



Alibaba's Aspirations and Actions
in Support of Disability 2024

A Better Life for Everyone

In Support of Those with Disabilities,
We Wish to Go Further



Prologue

Integrating Alibaba's actions in support of disability into China's cause of persons with disabilities and into Alibaba's sustainability strategy



At the United Nations' Summit of the Future held in September 2024, almost all member states pledged to scale up action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An essential aspect of this agenda is promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities, crucial to delivering the commitment of "leaving no one behind."

Part of Alibaba's vision is to be a good company that will last for 102 years. It also indicates that creating sustainable values that goes beyond traditional business practices defines our approach to the future over the long term. This vision provides Alibaba with a strategic framework for tackling global challenges and lays a cornerstone for our sustained success. In alignment with our vision for "A Better Life for Everyone," we have been engaged in supporting disabilities for years. Our commitment has evolved from "in support of those with disabilities, we try to do more" in previous years to "in support of those with disabilities, we wish to go further" this year. This subtle shift in wording underscores our deepening commitment to disability support, reflecting our heartfelt connection with and genuine desire to assist our disabled partners.

Recognizing more clearly that individuals with disabilities are also active contributors and creators of a better life. Persons with disabilities are not merely recipients of aid. In fact, many of them possess extraordinary "hidden skills" that inspire even those without disabilities: He Yajun, completely blind, has completed 77 marathons; Lu Hong, a Taobao merchant with cerebral palsy and a recipient of the "Touching China" award, not only employs 35 disabled individuals but is also an inventor who has developed numerous equipment for his factory; Zhang Baofeng, an armless coach, teaches swimming with exceptional grace and agility, like a flying fish... These remarkable individuals not only benefit from others' support but also make substantial contributions to society. We recognize that achieving "A Better Life for Everyone" encompasses more than just providing assistance; it involves relying on and collaborating with disabled individuals to empower them to participate fully and equally in society and to collectively pursue

a better life. The principle that "Public welfare activities should not be incomplete without the participation of disabled partners" has resonated deeply within Alibaba, becoming a consensus.

Rolling out more concrete actions in support of disability and elevating "supporting the disabled and the disadvantaged" to one of the four pillars of the Alibaba Foundation. Covering all business sectors and involving ten thousand Alibaba employees, our disability support initiatives have become a prominent aspect of our corporate philanthropy. For barrier-free entrepreneurship and employment, programs such as Alibaba Cloud Customer Service, the Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities, and Ele.me Hearing-Impaired Riders have assisted over ten thousand disabled partners in raising their income; to realize barrier-free technology, Taobao, Tmall, Ele.me, and our other major apps have finished accessibility adaptations, with quite a few of them having obtained the national first-level certification for accessibility in China, and 27 patented technologies are shared to the public for free. Celebrating the first anniversary of China's *Law on Building a Barrier-free Living Environment* in September 2024, we released "Top Ten Actions Towards Barrier-free Technology," aiming to significantly enhance the day-to-day support for our disabled partners. As for barrier-free volunteer services, capitalizing on Alibaba's Three Hours for a Better World culture and digital capabilities, we continuously contribute to the advancement of China's volunteer service legislation. In 2024, we were honored as a National Disability Volunteer Service Base by the China Association of Volunteers for Disabled Persons. To foster ecosystem support for barrier-free access, our platforms like Alibaba Philanthropy and Alibaba Daily Positive Energy Program, together with caring merchants, netizens, and media partners, support and promote outstanding disability initiatives, and discover, share, and encourage everyday good deeds among disabled individuals.

