Royal Academy of Engineering

AT2030




***Why it matters…***
Assistive technology (AT) has the potential to be lifechanging. Yet, without understanding *how*, *why*, and *under what conditions* it makes a difference, efforts to transform AT systems may not reach their full potential.

**The research**
- ‘Most significant change’ workshops
- Case studies
- Caregiver focus groups
- Interviews with professionals

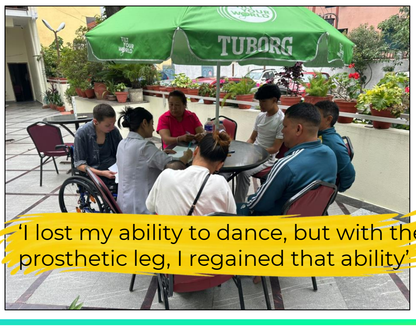
**Three countries**
- Nepal (Kathmandu and Pokhara)
- Kenya (Nairobi and Meru)
- Ghana (Accra and Ho)

# Beyond access: how AT becomes lifechanging

***AT is often transformative…***

- People shared deeply personal stories about the lifechanging impacts of AT
- AT opened doors to education, employments and relationships
- AT fostered confidence, self-esteem and self-acceptance in many people
- Small AT-related changes could have profound impacts, particularly for dignity, independence and participation
- AT could be lifechanging beyond the user, reducing caregiver burden and stress
- People creatively adapted AT to fit their needs and circumstances
- Lifechanging AT sometimes came from non-traditional sources (e.g. Uber, phone cameras or skateboards)




***…but may not solve all the problems***

- Lifechanging impacts could be both positive or negative, especially around loss
- AT expectations did not always meet realities
- AT did not always fit the environment, leading to abandonment and reducing lifechanging potential
- On-going costs and durability of cheap imported AT were major barriers
- Repair and maintenance was often limited
- Donor dependence limited choice, appropriateness and sustainability
- Caregivers often felt isolated, overlooked and stigmatised
- Both AT users and caregivers felt that they needed training and support

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