

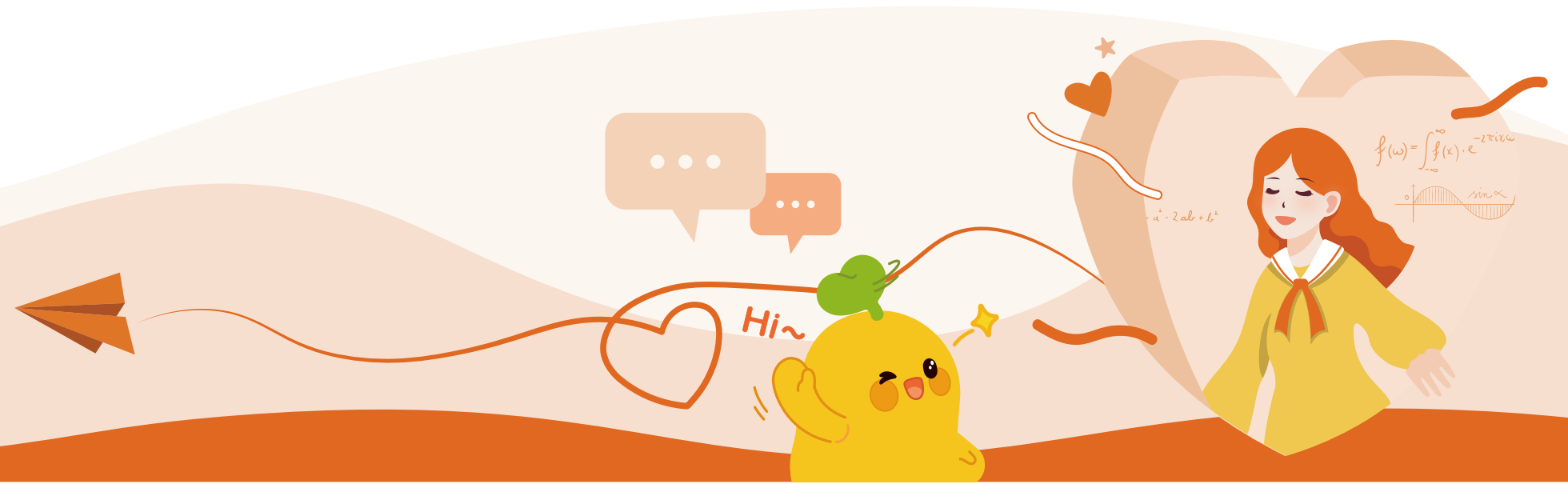
Alibaba's Aspirations and Actions in
Support of Disability **2023**

A Better Life for Everyone

*In Support of Those with Disabilities,
We Try to Do More*

FOREWORD

Supporting the high-quality accessibility development, creating a better life



Over halfway to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, more than 1.3 billion persons with disabilities worldwide continue to face significant challenges to their full integration into and participation in society. This means that some one-seventh of the world's population needs support in areas such as accessibility.

Ensuring inclusion and equality for persons with disabilities is not only essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but are also core to the 2030 Agenda's commitment to "leave no one behind." It resonates with Alibaba's vision in support of disability: A Better Life for Everyone.

As an organization that believes in the principle of the SDGs, Alibaba has been committed to social welfare and helping others since its inception. Together with partners, including those with disabilities, we hope to create a better life through digital technology, the platform ecosystem, and a culture of public welfare.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), remarkable strides have been made in China in supporting the disabled community, ensuring many fundamental needs are met. At Alibaba, we focus on the nuances of everyday needs - food, clothing, housing, and transportation - of our users with disabilities. We fully solicit their input and get to know what they are engaging in, what they want to do and what are the challenges. Our surveys reveal a growing desire among our partners with disabilities for spiritual fulfillment. In 2023, we launched the "Fulfilling Dream at the Great Wall" campaign, enabling persons with disabilities to experience the majesty of the Great Wall. Alongside this, we facilitated opportu-

nities for disabled individuals to watch games at the Asian Para Games venues, provided assistance for mothers of children with autism, and supported Benjamin Lou, a Chinese-American math prodigy living with Spinal Muscular Atrophy, in pursuing his dreams. Our "Dream-Fulfilling" series, commented as "compassionate" by our disabled partners, has been a source of inspiration and motivation for us. These efforts will be disclosed in this report.

Led by the guiding principles of the 20th CPC National Congress, Alibaba's support for disabled persons has evolved in a more focused and goal-oriented manner. On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in 2022, we launched the Volunteer Alliance for Helping Disabled Persons, joined by over 40 business partners from Alibaba Group. In 2023, in line with our vision in support of disability—A Better Life for Everyone, we divided our efforts into four domains: barrier-free entrepreneurship and employment, barrier-free technology, barrier-free volunteer services, and ecosystem support for barrier-free access. Each of these domains is seamlessly integrated into the daily lives of persons with disabilities, driven by our commitment to digital innovation. To foster barrier-free entrepreneurship and employment, our Alibaba Cloud Customer Service currently employs 3,304 disabled persons, and through Ele.me, more than 3,000 hearing-impaired riders are earning an income. Furthering these efforts, our "Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities" aims to bolster the growth of 10,000 disabled entrepreneurs within three years. As for barrier-free technology, we have upgraded 15 Alibaba apps to improve accessibility. We've implemented Amap wheelchair navigation to facilitate the mobility for the physically disabled and elderly, and introduced Youku's barrier-free cinemas for catering to the needs of the visually

impaired. In 2023, the commitment of our workforce was evident as over 10,000 Alibaba employees volunteered in support of disabled persons. Furthermore, our 3-hour Public Service platform has galvanized a community of 270,000 netizens who now serve as advocates for barrier-free environment... Looking forward, we are eager to collaborate with our ecosystem partners to increase the well-being of our disabled friends through tangible and impactful actions.

China's *Law on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment* came into effect on September 1, 2023. In this context, the Asian Para Games 2023 in Hangzhou marked a significant opportunity to advance high-quality barrier-free development across China. The Games highlighted remarkable achievements resulting from Hangzhou's collective efforts: athletes lit the main torch with BrainCo's intelligent bionic hand; paralyzed Afghan athletes stood up using RoboCT's exoskeleton; Alibaba's Xiaomo, an AI-powered tool, provided sign language translation, and Amap's wheelchair navigation feature offer barrier-free travel planning... The Hangzhou Barrier-free Environment Promotion Association has successfully completed 1,800 barrier-free trial projects, encompassing Hangzhou Metro, Asian Para Games venues, hospitals, and barrier-free tourist routes. Additionally, Lions Clubs International D386 Zhejiang China, along with other volunteers, have assisted over 1,400 disabled individuals in watching the games at the Asian Para Games venues. These collective efforts underscore our belief that supporting those with disabilities is integral to the well-being of all. Alibaba, as an active player, is committed to contributing to China's high-quality accessibility development. In this report, we will also highlight the importance of these "collective efforts" in the context of the Asian Para Games.

"Up the River During Qingming," painted by Northern Song painter Zhang Zeduan and revered as one of China's ten top ancient paintings, exquisitely captures the prosperity and splendor of Bianjing, now known as Kaifeng. Drawing inspiration from this masterpiece, we have created a "Scroll of a Barrier-Free Life" in the context of Hangzhou Asian Para Games. This modern interpretation champions the vision of a better life for everyone, emphasizing unity between people with and without disabilities. Our story weaves through scenes of natural beauty and Alibaba's dynamic operations, spanning from the "Big Lotus" to the West Lake. It highlights that every person, regardless of their abilities, plays a vital role in a fulfilling life. This depiction, intentional yet subtle, reflects the varied ambitions and journeys of individuals. Despite differences, a shared desire for a better life unites us, mirroring our aspirations and expectations.

In alignment with the 2030 Agenda, and led by the guiding principles of the 20th CPC National Congress, Alibaba integrates the needs of the nation and those with disabilities with our utmost efforts. Remaining true to our original aspiration, Alibaba pledges to continue its dedicated support for people with disabilities, striving to make meaningful contributions to their lives.

TESTIMONIAL

Thumbs up for Alibaba's Aspirations and Actions in Support of Disability

Author: **Lyu Shiming**

member of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress and President of the China Association of Volunteers for Disabled Persons



Alibaba's insightful report, "A Better Life for Everyone - Alibaba's Wishes and Actions in Support of Disability", deserves applause for its surprising, heartening and exhilarating content. The spirit of volunteer service for people with disabilities, flourishing in the fertile grounds of Hangzhou, Zhejiang - a key area in China's "Common Prosperity" Pilot Zone - blossoms vibrantly in Alibaba's garden, a vanguard of public welfare and universal participation. This radiant and enthusiastic flowering is truly commendable and inspirational.

"A better life" encapsulates the essence of common prosperity and is integral to the Chinese path to modernization. It signifies a harmonious blend of an optimized social environment and the realization of the grand Chinese dream. "For everyone" emphasizes an inclusive right that allows everyone to share benefits equally. It resonates with the pursuit of "common prosperity" and reflects the profound global compassion. In this splendid display, we feel the dedicated spirit of "Aliren" and "volunteers".

In his report to the 20th CPC National Congress, Chinese President Xi Jinping underscored the need to improve the system and working mechanisms for volunteer services. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, volunteer service for disabled persons in our country has seen rapid growth. Countless volunteers and organizations dedicated to helping people with disabilities, along with compassionate enterprises, have fervently responded to the Party's call, placing people at the forefront. Their commitment to upholding and promoting core socialist values is evident as they extend their efforts into communities, rural areas, and primary levels, bringing warmth to the disabled and contributing significantly to society. Their actions vividly showcase their ideals, compassion, goodwill, and sense of responsibility, reinforcing the belief that a country's strength and future are rooted in its people's ideals. These volunteers, earnest in their support for the disabled, embody the volunteer spirit of dedication, friendship, mutual help and progress. They advance together with the motherland, dedicate to the people and harness the energy of youth to solve the most pressing difficulties of high concern to disabled persons. Their endeavors substantially contribute to the realization of the Chinese dream.