Deepening ecological connections and facilitating a multifaceted model of disability assistance encompassing government

guidance, corporate action, participation by social organizations, volunteer support, and direct benefits for people with disabilities. Believing that a better life is co-created, Alibaba is committed to mobilizing more social forces to support the disabled and foster an environment of "Boundless Care, Barrier-Free." Under the guidance of the China Disabled Persons' Federation and the Zhejiang Provincial Disabled Persons' Federation, we have connected with various specialized associations under the China Foundation for Disabled Persons and China Disabled Persons' Federation, local disabled persons' federations, and nonprofit organizations for people with disabilities to collectively advance disability support initiatives. Over the past year, our Goods for Good platform has raised over RMB 13 million, supporting 12 disability assistance projects across areas of employment, hearing, visual and mental health impairment, etc. Through the Three Hours for a Better World platform, we have cooperated with 55 non-profit organizations to launch 303 disability assistance volunteer service activities. Highlights include supporting the "Beauty Workshop" project of the China Disabled Persons' Federation at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, facilitating the successful hosting of the "Ah Bing Cup" instrumental competition by the China Association of Persons with Visual Disabilities, helping the campaign to advocate for barrier-free environments and volunteer services by the China Association of Volunteers for the Disabled, and supporting the actions to offer free movie tickets for disabled individuals in 50 cities across the country by the China Association of People with Physical Disabled.

Furthering accessibility integration to support the SDGs and China's disability cause. In September 2024, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released the ISO/UNDP PAS 53002 international guidelines. These guidelines urge organizations to accelerate their SDG responses, specifically highlighting the need to consider resource allocation for people with disabilities to ensure social equity. The United Nations' *Disability and Development Report 2024* indicates wide gaps persist between persons with and without

disabilities, emphasizing the ongoing need in accelerating making physical and virtual environments accessible for persons with disabilities, in adopting anti-discrimination legislation, in expanding social protection and in implementing measures to guarantee the safety and protection of all persons with disabilities during disasters and emergencies. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China's state leadership has shown exceptional concern for people with disabilities. Both the report from the 20th CPC National Congress and the decisions from the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the CPC explicitly call for improving the social security and care service systems for people with disabilities. In response, Alibaba has established a long-term disability support policy that aligns with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are dedicatedly integrating our actions in support of disability into China's cause of persons with disabilities and into Alibaba's sustainability strategy.

Looking ahead, Alibaba will continue to focus on the needs of the disabled. Guided by our policy of dual integration, we will harness science and technology to support the high-quality development of disability services through in-depth, pragmatic, heartfelt, and innovative actions, contributing more to the Chinese path to modernization.



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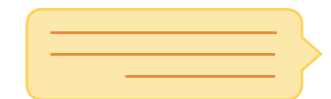
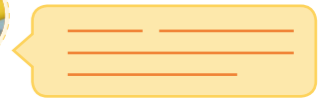
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Dialogue

Sun Lijun, Alibaba Partner, Talks with Tan Yujiao, a Paralympic Gold Medalist, on a Better Life from Accessibility



Figures

Triumphant over Adversity with Talents

01

Every individual shines with their unique brilliance. When we turn our focus to those with disabilities, it becomes evident that they have dreams and ambitions no different from anyone else, yet they often cultivate exceptional skills through adversity. With unmatched perseverance and wisdom, they reveal their unyielding spirits to the world.



Blind Masseur: He Yajun

Scaled **24** mountains and
completed **77** marathons

He Yajun is a blind masseur from Beijing who has transformed his lack of sight into a journey of extraordinary physical feats. Observing that even his healthy clients experience injuries sometimes, he realized that the unexpected is a part of life—even more so for someone who navigates the world in darkness. Getting over it, he, encouraged by volunteers, began running, eventually taking on marathons. To date, He has scaled 24 mountains and completed 77 marathons, with a record time of 3 hours and 14 minutes in the full marathon. He Yajun believes that “real life is about stepping out into the world, finding the beauty wherever the scenery leads.”

To aid visually impaired individuals like He Yajun in enjoying running, Alibaba's Together We Run Group provides on-going volunteer services to help them “see” the world's beauty through enhanced experiences.

