

Google gives multi-million Rand grant to Africa NGO

Google has awarded a \$717,728 (roughly R10 million) grant to the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD) to develop technology that can assist people in Sub-Saharan Africa who are living with disabilities.



SAFOD is working with the University of Washington and the African Network for Evidence-to-Action on Disability (AfriNEAD) to establish AT-Info-Map, a system that will map the location and availability of assistive technology (AT) in Sub-Saharan Africa—providing critical and timely information to empower governments, suppliers, and advocates to increase access to AT.

The Google Impact Challenge: Disabilities, was launched in March last year in the form of an open call to global nonprofits who are building transformative technologies for people around the world with disabilities. Ideas were received from over 1,000 organisations spanning 88 countries, and 30 winners were announced [last week](#).

Google is helping these 30 organisations to scale by investing in their vision, by rallying its people and by mobilising its resources in support of their missions.

The organisations Google is supporting all have big ideas for how technology can help create new solutions and each of their ideas has the potential to scale. Each organisation has also committed to open sourcing their technology—which helps encourage and speed up innovation in a sector that has historically been siloed.

In awarding these grants Google looked for big ideas, with technology at the core and the potential to scale supported by nimble and flexible teams that are strong enough to implement the work proposed.

And, Google realises there's always room to improve its products as well. The company has a team committed to monitoring the accessibility of Google tools; and provides engineering teams with training to incorporate accessibility principles into products and services. That doesn't just mean improving existing Google tools, it means developing new ones as well. For example, Liftware is a stabilising utensil designed to help people with hand tremors eat more easily, and self-driving cars could one day transform mobility for everyone.