As we jointly move towards the Chinese path to modernization and the goal of common prosperity, Alibaba's volunteers for the disabled are continuously expanding the volunteer services in support of disability. By leveraging their knowledge, skills, and wisdom, they are not only developing these services but also passionately engaging in the pursuit

of "a better life for everyone."

What does a "better life" truly mean? It is a concept rich with descriptors like harmony, beauty, livability, age-friendliness, safety, convenience, accessible information, freedom, harmony, sharing, and inclusion. These words, however profound, only begin to scratch the surface. Yet, all these facets can be succinctly encapsulated in one term: "barrier-free." A life where barriers are non-existent, where barrier-free love permeates everything, evolves into "infinite love" and "eternal love." This understanding highlights the critical role of "barrier-free ecosystem" in shaping our social environment, influencing human psychology, and fostering harmonious relationships between people, technology, nature, and the wider ecosystem. Developing barrier-free environments is a huge social system project, and establishing a barrier-free legal environment is indeed the ideal in the legalization of voluntary service.

As we embark on this new journey and begin a new chapter, we understand that every step taken is a stride towards significant achievements. *The Law of the People's Republic of China on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment*, effective from September 1, 2023, and the National People's Congress's official start to legislate voluntary service, mark significant milestones. Holding barrier-free principles in one hand and the spirit of voluntarism in the other, the synergy between a barrier-free environment and voluntary service is set to lay the groundwork for a better life. May all volunteers harness their broad mind, deep wisdom, profound knowledge, and exceptional skills to understand, embrace, practice, and share barrier-free prospects. In this way, we can infuse life with beauty, integrate it into our daily routines, and cherish it in our hearts. This journey inspires us all to become architects of a better life, advocates of voluntary service, and sharers of barrier-free enthusiasm.

I extend my heartfelt wishes for Alibaba's volunteer service for helping disabled persons to flourish through dedication and reap rewarding outcomes.

My deepest gratitude also goes to the volunteers for their humanistic spirit, compassionate care, and warm companionship on this journey!

(Source: Barrier-Free Environment Committee of China Association of Volunteers for Disabled Persons (Think Tank))

CONTENTS



01

COMMITMENT

Where There's a Will, There's a Way 01

"Aspiration" and "Action" 01

Securing Happiness 09

Spotlight 13

02

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS

Harnessing Technology for the High-Quality
Accessibility Development 21

Lyu Shiming: Hangzhou Asian Para Games - A Window to China's Wisdom,
Strength, and Image 23

03

DIALOGUE

Sun Lijun, Alibaba Partner and Chairman
of the Alibaba Foundation Talks with Lu
Hong, "Touching China" Award Winner 25

04

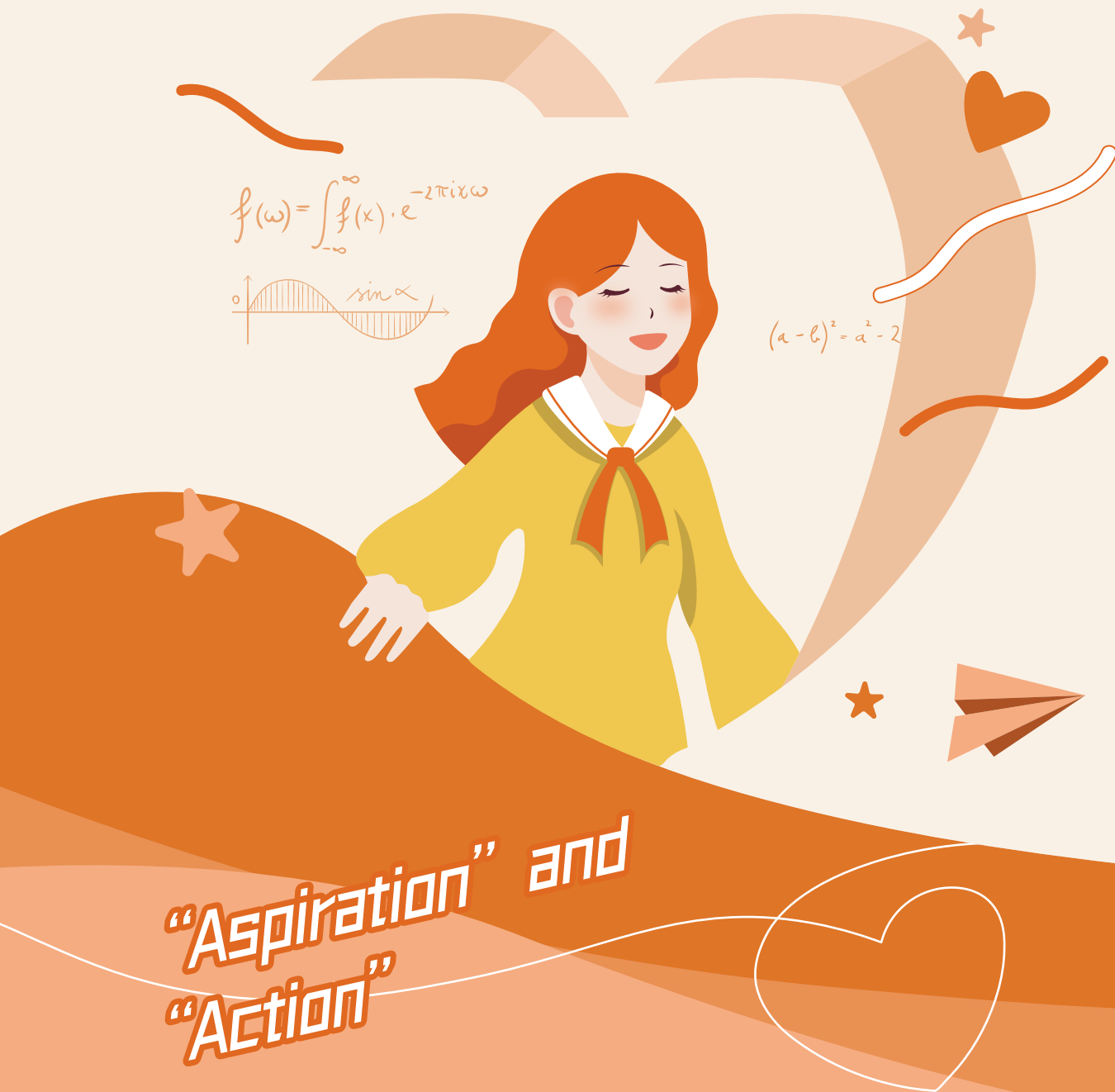
ANNEX

Contributing to the UN SDGs 31

COMMITMENT

Where There's a Will, There's a Way

Along the Chinese path to modernization in a new era, China regards it as a distinctive theme to promote the comprehensive development of the cause of persons with disabilities and create a happier life for them. This is also what Alibaba continues to work for. Starting from meeting the small needs of persons with disabilities, we communicate the message of love and care by breaking down barriers and taking actions to explore a world of possibilities with persons with disabilities.



“Aspiration” and “Action”



He Yajun, a visually impaired massage therapist:

“I want to go to the Great Wall at Badaling and touch it. Although I cannot see it, I consider myself a hero.”

Fulfilling the Dream of Visiting the Great Wall in Beijing

On May 22, Alibaba Foundation initiated the “Fulfilling the Dream of Visiting the Great Wall” activity. With the assistance of volunteers, 14 outstanding representatives of individuals with disabilities from all over the country, including He Yajun, climbed the Great Wall at Badaling. For the majority, it was their first visit to this historic landmark.

He Yajun’s story was also included in last year’s report. He received a commitment from Sun Lijun, Alibaba Partner and Chairman of the Alibaba Foundation (nickname: Dasheng). He hoped that Dasheng would gain a deeper understanding of the world of the visually impaired through volunteer services for them. In the “Fulfilling the Dream of the Great Wall” event, Sun Lijun, as a volunteer, accompanied He Yajun to climb the Great Wall, honoring his commitment.



Chen Meirong, initiator of the Quanzhou "Star Youth" Cainiao Courier Station:

"I want to find a path for young people with autism to integrate into society with their own hard work so that they can live dignified lives."



Fulfilling the Dream for "Star Youths"

Chen Meirong, the mother of twin autistic youths, has tried various methods to help her growing children find a way forward. With a "let's give it a try" attitude, Chen Meirong opened a Cainiao Courier Station in the community to support "Star Youths", who face challenges similar to her children. With the assistance of Cainiao and Alibaba Foundation, the station has become a haven for more than ten Star Youths to integrate into the community. Many of them can now independently deliver packages, and receiving a salary has become the most anticipated thing for them every month. Recommended by Alibaba Daily Positive Energy Program, Chen Meirong was honored as the Annual Charity Star on Alibaba's Charity List in 2023. She also had the opportunity to take more than ten Star Youths from the station to visit and learn at Alibaba Campus in Hangzhou.



Wishes of several visually impaired children:

"I really want to go to the cinema and watch a movie with my parents like other children."



Fulfilling the Dream of Barrier-free Movie Watching

On August 19, Alibaba Foundation's summer "Hugs and Help" group organized the "Watching Movies Together" activity at the Youku Barrier-Free Cinema in Alibaba Campus in Xixi. Over 200 visually impaired children, accompanied by audio descriptions, watched the movie *Hachiko*.

