

# DISABILITY INCLUSION AND ESG

The Valuable 500 Global Trends Report

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# This report contains...

01

## Executive summary

Identifying the most notable trends in the period December 2022 – March 2023

02

## Let's discuss

Discussion on this issue's topic of interest – **Disability inclusion and ESG**

03

## The global view

Analysis of notable moves, changes or developments at a global level

04

## Regional perspectives

4a. Europe

4b. Asia Pacific

4c. North America

4d. South America

4e. Middle East and Africa

05

## Conclusion

Recommendations





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Identifying the most notable trends in the  
period December 2022 — March 2023



## GLOBAL TRENDS

- 01 International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022.**  
The annual celebration has seen a huge increase in interest and engagement year-on-year.
- 02 On-screen disability representation.**  
2022 was a year of progress and innovation but there are signs commitment to disability representation is waning.
- 03 The global energy crisis.**  
Rising costs of fuel and food are having a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities worldwide.
- 04 Remote working for people with disabilities.**  
Flexible working practices can be beneficial for the disabled community but data suggests they're not a fix-all solution.
- 05 Health equity for disabled people.**  
New research highlights the disparity in health equity for disabled people globally.

## REGIONAL TRENDS

- 06 Disability employment targets and reporting.**  
Companies around the world are beginning to include disability data in ESG reporting.
- 07 Assistive and adaptive products in new sectors.**  
The beauty and fashion industries have become the latest to launch bespoke solutions for disabled consumers.
- 08 Changing values towards ESG compliance.**  
Gen Z and millennials increasingly identify environmental, social and governance issues among top global priorities.
- 09 Disability inclusion in the tech industry.**  
From manufacturers to service providers, the tech industry is displaying a strong commitment to disability inclusion.
- 10 Accessibility in travel and tourism.**  
The focus on inequality in the travel industry continues, prompting many businesses to provide solutions.





# LET'S DISCUSS

Disability inclusion and ESG



# The rise of ESG.

ESG, Environmental, Social and Governance, refers to the three key pillars which can be used to measure the sustainability and ethical impact of a company.

The goal of ESG is to develop a framework through which the non-financial risks and opportunities inherent to a company's day-to-day activities can be assessed.

- The **environmental** criteria encompass a company's impact on the conservation and protection of the natural world and the sustainability of business practices.
- The **social** criteria refer to the company's impact on employees and society, concerning issues regarding business ethics, how companies treat their labour force and their interactions with the local community.
- The corporate **governance** criteria evaluate the composition of the board and the way management conduct themselves and navigate the business.

In 2023 these factors are becoming a top priority for businesses, as more and more investors are now incorporating ESG elements into their decision-making processes, meaning ESG is increasingly important to securing capital, both debt and equity.

The **Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report** found that 54% of institutional investors held that companies that implement effective ESG win trust among investors. In addition, the 2021 **Porter Novelli Purpose Premium Index (PPI)** found that 73% of investors argue that organisations requiring their support must first demonstrate how they support the environment and communities.

And this is a growing trend. According to data presented by **MIT Sloan Management**, from 2018 to 2020, earnings call transcripts saw a 671% increase in references to ESG and a 751% increase in references to diversity, equity and inclusion.

**ESG is now a top priority for investors.**

**2018 – 2020 earnings call transcripts show:**

**671%**

**increase in references to ESG**

**751%**

**increase in references to diversity, equity and inclusion**

**(MIT Sloan Management)**

# Reporting requirements and changing investor values.

Around the world, companies are becoming subject to stricter reporting requirements and a growing investor-values trend towards ESG.

Data shows that the social impact agenda is incredibly important to younger investors, with 84% of millennial investors stating that they are interested in investment projects founded on the impact concept.

Additionally, in 2022 the **Dubai Investment Fund (DIF)**, one of the world's largest global independent investment funds and asset managers, announced the creation of an ESG investment department, monitoring global and local ESG markets to discover promising investment opportunities and stay on top of this emerging trend.

As well as changing investor values, businesses today must comply with more stringent ESG reporting requirements in multiple markets. On April 21, 2021, the European Commission adopted the sustainable finance package, including the proposed **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)**, which reforms and greatly increases the scope of reporting required. This means that from 2024, almost 50,000 companies in the EU must report on ESG issues.

This trend is also extending to markets that have traditionally lagged behind on their ESG commitments. In 2021, India introduced new ESG reporting requirements for the top 1,000 listed companies in the country by market capitalisation, which are mandatory for FY 2022 – 23.



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“  
Profits and purpose are  
inextricably linked.

Larry Fink, Chairman and CEO,  
Blackrock

# ESG and brand value.

ESG is also an important factor for companies to consider outside of the investment framework.

Data shows an increased interest in companies' social impact, meaning that ESG compliance can help attract new customers and employees, and promote loyalty among both groups.

## Employees

Porter Novelli's 2021 **Business & Social Justice Study** found that 58% of employees feel that their employers should lead in initiating higher standards to address social justice issues. In addition, 43% expressed dissatisfaction and unwillingness to continue working in their current companies because their employers 'are not on the frontline to address social justice'.

This trend is magnified among Gen Z and millennial talent. In 2016, the **Cone Communications Millennial Employee Engagement Study** found that 64% of millennials are not interested in working for companies that don't value social responsibility. Data from **Deloitte** also shows that 52% of Gen Z and 55% of millennials expressed their interest in working work for organisations with a strong purpose and mission toward social change.

Increasingly, employees are also willing to leave jobs based on their ESG values. The **2023 Net Positive Employee Barometer** revealed that nearly half of employees say they would consider resigning if a company's values don't align with their own, while a third of employees say they have already resigned for this reason, suggesting a rise in 'conscious quitting'.

**1/2** of employees would consider resigning if a company's values don't align with their own.

**1/3** have already resigned for this reason.

## Customers

Key insights from the **CONE Communications CSR Study** state that 70% of respondents believe businesses are responsible for improving issues relevant to the community, and that 73% of Americans are willing to stop purchasing from companies with different perspectives on caring for things that matter to communities. A study by **Unilever** which surveyed 20,000 adults from five countries also found that 33% of global consumers buy from brands doing social or environmental good.

ESG is even more important to Gen Z consumers, with 89% expressing their commitment to purchasing from companies that support social and environmental impact, and 65% claiming to evaluate a company's CSR efforts before making a purchase decision.

This can have a huge impact on customer loyalty, as research from **Zeno** shows that consumers are six times more likely to protect the company's image against public criticism when a brand develops a strong purpose in promoting social and environmental issues.

# Disability inclusion and ESG.

Disability inclusion is a key factor within the ESG framework across each of the three pillars.

- **Environmental:** The requirement to ensure the sustainability of built environments and future-proof business practices mean that companies must adhere to accessibility regulations and cater to ageing populations.
- **Social:** The criteria relating to how companies treat their labour force and the local community extends to equal access to employment for people with disabilities, health and safety compliance and the provision of products and services to the disabled community.
- **Governance:** The evaluation of board composition and management practices necessitates representation of disabled people at leadership level, as well as corporate strategies for disability inclusion.

From an investor perspective, evidence also suggests that disability-inclusive businesses perform better. Companies that specifically prioritise disability inclusion practices have been found to benefit from increased productivity and lower employee turnover rates, while developing a more positive public image.

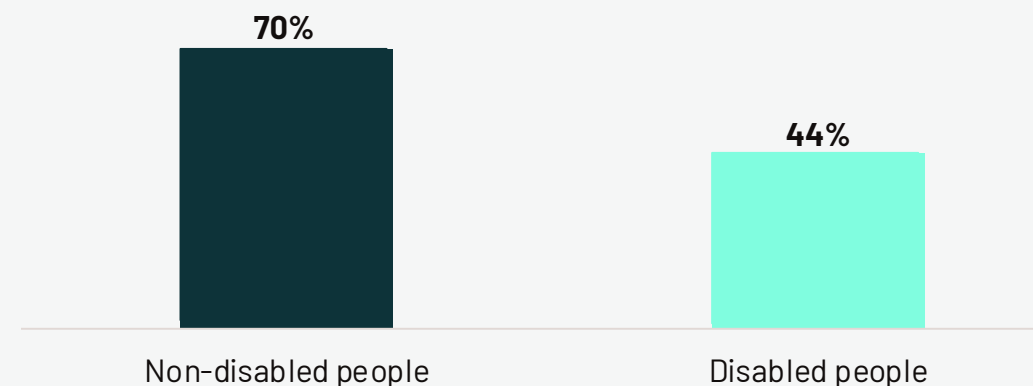
In fact, **Accenture** found that companies that embraced best practices for employing and supporting people with disabilities achieved 28% higher revenue, double the net income and 30% higher economic profit margins over a four-year period.

In addition, according to the 2022 **JUST 100**, an annual ranking of America's largest publicly traded companies on issues that matter in defining just business behaviour, JUST 100 companies had a 4.4% higher return on equity and paid 19.2% more in dividends than their peers.

Effective disability inclusion strategies can also help win the war on talent. Globally, the disability employment gap means that people with disabilities represent a huge, untapped pool of talent. The employment rate of people with disabilities in OECD countries is just 44% vs. 70% for people without a disability. In developing countries this gap is even wider, with an estimated 80% – 90% of people with disabilities of working age currently unemployed.

Furthermore legislation around the world, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the US and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in the UK, requires the equal inclusion of disabled people in the labour market. Failure to comply with such legislation exposes companies to significant financial and reputational risk.

## Employment rate of disabled people compared to non-disabled people in OECD countries



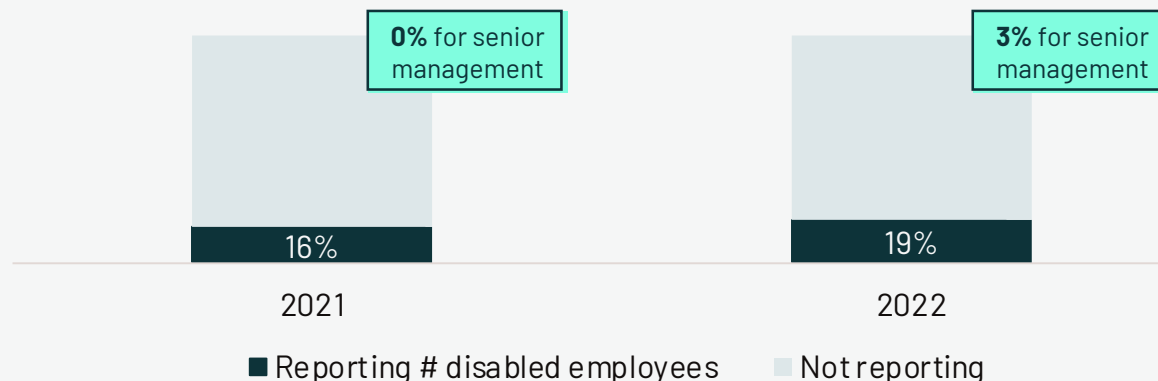
# Disability-specific reporting.

Despite the overwhelming evidence in support of including disability data in ESG frameworks, it is strikingly absent from standardised key performance indicators, metrics or targets through which organisations measure their impact.

Disability benchmarking data in the corporate environment is limited in availability and global relevance, often only widely reported in countries such as the UK and the US.

The **Tortoise Responsibility100 Index** found that just 19 of the FTSE 100 companies report the number of employees with disabilities in their workforce – up from 16 in 2021 – with 15% being the highest proportion reported. It also found that only three of the FTSE 100 companies (**BT**, **Centrica** and **Landsec**) reported disability representation in senior management, up from zero in 2021.

## FTSE 100 disability reporting



# 22%

of Valuable 500 companies publicly disclosed workforce representation percentages.

In 2022, **the Valuable 500** undertook a formal analysis of FY 2020 – 2021 annual reports produced by the companies within its Collective. These included Annual Reports and Accounts, ESG reports, sustainability reports, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) reports, and impact reports. This analysis showed that 22% of Valuable 500 companies publicly disclosed workforce representation percentages.

