity pursuing 'inclusion through technology') has eye-gaze systems that convert eye movements and blinks into mouse pointer and click instructions.

Beyond technological considerations are moral ones for the metaverse: **60%** of respondents in the Institute of Digital Fashion's 2021 survey were concerned about the increased potential for bullying and discrimination against people with disabilities in virtual worlds.



The **Pico Neo 2 Eye** is the world's first commercial standalone VR headset with native eye tracking.

In an ideal scenario, (metaverse) users can create customised avatars to show their status as a person with a disability, thereby creating both greater representation and acceptance of diversity in the employment realm.

Regan Gross, Society for Human Resource Management

E-health accelerates

It's taken a pandemic to make it happen, but the mainstreaming of remote consultation, diagnosis and monitoring software services and hardware presents a wealth of potential benefits to members of the disabled community who might need wider and better access to interfaces and services that could give them greater independence.

In the US, **Forbes** has reported that the number of US telehealth claims grew **3,000%** in the 12 months to October 2020, whilst **McKinsey** has asserted that **\$250 billion** of the country's healthcare spend could be potentially virtualised. Over in the UK, the **myGP** app, which is used by the country's National Health Service, has **2.4 million** active users.

For those dependent on home or remote care, this has accelerated uptake of video chat apps like **Binah.ai** that can detect users' heart rates, as well as devices like **StethoMe's** smart wireless stethoscope, **KardiaMobile's** ECG reading digital monitor and **NuroKor's** wearable that uses bioelectric nerve, muscle and microcurrent stimulation to help patients manage pain. Medical professionals are also being assisted remotely by **Bio-Patches** that monitor and measure a patients' heart rate, ECG, heart rate variability, respiration rate, and activity, transmitting data to the cloud and the **Leaf Patient Monitoring System** that wirelessly monitors a patient's position and movement to prevent pressure-related injuries and assist carers to adhere to turning schedules.

\$250bn

of current US healthcare spend
could be potentially virtualised
- **McKinsey**

Leaf Patient Monitoring System



E-health improvements in practice

Digital tools can bridge gaps and create regular contact and theoretically address a situation where people with learning disabilities are twice as likely to die from an avoidable medical cause of death in the UK, according to the Learning Disabilities Mortality Review, 2020.

An **NHS** case study in the UK's southwest used digital tool, **HearMeNow**, to help remind people to manage medication, hydration and exercise, interact remotely with healthcare providers, and share success stories with them as well as friends and family. App **BrainInHand** is a "digital self management support system" for anxiety and uses a traffic light system to alert support workers if they are needed, whilst remote monitoring sensors are also being used to track routines, nutrition and activity.

The NHS has concluded that these tools have benefitted people by:

- making it easier for them to communicate their needs
- helping them to engage with confidence
- supporting healthier lifestyles

56%

of people with learning disabilities in the UK's Southwest have an annual health check.

- NHS, UK

35%

have a health action plan in place.

- NHS, UK



This project should make an important contribution to our goal of reducing the health gap for people with learning disabilities, enabling clinical teams to work with greater precision and responsiveness than before.

Zain Patel, Transformation Programme Manager, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG





GLOBAL TREND DRIVERS

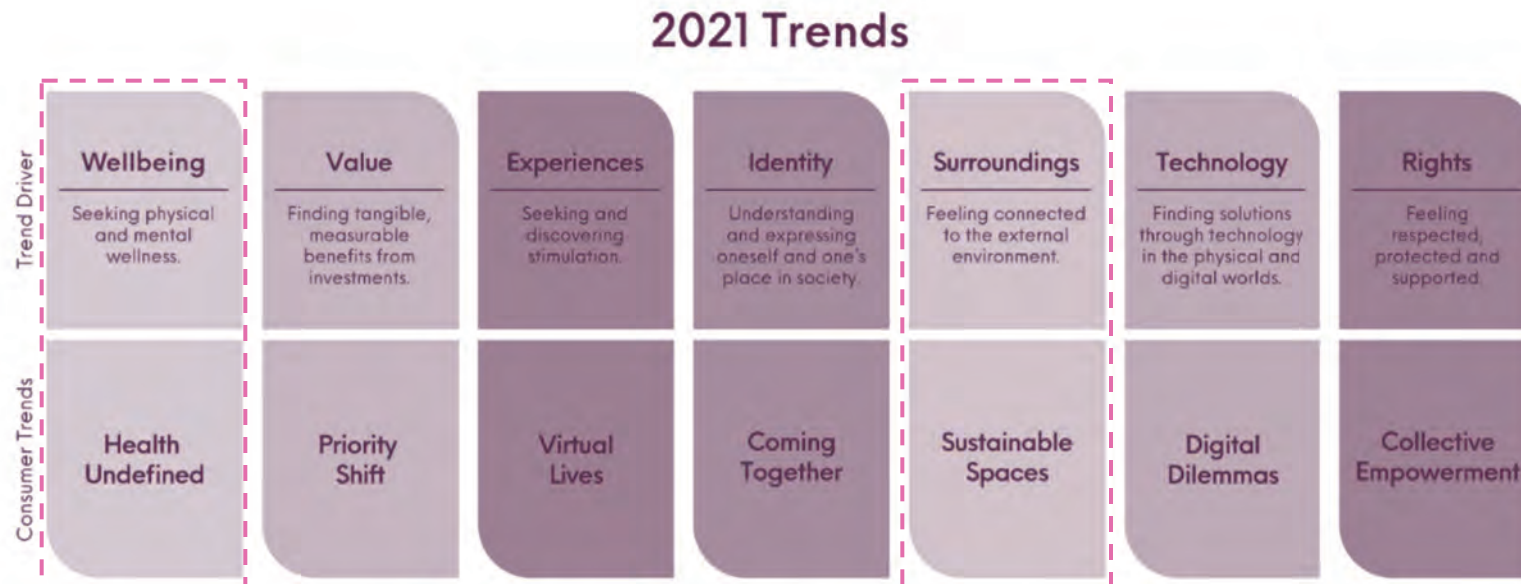
*Analysis of the topic
chapters for each of the
five regions*



Mintel's Global Consumer Trend Drivers

In each Report we address the most relevant trends driving consumer behaviour. This quarter we look at **Wellbeing and Surroundings**.

The pandemic has put physical and mental health at the forefront of consumers' daily lives and we're seeing a rise in apps and AI-based services geared towards monitoring and maintaining both aspects. Consumers have also become more connected to - and appreciative of - their physical and environmental surroundings and we're seeing innovations and initiatives aimed at increasing both accessibility and the ability of people to make conscious, impactful purchasing choices.



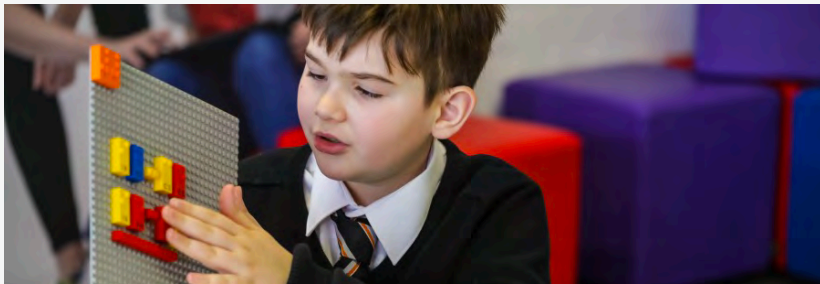
Wellbeing braille innovations

The Royal National Institute of Braille states that 9 out of 10 blind and partially sighted people said that information on medication or food packaging was quite difficult or impossible to read.