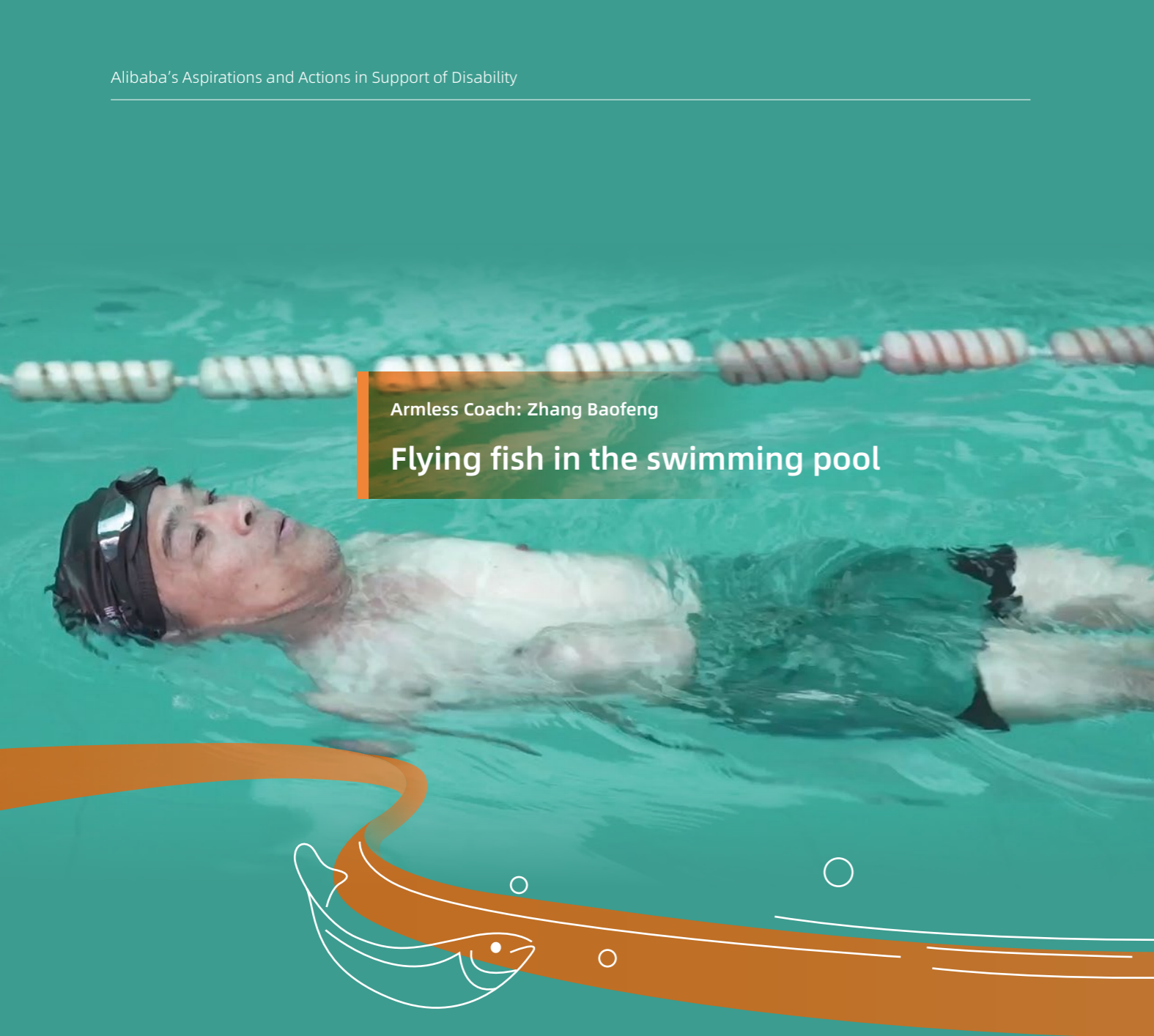
Engineer in a Wheelchair: Guo Bailing

Triumphing over challenges together
with Wheelchair Navigation

Guo Bailing, a data engineer at Alibaba, navigates life using a walking stick and a wheelchair due to childhood polio. Through sheer endeavor, he pursued his education and eventually joined his dream workplace, an Internet giant. Guo posted messages to advocate for better accessibility on the Alibaba Intranet and became a volunteer for Alibaba's Wheelchair Navigation project. Embracing his vision of a world without barriers, he facilitates the accessibility development.