This suggests that while disability reporting may be improving, there is still a long way to go before such data is capable of being included equitably within the ESG framework.

However, investors are now beginning to apply pressure on companies to improve reporting standards. In 2021, investors asked **Nasdaq** to include people with disabilities in a new boardroom diversity rule for most of its US listed companies. Additionally, a recent study by **The Conference Board** and **ESGUAGE** analysed 348 ESG proxy proposals at Russell 3000 companies in the first half of last year. It found that among the proposals voted on, the highest level of average support (69%) was recorded for proposals requiring companies to publicly disclose their workforce diversity data.



# The future of ESG.

**In order to satisfy the growing importance of ESG, businesses must prioritise socially material issues even in periods of economic downturn.**

A recent survey from **EY** exposes a wide gap between expectations of business leaders and investors on sustainability. While 78% of investors want companies to focus on environmental, social, and governance activity, even if it hits short-term profits, only 55% of businesses are willing to do so. Additionally, 76% of investors say businesses 'cherry pick' disclosure.

This expectation gap will continue to be problematic, especially given the current global economic downturn. Companies that made promises to hire more underrepresented groups are disbanding departments meant to achieve those goals, as evidenced by the huge layoffs in the tech sector in Q4 of 2022 and Q1 of 2023.

More than 45,000 employees have already been let go across the sector, from companies including **Microsoft**, **Meta** and **Lyft**. At **Twitter**, the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) team has been reduced from 30 people to just two, while the accessibility team, responsible for creating digital equity for disabled people on the platform, has been disbanded entirely.

It is likely that job cuts and loss of profits may slow or prevent further development concerning DEI and accessibility initiatives across many sectors over the course of 2023.

However, with the appetite for ESG reporting and compliance still growing among investors, customers and employees, it is imperative that businesses seek to improve reporting standards and balance financially material issues with social impact, including disability inclusion.



**78%** of investors want focus on ESG over short-term profits.

**55%** of companies are willing to do this.

**76%** of investors say businesses 'cherry pick' disclosure.



# THE GLOBAL VIEW

Analysis of notable moves,  
changes or development at  
a global level



# Global trends

01

## **International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022.**

The annual celebration has seen a huge increase in interest and engagement year-on-year.

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## **On-screen disability representation.**

2022 was a year of progress and innovation but there are signs commitment to disability representation is waning.

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## **The global energy crisis.**

Rising costs of fuel and food are having a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities worldwide.

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## **Remote working for people with disabilities.**

Flexible and hybrid working practices can be beneficial for the disabled community, but are not a fix-all solution.

05

## **Health equity for disabled people.**

New research highlights the disparity in health equity for disabled people globally.

### **North America**

New research suggests a clear correlation between remote working and increased employment for people with disabilities.

### **Europe**

UK broadcasters have been particularly active in the move towards greater on-screen representation for disabled people this quarter.

### **South America**

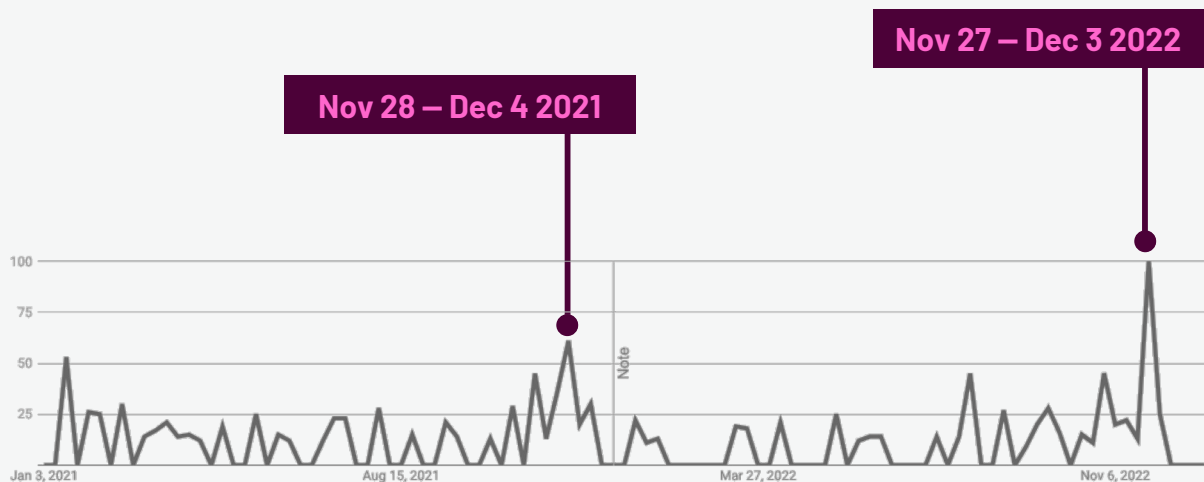
Caribbean countries are taking positive steps towards health equity for disabled people in disaster management strategies.

# International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2022.

IDPD, celebrated annually on December 3, serves to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilise support for the dignity, rights and wellbeing of disabled people.

The theme set by the **United Nations** for IDPD 2022 was 'Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fuelling an accessible and equitable world'. The theme was designed to integrate with the central premise of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** to 'leave no one behind', encouraging governments and public and private sector organisations to collaboratively find innovative solutions to make the world a more accessible and equitable place.

Analysis of **Google Trends** data from January 1, 2021 – January 1, 2023 shows the growing interest in IDPD worldwide year-on-year (YoY):



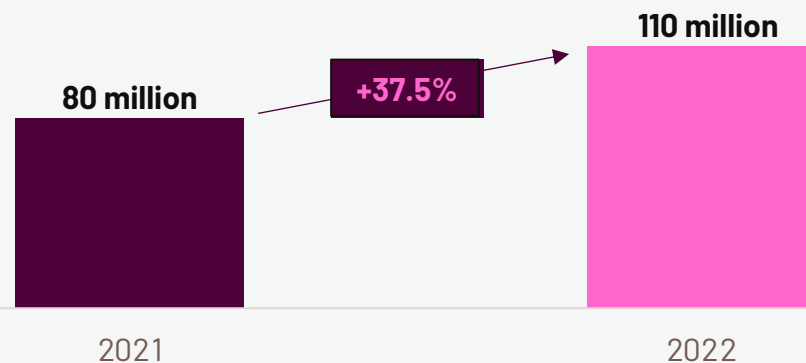
Sources: [United Nations](#), [Google Trends](#), Puzzle, the Valuable 500

Tracking brand mentions, the Valuable 500 noticed a number of trending hashtags, including: #IDPD2022, #InclusionMeansAction, #IDPD, #Disability, #Inclusion and #DisabilityInclusion. The most popular hashtag used was #IDPD2022.



The impact of IDPD-related social media posts by Valuable 500 members alone also saw a huge YoY increase, reaching over **110 million** people on LinkedIn, compared with **80 million** in 2021. Across all social media channels, the total number of people reached was **135 million**. This growth is evidence of the increasing importance of the event to businesses worldwide.

## YoY growth of IDPD among Valuable 500 companies



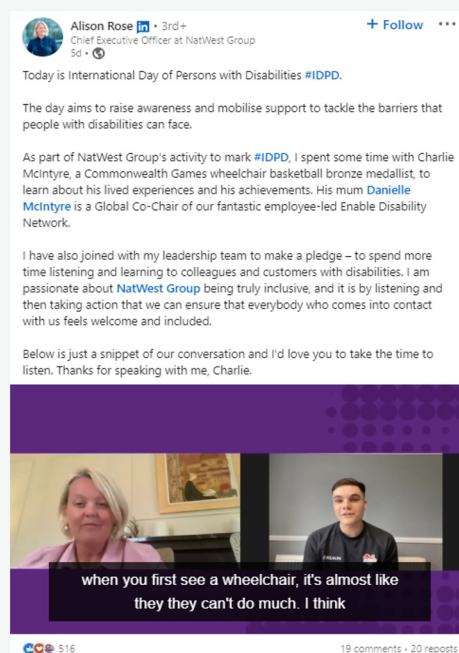


# IDPD 2022 (continued).

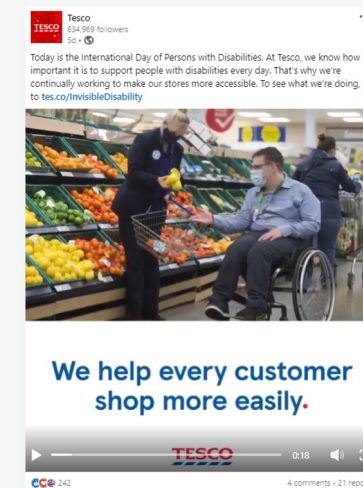
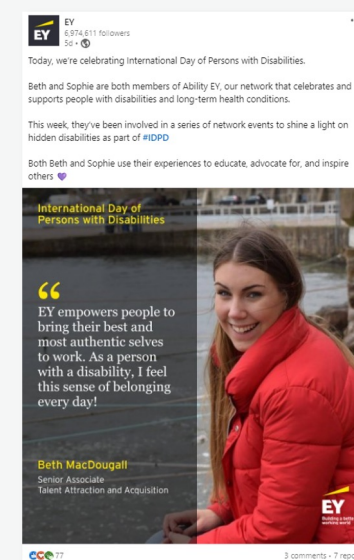
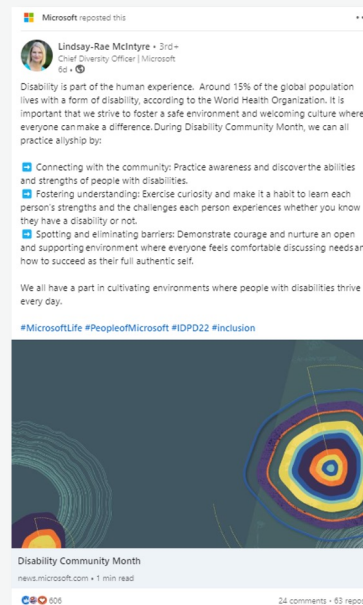
2022 saw a marked shift in the subject matter of social media posts relating to IDPD, with more companies and business leaders sharing personal stories of disability, and demonstrating impact.

Posts from business leaders in 2022 tended to highlight their own personal connection to disability and/or their commitment to working with disabled people.

Paul Hewitt, the Global Head of Creative at **Deliveroo** spoke about his own experience of disability, while **Natwest Group** CEO, Alison Rose, pledged to spend more time listening to and learning from colleagues and customers with disabilities.


[Executive summary](#)
[Let's discuss](#)
[The global view](#)
[Regional perspectives](#)
[Conclusion](#)

Many businesses chose to focus on disabled employees and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) in their posts. For example, **EY** shared quotes from members of its ERG, **Ability EY**.



There was also a trend towards demonstrating progress. **Microsoft** shared a post from its Chief Diversity Officer about how to be an ally during Disability Community Month, while **Tesco** shared a video of how it has made its stores accessible for disabled people. Comments on these posts were positive, with many organisations being commended for their actions by employees.

# Is on-screen disability representation finally improving?

2022 was an important year for on-screen disability representation, but the start of 2023 has seen commitment from major advertisers begin to decline.

People with disabilities are hugely under-represented and inauthentically portrayed in media and advertising. According to **Nielsen Gracenote Inclusion Analytics**, as of December 2022, 7,556 video titles included disability thematic attributes, but that number represents just 4.1% of the 183,089 total titles released during the same period.

However, the latter half of 2022 saw a number of global megabrands, including **Apple** and **Amazon**, launch ads featuring disabled people in leading roles. For IDPD 2022, Apple released 'The Greatest', a film showcasing the power of accessibility for disabled people. It featured people with disabilities using accessible Apple technology, and included captions and an audio-described version.