In this year, nearly 30 sessions of such barrier-free movie-watching events were held in cities like Beijing, Hangzhou, and Changsha, fulfilling the dreams of many visually impaired individuals, including the children. Over 10,000 Alibaba employees, along with their families and children, have volunteered to offer services during the process.

The Youku Barrier-Free Cinema, based on the Youku platform, provides free access to inclusive audio-visual content for the visually impaired, allowing them to enjoy movies anytime and anywhere. To date, our library boasts over 8,000 barrier-free films and television episodes.

“ Cai Lu, a young amputee:

“The internet has created many online celebrities and I also want to become one by starting a business through e-commerce live streaming.”



Fulfilling the Dream of Entrepreneurship Employment

On May 18, Alibaba Foundation and the Zhejiang Provincial Disabled Persons' Federation launched "Zhejiang Livestreaming" project. It aims to train a group of outstanding anchors with disabilities through e-commerce live streaming and promote a selection of high-quality products to support projects related to the disability cause. Also, efforts are made to provide live streaming skills training opportunities for 1,000 disabled individuals, enabling 100 of them to boost their income through livestreaming sales. Cai Lu also participated in this project.

“ Yang Di, Gu Jing, Wang Hao and more, who are baristas with hearing impairment:

“I want to teach more people sign language so that they can communicate with the hearing impaired better, helping eliminate the misunderstandings and prejudices the group often face.”



Fulfilling the Dream of Sign Language Courses in café

Since October 2022, the Alibaba Foundation, Ele.me Foundation, and Yang Di of Sign Language Café in Hangzhou have collaboratively launched the "Free Sign Language Courses" project. Focusing on ordering and checkout scenarios, the project employs a life-oriented approach to teach sign language, creating an engaging experience to capture the interest of young learners. The project has trained a group of volunteers in sign language, fostering their passion for supporting the community with hearing impairment, and has provided a platform for the hearing impaired to communicate with others. In the past one year, a total of 97 classes have been conducted, benefiting 7,000 Alibaba employees who have learned sign language. This knowledge equips them to better assist the hearing impaired in their daily lives.

Taylor (美国)
芝加哥大学

陈致远 (美国)
普林斯顿大学

Eiros Xiao
新加坡国立大学



Lou Yingen, a Chinese-American teenager with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) at MIT:

"Though I've never set foot on this planet, I navigate the rich and magnificent universe of math. My aim is to rise to the challenges using the power of math."

蒋宁骏
清华大学

郭逸帆
清华大学欧文分校



Fulfilling the Dream of Participating in a Global Mathematics Competition

In March, the 2023 Alibaba Global Mathematics Competition kicked off, bringing together math enthusiasts like Benjamin Lou on its stage. In September, the award ceremony revealed that Lou had earned the "Excellence Award." The Alibaba Global Mathematics Competition was jointly organized by the China Association for Science and Technology, Alibaba Foundation and Alibaba DAMO Academy. Designed for math enthusiasts worldwide, the competition integrates elements of competition, training, and communication. Its goal is to capture global attention for the field of mathematics, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation while encouraging contributions to the domain. Over its five consecutive years, the competition has drawn over 250,000 participants worldwide, representing more than 70 countries and regions.



On September 1, 2023, The Law of the People's Republic of China on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment, officially took effect. This marks a milestone in China's commitment to accessibility development, essentially providing a framework to guarantee equal, sufficient, and convenient participation and engagement of individuals with disabilities and the elderly in social life. Enabling more people to learn, understand, and abide by the law is an important step toward building an inclusive and barrier-free life.

Fulfilling the Dream of Being an Advocate of Barrier-free Environment

On September 1, the Alibaba Foundation, in partnership with the China Disabled Persons' Federation, initiated the "I am an Advocate of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment" public awareness campaign. Leveraging attractive methods such as developing question banks and creating cartoons, the campaign aimed to promote the law and advocate for barrier-free access. The initiative engaged 270,000 participants in online activities to learn about the law. To further enhance accessibility, the content of the law reached over 200 urban and rural communities nationwide through exhibition boards and informative sheets. Moreover, over 500 Alibaba employees volunteered to introduce the law into the communities.



Securing Happiness:
Alibaba's insightful overview

*Across the countryside's patchwork fields to the city's vibrant throng
From a lone candle's flickering glow to the bright lights in homes along
With digital technology, we traverse mountains, oceans wide
In silence, we find our voice, and in darkness, we seek the guidance of light
Encircling each soul with care, we weave a tapestry where happiness is
steadfast and bright...*



Barrier-Free Entrepreneurship and Employment

Alibaba has empowered more than 10,000 disabled partners to earn an income since 2023 through a number of projects such as Cloud Customer Service, Ele.me Hearing-Impaired Riders, and the Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities.

- Alibaba**
In the fiscal year 2023, Alibaba and its associated business segments, including RT-Mart, Cainiao, and Freshippo, collectively hired 1,431 employees with disabilities.
- Taobao and Tmall Group**
Under the guidance of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the Cloud Customer Service project has formulated preferential policies for people with disabilities and has been recruiting home-based customer service staff for nine consecutive years. Currently, 3,304 persons with disabilities are employed in these roles.
- Cainiao**
In partnership with various non-profit organizations, the Cloud Customer Service project has established employment stations in Kangding, Canxi, and Longyan, Sichuan Province. To date, this project has provided job opportunities to 545 low-income individuals, including those with disabilities.
- Local Services Group - Ele.me**
Ele.me has launched a barrier-free communication system tailored for hearing-impaired riders. It adopted five measures to improve delivery experience for riders, including "Quick-Select Communication Tool" and "No-Fault Delivery Policy for Challenging Scenarios". More than 3,000 hearing-impaired riders have earned an income on the Ele.me platform.
- Freshippo**
In collaboration with local civil affairs departments and disabled persons' federations, Freshippo now employs 250 disabled individuals in its physical stores.
- Taobao and Tmall Group & Alibaba Foundation**
On May 22, Alibaba Foundation, in partnership with the Taobao merchant operation team, launched the "Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities". This three-year program aims to support 10,000 disabled merchants through e-commerce training and establishing exemplary business models. As of November 20, Alibaba Foundation has assisted 3,200 businesses run by individuals with disabilities, offering digital support through the Business Advisor package. Moreover, on May 18, together with the Zhejiang Federation of Persons with Disabilities, the Foundation launched the "Zhejiang Livestreaming" project, aimed at empowering the disabled in live-stream selling. This project has successfully trained 1,000 disabled individuals in livestreaming skills, enabling 100 of them to boost their income through livestreaming sales.

Barrier-Free Technology

Since 2023, Alibaba has upgraded 15 of its apps to improve accessibility. Eight have been certified at the national first-level standard for barrier-free access. Notable innovations like wheelchair navigation, digital avatar Xiaomo, and barrier-free cinema have emerged as star products in assisting the disabled.

- Alibaba Digital Accessibility Team**
With this group's efforts, 15 Alibaba-owned apps, including Taobao, Xianyu, Youku, Ele.me, Freshippo, and DingTalk, have completed accessibility enhancements. Eight of these apps have been certified at the national first-level standard for accessibility. The accessible apps are forging a "digital pathway" for the visually impaired, akin to the tactile paving on the internet. The group has also generously opened up 11 patents, encouraging the sharing and innovation of technologies that break down information barriers.
- Digital Media and Entertainment Group**
Youku Barrier-Free Cinema, based on the Youku platform, offers visually impaired audiences an inclusive film and TV experience, enabling them to enjoy movies online. To date, our library boasts over 8,000 barrier-free films and television episodes.
- Cloud Intelligence Group**
Utilizing AI technology, Xiaomo, a digital avatar proficient in sign language, is created. Xiaomo serves as a communication bridge for the hearing-impaired community. Already integrated into Alipay, Xiaomo played a significant role in sign language translation at the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou. Currently, Xiaomo is active in 46 scenic areas and 658 spots around West Lake, and has provided sign language translation services at key historical and cultural sites like the Southern Song Dynasty Dushou Palace Ruins and the China National Tea Museum.
- Alibaba Health**
Alibaba Health has innovatively designed and launched the Alibaba Health Font, China's first non-profit font featuring a "Chinese-Phonetic Notation-English-Braille" conversion function. This font enables automatic conversion between Chinese, English and Braille, facilitating direct Braille spelling and input via text phonetic notation. It has been applied in the packaging of medicines and health products.
- Amap**
In November 2022, Amap, in collaboration with the Alibaba Foundation, introduced "wheelchair navigation." This feature is adept at avoiding steps and steep slopes, and prioritizing routes with barrier-free facilities like barrier-free elevators, thus effectively aiding wheelchair users in their travels. As of mid-October, this new feature had been launched in 30 cities nationwide, providing 24 million barrier-free route planning services.
- Alibaba Health**
Alibaba Health has innovatively designed and launched the Alibaba Health Font, China's first non-profit font featuring a "Chinese-Phonetic Notation-English-Braille" conversion function. This font enables automatic conversion between Chinese, English and Braille, facilitating direct Braille spelling and input via text phonetic notation. It has been applied in the packaging of medicines and health products.

Barrier-Free Volunteer Services

Under the umbrella of the "Three Hours for a Better World" initiative, since 2023, Alibaba has mobilized tens of thousands of volunteers to provide voluntary services to persons with disabilities around their actual needs through 10 dedicated "Hugs and Help" groups for people with disabilities.