Alibaba advocates for diverse, equitable, and inclusive employee development, and continuously improves barrier-free facilities in Alibaba parks based on the actual needs of disabled staff like Guo Bailing. Initiatives such as Amap's Barrier-Free Navigation and Tao Piaopiao(the movie ticketing platform)'s Wheelchair Friendly Cinema are examples of Alibaba's commitment to technological solutions that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities.





Armless Coach: Zhang Baofeng

Flying fish in the swimming pool



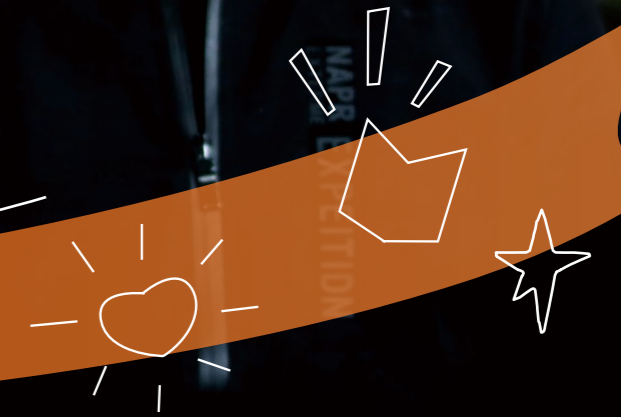
Zhang Baofeng from Shandong lost both arms in an accident. Through the radio, he knew the Paralympic Games and found inspiration from it. Motivating himself with the thought, "Run, for I still have legs," he advanced from the Liaocheng Disabled Sports Team to the Shandong Disabled Sports Team, embarking on an athletic career. After retirement, with his family's support, Zhang founded the first disabled swimming team in Liaocheng, teaching other disabled partners to swim with the grace and agility of a flying fish.

For over a decade, Alibaba Daily Positive Energy Program has sought to uncover, share, and reward everyday good deeds and everyday heroes like Zhang Baofeng, sowing seeds of truth, goodness, and beauty across society.



Inventor with Cerebral Palsy: Lu Hong

Self-taught and inventive, most of the machinery in his factory was developed by himself



Lu Hong, honored with the "Touching China" award from Suzhou, developed cerebral palsy due to a high fever in childhood. Despite his challenges, he has maintained a positive outlook without ever complaining. Starting with a Taobao store, he established a factory employing 35 workers with disabilities. Understanding the unique needs of his disabled staff, Lu took up self-study. He developed and renovated various machines for use by people with disabilities, such as foil stamping machines and manual creasing machines. In his quest for innovation, he always believed he could discover groundbreaking technologies for aiding disabled individuals, much like Columbus discovered the New World.

The Alibaba Foundation supports exemplary disabled entrepreneurs and partners like Lu Hong through funding and other means, facilitating more disabled individuals to achieve their dreams of entrepreneurship through mentorship and support.

Hearing-impaired Store Owner:
Zhong Ming

Using digital avatar as his employee

Zhong Ming, a deaf Taobao store owner from Hangzhou, has minimized the impact of his hearing impairment by managing an online store. From shipping orders and editing photos to shooting videos and running the store, he continuously learns and has become an "all-rounder" in e-commerce entrepreneurship. With the advent of the AI era, he became interested in the digital avatar feature on Taobao Live. Currently, the trained digital avatar presenter works tirelessly on his behalf.

Alibaba's "Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities" invites disabled merchant representatives to launch the digital avatar live streaming feature. Training digital hosts by feeding them textual data, the program supports disabled merchants to increase their income.



Hearing and Speech Impaired Craftswoman: Wang Lijuan
Creating China's own "Barbie dolls"



Since the 1980s, when American Barbie dolls first captivated countless women and little girls after entering China, Wang Lijuan from Hebei, who is hearing and speech impaired, has been skillfully handcrafting her version of China's "Barbie dolls." Over a decade ago, she became a sculptor for Beijing Silk Figurines featuring Tang dolls. In her silent world, she and her colleagues have created stunning pieces inspired by Chinese elements such as Dunhuang's Flying Apsaras, the Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea, and the Twelve Beauties of Jinling (Nanjing), which have amazed consumers worldwide.