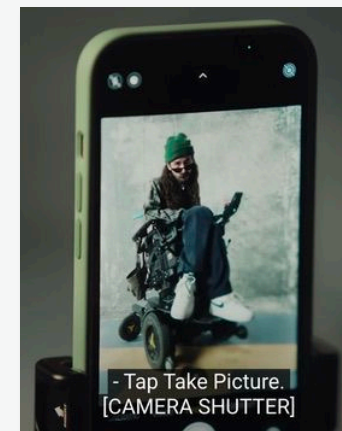
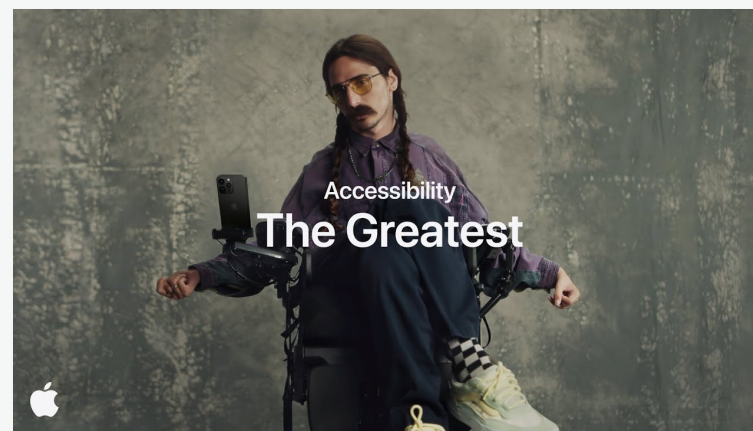
This film also demonstrates a wider trend within on-screen disability representation towards portrayals of disabled people leading their everyday lives, as opposed to winning gold medals and achieving the impossible, a depiction sometimes known as 'inspiration porn'.

2022 also saw a major development in tracking disability representation on screen, as **Nielsen's** TV content analysis company **Gracenote** announced in December that it will begin tracking on-screen disability representation as part of its inclusion data. This is an important first step towards monitoring progress.

Improving representation in advertising is key to companies engaging with disabled audiences. **Nielsen's 2022 Attitudes on Representation on TV study** found that:

- **48% of viewers 'are more likely to watch content in which their identity group is represented', up 13% from the previous year.**
- **34% of people with disabilities surveyed said they 'felt under-represented in media'.**
- **52% said they were 'inaccurately represented'.**

In spite of these findings, analysis by **AdAge** has revealed that the majority of casts, crews and directors behind the 2023 Super Bowl commercials were non-disabled white men. It appears, as the ad industry's focus on commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion has waned, so too has advertisers' progress in representation both in front of and behind the camera. It is vital that in 2023, brands continue to commit to improving on-screen disability representation in order to engage with disabled consumers.





# The global energy crisis.

**Record prices, fuel shortages, rising poverty and slowing economies are just a few of the consequences of the energy crisis having a huge impact on people with disabilities.**

Energy markets began to tighten in 2021 because of a variety of factors, including the extraordinarily rapid economic rebound following the pandemic. However, the situation escalated dramatically into a full-blown global energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Higher energy prices and the increased cost of living have contributed to painfully high inflation, pushed families into poverty, forced some factories to curtail output or even shut down, and slowed economic growth to the point that some countries are heading towards severe recession.

In emerging and developing economies, where the share of household budgets spent on energy and food is already large, higher energy bills have increased extreme poverty and set back progress towards achieving universal energy access. Even in advanced economies, rising prices have impacted vulnerable households and caused significant economic, social and political strains.

The cost of living crisis has shone a harsh light on different groups' ability to deal with fast-rising prices, particularly the disabled community. People with disabilities are more vulnerable to rising costs of essentials because energy and food make up a greater share of their budgets, on average, than for non-disabled people, in part because of additional needs caused by underlying health problems.

In 2021, a study from **the University of Leeds** revealed that disabled households in the European Union (EU) are 5% more likely to experience energy poverty. Using consumption data from 19 countries in the EU, the **Sustainability Research Institute**, showed that while disabled people use 10% less energy than other households on average, this is not through choice, but necessity.

A new study published in January 2023 by the **Resolution Foundation** surveyed 8,000 working-age adults in Britain, over 2,000 of whom reported a long-term illness or disability. Almost half (48%) of disabled adults say they have had to cut back on energy use this winter, compared to 32% of people without a disability.

41% of people with a disability also said they couldn't afford to keep their homes warm compared to 23% of the non-disabled population, and 31% of disabled people say they have had to reduce their expenditure on food, compared to 18% of non-disabled people.

Governments and businesses must offer targeted support for the disabled community to prevent disabled people worldwide being forced into fuel poverty.

**48%** of disabled people have had to cut back on energy use this winter.

**41%** of disabled people can't afford to keep their homes warm.

**31%** of disabled people have had to reduce their food expenditure.

# Remote working for people with disabilities.

The move towards flexible and hybrid working initially benefitted people with disabilities, but data shows it is only one part of the equation.

More widespread acceptance of remote working practices, initially triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, represented a positive shift for disabled people.

Working from home removes many of the barriers to disabled people accessing employment. These can include having to travel to work using inaccessible public transport systems, inaccessible working environments and fixed working hours.

It is therefore unsurprising that research published in 2022 by the **Economic Innovation Group** suggests a clear correlation between remote working and growth in the employment rate for people with disabilities. Disabled people of working age are 3.5 percentage points more likely to be employed in Q2 2022 than they were pre-pandemic.

However, new research from **Instant Offices** suggests that flexible working is an improvement but not a 'fix-all' solution to the equitable inclusion of disabled people in the job market.

The data shows the mixed feelings of people with disabilities towards remote working. For example, 63% say flexible working gave them greater control of their working hours but 60% said they missed social interactions with their co-workers. In addition, while 26% of workers with disabilities said their mental health improved working from home, 30% reported that their mental health had worsened.

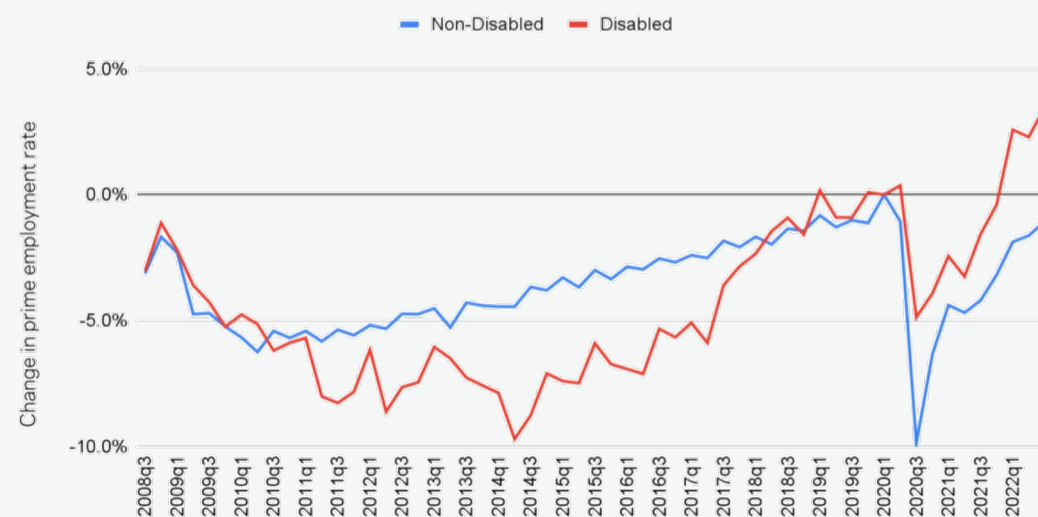
Sources: [Economic Innovation Group](#), [Forbes](#), [Instant Offices](#)

While the increase in flexible and hybrid working has been beneficial, it has also highlighted the need for accommodations and accessibility outside the traditional office environment.

34% of respondents said they lack proper office equipment at home, 7% lack the specialist software needed to do their work and 9% struggled to use online meeting platforms.

This data points to the need for organisations worldwide to provide adequate equipment and training for remote workers, in order to maximise their productivity. It also serves to highlight that flexible and remote working practices must not come at the expense of employees' mental health and organisational culture.

## Prime Employment Rate: Change from Q4 2019



# Health equity for disabled people.

## New research highlights the disparity in health equity for disabled people worldwide.

In December 2022, the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** published the '**Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities**'. The report demonstrates that while some progress has been made in recent years, the world is still far from realising health equity for people with disabilities, who continue to die earlier, have poorer health, experience more limitations in everyday functioning than others and are more affected by health emergencies than the general population.

For example, people with disabilities have higher rates of premature mortality compared to people without disabilities. This is evident in people with intellectual disabilities across all life stages: children are eight times more likely to die before the age of 17 years and in the older age range, more people with intellectual and developmental disabilities die within 30 days of hospitalisation than those without disabilities.

In addition, a higher incidence of diseases is found in people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities. This includes conditions such as tuberculosis, diabetes, stroke, sexually transmitted infections or cardiovascular problems.

A major factor for the increased mortality and morbidity among people with disabilities is their limited or delayed access to quality health services. This is in part due to a lack of trust in the healthcare system. A recent survey by **Sanofi** of 11,500 people from across the US, France, the UK, Japan, and Brazil reveals that 73% of people with disabilities reported that they have had experiences that damaged their trust in healthcare, compared to 56% of non-disabled people.

The survey also highlights the compounding effect of marginalisation. People who fell into more than one marginalised group were significantly more likely to have had a bad experience while seeking care.

For example, in the US, 80% of people who have disabilities and identify as LGBTQ+ reported losing trust in the healthcare system due to their personal experience, compared with 56% of people without those backgrounds.

In response to the findings, Sanofi suggests three steps to close the trust gap:

- 1. Diversify the healthcare workforce – patients of all backgrounds need providers of all backgrounds.**
- 2. Invest in prevention – focusing on treatment alone is insufficient.**
- 3. Listen – the top reason patients cited for losing trust was that they did not feel their provider listened to them.**

**Achieving health and well-being for all must include addressing the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing the health services they need.**

**Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,  
WHO Director-General**



# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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



# Regional trends

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## North America

The US travel and tourism sector is beginning to solve systemic accessibility problems.

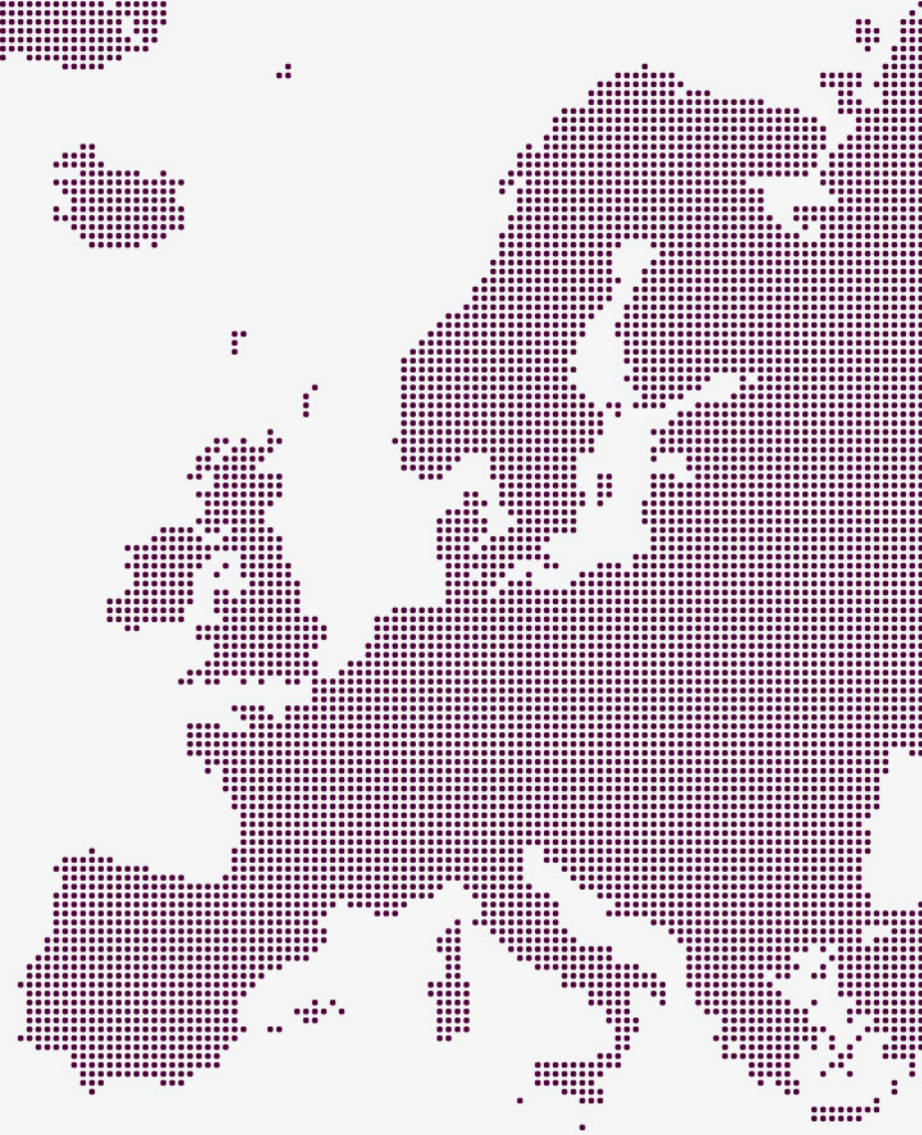
## Europe

Major European fashion and beauty brands are innovating to bring assistive technology and adaptive clothing to their disabled consumers.