- Colorful Heart Group**
Devoted to serving friends with disabilities, this group has organized nearly 20 public welfare activities aimed at uniting people with and without disabilities. In 2023, over 200 volunteers accompanied more than 600 disabled individuals to tour around Alibaba Campus, natural scenic spots, and watch games at the Asian Games venues.
- Cinematic Visionaries Group**
To enable visually impaired people to experience the magic of movies, this group conducts offline barrier-free movie sessions in Beijing, Hangzhou, Changsha, and other cities. In 2023 alone, the group organized nearly 30 activities, engaging over 10,000 Alibaba staff and their families.
- Together We Run Group**
Aiming to assist visually impaired friends with running activities, this group uses elastic bands to create a trust bridge. In 2023, they organized more than 60 activities, including morning runs and marathons together with visually impaired companions, with nearly 300 volunteers involved.
- Sign & Sip Group**
Dedicated to supporting the hearing impaired, this group combines sign language with coffee gatherings. In 2023, they hosted over 100 activities, engaging nearly a thousand volunteers.
- Autism Support Station Group**
Supporting children with autism, this group organizes empowerment and stress-relief activities for families affected by autism, fostering societal integration through one-on-one companionship. In 2023, they conducted seven public welfare activities, with more than 60 Alibaba volunteers serving 150 autism-affected families.
- Future Stars Drama Group**
This group helps autistic children express themselves through drama games. In 2023, it carried out five public welfare activities in a row, mobilizing nearly 200 volunteers.
- Summer Bonding for the Disabled Group**
This group coordinates fundraising campaigns, engaging employees and their families to support movie screenings for visually impaired children from schools for the blind. In 2023, 7,600 volunteers and their children facilitated movie experiences for 1,300 visually impaired children nationwide.

Ecosystem Support for Barrier-Free Access

Alibaba harnesses the collective strength of its platform and ecosystem to bolster accessibility development. In 2023, through the "Goods for Good" initiative, over RMB 18 million was raised for 25 projects in support of disability, and 270,000 netizens were mobilized to contribute through the "Three Hours for a Better World" platform.

- Alibaba Charity Platform**
The "Goods for Good" initiative supports 25 disability assistance projects across various areas, including employment, hearing, visual, and mental health impairment support, raising over RMB 18 million in 2023. In total, the platform has garnered RMB 128 million of donations for disability assistance.
- "Three Hours for a Better World" Platform**
In 2023, this platform enabled 270,000 individuals to become advocates for the Law on Building a Barrier-Free Living Environment. Over 10,000 volunteers facilitated barrier-free travel for the disabled through 250 volunteer activities on the platform. The platform also partnered with Amap to launch a volunteer campaign named "Wheelchair Navigation Care Report", focusing on reporting information to enhance wheelchair navigation and facilitate barrier-free travel.
- Alibaba Daily Positive Energy Program**
Collaborating with over 400 mainstream media outlets, this program rewards everyday good deeds, inspiring positive actions and kindness. Over the past year, 73 of these recognitions have been related to disability assistance. More than 500 awards have been presented to support the disabled since 2013.
- I am an Advocate of the Law on Building a Barrier-Free Living Environment**
Together with the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the Alibaba Foundation initiated the "I Am an Advocate of the Law on Building a Barrier-Free Living Environment" campaign on September 1. This campaign motivates netizens to partake in online quizzes via the "Three Hours for a Better World" platform and to join offline law promotion activities across more than 200 urban and rural communities, enhancing awareness and support for barrier-free environment.
- Alibaba Health's "Xiao Lu Lantern Children's Serious Disease Relief Platform"**
Through "active assistance", the platform offers economic and medical aid to disabled children facing serious illnesses in underdeveloped areas. As of September 30, 2023, this platform has reached out to 872 townships and villages in 57 counties across 32 provinces. It has channeled over RMB 30.62 million in donations, organized 70 free clinic sessions, conducted preventative health screening for 22,400 children, and aided 1,486 children with severe diseases, including 233 children suffering from disabilities.



Because “we see them in the crowds”

Amap wheelchair navigation shows a more friendly world

At the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, Ruan Cheng, a young man born in the 1980s, was in the limelight when appearing in the center position of the performance “Walking Together”. As a member of the Hangzhou Team of Wheelchair Dancers with Disabilities, Ruan used to be a canoe and kayak athlete and won third place in the 200-meter men’s individual canoeing in still water at the National Games for Persons with Disabilities.

“When I heard Ruan Cheng’s story that he had traveled to many cities with the help of Amap wheelchair navigation, I felt that the project was extraordinarily valuable and I was happy beyond words,” said Zhao Jun, an Alibaba employee who works as a volunteer for the wheelchair navigation project. He has a strong sense of personal pride when talking about the Amap wheelchair navigation system, because he is one of the project initiators.



Philanthropic aspirations spark new ideas

Zhao Jun is inspired by Alibaba’s data engineer Guo Bailing, a wheelchair user who suffers from mobility issues due to polio. “Because we see him in the crowds, we start to pay attention to how difficult it is for persons with disabilities to travel.”

As colleagues, Zhao and Gao usually talk with each other, and Zhao learns that persons with disabilities face many unexpected challenges, such as inaccessible steps for wheelchair users, occupied tactile paving for the visually impaired, and communication barriers encountered by people with hearing disabilities when they have problems.

“The last thing one might want to do is to ask for help, but the more reluctant one is to turn to others and go outside, the more difficulties one faces,” said Zhao Jun thoughtfully. “The things we take for granted are less friendly to those with disabilities.” These obstacles chain the majority of persons with disabilities at home and result in emotional self-isolation. That is why in a country with 85 million persons with disabilities, they are often invisible in our daily lives.

Persons with disabilities pass route information within their groups,

which is taken down in their notebooks, or use some lesser-known map apps, which serve a small group of users and are not up-to-date and accurate. “We were discussing what we could do to help wheelchair users get around with more certainty.” Zhao said that they immediately held an online meeting with the team of Amap to explore the possibility of creating the “wheelchair navigation” feature.

Zhao’s idea immediately stroke an instant chord with engineers of the Amap non-motorized vehicle navigation team. With rapid response, the idea was turned into a system within three months. In November 2022, with the support and guidance of the China Disabled Persons’ Federation and Zhejiang Provincial Disabled Persons’ Federation, Amap and Alibaba Foundation together launched the free “accessible navigation” feature, which helps avoid steps and steep slopes in navigation and gives priority to routes with barrier-free facilities such as barrier-free elevators. The new feature is especially convenient for wheelchair users, so it is also called “wheelchair navigation”.

Doing the best for utmost certainty

According to the feedback from engineers, technical aspects are not the biggest challenge. Digitalized accessible navigation is made possible because barrier-free facilities are getting better. The difficulty of the project lies in how to design the product from the perspective of persons with disabilities based on a public navigation product. It is necessary to accurately collect and label the data of barrier-free facilities to provide them with sufficient certainty. “The cost of travel for persons with disabilities is very high. Once they are navigated toward the wrong route, it will be much more challenging for them to switch, unlike persons without disabilities,” Zhao Jun added.

The new system is well-developed thanks to several factors. First, Guo Bailing explains the travel needs of persons with disabilities in a way easy for engineers to understand, so there is less trial and error in the design process. Second, the new system is also attributed to Amap’s considerable pool of data and technical solutions as well as the positive response and full support from the caring engineer team. Third, the project is piloted in Hangzhou, Beijing, and Shanghai where barrier-free facilities are better developed, so the new system can be swiftly applied and updated. Fourth, the project is recognized by the China Disabled Persons’ Federation as soon as it is launched, so that more data on barrier-free facilities is fed into the system. Fifth, the corporate culture of Alibaba that encourages everyone to participate in philanthropy kindles the goodwill and action of Alibaba employees in various positions. And Alibaba Foundation mobilizes funds, volunteers, and the public to strongly support the project. Amap wheelchair navigation has become the first such navigation feature in public map applications in China. Once users enable the “accessible navigation” option, they can get a planned

barrier-free route, including barrier-free elevators and excluding steps and slopes. Wheelchair users no longer have to worry about the sudden barriers on their way, making it certain for them to travel smoothly.

After the Amap wheelchair navigation system is launched, it is widely promoted and highly recognized by persons with disabilities. With the efforts of Amap’s engineers, the new system has been applied in 30 cities across China, including Hangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Wuhan, Changsha, Jinan, Chengdu, and Qingdao within one year, providing 24 million barrier-free route planning services for persons with disabilities. Greatly applauded by wheelchair users, Amap wheelchair navigation offered users 1.57 million barrier-free route plans during the 2023 golden week (National Day holiday).



Applied in **30** cities across China within one year



Providing **24** million barrier-free route planning services for persons with disabilities



Offering users **1.57** million barrier-free route plans during the 2023 golden week (National Day holiday)



Positive feedback activates positive cycles of sustainable love without barriers

Although 24 million barrier-free route plans a year are only a tiny amount for Amap, which has more than 100 million daily active users, it still greatly exceeds the expectations of the volunteers of the entire project team and gives them great encouragement. To learn that so many persons with disabilities are using the product!

"Despite the coverage of a limited number of cities and the low proportion of persons with disabilities going outside, we see that the new product has a stable base of users that is growing, an indication of user viscosity being formed. It also shows that wheelchair navigation has brought convenience to persons with disabilities, even becoming part of daily life for some users." It is the positive feedback from the use data, users, and relevant departments that informs the project team of Amap believe that there is a real demand for this product, so all the effort is worthwhile. This also accelerates the input of capital and brainpower into the product, making the R&D and operation of the wheelchair navigation system spiral upward.

