Background: It is well known that the provision of assistive technology (AT) is a ‘wicked’ problem and one that requires new thinking to solve. AT2030 is a programme of investment which is part of a new global movement, to find new cross-sectoral approaches to AT provision and use. AT2030 was designed based on a scoping study into the barriers affecting AT provision. The scoping study had the objective of answering the following two questions: 1) What are the barriers which prevent access to AT for the people who need it, with a focus on those living in low resource settings within the UK Department for International Development (DFID) priority Global South countries?; 2) How should DFID, in partnership with others (including particularly other donors), best direct its interventions toward overcoming these barriers? 

Method: The method used was flexible and iterative in nature. It sought to bring in expertise from across a diverse set of stakeholders and organisations. The emerging ideas were tested through stakeholder interviews and discussions and were refined through partner workshops and external events. The methodology was characterised by a participatory and consultative process, with clear objectives, and was both inclusive and transparent. This provided an opportunity to reflect on the applicability of evidence in different contexts and promoted dialogue among different types of stakeholders. Due to its rigour, flexibility and appropriateness in summarising relevant features of complex datasets including different sources, thematic analysis was chosen as the analysis method for this scoping research.

In total 18 sets of field notes alongside transcripts of 23 semi-structured interviews were analysed. These data sources had been collected during meetings with stakeholders such as funding agencies, research partners and AT providers. Interviewees worked in different developing countries and were employed in various sectors including academia, industry and NGOs. These were supplemented with two deep-dive scoping exercises conducted in Kenya and Uganda. This corpus of data was analysed and coded using a hybrid deductive and inductive approach.

Key results: Our work reveals differing levels of AT market development across countries. However, the key barriers are common. Five broad areas to categorise barriers, facilitators and opportunities for improving AT access in developing countries were identified and prioritised according to the 5Ps model formulated by GATE: People, Products, Policies, Provision, Personnel.
Conclusion: We found the challenge of AT provision represents a complex web of market and systematic market failure, compounded by a lack of participation from the communities that have the best knowledge of the issues (users themselves). This results in a mismatch between supply and demand which affects almost a billion people. This makes AT access one of the most pressing problems facing the global health sector.

Keywords: Keyword 1, Keyword 2, Keyword 3, (Keyword 4), (Keyword 5).

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Tweetable abstract: A cross-sectoral approach is needed to tackle the wickedProblem of AT provision globally. @AssistTech2030 is a global programme testing what works in low resource settings and have the potential to scale. We are developing and testing solutions to #LeaveNooneBehind by ensuring #AT is accessible to all.