## Asia Pacific

The region has seen an increased focus on accessibility and inclusion within the tech industry.





# Europe





# Hiring trends

- Between September 2021 and September 2022, overall hiring rates across Europe slowed. In the UK and the Netherlands, the hiring rate fell by 11%, in Spain by 8%, in Germany by 5% and in France and Italy by 4%. This decline has been mirrored by a decrease in the number of diversity, inclusion and accessibility roles advertised.
- Workers across Europe are bracing for an economic downturn, with many candidates and employees reporting decreased confidence in their ability to improve their financial situation in the next six months. In Germany there was a -7 point change and in the UK, a -10 point change.
- The number of remote and hybrid job postings has slowly decreased but views and applications for these roles are holding strong across the region. However, the diversity and inclusion space is still seeing a large proportion of hybrid roles advertised.



Sources: [LinkedIn UK](#), [LinkedIn France](#), [LinkedIn Germany](#)

## Sample of diversity, inclusion, accessibility and ESG roles posted on LinkedIn (December 2022 – March 2023)



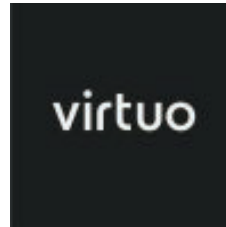
**Creative Diversity – 50:50 the Equality Project Internal Lead**  
BBC  
(UK, Hybrid)



**Head of Inclusion and People**  
Sported  
(UK, Hybrid)



**Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Industrial Placement 2023**  
L'Oréal  
(UK)



**Corporate and Social Responsibility Internship**  
Virtuo  
(France, Hybrid)



**Diversity and Inclusion Consultant**  
KOMMLINK GmbH  
(Germany, Hybrid)



**Global Program Communications & DEI Specialist EMEA**  
Dexcom  
(Ireland, Remote)

# Major European corporations commit to disability employment targets.

Inditex and Telefónica join the list of European corporations pledging to increase the number of employees with disabilities.

**Telefónica's** Global Diversity Council, made up of senior company executives, recently approved the objective of doubling the number of employees with disabilities in the workforce by 2024.

To achieve this, the company aims to raise awareness among its people, in order to overcome unconscious biases and normalise disability in the workplace. This has involved holding regular courses and workshops aimed at all employees and areas with significant responsibilities.

**We believe that the talent of our people is the only thing that matters. That's why, at Telefónica, we are committed to doubling the number of employees with disabilities globally over the next two years.**

Laura Abasolo, Chief Financial and Control Officer & Chair of T. Hispam, Telefónica

*Telefónica*

**INDITEX**

**Inditex**, the owner of Zara, has also announced that it is to double its number of employees with disabilities worldwide within two years.

This will include boosting the inclusion of people with differing abilities across its stores, logistics platforms, warehouses and offices and could mean that as many as 1,500 people with some form of disability will join the business.

Inditex's Chief Executive, Óscar García Maceiras, announced the commitment at a meeting with Gilbert Hounbo, the Director General of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, after the company endorsed the ILO Global Business and Disability Network, which promotes disability inclusion in the workplace.

The company stated that the collaboration is a major step forward in Inditex's disability inclusion strategy, which focuses on championing inclusive recruiting and career development, fostering accessible workplaces conducive to ensuring equal opportunities, facilitating an inclusive shopping experience, and raising teams' awareness of disability.

Publishing employment targets is a vital step towards closing the disability employment gap. However, it is also important that such targets are accompanied by accurate reporting on progress in annual reports, so that companies can be held accountable for their commitments.

# More fashion brands launch adaptive ranges.

Major players in both the traditional and online retail markets have announced new adaptive clothing ranges for people with disabilities.

In Q4 of 2022, online fashion platform **Zalando** entered the adaptive fashion market, launching more than 140 adaptive styles spanning five of its private labels. The designs will be available in all 25 of Zalando's markets, and will include men's and women's clothing, as well as footwear, with prices ranging from €12.99 to €89.99.

The styles on offer include seated clothes fit for wheelchair users, sensory-friendly styles for skin sensitivities or neuro-divergences, styles with easy closures and styles suitable for prosthetics or bandages.



**Sensory friendly**  
Wear what feels good



**Seated style**  
For sitting in comfort



**Easy closures**  
More flair, less fuss



**Fit for prostheses**  
Dress with stylish ease



In February 2023, George at **Asda** also announced the launch of an adapted clothing range in support of independent dressing for children and young people with disabilities, marking a first for a UK supermarket. The everyday casualwear 'Easy On Easy Wear' collection has been specially adapted to make independent dressing easier for people with additional needs and reduced mobility.

The 24-piece range, for kids aged 3 to 16 years, features discreet and practical modifications including hidden hook and loop fasteners on necklines to make slipping sweatshirts and tees on and off more comfortable. Other features include higher backs and longer legs to ensure a level waistband and perfect leg length when seated, and holes added to make access easier for feeding tubes. George also incorporated soft threads and removed care labels to prevent potential irritation and support children with sensory needs.

George's Buying Manager, Vicki Radford, enlisted the help of 14-year-old Ava Joliffe, an award-winning deaf and blind artist from Preston, to consult on the accessibility and design of the range.

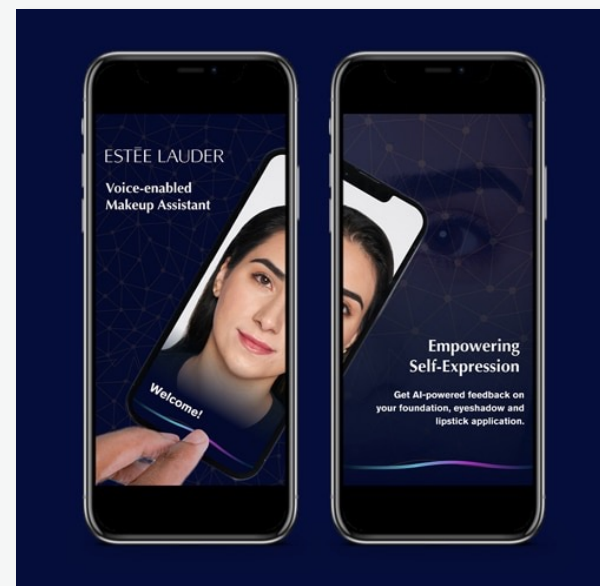
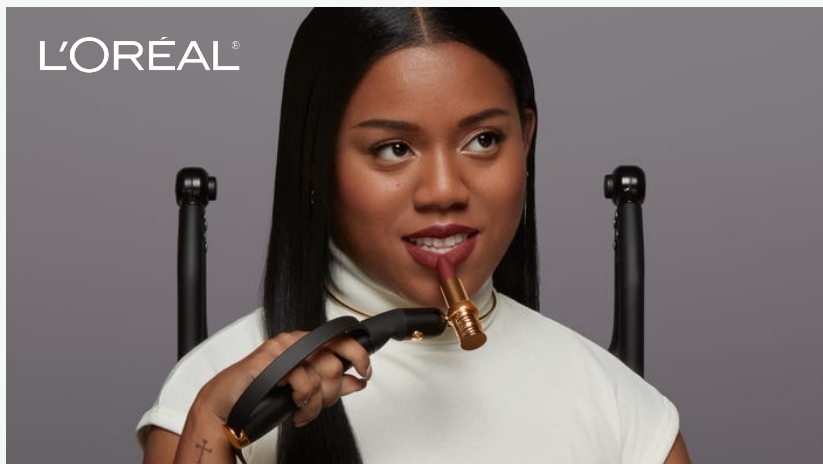


# Beauty brands innovate for disabled consumers.

Giants in the make-up and beauty sectors are using technology to improve product experience for disabled consumers.

In January 2023, **L'Oréal** unveiled a handheld, computerised lipstick applicator called 'Hapta', designed for people with limited hand and arm mobility. The name references 'haptic', which is a type of vibrating motor technology used in many smartphones and adaptive devices for people with disabilities. Make-up applicators for people with disabilities do exist but, according to L'Oréal, this is the first high-tech option to be developed by a major cosmetics company.

The product is expected to be available in US stores at the end of this year and globally next year, at a cost of \$149 to \$199. Hapta is set to be compatible only with **Lancôme** lipsticks for now, though L'Oréal plans to create fittings that would make the device adaptable with other lipsticks.



**Estée Lauder** recently released a new app, called the Voice-Enabled Makeup Assistant (VMA), which is designed to help people with visual impairments apply their make-up more easily.

VMA uses smart mirror technology to help people with sight loss understand if their lipstick, eyeshadow or foundation has been applied correctly.

The app is out on the Apple Store now, but is continuing to be developed so it can launch on other platforms in the future.

# Coalition of UK broadcasters commit to access for disabled talent.

The TV Access Project (TAP) is a coalition of nine of the UK's biggest broadcasters, that have pledged to work together to deliver real improvements in access for disabled talent in the TV industry.

Launched at the Edinburgh Festival in 2022, TAP was created by **Channel 4, the BBC, ITV, Paramount, Sky, Netflix, Amazon, Britbox, UKTV** and **Disney**, with support from industry body **CDN (the Creative Diversity Network)** and **PACT**, representing the indie sector.

The coalition was formed in response to the campaign by **Underlying Health Condition (UHC)**, set up by disabled creatives Genevieve Barr, Katie Player and Holly Lubran, along with screenwriter Jack Thorne, following his MacTaggart Lecture at the Edinburgh TV Festival in 2021.

The project started in April, when Charlotte Moore, Chief Content Officer at the BBC, convened a pan-industry roundtable between disabled creatives and content creators. Since then, the coalition has met regularly, focusing on two key areas: access on productions and access in studios and facilities. Channel 4 and the BBC have also appointed two of the industry's most experienced practitioners to lead and manage TAP: Ally Castle and Tanya Motie.

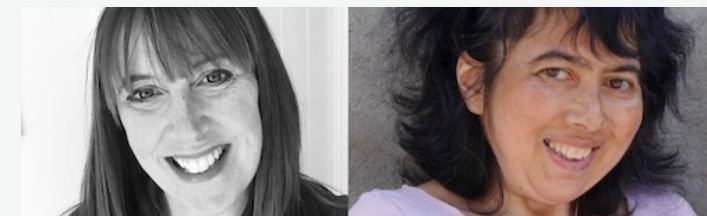
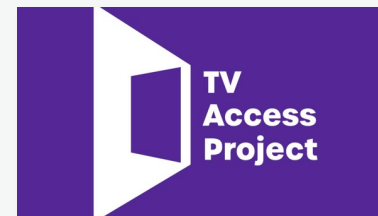
A group of TAP members have published an open letter encouraging the development of new industry standards for inclusivity in their workspaces. Studios, post-production houses and facilities that show they can meet these new guidelines will be given priority by TAP members when considering new UK commissions.