During the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, the Alibaba Foundation supported the exhibition of the "Beauty Workshop", an entrepreneurship and employment project for women with disabilities launched by the China Disabled Persons' Federation and the All-China Women's Federation. The program showcased the exceptional works made by disabled women in China, like Wang Lijuan, to the world.



Child of the Stars: Tu Tu

Creating personalized picture books with AI

Tu Tu, affectionately known as a "child of the stars" because of his autism, is exploring new ways to express himself through a pioneering AI tool. With the assistance of his family, Tu Tu turned his everyday stories into picture books. These cool AI works have quickly made him popular among children.

In July 2024, Alibaba volunteers harnessed the capabilities of the Qwen large language models to develop China's first AI tool for picture books for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) designed to nurture the growth of children with autism.



@Everyone

Lifting disabled partners toward a bright future together

At the Nanyang Midi Music Festival, the crowd lifted Dong Yu, a young man dependent on a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy, allowing him to experience the music in a uniquely inclusive way.

In the effort to build barrier-free environments, everyone possesses a hidden skill: the ability to help others using their own strength. Together, we support the integration of disabled and non-disabled people, lifting up our disabled friends to secure their happiness. In support of disability, Alibaba is willing to work together with @Everyone.



Engagement

Pursuing Accessibility with Commitment

02

In 2024, “supporting the disabled and the disadvantaged” was elevated as one of the four pillars of the Alibaba Foundation. In response to the needs of persons with disabilities, Alibaba has integrated the three overlapping circles that radiate to the outside: “caring employees, a responsible enterprise, and a heartwarming ecosystem.” These efforts respond to the actions in support of disability, contributing to high-quality accessibility development.



Our Achievements in Figures

95

Alibaba Daily Positive Energy Program has collaborated with more than 400 mainstream media outlets across China to reward ordinary people for their good deeds, with 95 rewards in support of disability in 2024. Since 2013, the Program has donated over 600 rewards in support of disability.

303

Over the past year, the "Three Hours for a Better World" Platform has worked with 55 non-profit organizations to launch 303 disability assistance volunteer service activities, involving more than 3,300 volunteers.

A heartwarming ecosystem

Working with ecosystem partners for the good of others

17'000+

Alibaba Foundation, together with Tao Piaopiao, China Association of People with Physical Disabilities, offers free movie tickets to over 2,000 disabled moviegoers in 50 Chinese cities. Alibaba Foundation also supports over 5,000 students from special education schools and schools for the blind to watch the inspiring movie Miracle Band; Youku Barrier-free Theater offers barrier-free movie experiences in multiple locations for an audience of over 10,000.

13'000'000+

In 2024, the "Goods for Good" initiative raised more than RMB 13 million to fund 12 projects in support of disability. The platform has collected a total of RMB 141 million in disability donations.

A responsible enterprise

Fulfilling social responsibilities

1'342

In the fiscal year 2024, 1,342 employees with disabilities worked at Alibaba and our affiliated businesses such as RT-Mart, Cainiao, and Freshippo.

10'000+

Ele.me held the free-of-charge barrier-free activity for visually impaired users for the third consecutive year, covering more than 10,000 such users in 2024.

12'000+

Alibaba has helped more than 12,000 partners with disabilities start businesses or find jobs through projects such as Alibaba Cloud Customer Service, Ele.me Hearing-Impaired Riders, and the "Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities."

200'000

Alibaba has launched China's first AI tool for picture books for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), serving nearly 200,000 autistic kids.

150'000'000+

The Amap Wheelchair Navigation project has been launched in 58 cities across China, and the feature of navigation services for visually impaired users have been added. New sign-language guidance has been added to 150 barrier-free public service locations in Hangzhou, Changsha, and Harbin. As of November 2024, Amap has provided more than 150 million barrier-free route planning services.

Caring employees

Encourage employees to engage in philanthropy

10'000+

Influenced by Alibaba's "Three Hours for a Better World" culture, multiple dedicated "Hugs and Help" groups for people with disabilities have mobilized more than 10,000 Alibaba employees to participate in volunteer services for the disabled.