The dedication of engineers involved in the project also touched Zhao Jun very much. Zhao first met the Amap engineer team about half a year after the wheelchair navigation was launched, at the award ceremony of Alibaba's Charity List, a philanthropic "Oscar" ceremony held by Alibaba for employees. As one of the best projects of the year, wheelchair navigation won the Social Insight Award. "It was at the ceremony that I learned that some engineers commuted to work in wheelchairs for several days in a row to have first-hand experience so that they could understand the travel needs and challenges of persons with disabilities," Zhao said. "They also attach great importance to feedback from users with disabilities with immediate response and improvement."

Liu Zhenfei, Partner of Alibaba Group, Director of Alibaba Foundation, and President of Amap, said that the first step in developing wheelchair navigation was to empathize, which is extremely important. Only by understanding the challenges of wheelchair users from their perspective can engineers create products that truly meet their needs. "One more step we take means more convenience for them."

Accessible navigation is written into the law, which means a lot

On June 28, 2023, at the third meeting of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment* was passed by a huge margin and was implemented on September 1, 2023. The law on building a barrier-free living environment systematically



After the Amap wheelchair navigation system was created, there were some surprises beyond Zhao Jun's expectations. For example, Ruan Cheng, who we mentioned at the beginning of this article, has traveled to many cities for the first time with the help of Amap wheelchair navigation. Some persons without disabilities, such as the elderly, temporary wheelchair users due to injuries, parents with strollers, people carrying heavy objects, and other people unable to climb stairs have also begun to use the new system.

Philanthropic aspirations and digital means help Amap expand the user group and enrich product functions. Amap wheelchair navigation has become a vivid example of what Alibaba advocates in philanthropy: "philanthropic intention, commercial methods, and technical power". It also shows that philanthropy is sustainable only when social and commercial values are integrated.

stipulates major institutional mechanisms for a barrier-free environment in terms of facilities, information exchange, and social services. In Chapter 3 about barrier-free information exchange, Article 32 clearly states: The state encourages map navigation and positioning products to gradually improve the signs of barrier-free facilities and

the navigation of barrier-free travel routes.

Dr. Li Jing, with the Law School of the China University of Labor Relations, is one of the experts drafting the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment*. Dr. Li said the leap from the previous Regulations on *Building a Barrier-free Living Environment* to the Law on *Building a Barrier-free Living Environment* shows the determination of the whole society to build a barrier-free environment. The chapter about "barrier-free information exchange" indicates the importance of such content and reflects that the building of a barrier-free living environment in China is no longer just about physical space. It has been elevated to a new level, which is of great value for helping the elderly and persons with disabilities to integrate into society and is compatible with China's efforts to advocate for an inclusive society, inclusive employment, and inclusive education.

Everyone gets involved in philanthropy for barrier-free travel

The launch of Amap wheelchair navigation is just the beginning of the digitalization of barrier-free facilities. Building a barrier-free environment requires the efforts of the government, society, enterprises, and individuals. It includes the guidance of laws and policies, the standardized development and use of barrier-free facilities, as well as care, respect, inclusion, and support for persons with disabilities.

To provide greater certainty and better experience for the groups using Amap wheelchair navigation, on October 27, 2023, at the ceremony of launching Amap wheelchair navigation in 30 cities, Amap and Alibaba Foundation jointly initiated the wheelchair

The fact that "barrier-free navigation of travel routes" is written into the law reminds Zhao Jun of the significance of the Amap wheelchair navigation system. "This is the first national barrier-free navigation product that is supported and acclaimed by China Disabled Persons' Federation and the Zhejiang Provincial Disabled Persons' Federation. It's inspiring to see what we worked for is written into the law."

Li Dongmei, member of the Party Group and Vice Chairman of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, commented, "Wheelchair navigation is a concrete example of implementing the *Law on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment*, an important practice of all stakeholders participating in the building of a barrier-free environment, and a successful application of new technology in building a barrier-free environment. Wheelchair navigation reflects the concept of integrated development of barrier-free facilities, information, and services, providing an example for future promotion of a barrier-free environment."

navigation campaign of "marking barrier-free facilities", calling for users to together build a barrier-free environment. Users can search for "marking barrier-free facilities" on Amap and upload information about barrier-free facilities and barrier-free routes around them to facilitate the travel of persons with disabilities.

Zhou Linya, wheelchair navigation project leader and product director of Amap, said, "The improvement of barrier-free navigation requires the joint efforts of the whole society, and we also hope that more map navigation apps will join us to improve the barrier-free environment together." (Correspondent Deng Mingwen)





An Alibaba relay race with no end

information accessibility makes everyone be seen

Eighty-three percent of the information that we access depends on vision and eleven percent on hearing. That is why visual and hearing impairments may complicate ordinary tasks, which is exactly the daily reality faced by 17.31 million visually impaired and 27.8 million hearing-impaired people in China. If the elderly with deteriorating vision and hearing is included, the population with limited access to information in China will approach 300 million. For them, the Internet is a world that is hardly "accessible".

In 2010, a visually impaired user could no longer use the third-party auxiliary software for online operation after the Taobao computer version was revised. Feeling helpless, the user "complained" about Taobao in the media. This small story captured the attention of an Alibaba engineer, Ma. In 2011, he and several other engineers led the establishment of the first accessibility laboratory with Taobao as the main platform, which ushered in Alibaba's over-ten-year relay race of information accessibility.



Passion goes a long way while contributing to the standardized process

In 2014, Huang Gang, current vice chairman of Alibaba's digital accessibility team, joined the company at a time when China entered the era of mobile Internet. Huang, still a "newcomer" in the industry, had not yet formed a specific concept of information accessibility: "I only had some vague ideas that Alibaba could do more than just business for the world around us."

Huang chanced upon a visually impaired user's feedback on online shopping. He had never thought about the experience of visually impaired people in using smartphones and the surprise feedback spurred him to reflect. In 2016, Zhuyin, working on the interface of mobile Taobao information accessibility, approached Huang, who was responsible for the basic link function of the mobile app, hoping that he could join the volunteer team that had formed to advance

mobile Taobao information accessibility. Huang then realized that many employees of Alibaba also noticed the needs of users with disabilities and were doing their bit to solve challenges. "It's a noble cause." The thoughts that had been Huang Gang's began to take concrete form.

When Huang first entered the field of information accessibility, Taobao's barrier-free work had already been manifest for some time, but mainly on the PC side and the accessibility for mobile apps was in its infancy. Necessary functions such as product description, settlement, and picture information reading were not yet adjusted to be accessible, which called for more collaboration. That is why other volunteers invited Huang Gang to join. Huang selected many colleagues from his team to join their cause, including Zhang Yiyuan,

who later served as the long-standing project leader.

Both Huang Gang and Zhang Yiyuan initially worked on the barrier-free features of the Taobao mobile app as volunteers, but Zhang recalled that no one was slacking in the work because it was "unpaid": "everyone was aware that this required immense effort but generated low business returns, but we thought that Alibaba should act first because it is such a large company. Our sense of honor and responsibility as Alibaba employees drove us to work voluntarily."

With Alibaba's increasing attention to information accessibility and the continuous contributions by Alibaba's employees, the barrier-free transformation of mobile Taobao was systemized and standardized rapidly. In 2017, the continuous iteration of barrier-free transformation was included in the core development process and specifications of mobile Taobao. In 2018, OCR technology was applied on a large scale. In 2019, Alibaba established the Information Accessibility Committee together with the Technical Philanthropy Committee. In 2020, Alibaba put in place a unified information

accessibility technology platform. In the same year, China's first national standard on information accessibility, *GB/T 37668-2019 Information Technology - Internet Content Accessibility Technical Requirements and Conformance Testing*, was implemented. Alibaba contributed to its drafting.

At the 2019 Technology Accessibility Development Conference, Huang Gang made a keynote speech on behalf of Taobao. A visually impaired user stopped him when he stepped down, telling him that Taobao had made great progress in the past few years, and the user thanked him in particular. It was the first time that Huang Gang's work had been recognized by a user, making him touched and proud: "Our team started the work out of our passion and created a standardized process and technical tools, elevating the information accessibility of Alibaba's products to a leading level. This is the greatest contribution of our team."



Ongoing expansion and growth

The establishment of the Information Accessibility Committee marked a shift from the voluntary participation of Alibaba employees to planned organization. Information accessibility was no longer the passion of a few, but one of the key issues that all Alibaba employees should focus on. "At first, we worked in silos," Zhang Yiyuan said, "The committee brings barrier-free transformation together as a whole and gives Alibaba employees involved a strong sense of belonging."

In 2021, Zhang Yiyuan took over from Huang Gang and became the executive leader of Alibaba's information accessibility, while Huang Gang coordinated as the vice chairman of the Information Accessibility Committee. "Barrier-free transformation is difficult to measure in commercial terms, and it requires people with genuine inner strength," Huang Gang said, "Zhang Yiyuan has great ideals."

At that time, Alibaba had established diversified user needs communication channels and a product iteration mechanism. Engineers bore in mind the needs of online users. Through the Shenzhen Accessibility Research Association, the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the "Green Channel Group" feedback platform, and regular offline activities, engineers solicited feedback from users with disabilities for following product optimization. Each updated version to be released would be sent to the engineers with disabilities of Alibaba's partner institutions for testing. Alibaba engineers themselves would often simulate the scenario of persons with disabilities for trial and adjustment. They solved the real problems of users with disabilities through continuous improvement and innovation.

Li Qingyang, current head of the information accessibility project, participated in many offline activities. During face-to-face exchanges, he received many sincere thanks from persons with disabilities but also faced many sharp questions. "Many engineers have few opportunities to work with persons with disabilities. The project is an opportunity for self-improvement, making them look at different problems with a more inclusive and open-minded attitude. The way they think at work will be more altruistic."