Sources: [Disability Horizons](#), [Channel 4](#), [Televisual](#)

TAP has also announced the publication of new production guidelines for disability inclusion, 'the 5 As'. When it comes to working with disabled talent and providing access requirements, all those who adopt the guidelines will commit to:

1. Anticipating
2. Asking
3. Assessing
4. Adjusting
5. Advocating

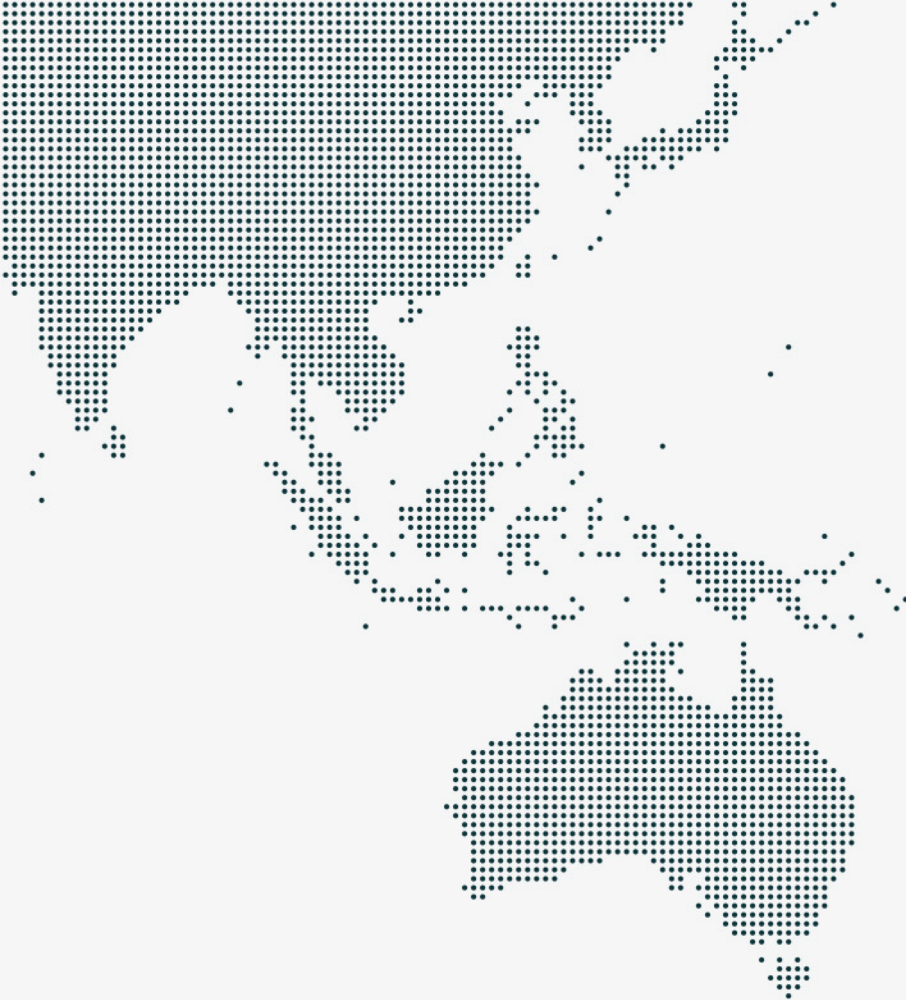
It is for each organisation to adopt these guidelines and agree how they intend to implement them. However, some guidance is provided about how the standards could be put into practice.



Ally Castle and Tanya Motie: TAP Project Leads.

The TV Access Project aims to significantly improve access provision for disabled talent across the TV industry.

Charlotte Moore, Chief Content Officer,  
the BBC



# ASIA **PACIFIC**





# Hiring trends

- Across the region, hiring rates are decreasing. In Australia, and Singapore, the hiring rate has fallen by 14% since 2021, in New Zealand by 12% and in India by a massive 18%. This sharp decline has been felt heavily across diversity, inclusion and accessibility roles.
- LinkedIn data shows that flexibility is now the highest priority for candidates in Australia. However, by September 2022, remote-job posts fell to 5.5%, while the share of remote applications in Australia remained high at 10.8%.
- Candidates in Japan also want remote work and employers are increasingly offering remote options to meet demand. Remote job postings in Japan have increased by 3% since 2021.



Sources: [LinkedIn Japan](#), [LinkedIn Global Talent Trends](#), [LinkedIn Australia](#)

## Sample of diversity, inclusion, accessibility and ESG roles posted on LinkedIn (December 2022 – March 2023)



### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Manager**

CBRE Asia Pacific  
(Australia, Hybrid)



### **Social Inclusion and Diversity Advisor**

John Holland  
(Australia)



### **Senior Diversity and Inclusion Consultant**

Qantas  
(Australia, Hybrid)



### **Digital Accessibility Specialist**

Agoda  
(Bangkok)



### **ESG Consultant**

Baker Tilly  
(Singapore)



### **Head – Diversity and Inclusion**

Michael Page  
(India)

# Sony announces commitment to assistive products for disabled gamers.

The electronics company has demonstrated its commitment to disability inclusion via the launch of an accessibility controller and new inclusive design guidelines.

In January 2023, at the **Consumer Electronics Show** in Las Vegas, **Sony** launched a new customisable controller aimed at gamers with disabilities under its codename '**Project Leonardo**'. According to Sony's announcement, the device has been designed 'with key contributions from accessibility experts, community members, and game developers' and the control solution aims to let players with disabilities 'play games more easily, more comfortably, and for longer periods'.

The highly configurable controller integrates with the PlayStation 5 console and is built to address common challenges faced by many players with limited motor control, including difficulty holding a controller, accurately pressing small clusters of buttons or triggers, or positioning thumbs and fingers optimally.

Project Leonardo includes a robust kit of swappable components, including a variety of stick caps and buttons in different shapes and sizes. Its split, symmetrical design allows players to reposition the sticks as close together or as far apart as they like. The controller also lies flat and does not need to be held, so players can lay it on a tabletop or a wheelchair tray.

Sony says the controller is still 'currently in development' through collaboration with players, with no confirmation of a potential release window or price point at this time.

Sources: [PlayStation](#), [Asia Nikkei](#), [Ars Technica](#), [IGN](#)

Shortly after the launch of Project Leonardo, Sony also announced a commitment to make all its products and services more user-friendly for disabled people.

The company will make inclusive design an in-house rule by March 2023 and several hundred products – including televisions, audio equipment, cameras and smartphones – will be compliant with the new standards by 2025.



We were inspired by the idea of all players enjoying the world of PlayStation together. Our team tested over a dozen designs with accessibility experts, looking for approaches that would help address key challenges to effective controller use.

So Morimoto, Designer,  
Sony Interactive Entertainment

# Australia fails to meet transport accessibility targets.

A 20-year public transport target has been missed, and airlines and airports are urged to improve treatment of disabled travellers.

Legislation passed 20 years ago by the federal government (Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport) called for all stations and stops to be fully compliant with accessibility standards by the end of 2022. But that target – which covers services like access paths, ramps, toilets and tactile tiling – hasn't been met.

Only 50% of the country's transport network is accessible, according to Susie Pascoe from **Sterling Infrastructure**, a company that delivers services across Australia's rail network and assesses the accessibility of stations and walkways around trains.

In New South Wales, a third of train and ferry stations aren't independently accessible, while that figure is around 40% for Queensland Rail and Western Australia's train stations. In Victoria, 73% of tram stops don't meet the accessibility standards.

The Australian government is working on reforms to the 2002 legislation, set to be released later this year. A spokesperson for federal Infrastructure Minister, Catherine King, said the government was 'fully committed to further removing discrimination for people with disability' but some in the sector are calling for changes to make the accessibility requirements more flexible.

**50%** of Australia's transport network is inaccessible.

In February 2023, Australia's airlines and airports were also urged to improve treatment of travellers with disabilities, in a letter from the Chair of the **Disability Royal Commission**, Ronald Sackville.

Sackville's letter followed workshops with 60 Australians with a disability last year about their experiences, which found that people with disabilities are routinely subject to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation when flying domestically.

Participants told the inquiry they felt airlines were 'dehumanising' them and that complaints were rarely followed up. Sackville listed shortcomings raised by people with disabilities that airlines and airports could address to make flying 'a more inclusive experience'.

Major airlines **Qantas**, **Jetstar** and **Virgin Australia** have already issued responses confirming that they are considering the matters raised.



# WhatsApp rated most accessible app in India by new report.

The report evaluated ten apps across categories like messaging, online payments, transport, e-commerce and food delivery.

'Making the Digital Ecosystem Disabled Friendly', published in February 2023 by **The Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy**, along with **I-Stem** and **Mission Accessibility**, rated the ten most widely used apps in India for digital accessibility.

Along with **WhatsApp**, the report assessed **PhonePe**, **Paytm**, **Swiggy**, **Zomato**, **Amazon**, **Flipkart**, **Telegram**, **Uber** and **Ola**. The applications were rated with 'high accessibility', 'moderate accessibility' and 'low accessibility' based on the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)** and of the ten, WhatsApp was the only app rated with 'high accessibility'.

Rahul Bajaj, Senior Associate Fellow at Vidhi, said this shows that 'accessibility does not happen automatically; it must be a function of proactive and thoughtful actions'.

Features like voice notes, reactions and video-calling make WhatsApp a preferred messaging platform for people with disabilities, facilitating access to essential digital services and delivering solutions ranging from education, healthcare, banking and insurance.

In India, public and private organisations have a legal responsibility under the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016)** to provide accessible content for people with disabilities. However, few organisations – government or private – are in compliance with accessibility standards because the nation's laws do not identify a universal set of standards to define accessible content.

Number of accessibility violations identified for each of the ten apps across the Android and iOS platforms:

App	Number of violations (Android)	Number of violations (iOS)	Average number of violations	Accessibility rating
PayTM	64	87	75	Low
Swiggy	67	59	63	Low
Flipkart	94	94	94	Low
Zomato	75	62	69	Low
PhonePe	45	44	45	Medium
Amazon	54	52	53	Medium
Telegram	33	41	37	Medium
Uber	35	30	33	Medium
Ola	41	51	46	Medium
WhatsApp	24	21	23	High

Apps and websites have enormous potential to empower the disabled. If they are not designed with their needs in mind, however, they can replicate the barriers the disabled otherwise face.

Rahul Bajaj, Senior Associate Fellow,  
The Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy



# Findings from the Big Youth Survey 2022 reveal the most important issues to young Australians.

The survey, conducted annually since 2002, provides a platform for young people aged 15 to 19 to 'speak up' about the issues that really concern them.

In 2022, **Mission Australia** surveyed over 18,800 young people, to learn about the issues that concern them most. The findings reveal that young Australians consider environmental and social issues to be among the most important facing Australia today.

The most important issue identified by young people was the environment, with 51% of respondents identifying it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 38% in 2021. 25.5% of young people reported feeling personally extremely or very concerned about climate change.

The second most important issue for young people was equity and discrimination. 35.9% identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia, up from 35.4% in 2021. 27.1% of young people reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the last year.

The third issue to be nominated was mental health, with 33.9% of respondents stating it was an important issue, compared with 34.6% in 2021. Additionally, close to 3 in 10 (27.7%) young people spoke about mental health challenges which included stress, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem.

These findings demonstrate the growing trend among young people worldwide towards prioritising environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues.

1

## The environment

51% identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 38% in 2021 and 29.8% in 2020.

2

## Equity and discrimination

35.9% identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 35.4% in 2021 and 40.2% in 2020.