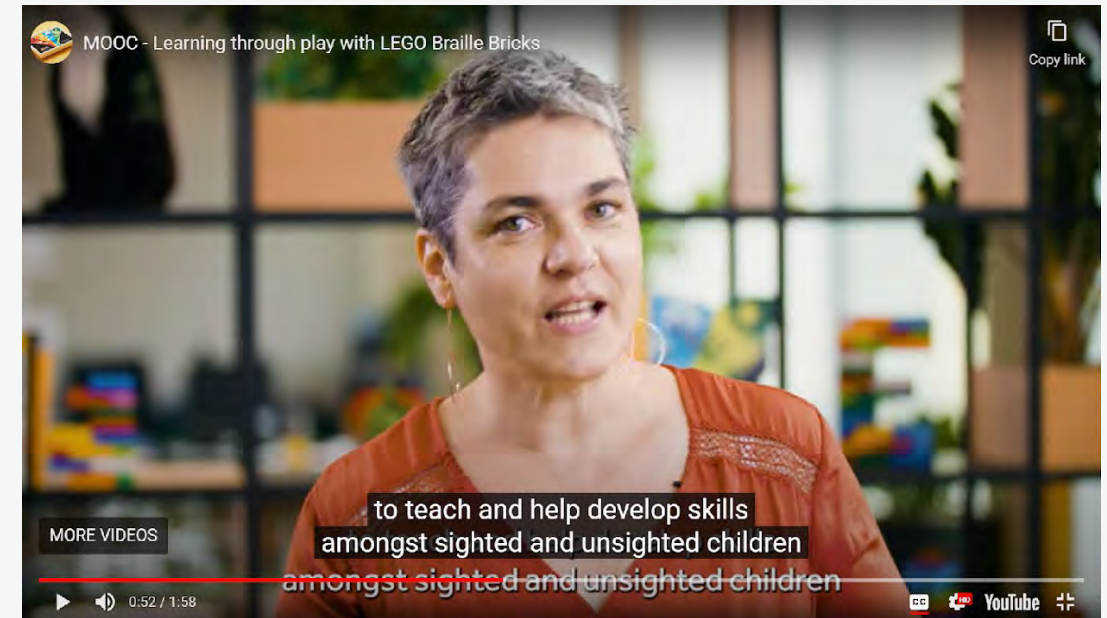
New product developments being launched by organisations are actively attempting to create more accessible products for their customers by adapting their products to feature braille. The significance of braille for blind and partially sighted people encourages, supports and allows them to develop a life-long skill. Learning braille from a young age can help with literacy, as braille is a much better way to understand punctuation, grammar and spelling than audio.

World Braille Day, recognised annually on the 4th January, places significance on a selection of innovations from global corporations to support people who are visually impaired.

The LEGO Foundation has made Lego Braille Bricks available in 20 countries and in 11 languages to give blind children a fun way to develop skills and learn the braille system.



Source: Euroblind; Mintel; United Nations; National Federation of the Blind; Mintel Global Consumer Data 365



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This is particularly critical when we know that individuals with blindness all over the world rely on braille to work, study and enjoy their daily lives to the fullest.

LEGO Braille Bricks

Wellbeing and Surroundings in entertainment

Engaging with entertainment benefits our wellbeing and connects us more strongly to our senses and our surroundings. This quarter we're seeing innovations that deliver on both fronts.



In Korea, to improve the viewing rights of people with visual impairments, **SK Telecom** and **JTBC Studios** are collaborating to develop a voice-to-text technology that will automatically generate subtitles.

Through the partnership with JTBC Studios, deep learning content and broadcasting technology consulting can be provided, solving the biggest challenge of AI media technology development.

SKT's media business support division head Lee Jae-kwang

Source: Euroblind; Mintel; United Nations; National Federation of the Blind; Mintel Global Consumer Data 365; Aju Business Daily



In Mexico, **Teatro Ciego (Blind Theatre)** presents theatre productions in total darkness for guests to experience how blind people enjoy art. The actors and organisers are all people with visual disabilities, meaning the project is also a source of employment for them.



Wellbeing and Surroundings: CES 2022 technology launches

CES is the world's premier tech innovation show and in 2022, the Health and Wellness theme was Accessibility "regardless of ability", yielding some key innovations:



The **Tovertafel** is an interactive light projector gaming system designed for people with dementia and learning disabilities, designed to stimulate brain activity and connection.



Dignity Lifts WL1 is a 'power lift' high-tech toilet for people with mobility limitations. It has a seat warmer, bidet and dryer and lifts users back up into a standing position.



Eargo 6 hearing aids have a 'Mask Mode' to help Hard of Hearing people better interpret the voices of mask wearers.



The **Whill Model Fi** is a lightweight and foldable 'personal electric vehicle' which can be driven and locked remotely with an app.

Surroundings: Braille brings sustainable product claims to all

In this edition's **Let's discuss** we saw how visual-only packaging communication was excluding people from behaving more sustainably. However, in the last 3 months from October 2021 to January 2022, there have been **43 NPDs (New Product Developments)** launched in the beauty and personal care sector on **GNPD (Global New Products Database)** platform that integrate both sustainability (recyclable material) and disability (braille text).



Bath Additive Strawberry

is made from 77% recycled pulp. It carries the FSC Mix logo and braille writing with a limited edition Sumikkogurashi design. The product was launched in Japan in November 2021.

Source: Mintel GNPD



Anti-Dandruff Rebalancing Shampoo

is completely vegan and cruelty-free. The product retails in a 300ml recyclable and refillable pack, made with 100% green plastic, and features braille text. The product was launched in Peru in October 2021.

Source: Mintel GNPD; Philosophy; ONS

Surroundings: Ecopreneurship by – and for – people with disabilities

In Let's discuss we highlighted the need for a self-sufficient response in the face of business and government inaction. It's happening.

What do all four entrepreneurs have in common? They are all **ecopreneurs** campaigning for a sustainable future by building their brands. More than anything they are advocating for equal opportunities in the workplace, breaking down barriers and stigmas. These success stories are an example of a future worth celebrating.



Sangita Desai, Co-Founder of **Raw Nature**, has a congenital motor issue. One of the biggest names in the natural cosmetics and grooming sector in India, Raw Nature's products and ingredients are 100% natural and vegan.



Shenaz Haveliwala, owns a sustainable-based food delivery service called **Le Garden - The Salad Company**, based in Mumbai. The hospitality business is available on all delivery applications and serves healthy drinks, soups, salads and desserts. Recently she has been growing microgreens in her home garden to supply to restaurants. In 2013, she was awarded the Outstanding Person with Epilepsy by the International Bureau of Epilepsy. She is actively looking to hire more staff with epilepsy, to support and develop a committed workforce.



Founder, **Srinkanth Bolla**, of packaging company, **Bollant Industries**, manufactures eco-friendly products direct from fallen palm leaves. The current value of the business is at £48 million and the company employs 500 staff members, with 36% of employees having a disability. Bolla, was part of the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders 2021 list and is visually impaired.



Melody Stein, who is deaf, along with her daughter Tanya, has launched **MxT 2510**, a sustainable fashion company where only eco-friendly fabrics are used. Prior to this venture, Stein owned a restaurant in San Francisco with her husband where they employed a completely Deaf team.



REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Europe | Asia Pacific | North America
South America | Middle East and Africa



Disability hiring and development take priority across regions

01 APAC

This region dominates in hiring for D&I roles this quarter. Large international corporations like Amazon, Unilever and Meta are looking to expand their D&I roles across this region, focusing more on the Asian region rather than the Pacific regions. In this region, emphasis has been placed on developing technology to assist people with disabilities.

02 EMEA

The European job market is looking for D&I roles across multiple sectors, encompassing the British Police Force, consultancy and retail firms. In the UK, we see a focus on sustainability and its implication on people with disabilities.

03 LATAM

The few roles being offered are at a director level in the e-commerce and D&I sectors.