Open dialogue supports product iteration and changes the way many Alibaba employees see their work. For example, information accessibility has been integrated into the mobile Taobao. Each time the app is updated, hundreds of branches and thousands of employees are involved. One of the eight indicators for engineers to determine the release of an update is "whether it gets in the way of the accessibility function". Engineers of another app, Xianyu, an online second-hand item trade platform, sometimes spontaneously take an afternoon out to discuss recent feedback from users with disabilities and adjust their product. For them, accessibility transformation has become part of their work.

In 2021, AZFT (Alibaba-Zhejiang University Joint Institute of Frontier Technologies) established by the Alibaba Accessibility Committee and Zhejiang University jointly launched the automatic system WAAE (Web & APP Accessibility Evaluation) to detect accessibility issues. WAAE realizes non-intrusive and efficient detection through the combination of software, hardware, and AI. So far, WAAE has developed normalized detection capabilities to provide daily accessibility testing services for a variety of apps, including mobile Taobao, Ele.me, and AliExpress.

With heightened accessibility awareness and technological innovation, more Alibaba apps have been transformed. The target group has also expanded from the initial visually impaired community to the hearing-impaired group, physically challenged persons, and even seniors as well. For the visually impaired, the product user interaction section of Quark can all be read aloud by the system and Fliggy helps visually impaired users book air tickets, train tickets, or hotels through the screen reading function. For the hearing-impaired community, Youku has launched the "Barrier-free Cinema", becoming the first entertainment platform to provide streaming services for the visually impaired. For physically challenged persons, Amap has launched the wheelchair navigation feature to plan barrier-free routes for users facing travel inconvenience. For the seniors, Taobao has launched voice assistant services such as "manual customer service (online + hotline)", "active service for refund rejection" and "operations on behalf of customers (partial)" to provide practical help for the elderly to shop online.....

As of the end of March 2023, a total of 15 Alibaba apps had undergone barrier-free and age-friendly upgrades, involving a variety of digital scenarios such as online shopping, food ordering, entertainment, and social networking. Taobao, Ele.me, Xianyu, Amap, and Youku have been rated as the first excellent cases of barrier-free and age-friendly upgrades of online apps by China Academy of Information and Communication Technology. The eleven patents related to barrier-free and age-friendly upgrades, showing the strong sense of responsibility of Alibaba employees, are available to the public free of charge, contributing to the promotion of information accessibility and age-friendly technologies.

Alibaba's support for barrier-free transformation and its positive attitude are a great comfort to Zhang Yiyuan. What satisfies him most is the gratitude from persons with disabilities and the recognition from relatives and friends. In the past, when he introduced his work at Alibaba to his classmates and families, they were confused by his abstract description. "Sometimes they think I just work for a big company." After learning that Zhang was working on information accessibility, his mother felt proud and told him to work harder. "They all felt that I was doing something particularly meaningful," Zhang smiled, "This also enabled me to see my job at a deeper level."

Solid commitment to a promising future

In 2023, as Alibaba's "1+6+N" structure reform deepened, Li Qingyang took over Zhang Yiyuan to lead the information accessibility project, while Zhang Yiyuan and Huang Gang continued to follow and help the project. The Alibaba digital accessibility team evolved from the initial several volunteers to a specialized team with four full-time personnel. The number of Alibaba employees who have participated in and are engaged in barrier-free transformation amounts to hundreds.



Building upon the legacy of many Alibaba employees, Li Qingyang, a veteran in consumer-end development, began to apply information accessibility in the secondary link to cover more types of users. Some members of his team focus on products and identify areas of improvement based on the needs of persons with disabilities before updating the information to the person in charge of each app. Some members collaborate with partner organizations to evaluate each app and help fix problems. Others specialize in technology and embed the basic functions of information accessibility into each app to bridge the accessibility gap between different products. "Information accessibility needs to be implemented, and we must meet the basic needs of users to ensure the tangible benefits of information accessibility," Li Qingyang said.

Thanks to the efforts of the information accessibility team, Tmall served more than 320,000 visually impaired users in fiscal year 2023. By the end of 2022, Taobao's "senior mode" had served more than 3 million elderly people. The OCR technology reads about 100 million pictures for visually impaired users every year, or an average of 270,000 pictures each day. More than 20 cities in China have successively launched over 2,200 "Caring Stations for the Elderly", covering communities, hospitals, and bus stations, in partnership with Amap's "senior version".

Looking into the future, Alibaba still faces many challenges in information accessibility. Alibaba employees face the common question about how to keep the momentum of barrier-free transfor-

mation in the rapid development and iteration of products and how to use emerging technologies such as AI and large models to improve the experience of persons with disabilities. Alibaba's unchanged commitment and accumulation over a decade inspire confidence in all employees to tackle challenges.

The baton of information accessibility is now passed to Li Qingyang, who said that he aspired to carry on the work of his predecessors and support the barrier-free transformation to be more efficient and cover a wider group. What Huang Gang, Zhang Yiyuan, and Li Qingyang expect is for technology to narrow the "digital divide" so that persons with disabilities and seniors can equally and freely access and use information in any scenario. This is also the expectation of every Alibaba employee who has participated in the barrier-free transformation in the last ten years and also the expectation of the public for Alibaba.

The journey ahead is lengthy but bright, and Alibaba's employees will never give up. This information accessibility relay race of Alibaba will always continue. (Correspondent Zhu Lin)



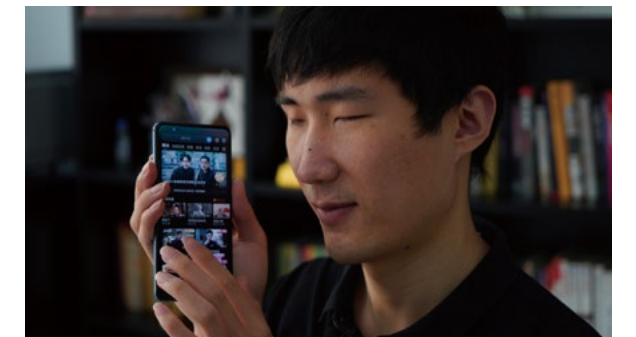
Tmall served more than **320,000** visually impaired users in fiscal year 2023



By the end of 2022, Taobao's "senior mode" had served more than **3** million elderly people



The OCR technology reads about **100** million pictures for visually impaired users every year, or an average of **270,000** pictures each day



COLLECTIVE EFFORTS

Harnessing Technology for the High-Quality Accessibility Development

The innovative technologies showcased at Hangzhou Asian Para Games has captured attention across Asia and the world, underscoring the crucial role of technology in supporting disability-related causes. Collaborative efforts by the Hangzhou Disabled Persons' Federation, Yuhang District Disabled Persons' Federation, Alibaba, and other key players in disability support are pooling strength in disability-assisting science and technology. These joint endeavors aim to leverage technology to advance the development of disability causes, facilitating the application of scientific breakthroughs in the realm. This collective action facilitates China's high-quality accessibility development and helps realize the vision of "a better life for everyone".



In preparation for the Asian Para Games, "accessibility experience officers" from the Hangzhou Barrier-free Environment Promotion Association diligently identified potential issues and shortcomings in barrier-free environments. Since the preparation for the Games, Hangzhou has seen extensive enhancements in accessibility: the renovation and upgrading of 140,000 barrier-free spots and key public service areas, the improvement of 75 urban road sections, over 3,000 kilometers of tactile paving for the visually impaired, and more than 1,600 accessible public restrooms...



At the 4th Asian Para Games' opening ceremony, Xu Jialing, a member of the Chinese swimming team, emerged as the final torchbearer. Donning a smart bionic hand, she lit the main torch tower, named "Tide Surge." This marked the first time in global sports history that an intelligent bionic hand using brain-computer interface was used to ignite the Asian Games flame.



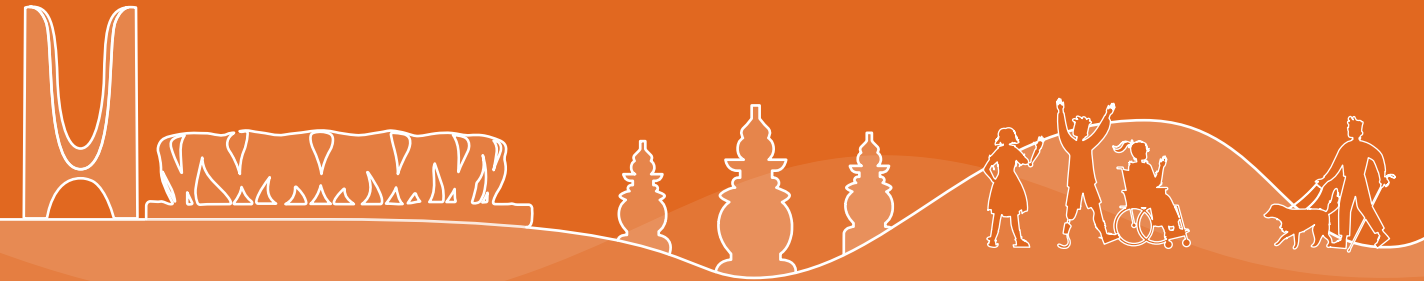
On October 22, at the Games' opening ceremony, with assistance from volunteers from Lions Clubs International D386 Zhejiang China and other organizations, more than 400 disabled friends from across the country became the first to benefit from the "Lions Clubs Zhejiang for Disabled Person- Thousands Watching the Games" event. They had the opportunity to witness the opening ceremony in person, enjoying a memorable and inclusive moment.