3

## Mental health

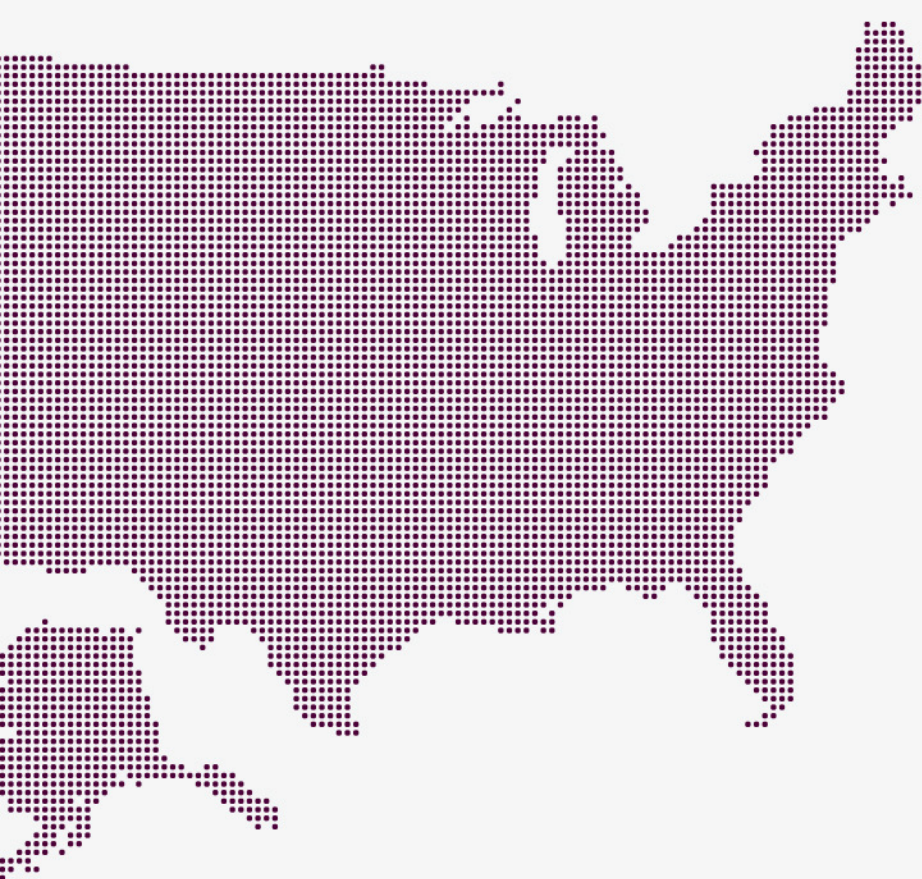
33.9% identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 34.6% in 2021 and 30.6% in 2020.

If the government/s (Australian but also internationally) and corporations took stronger action against climate change, I think I'd be less worried.

Female, 15, New South Wales

The biggest challenge I have faced is racism and discrimination, as well as struggling with the perception of self and confidence.

Male, 16, Queensland



# NORTH AMERICA





# Hiring trends

- In the US, hiring is down 10.3% year-on-year and down 9.4% from pre-Covid levels (February 2020). This is expected to decrease further as we progress into 2023 and economic uncertainty persists.
- Across all industries, hiring decreased 6.5% in February 2023 compared to January. This is the largest month-on-month decrease since April 2020. Additionally, LinkedIn Workforce Confidence Index data from February showed worker confidence in finding and holding a job declined to its lowest level since 2021.
- The biggest declines were in Tech, Information and Media (-4.9%), Wholesale (-2.4%), and Professional Services (-1.3%). The decline is even more marked when it comes to diversity, inclusion and accessibility roles within these sectors.



Sources: [LinkedIn United States January 2023](#), [LinkedIn United States March 2023](#)

## Sample of diversity, inclusion, accessibility and ESG roles posted on LinkedIn (December 2022 – March 2023)



**Executive Assistant, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**  
Warner Bros. Discovery  
(California)



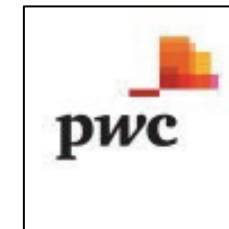
**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director, Strategic Partnerships**  
Elevance Health  
(Virginia)



**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Graduate Intern**  
World Wildlife Fund  
(Washington, DC)



**Summer 2023 Corporate Social Responsibility Internship**  
PSEG  
(New Jersey)



**ESG Senior Associate**  
PwC  
(Canada)



**Accessibility Analyst**  
Renaissance  
(South Carolina)

# Airbnb launches Adapted category for disabled people.

Airbnb Adapted allows disabled people to filter for accessible accommodation on the platform.

**Airbnb** has improved its offering to customers with disabilities by launching a new 'Adapted' homes category on its app. The new category showcases spaces and experiences confirmed to include accessibility features, such as step-free paths to the guest entrance, bedrooms and bathrooms. It will save time for users who would previously have had to scroll through listings individually to assess their suitability.

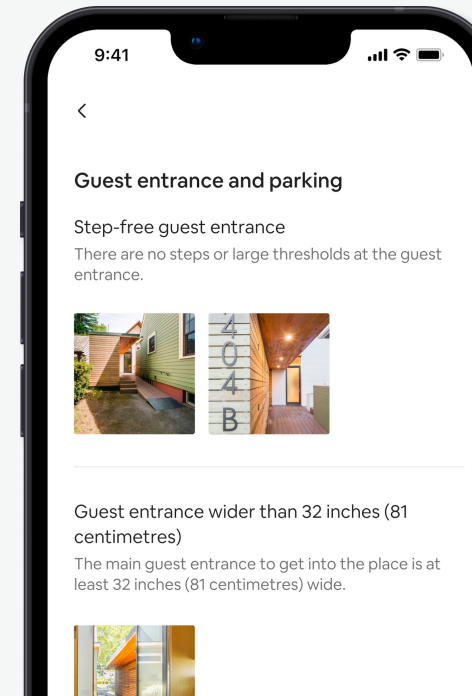
To build the category, Airbnb partnered with **Matterport** to conduct detailed 3D scans of all homes listed on the platform and verify features such as threshold heights and doorway widths. Every accessibility feature submitted by hosts is then reviewed for accuracy.

Airbnb has simplified the accessibility filters in the Adapted category to provide an even better search experience. A one-to-one chat feature also allows people to chat directly with hosts for more information about the accessibility features of their stay or experience.

Additionally, hosts can choose to allow access providers to join the guests they're assisting at no additional cost. Airbnb considers access providers to be anyone over the age of 18 who regularly assists a person with a disability, mental illness or long-term illness with daily activities.

As we strive to become a more inclusive platform, it is really important for us that we have listings that meet the needs of the [disability] community who have different accessibility needs.

Catherine Powell, Global Head of Hosting, Airbnb



Disability advocate Sophie Morgan showcases her wheelchair-accessible home, listed on Airbnb's new Adapted Category.

# American LEGOLAND resorts commit to supporting autistic children.

According to an announcement from Merlin Entertainments, LEGOLANDs in Florida, New York, and California will all become certified autism centres by the spring of 2023.

To become certified, the resorts will need to undertake evidence-based training from the **International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES)** and incorporate the perspectives of autistic individuals.

In addition, IBCCES provides resources like onsite reviews and customised recommendations, as well as renewal requirements to ensure LEGOLAND resorts have the tools and support that can make a lasting impact for all guests.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** reports that 1.5 million or about 1 in 36 children in the US have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It is therefore important that children's entertainment providers consider the needs of autistic children and their parents, so they can participate equally.

**1.5 million** or **1 in 36**  
children in the US have been diagnosed with ASD

Families visiting LEGOLAND resorts can soon expect:

- Trained front-line team members equipped to better assist autistic guests or people with other sensory sensitivities.
- Pre-planning resources available for guests on the resorts' websites.
- Sensory guides developed by IBCCES indicating whether there are bright lights, loud sounds, or any features that guests might need to plan around.
- Low sensory areas to allow guests with certain sensitivities to take a break and relax in a less stimulating environment.
- LEGOLAND Florida and LEGOLAND New York offer quiet rooms dedicated to children with varying sensory needs — where guests can decompress with weighted blankets, dim lighting, and tactile toys.
- Upon request, First Aid offers ear plugs to assist with sound and overstimulation and "Assisted Access Passes" can be requested at Guest Services.

**LEGOLAND**





# D/deaf agents boost PayPal's helpdesk.

PayPal provides a three-month training programme for D/deaf employees in collaboration with the De La Salle–College of Saint Benilde School.

The bespoke training programme, called 'Project Pierre', is the first in the world specifically designed for D/deaf people.

The three-month period is designed to prepare employees for the demands of the job and level the playing field between D/deaf and hearing employees. The D/deaf team is led by a leader who is fluent in sign language and some of the PayPal employees have also undergone sign language training at both basic and intermediate levels.

**PayPal** has made conscious efforts to understand and learn more about the D/deaf community as it pursues this project. This includes educating staff on how to properly communicate with their teammates, as well as raising awareness about the correct terminology to use.

John Nicholls, Senior Director for Global Customer Services, said 'When I first started on this journey, I was using the term "hearing-impaired" because I thought that was the politically correct term. But actually, one of my very first learnings was that if you talk about "hearing impaired" you are focusing on a disability, whereas being deaf is simply a fact'.

The programme continues to develop and expand, with PayPal hoping that its D/deaf employees will become mentors for other workers in the future.



When I first started on this journey, I was using the term "hearing-impaired" because I thought that was the politically correct term. But actually, one of my very first learnings was that if you talk about "hearing impaired" you are focusing on a disability, whereas being deaf is simply a fact.

John Nicholls, Senior Director for Global Customer Services,  
PayPal



# Major Foundations launch Disability Tech Fund.

**Borealis Philanthropy and Ford Foundation have launched a \$1 million Disability x Tech Fund to advance leadership of people with disabilities in tech innovation.**

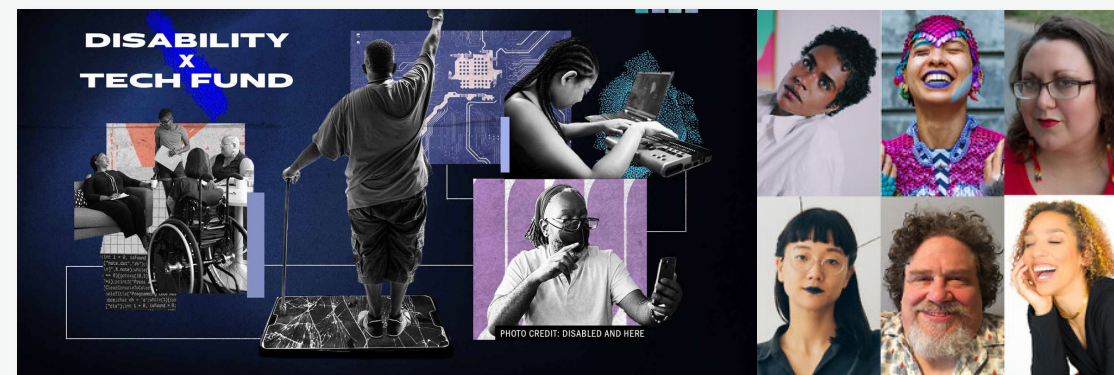
The fund from **Borealis Philanthropy** and the **Ford Foundation** is the only national fund supporting disability-led groups working to bring about transformational change at the intersections of disability rights, justice and technology.

The fund was born out of a year long process led by an advisory committee made up of people with disabilities, representing a wide range of expertise and backgrounds.

**The Disability x Tech Fund's** inaugural cohort of grantees is comprised of five disability-led organisations and two individual fellows addressing field-wide issues that occur when people with disabilities are excluded from the development, deployment and governance of tech.

These issues include algorithmic biases that undermine access to necessary benefits, biometric surveillance that disproportionately disadvantages people with disabilities and barriers to participation in the digital economy, among others.