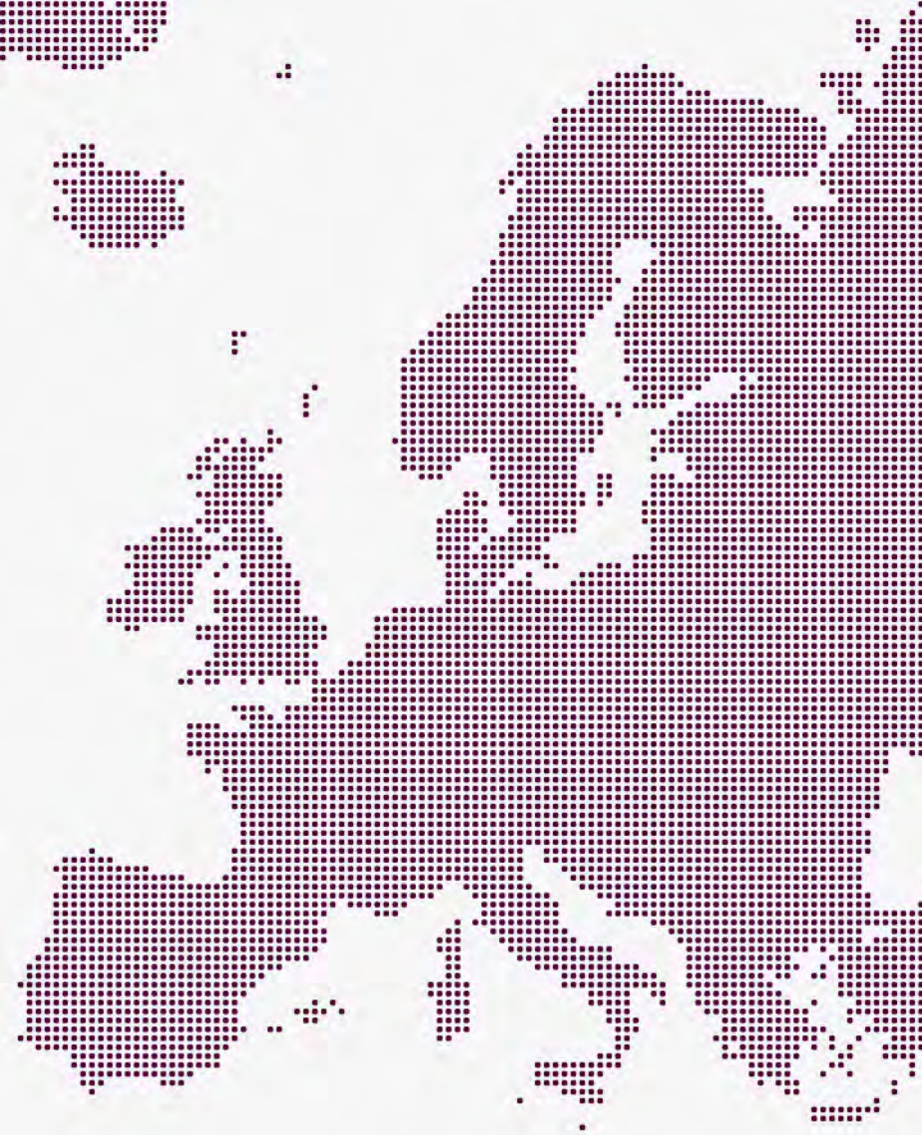
04 MEA

The UAE and South Africa are the leading countries for D&I roles, with Deloitte, Emirates and Amazon all looking to increase their internal D&I teams.

05 NAM

We've seen many disability inclusive roles with 'global' taking priority in this quarter. Additionally there has been an increase in senior roles in the IT and e-commerce sectors, with particular reference to Gurpreet Kaur appointed as the Head of Accessibility at Twitter, in a completely new role.





Europe



Diversity and Inclusion hiring trends

- We've seen a continued rise in D&I roles across a range of sectors such as research, policing and fashion divisions.
- In the UK, France and Germany the majority of D&I roles are managerial positions.
- An increase in D&I roles, where organisations are offering a part-time 6 month contract, implies high demand from companies looking to extend D&I policies.

Diversity and Inclusion roles posted on LinkedIn



Director – Diversity, Equity & Inclusions Advisor at Gartner
Posted in January 2022 (IE)



Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner at National Police Force
Posted in January 2022 (UK)



Global Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging Generalist at Oliver Wyman
Posted in January 2022 (FR)



Expert Global Diversity & Inclusions at Hugo Boss
Posted in December 2021 (DE)

Sustainable, accessible supplements

In the autumn and winter everyone is advised to take 10 micrograms (400 International Units) a day of vitamin D to support general health and in particular bone and muscle health.

The UK Government

Keeping immunity strong is vital to support an individual's overall lifestyle, especially during the winter months.

Finnish-based health brand, **Taimi**, offers an alternative solution for people with disabilities to take their daily supplements. The vitamins are available in a powder format, where they are able to be mixed into foods or drinks, are vegan and gluten-free and come in biodegradable, plastic-free packaging.

Source: Gov UK; Taimi

Taimi was originally created by the Founder for his daughter, who has a developmental disability and cannot swallow pills or capsules. Taimi helps consumers improve their wellbeing with functional and nutritional products to support general health.



Sustainability meets disability in eco-friendly make-up brush

UK-based disability beauty brand, **Kohl Kreatives**, designs brushes specifically to support people with disabilities.



Source: Kohl Kreatives; Mintel

Kohl Kreatives are on a mission to help everyone empower themselves through makeup. The brand has launched ten different brush collections, all designed to make makeup accessible for people with conditions such as Dupuytren's, MS and Parkinson's. The brushes also have support for identification and an audio guide for people with visual impairments.

Additionally, Kohl Kreatives' zero-waste system has produced a Future Fortune Blending Brush packaged with recyclable rice paper and the brush is made out of rice husk waste, making it 100% sustainable. It has been designed with a non-rolling and accessible handle and a raised sticker to help users identify the brush in their kit easily. It is also accompanied by an audio guide, where each brush is described and in a fun extra feature, users also read their fortune.



Over half of adults in the US agree that the beauty industry should be more inclusive, and over four in ten UK adults agree that beauty brands ignore people with disabilities.

Roshida Khanom,
Category Director for Mintel
Beauty & Personal Care

Consumers are purchasing from brands that represent their values

Marks & Spencer has renamed its jelly sweets Mini Gems.



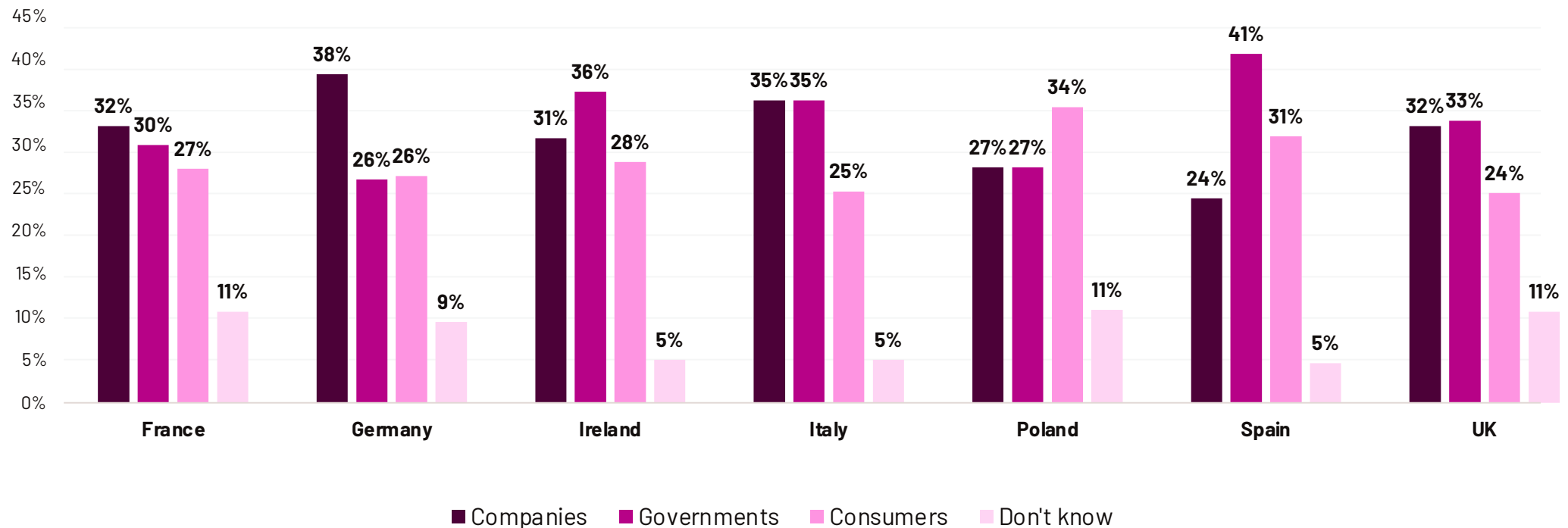
Previously known as Midget Gems, the jelly sweets will now be called **Mini Gems**. The change was prompted by a warning from a disability studies lecturer at Liverpool Hope University who described the word 'midget' as highly problematic and a form of hate speech that is insulting to those with dwarfism. Dr Erin Pritchard has achondroplasia, which is the most common form of dwarfism, and has criticised other retailers for also using the word in their products.



Companies and governments are responsible for greener transport

This edition's **Let's discuss** showed how people with disabilities were excluded from inaccessible public and EV transport modes. In Europe, there is a broader public demand for governments and companies to increase usage of low and zero emission modes and that should include initiatives to extend these options to the disabled community.