Panorama of Alibaba's Actions in Support of Disability

Empowered by our technology platform, Alibaba is dedicated to supporting persons with disabilities with detailed barrier-free scenarios, contributing to SDGs, and guaranteeing a life of steady happiness for our disabled partners.



Barrier-free entrepreneurship and employment

Since 2024, Alibaba has supported more than 10,000 partners with disabilities to secure their incomes through projects such as Alibaba 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 2024, 1,342 employees with disabilities worked at Alibaba and our affiliated businesses such as RT-Mart, Cainiao, and Freshippo.
- Taobao and Tmall Group**
Alibaba Cloud Customer Service customizes preferential policies for people with disabilities with targeted training and support. For ten consecutive years, the project has recruited remote customer service personnel. Currently, there are more than 2,430 individuals with disabilities on the payroll in the customer service modules of Taobao and Tmall platforms, Tmall Supermarket, Taobao Factory, and Xianyu.
- Cainiao**
Together with several non-profit organizations, the Alibaba Cloud Customer Service project has set up employment sites in Ganzi and Cangpi in Sichuan, and Longyan in Fujian, helping nearly 1,000 people with disabilities get employed.
- Local Services Group - Ele.me**
The Ele.me Hearing-impaired Riders project has launched a barrier-free communication system for hearing-impaired riders, with multiple measures supporting over 5,000 hearing-impaired riders earn money on the Ele.me platform.
- Freshippo**
In collaboration with local civil affairs departments and disabled persons' federations, Freshippo now employs 220 disabled individuals in its stores.
- Alibaba Foundation**
Alibaba Foundation supported the exhibition of the "Beauty Workshop", an entrepreneurship and employment project for women with disabilities launched by the China Disabled Persons' Federation and the All-China Women's Federation, during the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.
- Taobao and Tmall Group & Alibaba Foundation**
The "Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities" plans to support 10,000 merchants with disabilities in three years. So far, that number has exceeded 4,200. Additionally, Taobao and Tmall Group & Alibaba Foundation have set up the "Entrepreneurship and Employment Development Fund". To date, it has assisted more than 1,000 people with disabilities, jointly launched the "Zhejiang Livestreaming" project. In 2024, 110 live-streaming sessions promoted 47 high-quality products in support of disability, with more than 1,000 individuals with disabilities trained to do the job.
- Local Services Group - Ele.me**
Ele.me's "Dream Restaurant" non-profit project provides free one-on-one food delivery training, operation support, and packaging design to catering businesses that employ people with disabilities. The project has supported 11 stores that employ people with disabilities.
- Alibaba rural revitalization**
Alibaba's non-profit platform for vocational education, has launched a pilot program with Shanxi Pingshun Special Education School to establish a barrier-free learning area on the website to support people with disabilities in their entrepreneurship and employment.
- Local Services Group -Amap**
Amap has launched the "Small Shop in Big City" non-profit project, providing location marking, store entry, business publicity, and store popularity boosts for shops that employ individuals with disabilities. It has supported 120 such stores so far.

Barrier-free technology

Since 2024, Alibaba has upgraded 13 apps to enhance accessibility. Ten apps have been certified for meeting the national first-level standard for accessibility. Wheelchair navigation and barrier-free cinemas have become popular products in support of disability.