The fund's grantees seek to address these issues through research, litigation strategies, accessible content creation and interpretation, and frontline community-developed open-source platforms.

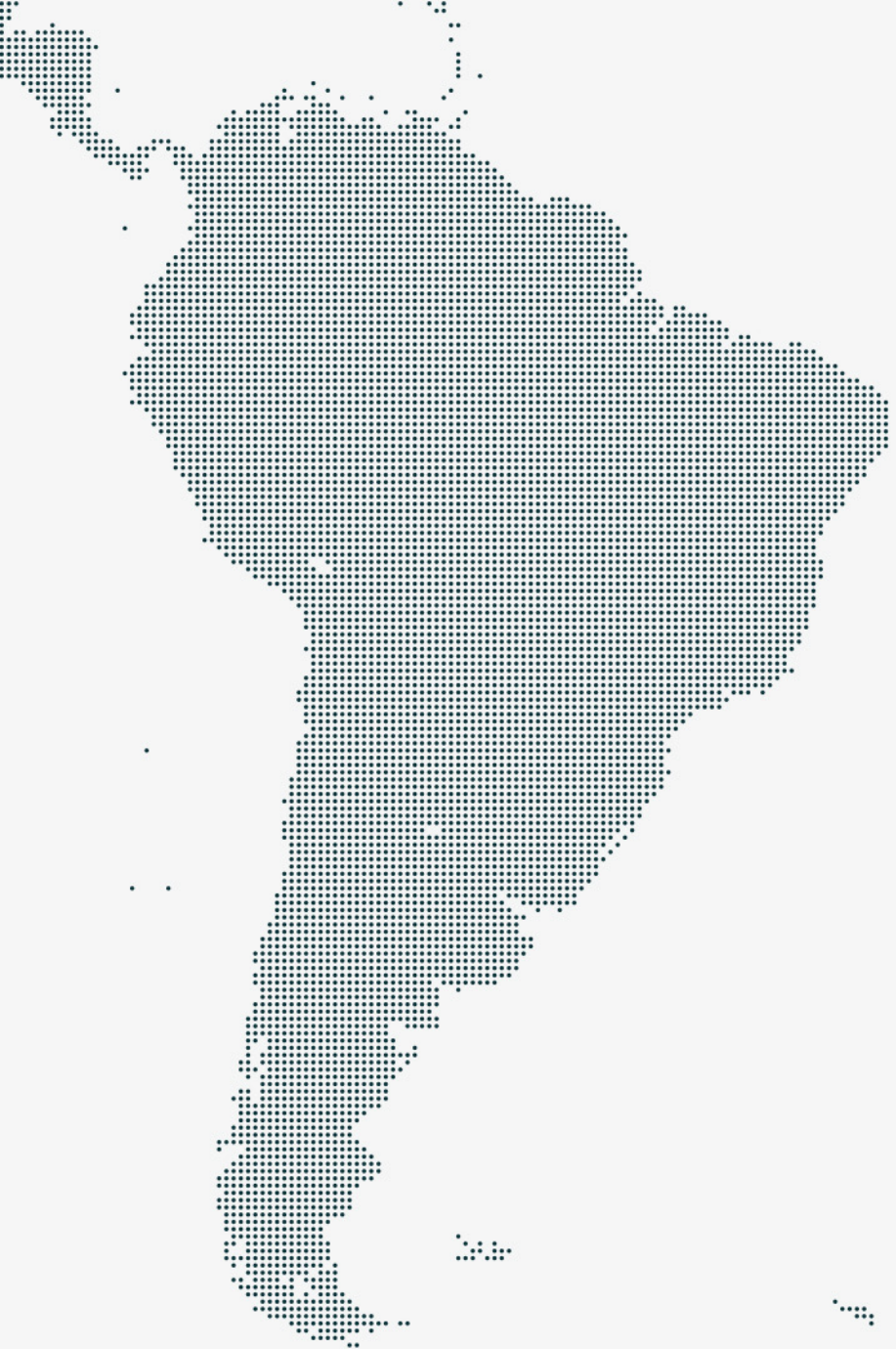


It is hoped that the fund will expand the participation, leadership and thought partnership of overlooked and under-resourced people with disabilities across the tech sector.

To that end, it supports organisations that are disability-led and disability-serving, particularly those led by Black, Indigenous and people of colour; queer and gender nonconforming people; and women.

This inaugural cohort represents the richness and diversity of leadership that exists within the disability rights and justice movement as well as the innovative, community-led work that is already happening across the country.

Liz Henry, Programme Manager,  
the Disability x Tech Fund



# SOUTH AMERICA



# Hiring trends

- Hiring rates are down across the Latin American region, falling by 15% in both Brazil and Mexico since 2021.
- There has been a sharp decline in the number of diversity and inclusion jobs advertised across the region, compared with the previous quarter of study. There were hardly any roles advertised in the last three months, even in Brazil where these roles are normally concentrated.
- There were also fewer accessibility roles advertised, especially at larger, global companies based in the region.
- However, ESG-related roles are on the increase, with companies across multiple sectors looking to hire consultants and advisors to drive their ESG strategies.



Source: [LinkedIn Global Talent Trends](#)

## Sample of diversity, inclusion, accessibility and ESG roles posted on LinkedIn (December 2022 – March 2023)



### **Accessibility Tester**

Level Access  
(Argentina, Remote)



### **Accessibility Auditor**

Backoffice Abroad  
(Argentina, Remote)



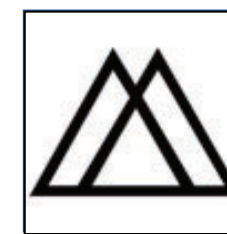
### **ESG Supervisor**

KPMG  
(Chile, Hybrid)



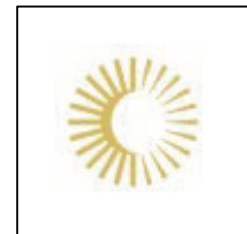
### **ESG Consultant**

Edp  
(Brazil, Hybrid)



### **Senior Web Engineer (Accessibility)**

Nimble Gravity  
(Mexico, Remote)



### **Director of Wellbeing**

Auberge Resorts Collection  
(Mexico, Hybrid)

# Telefónica reports increased disability employment in Argentina.

The telecommunications giant has demonstrated a commitment to diversity reporting by publishing disability-specific data for Q4 2022.

**Telefónica's** latest quarterly report includes its employment figures for people with disabilities in Argentina. The report states that as an equal opportunities employer, the company increased the number of disabled employees by 20% year-on-year. This represents a huge increase in the number of people with disabilities employed by the company in a single year.

Reporting disability data is incredibly important in the Latin American (LATAM) region, as it is estimated that while 85 million people with disabilities live in Latin America and the Caribbean, they are more likely to live in households that are poorer than the average, are overrepresented amongst those vulnerable to fall into poverty, have a higher propensity to live in informal neighbourhoods, have fewer years of education, and tend to be excluded from the labour market.

**85 million** people live with disabilities in LATAM and the Caribbean.

**1 in 3** households include a person with a disability.

**1 in 5** households living in extreme poverty include a person with a disability.

Without targeted action, the further development of Latin American and Caribbean societies will be unsustainable, since the disabled portion of the population face barriers to work, public spaces, the right to vote, and to live autonomously.

The **World Bank** names 'improved data collection' as one of the key drivers towards a more inclusive region, in order to tackle the statistical invisibility of people with disabilities.

The collection and publication of disability employment data by major employers in the region, such as Telefónica, has the potential to encourage others to follow suit and look to increase the percentage of disabled people in the workforce. This could have a major impact on region-wide employment rates and economic growth.



Together, we need to empower people with disabilities to humanise technology and break down barriers with digitalisation.

José María Álvarez-Pallete, CEO,  
Telefónica



# Disabled people included in disaster risk management in the Caribbean.

The Canada–Caribbean Resilience Facility (CRF) aims to achieve more effective and coordinated climate-resilient planning and recovery.

The **World Bank** and the **Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR)**, with support from the Canadian government, have established the **Canada–Caribbean Resilience Facility (CRF)** as a single-donor trust fund aimed at achieving more effective and coordinated climate-resilient preparedness, recovery, and public financial management practices in nine Caribbean countries. The CRF is supporting disability inclusive disaster risk management as an essential element in building societal resilience.

The fund has carried out an assessment with the primary purpose of understanding gaps in the inclusion of people with disabilities in disaster risk management (DRM) and climate resilience processes and strategies in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname.

The assessment is based on the recognition that collectively, people with disabilities are routinely marginalised and excluded from traditional disaster risk management practices by both governments and businesses.

It is hoped that barriers currently preventing disabled people from accessing disaster relief and healthcare can be removed or mitigated through effective social policy.

Over 29.2 million people will need assistance and protection in the region in 2023... The private sector has the extra resources and expertise needed to help us better prepare for and respond to threats.

Shelley Cheatham, Head of OCHA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

Business leaders have also joined humanitarian partners and government representatives to adopt a regional, collaborative and cross-sectoral approach to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. A joint roadmap will be implemented by private sector networks and partners in Latin America and the Caribbean in collaboration with the **OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative (CBI)**.

Over 40 business leaders, disaster management experts, development and humanitarian professionals from 13 countries came together at the end of 2022 to define a roadmap to better engage local businesses in emergencies. The regional approach will allow CBI private sector networks to build their capacities through peer-to-peer learning and support other business associations in the region.

# Brazilian company launches new electric car for drivers with disabilities.

Over the last five years, a Brazilian developer has been working to create an electric car that is accessible for disabled drivers.

Brazilian developer **Green Innovation** has been working to create an electric car that is not only environmentally friendly but solves one of the biggest problems for drivers with disabilities: accessibility.

The Stima, designed by Luigi Mangini, CEO of Green Innovation, was officially launched last September at the **Reatech International Fair of Technologies** in São Paulo. Mangini's electric car is the first national project to reach the market and the only car with a universal design that can be used by people with or without disabilities.



All the controls are easily within reach and accessible by both hand and foot. By activating the vehicle's electronic command, the rear compartment opens, allowing the user access to features that include coupling of the seat to the steering wheel and to the control panel.

After a test drive and initial analysis, a survey of needs is carried out. The steering wheel and controls are then positioned and installed for better adaptation to the user. Green Innovation guarantees that its car will be the cheapest vehicle of its kind on the market, at around \$13,000, with all adaptations already included. However, this price can increase depending on the customisations added, according to the specific needs of each customer.



**Luigi Mangini, CEO of Green Innovation, alongside the Stima.**

**The inventor has two sisters who use wheelchairs, and the main goal of the project is to enable social equity for people with disabilities.**

The company initially produced 100 units for its launch and already has orders from more than twelve countries, including Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and others. The vehicle's price may be one of the main attractions, since making similar adaptations to a normal vehicle would cost an estimated \$22,000, if not more.

# Banco de Bogotá launches inclusive advertising campaign.

The seasonal advertising campaign highlights discrimination and the need for lasting change.

Colombian commercial banking company **Banco de Bogotá** challenged traditional holiday messages with its 'Christmas changes us, let's stay that way' campaign, which aimed to raise awareness around disability and discrimination.

As a way to highlight discrimination towards the disabled community, Banco de Bogotá and **Fantástica** developed two minute-long spots about Santa directed by Juan Rueda and produced by Akira Cine.

Campaigns like this one stand out in a region that has traditionally lagged behind when it comes to on-screen representation of disability. Data shows that there is a disconnect between brand intent and consumer perception, especially when dealing with the portrayal of historically underrepresented groups of people. For example, only 27.7% of Colombian internet users feel represented in the majority of video ads they see.