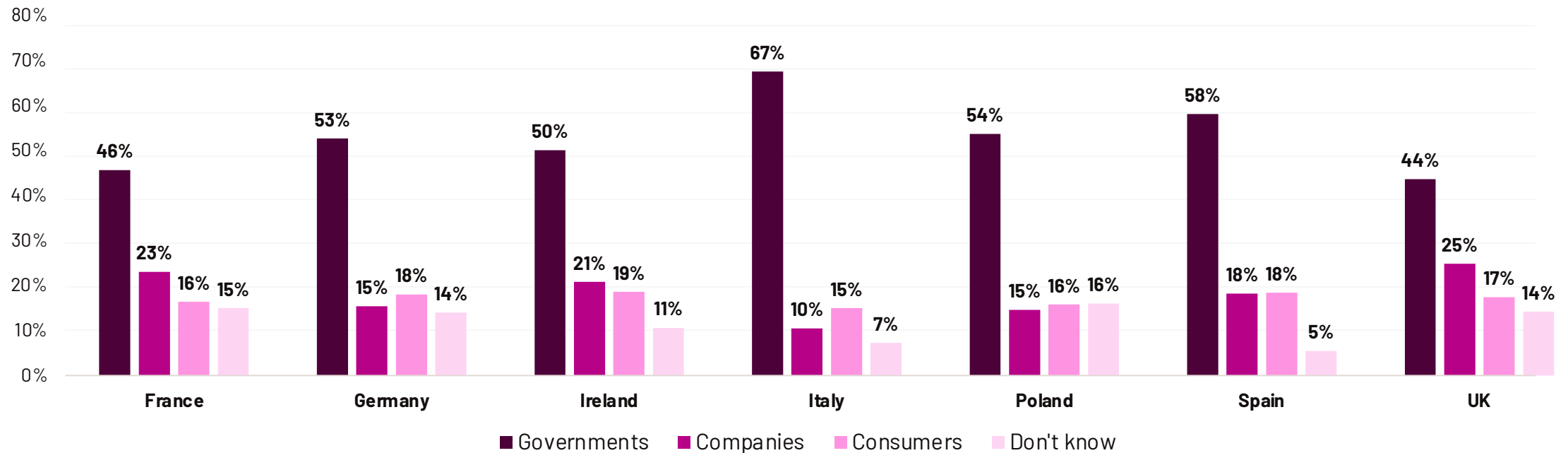
Who do you think is most responsible for reducing emission from vehicles?



Companies are responsible for increasing recycling

This edition's **Let's discuss** showed how people with disabilities were excluded from recycling by visual-only packaging and a lack of home collections. In Europe, the public view recycling as broadly a corporate responsibility.

Who do you think is most responsible for increasing the amount of packaging that is recycled?





ASIA PACIFIC



Diversity in management

- There is a wide range of diversity-focused roles in the APAC region. The majority being in managerial positions.
- Companies such as EY and Meta are actively recruiting for the same job description in multiple APAC regions.
- Consultancies, suppliers and retailers are all looking to increase their range of hiring staff within D&I roles.

Diversity and Inclusion roles posted on LinkedIn



AWS Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Employer Brand Marketing Manager at Amazon
Posted in January 2022 (MY)



APAC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead At Cargill
Posted in January 2022 (MY)



Diversity Equity & Inclusion Program Manager – Multiple locations at Meta
Posted in January 2022 (HK)



People with disabilities Inclusion and Accessibility Expert at Unilever
Posted in December 2021 (IN)



APAC Talent Attraction & Acquisition Consultant – Multiple locations at Ernst & Young
Posted in January 2022 (SG)



Diversity and Inclusion Advisor at BP
Posted in January 2022 (SHANGHAI)

Gamifying signing education

SignTown is the world's first application to be developed as an easy and enjoyable way to experience sign language for the first time.

SignTown launched in September 2021, after being jointly developed by **The Nippon Foundation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Google** and **Kwansei Gakuin University** as a means for teaching sign language.

The game encourages people to improve their sign language skills and apply them in their daily lives, teaching them to recognise hand gestures, body movements and facial expressions by using a conventional two-dimensional camera attached to a personal computer.

This enables doctors, teachers, and store employees to communicate with patients, students, and customers who use sign language as their main communication tool.



Source: The Nippon Foundation



South Korea trailblazing smart cities



The Seoul city government's **S-Map website** and **Seoul Smart App** replicate the entire city in cyberspace. This innovative 3D map allows people with disabilities the opportunity to have direct round-the-clock access to real-time information on the city's traffic conditions and the opportunity to tour the city's buildings from above.

Mirroring the benefits of supermarket initiatives we've looked at in this issue, smart city resources such as this enable governments to increase mobility, efficiency and sustainability in cities, making them more inclusive environments for people with disabilities.



'Hear the Sounds' with Vivo

Vivo has collaborated with the **Audiology Development Foundation** of China to launch a Hear the Sounds campaign to help hearing-impaired groups through barrier-free equipment donation, research and public advocacy.

Upgrades to Vivo's OriginOS accessibility features include monitoring the sound of a baby crying to send warnings to hearing-impaired parents, and call services that can translate messages from voice to text and vice versa.

A new Vivo documentary, Silent Love (无声的爱), co-produced with **Southern Weekend**, focuses on the parenting issues faced by hearing-impaired people, and presents how Vivo technology can help them optimise speech communication.



Source: Mintel.



56%

of Chinese consumers prefer to be involved with institutions/companies that promote equality.
The Holistic Consumer – Global, 2021

Braille vending machines in Malaysia



Source: Mintel.

A pilot project by Atlas Vending and the Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) placed 11 vending machines around Klang Valley.

These vending machines are specially designed with braille plates, indicator lights and motion sensor-triggered audio instructions to make it easier for the visually impaired to purchase their drinks.

The vending machines were placed at selected light rail transit (LRT) stations around the city, chosen based on MAB's data in areas where visually impaired commuters frequent most. The vending machines carry some of the country's most popular bottled and canned drinks, and accept both cash and cashless payments.

MAB's aim is "to educate and create equal opportunities for visually impaired persons, to enable them to enjoy the same quality of life as the sighted". The pilot project will provide the teams with feedback and suggestions for improvements to be incorporated into the final design of the machines.

512k

the estimated number of Malaysian consumers who are partially or fully visually impaired (representing 1.5% of the population)
National Eye Survey (NES II) - Malaysia, 2014

2022 Winter Paralympics Barbie collection

To coincide with the **Beijing Winter Paralympics**, **Mattel** has launched a Barbie winter sports range, including a Para Alpine Skier doll, with the tagline 'You Can Be Anything'.

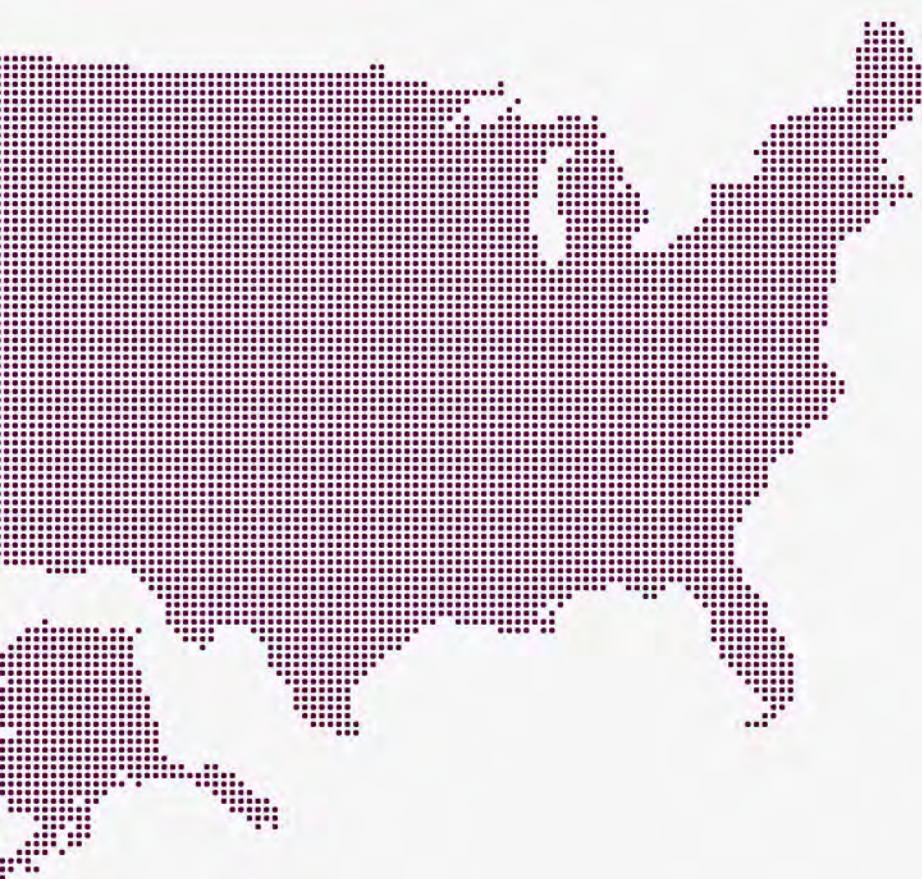
The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) along with 12-time Summer and Winter Paralympic medal-winner Chris Waddell have given their approval.

