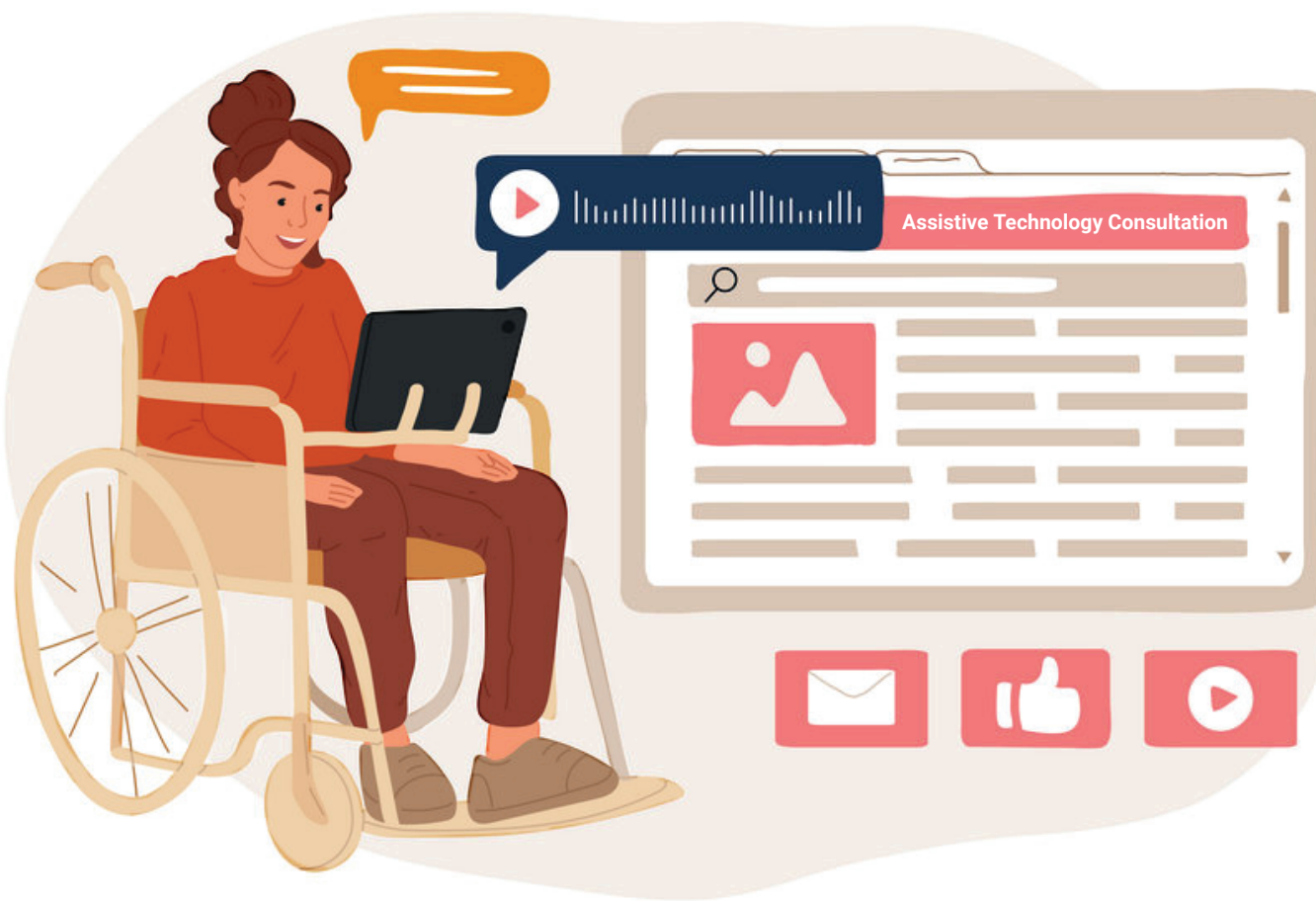


# AT DIGEST ISSUE 3

The importance of meaningful consultation in AT policymaking



# Introduction:

**Globally, out of the 2.5 billion people who need at least one assistive product to support their full and effective participation, 90% do not have access to assistive technology.**

More than 2.5 billion people around the world need at least one assistive product to support their full and effective participation in their lives, out of them, 90% do not have access to assistive technology. While access to AT is limited globally, the unmet AT need is disproportionately high in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC), where only 5–15% of people who require AT access have access to AT. Lack of human-centered AT policies is largely responsible for these huge unmet needs across the world. Integrating human-centered AT policies into the legal frameworks of the countries is a prerequisite for ensuring AT for all potential users. This article focuses on the relevance of meaningful consultation with and participation of AT users, including organizations of persons with disabilities, to AT policy making and implementation processes.



# Obligation to consult AT users and OPDs

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognizes people's right to participate in the government of his or her country directly or through chosen representatives. Article 4.3 of the CRPD reiterated the legal obligation of States Parties to closely consult with persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities and their representative organizations in the development and implementation of laws and policies. General Comment No.7 issued by the CRPD Committee further explained the obligations of States Parties to consult OPDs meaningfully, the process of how to consult meaningfully, and how to meaningfully engage OPDs in the monitoring processes. IDA-GDI Hub AT fellows observed in their countries that public policies are developed from a technical perspective and bureaucratic processes, and do not include consultations with beneficiaries and target groups of the policy, which in many cases causes policies to be disconnected from the life experience of people and does not identify their priority needs.

[Read more.](#)



# AT Fellows' Reflection Corner

The AT Fellows' Reflection Corner is a space for fellows to share their thoughts and insights as they work on varied projects through their fellowship.

IDA is finalizing its online course on assistive technology that was produced with active involvement of the IDA-GDI Hub fellows. Fellows co-created the content of the course, ensuring its representativity and inclusion of the widest pool of AT users, and brought in valuable reflections from their own constituencies. In order to optimize accessibility and user experience of the course, the user testing is scheduled to take place in late March, and the course will be published in early April 2024. Its targeted audience is disability rights activists from all over the world with particular emphasis on the Global South. The AT online course will be followed by a closely related course on social protection for persons with disabilities.

Ahmed Abdalla, AT Fellow from Sudan reflects on his contribution to the development of the AT online course. [Read more.](#)



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*"During this wonderful journey, my knowledge of the Sudanese context related to assistive technologies has increased, and I have also gained cumulative knowledge through reviewing the initial draft by discussing with the fellows and the project leads at IDA. The collaborative work in the review stage was effective and fruitful, as I listened to the colleagues and their different opinions, gaining a deeper understanding of their local contexts and diverse backgrounds."*

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