- Alibaba Digital Accessibility Team**
Alibaba has upgraded 13 apps to enhance accessibility. Ten apps or product functions have been certified for meeting the national first-level standard for accessibility. Alibaba has waived 27 patents. In 2024, Alibaba released the "Top Ten Actions Towards Barrier-free Technology".
- Digital Media and Entertainment Group - Youku**
Youku Barrier-free Theater, based on the Youku platform, offers visually impaired audiences access to over 8,000 barrier-free movies and TV episodes. Youku has also released the first AI voice package in China that uses AI technology to synthesize the voices of celebrities. Youku has started the "Glimmering Dreams - Youku Barrier-free Cinema Rural Tour" project, screening over 100 barrier-free movies in rural areas. Youku supports the third "Ah Bing Cup" blind solo instrumental performance competition.
- 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. It has been applied in the packaging of medicines and health products.
- Cainiao**
Cainiao has joined hands with the China Braille Library to provide free braille book delivery services for visually impaired users. The service has helped 2,690 visually impaired readers overcome challenges in borrowing braille books.
- Local Services Group -Amap**
The Amap Wheelchair Navigation project has been launched in 58 cities across China, and the feature of navigation services for visually impaired users have been added. New sign-language guidance has been added to barrier-free public service locations. As of November 2024, Amap has provided more than 150 million barrier-free route planning services.
- Alibaba**
At the 2024 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, China's first AI tool for picture books for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), was released. It has served nearly 200,000 autistic users.
- Digital Media and Entertainment Group - Tao PiaoPiao**
In May 2024, Tao PiaoPiao platform and Alibaba Foundation started to mark "wheelchair-friendly cinemas" on the platform to facilitate the cinema experiences of people with disabilities. More than 60 "wheelchair-friendly cinemas" have been marked.

Barrier-free volunteer services

Influenced by Alibaba's "Three Hours for a Better World" culture, dedicated "Hugs and Help" groups for people with disabilities formed by Alibaba employees spontaneously carry out charitable activities in response to the needs of people with disabilities. In 2024, more than 10,000 Alibaba volunteers were mobilized to participate in charitable activities in support of disability.

- Colorful Heart Group**
The Group is committed to bringing individuals with and without disabilities together through various activities. In 2024, the Group carried out 38 charitable activities, including playing badminton with autistic children, a New Year's gathering for people with disabilities, a mini-marathon for participants with and without disabilities, handicraft-making for participants with and without disabilities, and a spring outing. These activities involved nearly 5,000 employees to foster an equal and friendly environment for disabled persons through volunteer services. The Group was recognized as an excellent demonstration case by the China Association of Volunteers for Persons with Disabilities in 2024.
- Cinematic Visionaries Group**
The Group focuses on entertainment for the visually impaired. In 2024, through activities such as "reading, demonstration, and selection activities for the visually impaired", barrier-free digital life experience in the sci-tech park, and watching movies with the visually impaired, the Group made entertainment and technology more accessible to people with disabilities and involved more than 1,500 employees as volunteers.
- Together We Run Group**
The non-profit group is dedicated to assisting the blind in running activities. In 2024, it involved nearly 300 employees in these activities. Sports activities help the visually impaired blend in, promote others' understanding and respect for them, and encourage them to participate in social activities. They showcase their resilience, contributing to a more inclusive and harmonious society.
- Sign Language Group**
The Group focuses on empowering the hearing-impaired. In 2024, the Group carried out more than 40 free sign language classes, where more than 1,000 employees learned sign language. During classes, hearing-impaired instructors feel needed and appeal to participants to give more respect and encouragement to hearing-impaired partners in their daily lives via simple sign language.
- Autism Support Station Group**
The Group empowers and relieves stress for families with autistic children. In 2024, more than 60 autism support activities were carried out in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou, involving nearly 1,000 employees as volunteers. The joint autism concert gives autistic children an opportunity to show themselves, while badminton games and handicraft-making activities for people with and without disabilities help autistic children interact with non-autistic people. These activities create a more equal and inclusive environment.

Ecosystem support for barrier-free access

Alibaba harnesses the collective strength of our platform and ecosystem to bolster accessibility development. In 2024, through the "Goods for Good" initiative, over RMB 13 million was raised for 12 projects in support of disability, and the "Three Hours for a Better World" platform held 303 volunteer activities.