“
What if every little girl knew what was possible for people with disabilities? People that had life-changing injuries or young girls and boys that were born without the ability to walk would want to ski.

Six-time Paralympic Summer and Winter medallist,
Alana Nichols

Barbie





NORTH AMERICA



Diversity in management

- This quarter has seen an increase in senior roles being offered on job vacancy platforms.
- Notable growth in e-commerce, with roles being offered at SquareSpace and Shipt.
- IT hires at NielsenIQ, Dell and Pokémon.
- Wide variety of sectors offering D&I roles indicates growing desire to build an inclusive talent pipeline.

Diversity and Inclusion roles posted on LinkedIn



Global Culture, Diversity & Inclusions Innovative Strategist/Lead at Dell
Posted in January 2022



Diversity, Inclusion & Social Responsibility at Pokémon
Posted in January 2022



Diversity & Inclusion Program Manager – Multiple locations in the region at NielsenIQ- IT
Posted in January 2022



Coordinator – Global Inclusion Strategy at Creative Arts Agency
Posted in December 2021



Program Manager, Diversity & Inclusion and Corporate Social Responsibility at SquareSpace
Posted in January 2022



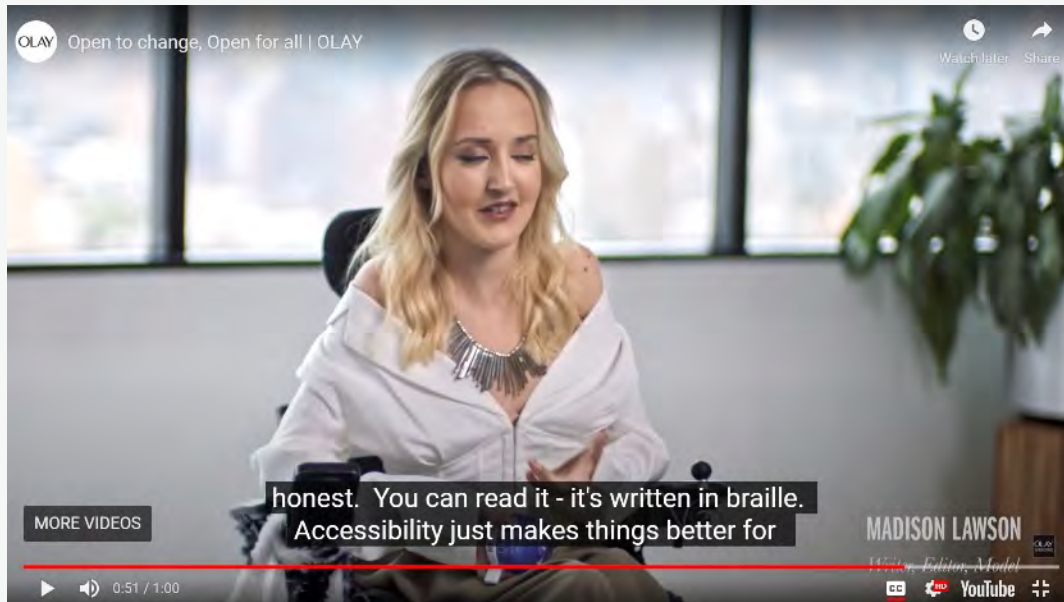
Storyteller and Content Sr. Manager – Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Shipt
Posted in January 2022

Olay launches inclusive packaging

Olay has redesigned its Regenerist lid for consumers who are experiencing dexterity and sight challenges.

The accompanying **YouTube** video portrays a diverse base of consumers that have requested easier-to-open jars such as this.

However, the campaign has been criticised for not featuring alt-text, and the product design for only featuring braille text on the lid and having no differentiation from other creams. This serves to underline how businesses should build-in accessibility and inclusivity into all aspects of the customer journey; not just focus on one aspect such as packaging alone.



Source: Mintel

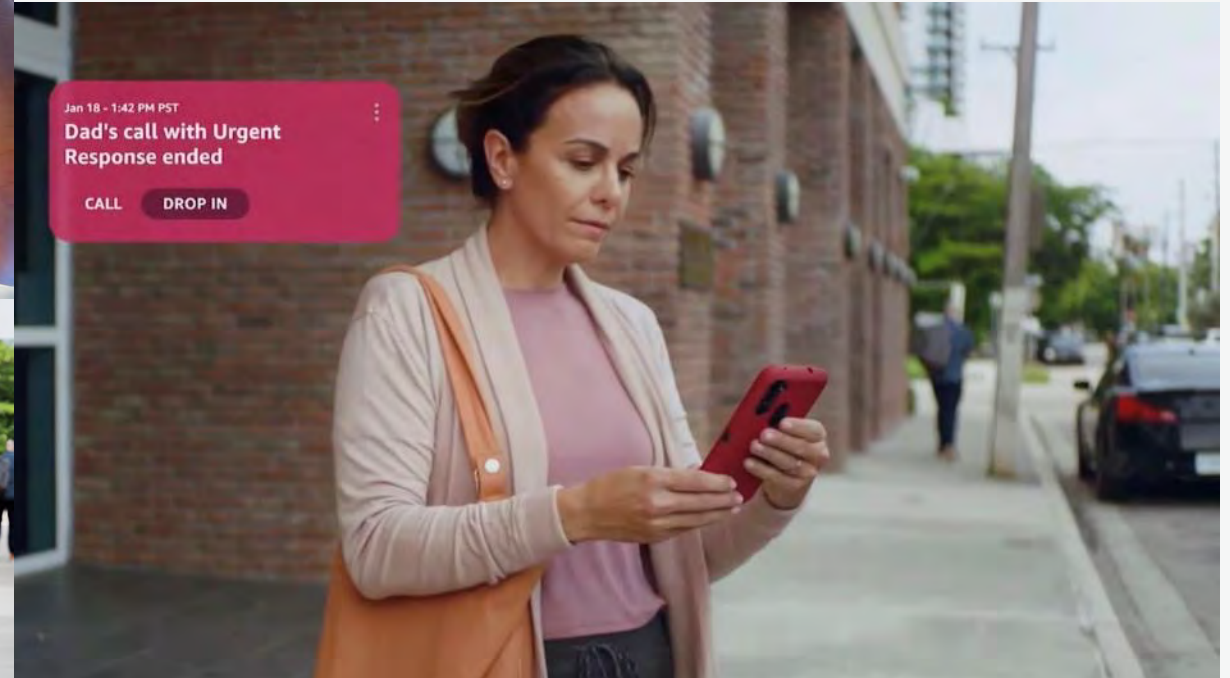
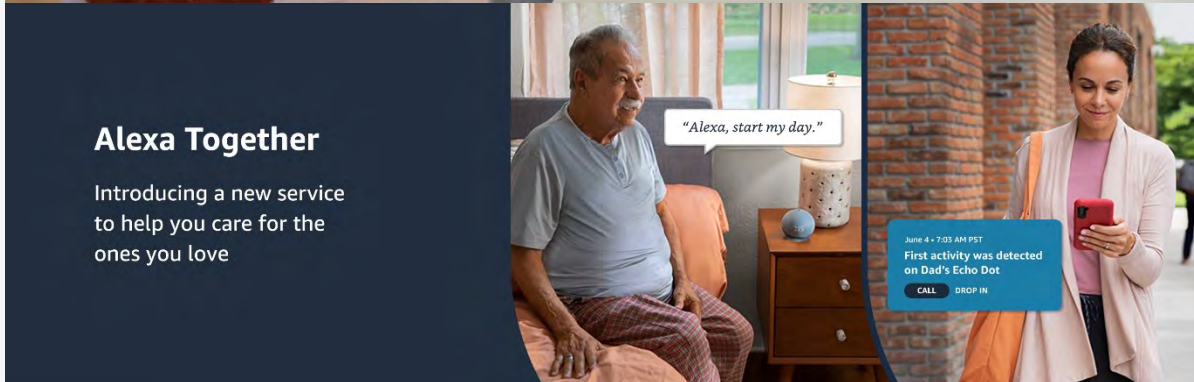


Amazon's Care Hub expands



The **Alexa Together service** - launched on 7 December, 2021 - is specifically designed for caregivers and to help aging customers or people with disabilities feel more comfortable and independent.