Digital avatar for sign language translation, accessible ride reservations, wheelchair-friendly navigation, and online streaming of barrier-free films...Prior to the Hangzhou Asian Para Games, the "Barrier-free Service Online" mini-program was launched on Alipay. This app addresses the essential needs of disabled individuals in areas such as clothing, food, housing, and transportation. This initiative echoes the unified call for "Boundless Care, Barrier-Free" among the disabled community.

In the Asian Para Games Village, over 60 athletes from more than 20 countries and regions experienced the transformative power of exoskeleton products. They embraced the magical feeling of "standing up" and "walking" once again.



“Lyu Shiming: Hangzhou Asian Para Games - A Window to China's Wisdom, Strength, and Image



The Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, the second city in China to host this prestigious event, was not merely a platform for para athletes to display their prowess. It was an international showcase of the style and spirit of disabled individuals from China and around the globe. Moreover, it was a window to the Chinese people's spirit as part of the nation's grand journey towards modernization and common prosperity.

The Games were incredibly captivating, showcasing Hangzhou's allure and reflecting China's character on a global stage. Particularly, the surprises and innovations of the Hangzhou Games fully and vividly demonstrated China's wisdom, strength, and image.

A Historical Opportunity for Barrier-Free Legislation

Since the 13th National People's Congress in 2018, the China Disabled Persons' Federation, in collaboration with various industries and societal sectors, proposed to integrate regulations on creating barrier-free environments with the Chinese path to modernization and public expectations into the legislative process. Capitalizing on the opportunity presented by Hangzhou Asian Para Games, the Zhejiang delegation of the National People's Congress spearheaded the proposal for the legislation of barrier-free environment development as a crucial bill. Thanks to the concerted efforts of other delegations and representatives over three years, *the Law on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment* was officially promulgated on June 28 and came into force on September 1, 2023.

This legislative milestone, coupled with the development of Zhejiang's barrier-free environment, has presented us with unparalleled opportunities to advance the accessibility development. The Asian Para Games presents another unique and special opportunity, and such large-scale international sports events can serve as a positive catalyst to improve various facets of society - from specific

regions and industries to social aspects. They even make impacts through smaller communities like families, city blocks, and public spaces, accelerating the development of barrier-free environments on all fronts.

The Law on Building a Barrier-Free Living Environment underscores the importance of not only protecting the rights and interests of disabled persons and seniors but also ensuring the inclusive sharing of economic and social development benefits by all members of society. In essence, creating a barrier-free environment is about addressing the most pressing difficulties of high concern to various groups, thereby driving societal improvements towards better lives for those in need. For instance, seizing the opportunity provided by the Asian Para Games, Hangzhou advanced barrier-free prosecution for public interests. Starting with Hangzhou as a pilot and extending to Zhejiang, this region has translated this invaluable experience into the rule of law process for barrier-free environments. Concurrently, this practice has paved an effective and impactful way for the full implementation of this law across the nation.

World Awed by the "Hangzhou Model"

With 85 million disabled persons and an elderly population surpassing 280 million, accounting for 19.8% of society, China has entered a moderately aging society. The well-being and social welfare of these groups are crucial to the overall sense of fulfillment, happiness, and security within society.

The Asian Games and Asian Para Games in Hangzhou have set a benchmark, with the barrier-free achievements in Hangzhou and even Zhejiang serving as exemplary models both nationally and internationally. For instance, the barrier-free facilities at Hangzhou Asian Para Games venues, the inclusive design of the Asian Para Games Village, and the surrounding accessible infrastructure, information exchange, and social services have all significantly contributed to the public's enhanced experience.

In the setting of the Asian Para Games, Hangzhou has made remarkable strides in building barrier-free environment, from families to

communities, from Westlake University to the Home of Hope for the Disabled, as well as various welfare and support institutions. Innovations like Top Hat Travel, wheelchair navigation, and Alibaba's barrier-free park pilot have significantly advanced this process. Economically, the dividends of barrier-free environments are substantial. For example, Xiaoshan International Airport, after a three-year period of accessibility development, stands out as the second leading barrier-free airport in China following Beijing Daxing International Airport.

Such examples are numerous in Hangzhou. The successful conclusion of the Asian Para Games is set to have an extensive impact and value on society. More importantly, it has shifted people's mindsets, utilizing the development of barrier-free environments as a catalyst to foster social civility and highlight the Chinese path to modernization and common prosperity.

Science, Technology, and Volunteerism: A Fusion of Warmth and Appeal

The Asian Para Games presented a fusion of modern technology and broad spirit of volunteerism, embodying rich spiritual values, humanistic sentiments, and technological innovation. In terms of volunteer service, Zhejiang Provincial Disabled Persons' Federation and Lions Clubs International D386 Zhejiang China, alongside the China Association of Volunteers for Disabled Persons and YTO Express Group, initiated the "Lions Clubs Zhejiang for Disabled Persons · Thousands Watching the Games" initiative. This endeavor invited thousands of disabled individuals to Hangzhou to watch the Asian Para Games and witness the city's accessible facilities firsthand. In the global spotlight, this display of immense love and selfless service showcased the allure of Hangzhou, the charisma of Zhejiang, and the cultural richness of China. Among these dedicated "lion" volunteers, the eldest is 72, with many post-2000s "Gen-Z" university students involved. Notably, some volunteers with their own disabilities, remained steadfast in providing compassionate and caring services to others with disability.

Hosting such a significant international event brings a timeless charm to a city. Moreover, the profound acts of human kindness and compassion witnessed during these Games are etched into history. The values showcased by a city and rooted in civilization, humanities, and technology, paint a picture of hope and anticipation for the future. Most importantly, these moments inspire us to rise to the challenge, to strive tirelessly, and to boldly advance, contributing to the ongoing narrative of human progress. (Author: Lyu Shiming, member of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress and President of China Association of Volunteers for Disabled Persons. He formerly served as Deputy Village Chief of the Yuannan Paralympic Village in Beijing in 1994, First Deputy Head of the Chinese Sports Delegation for the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games, the 2006 Malaysia Asian Para Games, and the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, as well as Head of the Chinese Sports Delegation for the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Para Games. Lyu also served as Vice Chairman of the Organizing Committee of Hangzhou Asian Para Games for a time).



DIALOGUE

Sun Lijun, Alibaba Partner and Chairman of the Alibaba Foundation Talks with Lu Hong, "Touching China" Award Winner

On November 20, upon the upcoming International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Sun Lijun, Alibaba Partner and Chairman of the Alibaba Foundation, had a conversation with Lu Hong, a representative of the physically challenged, a businessman on Taobao, and a "Touching China" award winner.

In Alibaba Xixi Park, they exchanged ideas about the needs of persons with disabilities and Alibaba's potential contributions. Guided by the blueprint drawn at the 20th CPC National Congress, this dialogue was expected to chart the course for the undertakings of supporting and empowering persons with disabilities in 2024, while uniting people with and without disabilities and boosting the high-quality accessibility development.

Sun Lijun: Everyone in Alibaba should remain true to our original aspirations of making the world a better place through helping others.

About starting a business We can achieve anything if we leverage our strengths

Sun: Hi, Lu Hong. As a representative of persons with disabilities, you have started your e-commerce business and opened a factory with dozens of partners facing similar physical difficulties. What are your strengths and challenges along this journey?

Lu: There are 35 physically challenged workers in my factory. Starting our own business, like opening a Taobao store, is indeed challenging for us. In general, we are not well-educated and cannot learn as fast as others, but our workers are very hardworking and diligent. Most importantly, we are not afraid of hardships. Because of our physical condition and limited mobility, we often have plenty-time to run our store on Taobao, which enables us to learn more things and to have more patience. Thanks to our physical condition, we are really good at sitting still. Sometimes, we can even remain sedentary for more than ten hours a day. And this merit boosts our confidence to keep up our business.

Sun: The journey has not been easy.

Lu: It is Taobao that renders us the opportunity to build a career and realize our life values. Besides, we have received help from many warm-hearted people and enterprises across society. Thus, we can always find a way to solve any difficulties ahead. Just as what I've been telling my team that, although we are physically challenged, we have our unique strengths. And we can achieve anything if we leverage our strengths.

Sun: What makes you really proud of during the whole process of running your factory?

Lu: Our factory had a turnover of more than RMB 14 million last year. While it may not be the ranks of the most successful companies yet, I am still quite proud that our factory can provide a livelihood for all our employees, the majority of whom have disabilities. We have come across many challenges as our factory develops. And whenever we were faced with problems, we would work together to find a solution, always having each other's back as a group. So, this job is something that everyone holds dear.

Sun: Incredible. Apart from providing jobs for physically challenged people, I heard that you are even planning to help them start their own business?

Lu: Life has been better for the employees in my factory because of the internet. They are very happy with that and I am really happy for them too. It motivates me to extend my help to more physically challenged people. Of course, I ran into some obstacles during the process. For instance, I had troubles building a supporting system to help them start their businesses. But fortunately, I was introduced to Alibaba Foundation.

With Alibaba Foundation's support, I was inspired to set up "Lu Hong's Program of Supporting Internet Entrepreneurs with Disabilities". Based on my experience in e-commerce operations, I want to recruit physically challenged people who are interested in launching online businesses, offering them a supply chain of the products from my factory and hiring professionals to teach them the expertise. Therefore, they can have the courage to start their own business and, hopefully, achieve final success. By doing these, I hope my program can bring out more "Lu Hong". Only by having more "Lu Hong" working together can the cause of supporting the physically challenged thrive in the future.