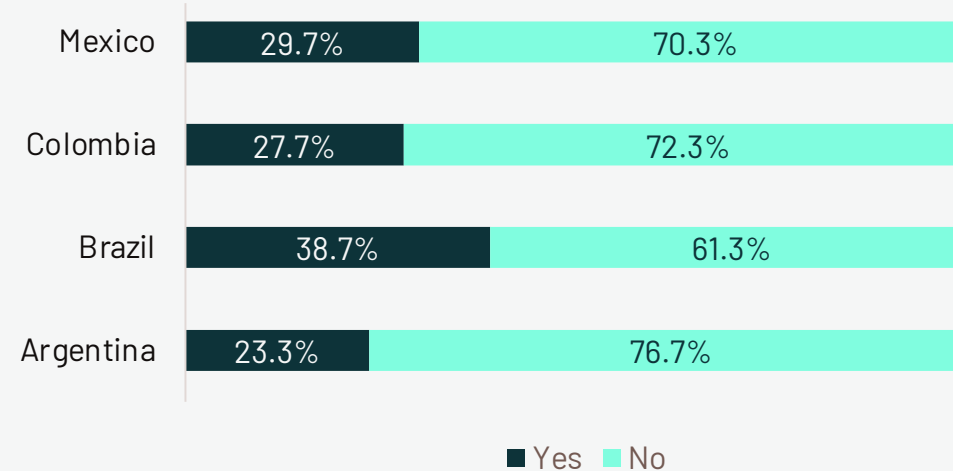
According to Matteo Ceurvels, eMarketer Director of Latin America Research at **Insider Intelligence**, 'While brands have made a concerted effort to increase their representation of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and to break away from the traditional portrayal of gender roles in marketing materials, a large percentage of consumers still do not feel represented in advertising'.

It is increasingly important that companies accurately portray the local communities they plan to target, while also fully embracing diversity in their marketing campaigns.

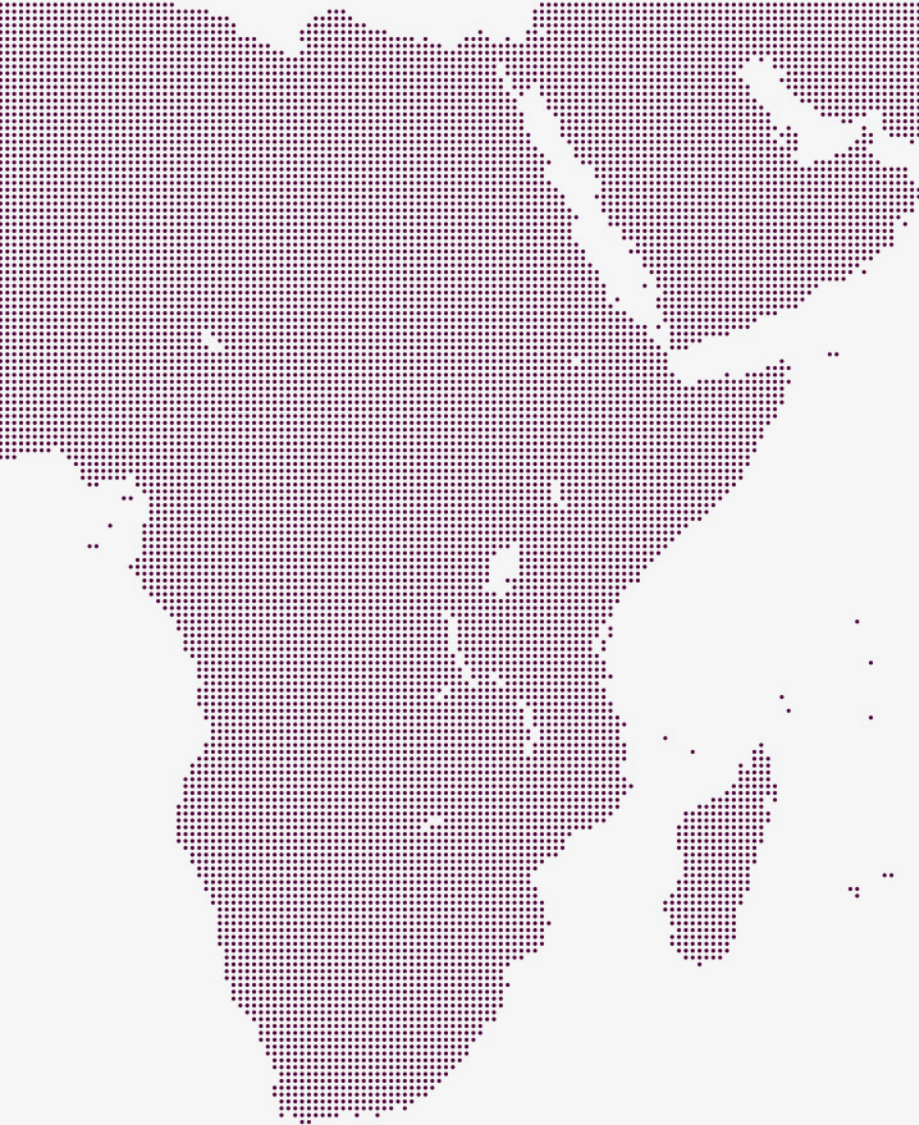
Sources: [AdWeek](#), [Insider Intelligence](#), [Ads of Brands](#)

[Executive summary](#)
[Let's discuss](#)
[The global view](#)
[Regional perspectives](#)
[Conclusion](#)


Internet users in Latin America who feel represented in the majority of digital video ads they see, March 2021







# MIDDLE EAST **AND AFRICA**





# Hiring trends

- Across the Middle East there was a marked decrease in the number of diversity and inclusion roles advertised. There was also a drop in the number of accessibility roles posted, with the largest proportion of jobs concentrated in Israel.
- However, there was an increase in the number of diversity and inclusion roles advertised in Africa this quarter, at both local and global organisations. This is an encouraging development in a region which has not traditionally invested in these business functions.
- There was also an increase in ESG-related hiring across the Middle East, particularly in Dubai, suggesting growth in the market.



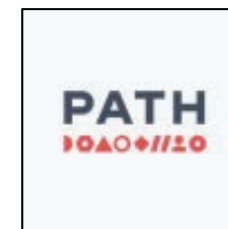
## Sample of diversity, inclusion, accessibility and ESG roles posted on LinkedIn (December 2022 – March 2023)



**Head of Inclusion**  
LEAMS Education  
(Dubai)



**Product Designer**  
accessiBe  
(Israel)



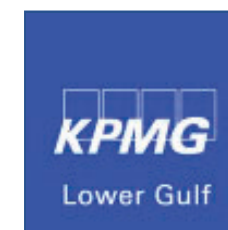
**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programs Assistant**  
PATH  
(Ghana)



**Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion Advisor**  
Winrock International  
(Senegal)



**DEI Director**  
Clinton Health Access Initiative, Inc.  
(Nigeria)



**Associate Director, ESG**  
KPMG Lower Gulf  
(Dubai)

# Dubai team for accessible travel and tourism launched.

A new team has been launched in the emirate as part of endeavours to consolidate its global standing as a year-round travel destination accessible to all.

The travel and tourism initiative was launched by Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of **Dubai Civil Aviation Authority**, Chairman of **Dubai Airports** and Chairman and Chief Executive of **Emirates Airline and Group**, during a meeting of senior officials in both government agencies and private organisations dealing with travel and tourism businesses.

The senior Emirati official has called upon the team members, each an expert in their field, to jointly work to advise on improvements at airports, airlines, hotels and shopping centres to provide the best possible services for tourists with disabilities.

The team has been tasked with consulting the disabled community to get acquainted with their needs and requirements during their movement within cities and while travelling to and within hospitality destinations. Their work will also involve gathering the authorities from both the public and private sectors for brainstorming sessions to discuss how to improve facilities and services for disabled tourists.

This development comes as the number of travellers with disabilities annually has reached about 150 million. According to the **European Network for Accessible Tourism**, the volume of lost opportunities for the global economy stands at €142 billion due to a lack of accessibility.

It is hoped that the new team will improve the approach to accessibility in the region.



Accessible tourism is an important sector for our national economy as well as helping to promote the rights of people of determination to move around and travel without hassles and obstacles.

Jamal Al Hai, Deputy CEO at Dubai Airports and Team Leader

# Guinness highlights the importance of accessibility in football.

**After launching the new brand platform, Black Shines Brightest, the company showcased what it means for their work in football.**

The new advert celebrates the relationship between Miracle and his brother, Abidemi, who are united behind their shared passion for football. Abidemi explains that for Miracle, who is blind, football is not just about what we see, 'but what we feel'.

For International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Olawale Adetula, Global Marketing Manager at **Guinness**, explained how and why the brand focused on the importance of accessibility in football for its latest campaign.

In Africa, Guinness is the number one beer brand associated with football, which presented the team with an opportunity to showcase Black Shines Brightest through the lens of the sport. Fans are at the heart of football and nothing else represents Black Shines Brightest more than the people who are going out of their way, using creative ingenuity to make the game brighter for all. This was what led the team behind the campaign to Miracle and Abidemi's story.

Once the script was approved, Adetula says the team knew they wanted to cast a blind actor to ensure the on-screen story was authentic, but once Miracle was cast, he added even more value by providing insights into his life which helped the team make choices that elevated the work.

**Diageo** also produced an audio-described version of the Guinness Brothers advert, meaning that it can be enjoyed by people with visual impairments.

Miracle not only did justice to the script, but he added even more value by giving us more insights into his life and this helped us make important changes and choices that elevated the work.

Olawale Adetula, Global Marketing Manager,  
Guinness





# New devices made in Turkey to benefit people with disabilities.

A Turkish company has developed two breakthrough devices to facilitate the use of phones and tablets for people with disabilities.

'Apallon glasses' and the 'Apallon Head Mouse' have been developed by a company located in the southern Turkish province of Hatay. The software and hardware for both devices are produced entirely in Turkey.

The **Apallon** glasses are able to distinguish artificial and natural blinking, while the Apallon Head Mouse can be operated using movements of the head. Both products are designed to facilitate the use of televisions, tablets and phones, especially for people who are paralysed or semi-paralysed.

We have users who have already tried the devices, and it makes us proud to see that contented feeling when they first use them.

Öykü Gülbaş, Student at Firat University and part of the team developing the Apallon glasses



While the company notes that glasses of this kind have been produced in other countries, the characteristic that sets the Apallon glasses apart is that they can differentiate between artificial and natural blinking.

The most distinguishing feature of the Apallon Head Mouse device is the existence of its x, y and z axis. When turned up, the device can move up, down, right, left and sideways. This means that people can operate the device in conjunction with other technology, using only basic head movements.





# CONCLUSION



# Recommendations

## 01 International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022.

Companies should continue to ensure IDPD is included in the annual calendar of events, with a focus on highlighting people and progress in external communications.

## 02 On-screen disability representation.

Advertisers and broadcasters should continue to prioritise representation in front of and behind the camera, as industry-wide tracking improves.

## 03 The global energy crisis.

Governments and businesses must offer targeted support for the disabled community to prevent disabled people worldwide being forced into fuel poverty.

## 04 Remote working for people with disabilities.

Organisations should provide adequate equipment and training for remote workers, in order to maximise the productivity of disabled employees and negate the risk to employees' mental health.

## 05 Health equity for disabled people.

Healthcare providers must take steps to build the disabled community's trust in the system, in order to combat global health inequity.

## 06 Disability employment targets and reporting.

Companies must build disability-specific data into ESG reporting metrics in order to satisfy investors, consumers and employees.

## 07 Assistive and adaptive products in new sectors.

Brands in the fashion and beauty industries must continue to respond to the needs of disabled consumers by developing bespoke adaptive products and services.

## 08 Changing values towards ESG compliance.

In order to appeal to Gen Z and millennial talent and consumers, businesses must show their positive impact on environmental, social and governance issues.

## 09 Disability inclusion in the tech industry.

Despite the global economic downturn, tech companies must prioritise diversity, inclusion and accessibility in order to keep up with their competitors.

## 10 Accessibility in travel and tourism.

Businesses within the sector must continue to demonstrate progress towards accessible experiences for disabled people under increased scrutiny from customers and regulators.



DISABILITY  
IS OUR  
BUSINESS.

 Valuable  
500