An expansion of **Amazon's free Care Hub**, the subscription service includes Echo device features such as fall detection, activity alerts and connections to emergency services.



Meta (formerly Facebook) introduces Video Relay Services

Video calling has been a critical service when remote working and learning is involved. However, for the communities who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing, it is absolutely crucial.

Meta (formerly Facebook) has collaborated with **ZP Better Together**, and is a leading provider of video interpreting and communication. ZP Better Together and Meta Portal have partnered together to bring to the VRS (Video Relay Services) to the platform.

This allows members of the D/deaf and Hard of Hearing communities to communicate in real time with people using a sign language interpreter.



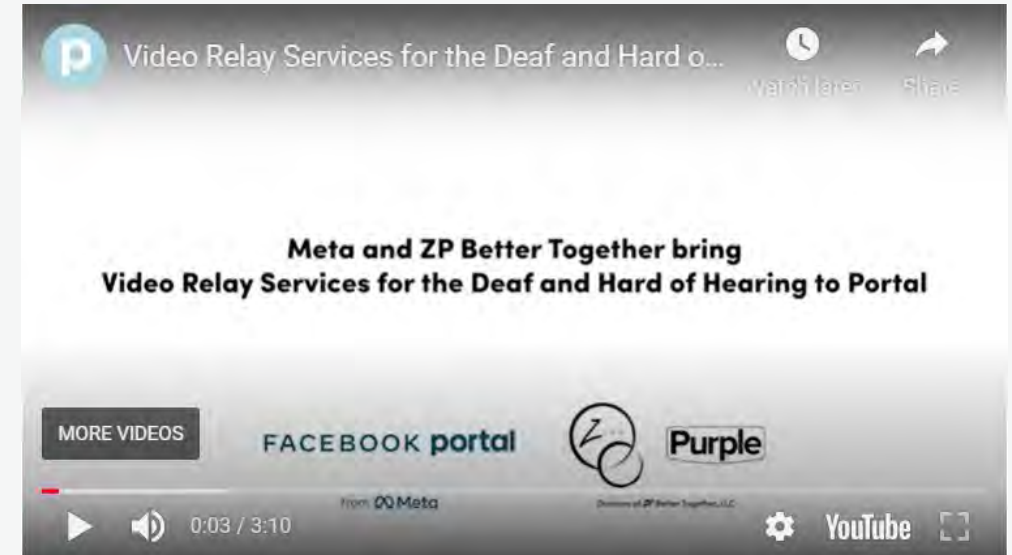
Divisions of ZP Better Together, LLC



FACEBOOK portal

from Meta

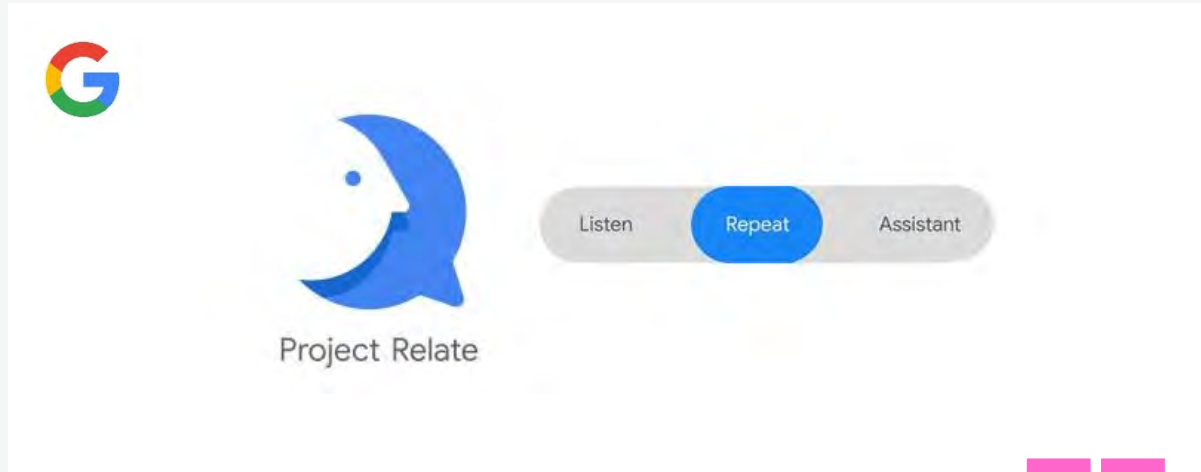
Source: Meta (Facebook)



The combination of ZP's apps and video relay service with the Portal's AI-powered Smart Camera that automatically keeps people in frame is game-changing. It delivers simplicity, connectivity, and the freedom to move and communicate using both hands.

Mike Shebanek, Meta Head of Accessibility

Project Relate app for Android



Google's Project Relate app strives to help people with speech impairments to better communicate with others through three core product features: **Listen**, **Repeat** and **Assistant**.

Listen, allows users to transcribe in real time, being able to copy and paste what is being said into other apps. **Repeat**, repeats what is said and **Assistant** allows users to speak directly to the **Google Assistant** for specific tasks such as controlling one's smart home devices.

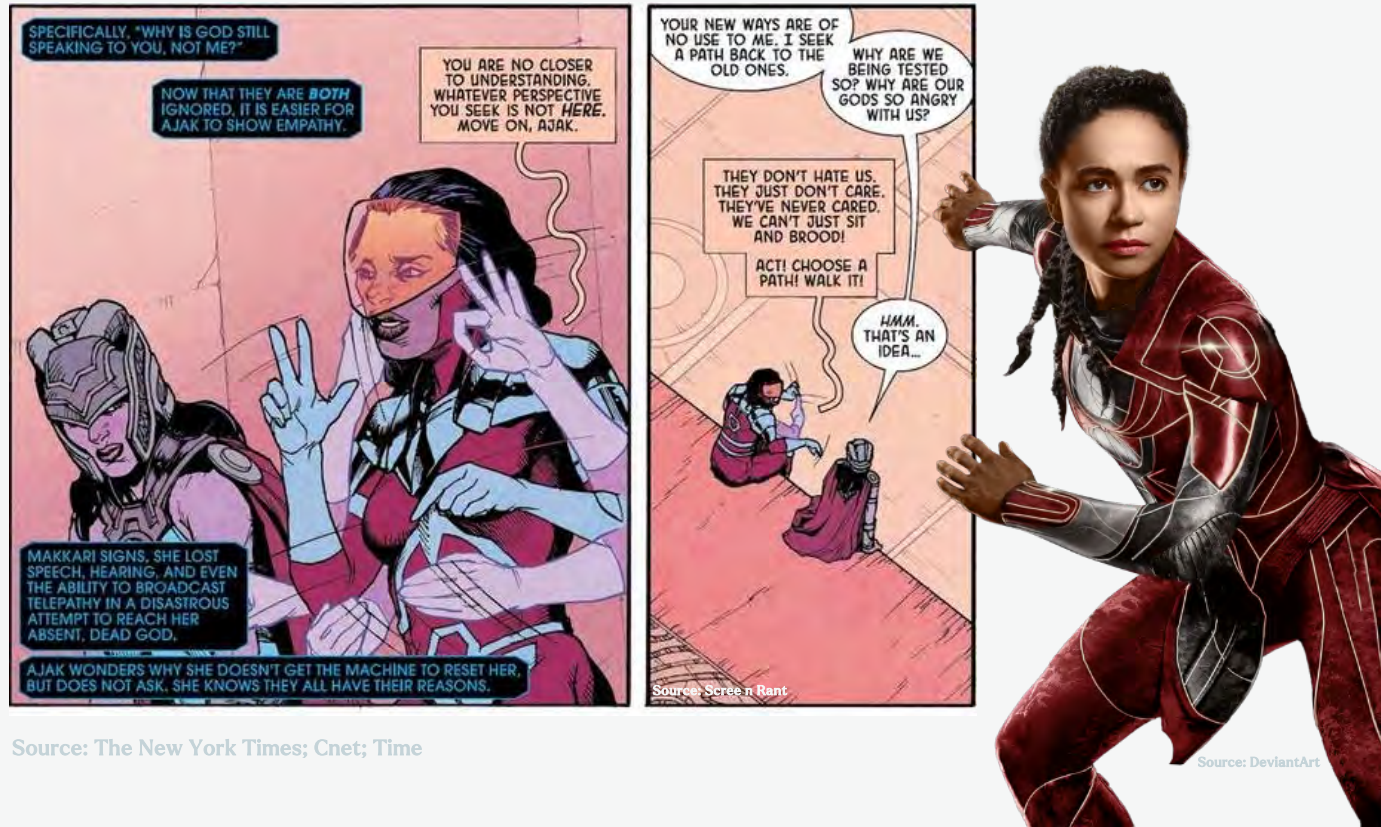
I'm used to the look on people's faces when they can't understand what I've said... Project Relate can make the difference between a look of confusion and a friendly laugh of recognition.