Sun Lijun

Alibaba Partner and Chairman of the Alibaba Foundation

About Alibaba's future

With greater love for all, Alibaba can go further and achieve more

Lu: I know you have a nickname, Sun Dasheng, the Monkey King. I love reading *Journey to the West*, and it seems to me that Dasheng is truly omnipotent. When I entered the park of Alibaba just now, I heard the prompt tone saying "Open Sesame", making me feel like coming to a wonderland. In your opinion, what is the magical part of Alibaba?

Sun: As for me, Alibaba is just a normal company, but with strong vigor and vitality. A key factor in promoting Alibaba's success is that it has set up very clear goals, missions and values at the very beginning, which enables the company to solve all sorts of problems. You just mentioned Sun Dasheng is capable of everything. But he has earned his reputation and achieved his ambition against all odds. So, it is very much the same for every individual and enterprise that success often comes after repeated failures.

Lu: I was once a physically challenged individual who couldn't get a job to support myself. But thanks to Taobao, now I have made some money and helped many people. From my perspective, that's a pretty magical thing about Alibaba.

Sun: Thanks for your compliment.

Lu: Speaking of Alibaba's assistance for persons with disabilities, what do you think are its unique features, as well as its inadequacies?

Sun: We boast an excellent corporate culture for philanthropy. It is crucial that we stay true to our founding mission to make the world a better place through helping others. Such a unique corporate culture demands that we keep committing our resources to persons with disabilities in multifarious ways. It is not because Alibaba is more powerful or that we are more intelligent people, but because we feel obliged to gather a group of like-minded people who are imbued with aspirations to promote the well-being of the world and eager to shoulder the responsibilities. With these people, we are able to make our own contribution to society through the guidance of our corporate culture.

Of course, there are still some inadequacies in our work. We have been striving to improve our services in a steady manner, so that our philanthropic programs can become more transparent, efficient and sustainable.

Lu: I have been in touch with many employees of Alibaba. They have one thing in common: devotion to charity. How did you make it happen?

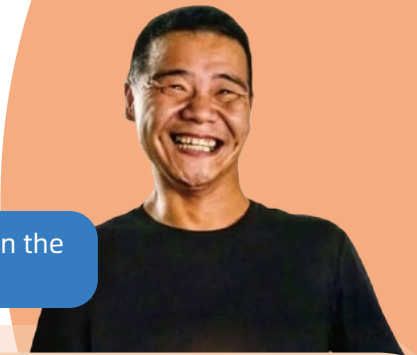
Sun: As I have mentioned, it is due to the guidance of our corporate culture. Many people conceive of philanthropy solely as contributing to society, while we members of Alibaba, from the very beginning, regard philanthropy as more of spiritual fulfillment than merely an act of giving. We encourage every employee of Alibaba to commit themselves to philanthropy, because only an individual committed to the common good can have a heightened sense of responsibility and embrace a more humane view, thus developing socially responsible products which cater to people's needs. Only in this way can Alibaba have a promising future.

Lu Hong

"Touching China" Award Winner

About Technology

Heroes Who Win Our Hearts in the Asian Para Games



Sun: You participated in the opening ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Games, and watched the Asian Para Games as well. What impressed you the most?

Lu: It was the scene of everyone in the stadium singing the Chinese national anthem in chorus that left an indelible impression on me. I feel that I am living in a great country. I was cheering all the time during the opening ceremony, for I saw a digital torchbearer traverse the Qiantang River, enter the stadium and light the main torch tower before our eyes. It was a stunning sight, manifesting the power of technology.

I also watched the Asian Para Games, which amazed me more. There were many AI machines providing services for the physically challenged. Besides, we are all people with physical challenges, but how could they (the athletes) be so outstanding? From these amazing scenes, I could perceive the development of Hangzhou, the development of technology, and the dedication of the athletes – they are my heroes.

Sun: I share the same feeling with you, especially for athletes with disabilities. They really boast strong spirits. I never view physical deficiencies as an insurmountable obstacle, for these athletes have proved themselves capable of winning championships. The Asian Para Games makes us see the heroes who win our hearts.

Lu: Alibaba is a tech company. What do you think can technology bring to us physically challenged people?

Sun: Technology can improve the quality of life with more convenient, equitable and inclusive services. For example, we ensure that every app launched by Alibaba is accessible to the visually impaired with the help of technology. Xiaomi, a digital sign language avatar, enables the hearing impaired to enjoy the Asian Para Games. Amap's wheelchair navigation system gives greater mobility to the elderly and people with physical disabilities... I believe that technology will make the lives of persons with disabilities better and better.

Lu: Actually, I have already known what technology brings us for a long time. It brings me Taobao with the tinkles (notification sounds indicating the completion of transactions) which mean profits for me. Moreover, it brings me the prospect of a future, equipping me with the courage to help the physically challenged in need.

Sun: I agree. Technology makes it possible for everyone to lead a fulfilling life.

Lu: I always believe in the power of technology to assist the physically challenged. Actually, I have purchased and designed numerous machines, some of which may turn out to be useless. But I still believe that I can create the ideal machine just like Columbus discovered the New World. I hope that I can improve this machine through my efforts, making them more suitable for the physically challenged so we can work as fast as those without disabilities and make better products. I also hope there will be opportunities to exchange ideas with engineers from Alibaba and that more professionals can provide guidance for us, so that our machines can better cater to the needs of the physically challenged.

Sun: Of course. Our engineers will find solutions together with you.

About future I want to see more "Lu Hong" in the future

Lu: I'm curious. What are your thoughts on the experiences of individuals with physical challenges? Do you think we are the weak?

Sun: I don't think disabilities should be described as tragedies. Don't care about how others might think of you. What truly matters is how you see yourself. When I was a teenager, I was not tall and lacked confidence. I even bought elevator shoes at senior high school. But later I realized that as long as we don't perceive ourselves as weak, we aren't. Many of my friends, though being physically challenged, are confident and optimistic. They are truly my role models whom I admire.

Lu: What would you most like to say to persons with disabilities?

Sun: Life is fair. You reap what you sow. Persons with disabilities may need to work harder than others. But with the support of national polices, empowerment of tech companies, and participation of warm-hearted people, the idea of "a more inclusive world, a better life" gradually takes root, and supporting the high-quality accessibility development will remain an inevitable trend. With dedicated efforts, you're bound to yield greater rewards and returns.

Lu: Can you share some insights and advice with us physically challenged?

Sun: I believe that as long as you bravely explore the world, you will encounter unexpected scenery and achieve something better than others because overcoming physical challenges not only toughens you up but also makes you resilient. It's just like the story of Da Sheng (Monkey King) I shared earlier. He obtained the Buddhist scriptures after going through numerous difficulties, which made him powerful. So, I want to tell friends with disabilities that don't ever let disabilities defeat you. Be brave, and be a hero that people around you can be proud of.

Lu: When I read Alibaba's annual report in support of disability, I noticed that He Yajun, who is visually impaired, had a wish that you could organize a volunteering service for him (to experience the world of the visually impaired through volunteering). You happily agreed then. Did you follow through on your promise? (laughing)

Sun: Yes, I did. This May, Alibaba Foundation launched "Fulfilling the Dream of Visiting the Great Wall" campaign. I volunteered to accompany Mr. He as we climbed the Great Wall. Despite being totally visually impaired, he was not afraid at all with his arm around my shoulder. Together, we walked along the Great Wall for a long distance, ascending very high. I also observed many others, who faced physical challenges, make their way up bit by bit. Some of them, despite mobility limitations, declined any assistance, and moved forward with their own hands. Witnessing the immense energy from them, I am truly grateful for such an opportunity.

Lu: Since 2024 is around the corner, I'd like to extend a New Year's invitation to you. Can you deliver an inspirational speech for the physically challenged, sharing your own stories and those of Alibaba?

Sun: Thank you for your trust and this invitation. That's for sure. I'm more than willing to do it. I also want to contribute my effort to empower persons with disabilities and I can make new friends in the process. Actually, you don't even need to ask for this. Whenever you need me, just let me know.

Sun: What's your future prospect and what's your expectation of Alibaba?

Lu: I am so lucky to have met Taobao. Even more fortunate is the possibility of cultivating more entrepreneurs like me through Alibaba Foundation in the future. I am so looking forward to working with Alibaba to improve our work to support persons with disabilities. Just as a group of running enthusiasts may produce a marathon champion and a group of singing fans may produce a talented singer...I can't wait to exchange ideas with outstanding merchants, so people who become prosperous first can help those who are behind them, leading to broader well-being.

Sun: Thank you, Lu Hong. We will support you and contribute to the emergence of more individuals like you. It's our shared aspiration. We will work wholeheartedly with you to realize these dreams.



Annex:

Contributing to the UN SDGs

Of the 17 UN SDGs, seven are directly related to persons with disabilities. Alibaba, in response to the needs of disabled persons, continues to pioneer efforts in four key areas: barrier-free entrepreneurship and employment, barrier-free technology, barrier-free volunteer services, and ecosystem support for barrier-free access. These endeavors align with and contribute to achieving the UN SDGs.



Founded in 2011, Alibaba Foundation envisions a world with a bluer sky, warmer hearts, and more help for those in need. We apply professional concepts and methods to mobilize the strength of Alibaba Group and its ecosystem partners, striving to bring out the good side of technology for good causes. We have charted six areas that focus on platform philanthropy, rural revitalization, environmental protection, and assisting the elderly and disabled. Alibaba Foundation is the designer, facilitator, and guardian of Alibaba's social responsibility and philanthropic vision, and is committed to becoming a modern foundation with a strong spirit of public interest and vibrant social value creativity.