Audrie Lee, Brand Manager at Google whose speech has been affected by muscular dystrophy



Marvel's first deaf movie superhero

Marvel's Eternals features actress, Lauren Ridloff, who has been deaf since birth. She plays Makkari, representing the first deaf superhero in the Marvel cinematic universe. Publicising the movie, Ridloff has broadened understanding of 'Deaf Gain', an important term used in the D/deaf community to describe "the benefits that result from loss of hearing". In the movie, Makkari's superfast power is a sonic boom that she creates when she runs, but as she is deaf, she is unaffected by its impact.



Source: The New York Times; Cnet; Time



What does this mean?

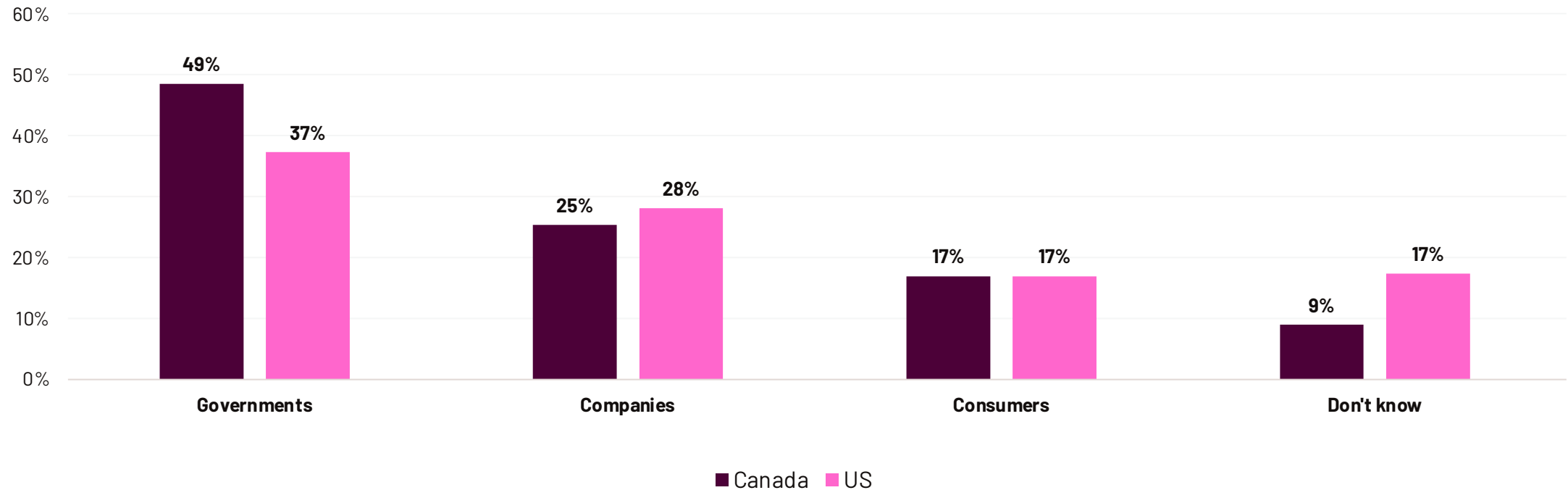
Beyond the broad benefits of increased representation, the character of Makkari has triggered a surge in people looking to learn sign language. According to research by Preply (via Independent), there's been a **250%** increase in searches for "learn sign language for beginners" in the past year, whilst the movie has also prompted more open caption screenings for people who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing.

The story of Makkari marks another positive step and further evidence that representation of people with disabilities in media is increasing. **Nielsen** found that the representation of people with disabilities in the media had increased **175%** in the past decade. Still not enough is being done though, as demonstrated by the 2020-21 **GLAAD** (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) study, which found that only **3.5%** of series regulars on broadcast scripted series were characters with disabilities.

North American companies should advance equality

Marvel's deaf character, Makkari, marks a laudable example of an entertainment brand advancing causes related to inequality. Research shows that this is an issue where many North Americans feel companies should be taking a lead.

Who do you think is most responsible for promoting equality?





SOUTH AMERICA



Diversity in management

- D&I roles are concentrated in São Paulo, Brazil, and many continue to be within DevOp based companies: GitLab and AWS.
- In general, this quarter has seen fewer D&I roles within the region.
- There are more flexible work roles being offered such as, remote D&I roles rather than in-person or hybrid roles.

Diversity and Inclusion roles posted on LinkedIn



GitLab

VP, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging – Chile & Mexico at GitLab

Posted in Jan 2022



Regional Gender Equality Diversity & Inclusion Director for LatAm – Colombia at The International Rescue Committee

Posted in Dec 2021

Teach For All
A Global Network

Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Organizational Development (remote) at Teach For All

Posted in Jan 2022

amazon

Head Of Dei, Prime Video Brazil, Prime Video Diversity, Equity at Amazon

Posted in Jan 2022

Dakota launches prosthetic-friendly shoes



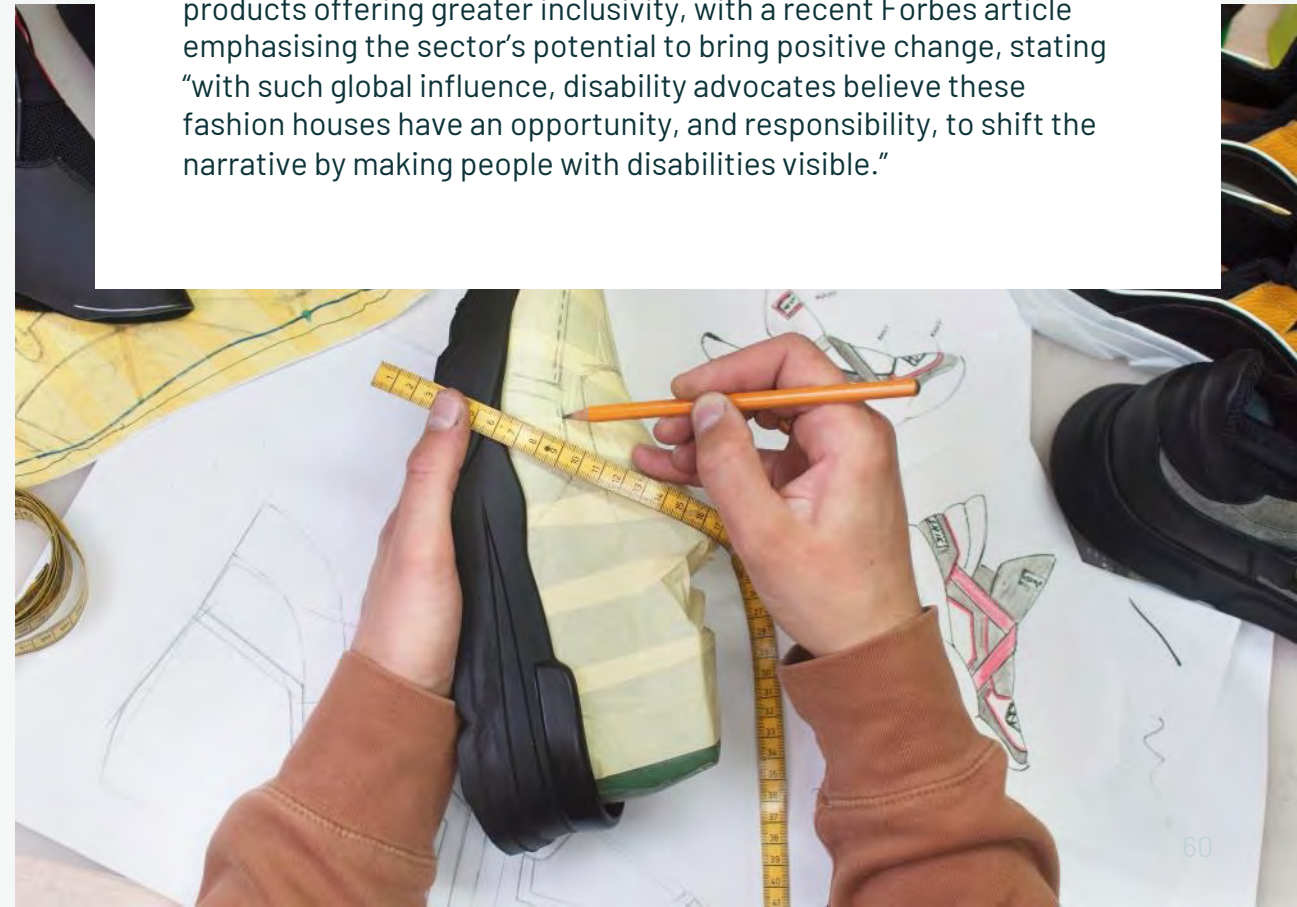
Dakota is launching its new line of shoes with the primary goal of being more inclusive and offering better adaptation for the use of orthopaedic prostheses.

The company decided to launch this line after consumers commented about the lack of accessibility for people with disabilities in its feedback reports.

Source: Mintel

Why is this important?

Fashion is an area where brands are starting to launch more products offering greater inclusivity, with a recent Forbes article emphasising the sector's potential to bring positive change, stating "with such global influence, disability advocates believe these fashion houses have an opportunity, and responsibility, to shift the narrative by making people with disabilities visible."



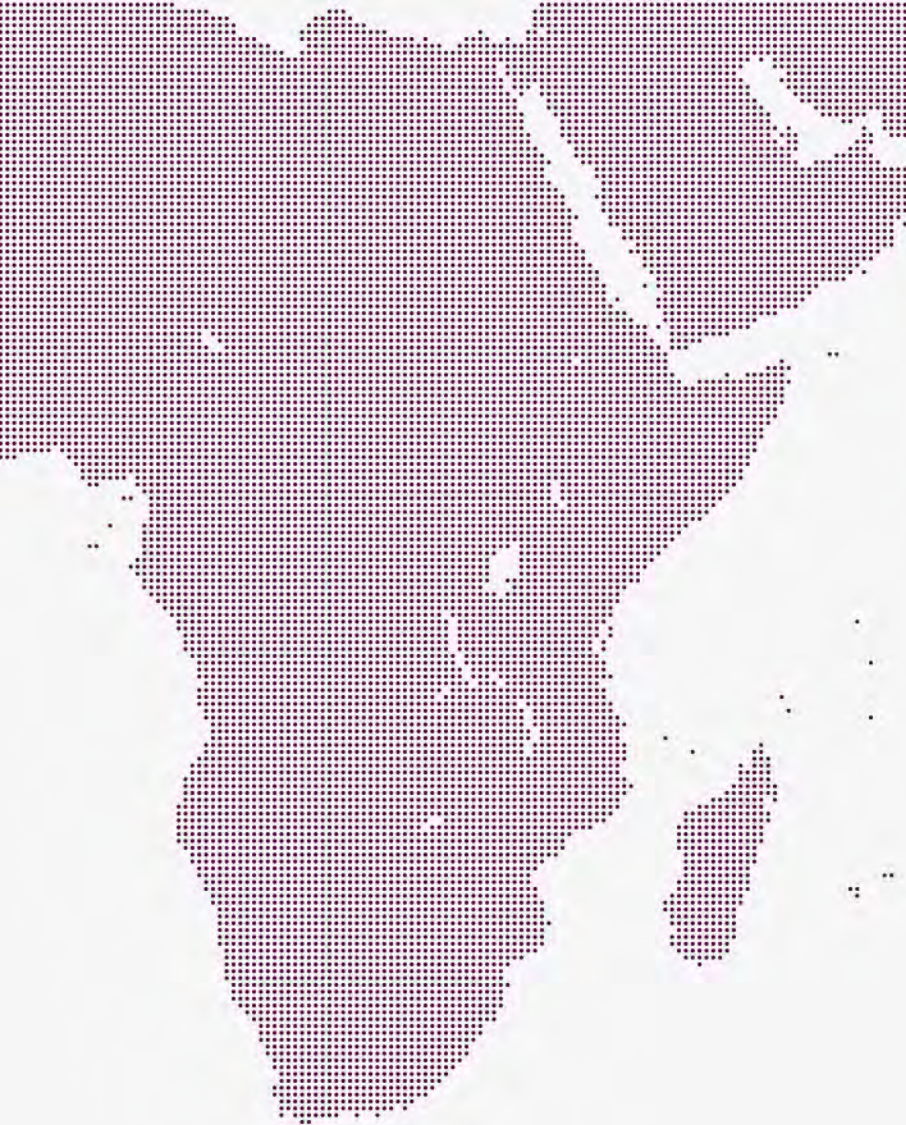
Claro launches smartphone for hearing disabilities

In Colombia, **Claro** is the largest provider of mobile phone services in the country and is launching new prepaid and contract cell phone plans specifically for consumers who have hearing impairments or disabilities.



Services include text messages, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Centro Relevo, a technological platform that facilitates communication among people with hearing disabilities with the assistance of sign-language interpreters.





MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA



Diversity in management

- D&I roles are concentrated in hospitality, consultancy and tech sectors.
- The majority of roles are being posted in the UAE and South Africa.
- There is a large emphasis of global corporations hiring within this region.

Diversity and Inclusion roles posted on LinkedIn



**Diversity & Inclusion Partner
- UAE at Emirates**
Posted in Jan 2022



**Internal Client Services -
Associate Director: Diversity
& Inclusion - South Africa
at Deloitte**
Posted in Sept 2021



**Enterprise Inclusion and
Diversity Leader - Abu
Dhabi at GHD**
Posted in Jan 2022



**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Business Partner - Dubai,
Cape Town at Amazon**
Posted in Dec 2021

Asian Youth Paralympic Games 2021 held in Bahrain

The fourth **Asian Youth Paralympic Games** took place in Manama, Bahrain from 2-6 December, 2021. Most participating nations ended up winning at least one medal to make the event a resounding success.

Around 750 Para athletes were in attendance from 30 countries. The competitions included nine sports: Para athletics, Para badminton, Boccia, goalball, Para powerlifting, Para swimming, Para table tennis, wheelchair basketball and - for the first time - Para Taekwondo.

Iran triumphed in the total medal haul, followed by Thailand and Japan, with Singapore notably receiving 10 medals. Overall, the fourth annual games suggested that Paralympian talent is especially strong in the region.



Source: International Paralympic Committee



"By providing more opportunities for our young Para athletes to compete, these Games play an important role in our strategy to grow the Paralympic Movement in Asia. This is needed because even though more athletes from Asia competed at the Tokyo Paralympic Games earlier this year, Asia is still under-represented with only 24% of athletes in Tokyo from our region, whereas Asia accounts for 60% of the world's population."

Majid Rashed – Asian Paralympic Committee President

Nigeria's police launch disability helpdesk service

The helpdesk service has been specifically designed to provide those with disabilities better access to police services.

Launched in Abuja, the desk for the **Persons with Disability (PWD)**, unique to the **NPF**, seeks to advocate for and challenge stigma against people with disabilities by offering support to meet their specific needs. The NPF will train police officers with the necessary skills to remove access barriers and identify other obstacles that limit engagement. Currently in operation in one Nigerian state, the helpdesk service will eventually be rolled out nationwide.



Why is this important?

The pandemic has made inequalities more apparent and more visible and created new ones for those unable to access the services they need. We've seen this in regard to access to the greener option of public transport, but the same goes for public services too. This new government initiative meets people with disabilities' essential right to feel safe, comfortable and a part of the community.

86%

of Nigerian consumers say they prefer to be involved with institutions/brands that promote equality.

The Holistic Consumer – Global, September 2021



CONCLUSION



Welcoming cultures

Businesses need to take a holistic view to creating open, welcoming environments, ensuring that they are inclusive at every level. This means supporting diversity for employees and customers through policies and programmes across hiring, training, digital interfaces and in store facilities.

Inclusive design

People with disabilities' exclusion from sustainable solutions and participation in the metaverse highlights the need to build inclusivity into design and product and service development from the outset, rather than attempt to retrofit it after the event.

Coherent campaigns

Portraying diversity is the easiest part for media campaigns, but inclusivity needs to be delivered across every aspect of product launches, from practical accessibility, to on-pack and digital communications, in order for them to offer full accessibility and engagement.

DISABILITY
IS OUR
BUSINESS.

 Valuable
500