- Alibaba Charity Platform**
The "Goods for Good" initiative supports 12 disability assistance projects. In 2024, the initiative raised more than RMB 13 million to fund projects in support of disability. The platform has collected a total of RMB 141 million in disability donations.
①The Platform has jointly initiated the "Community Star Friends-Daytime Service for Older Mentally Disabled Persons" project to improve their adaptability to community life. The project has recruited 10 partner organizations to serve more than 60 people with mental disabilities. It has carried out multiple rounds of empowerment training and on-site supervision, benefiting more than 30 staff members of partner organizations.
②The Platform has initiated the "Non-profit Plan of Technology Empowering Disability" in cooperation with Taobao and Tmall Group's 3C digital industry, using smart technology to help create diversified "digital-friendly" campuses. The first phase of the Plan has benefited 1,200 disabled students.
- "Three Hours for a Better World" Platform**
In 2024, the "Three Hours for a Better World" platform collaborated with 55 non-profit organizations to launch 303 disability assistance volunteer service activities, attracting more than 3,300 volunteers.
- Alibaba Media Charity**
Alibaba Daily Positive Energy Program has collaborated with more than 400 mainstream media across China to reward ordinary people for their good deeds, with 95 rewards in support of disability. Since 2013, the Program has donated over 600 rewards in support of disability.
①The project of testing the stories of accessibility champions, guided by the China Disabled Persons' Federation, hosted by the China Times and co-hosted by Alibaba Foundation, was launched. In 2024, nearly 20 outstanding disabled individuals and representative workers in support of disability were shortlisted.
- Alibaba Health Foundation**
①Through "active assistance", Alibaba Health's "Xiao Lu Lantern Children's Serious Disease Relief Platform" offers economic and medical aid to disabled children facing serious illnesses in underdeveloped areas. As of September 2024, the platform has channeled over RMB 39 million in donations to 58 townships across 32 provinces, helping more than 2,000 sick children and 590 children with disabilities.
②Alibaba Health has deployed 30 "Aidou Rehabilitation and Health Huts", providing rehabilitation training equipment for vulnerable groups such as the disabled. It has served a total of 59,381 people.
- Local Services Group - Ele.me Foundation**
Ele.me held the free-of-charge barrier-free activity for visually impaired users for the third consecutive year. In 2024, the event covered more than 10,000 such users.
- Alibaba Foundation**
①Alibaba Foundation co-sponsored free movie tickets to over 2,000 disabled moviegoers. Alibaba Foundation also jointly supported over 5,000 students from special education schools and schools for the blind to watch the inspiring movie.
②Alibaba Foundation donated RMB five million to provide intelligent prosthesis fitting for people with limb loss. By June 2024, 100 disabled individuals have completed intelligent prosthesis fitting and training.

Fulfillment

Creating a Better Life Together

03

Empowering disabled individuals to start businesses or find jobs is a crucial way to enhance their well-being and share a prosperous life. Alibaba is committed to addressing the entrepreneurship and employment needs and concerns of people with disabilities, leveraging its strengths and capabilities with dedication and empathy. Initiatives such as the Alibaba Cloud Customer Service, Taobao's Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities, and Ele.me's Hearing-Impaired Riders program are all designed to offer high-quality entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for disabled individuals, fostering a shared and enjoyable life.



Top Ten Concerns for Disabled Entrepreneurs and Job Seekers

In November 2024, Alibaba, in collaboration with the China Disabled Employment and Entrepreneurship Network Service Platform, conducted a nationwide "Core Concerns Survey for Disabled Entrepreneurs and Job Seekers." Analysis of 2,180 valid responses identified the top ten issues of concern during the entrepreneurial and employment process for disabled people. This survey, targeting some users of the service platform, offers insights primarily for reference by enterprises and organizations for the disabled. The top concerns and expectations are as follow:

Employment Opportunities

Equal, diverse, and convenient job opportunities

Due to limits in physical conditions, professional skills, and societal perceptions, disabled individuals are often at a disadvantage in employment, making them particularly concerned about equitable, diverse, nearby, and public-spirited employment opportunities.

Job Stability

Retainable, long-lasting, and stable jobs with potential for career development

Disabled individuals commonly seek jobs that offer good salary, long-term stability, and potential for development, ensuring basic life and work stability with prospects for advancement.

Workplace Culture

Less discrimination and prejudice, more care and inclusion

People with disabilities seek to reduce discrimination and prejudice in the workplace, respect diverse abilities, and appreciate employers with a proven track record of inclusive hiring, all aimed at fostering a supportive workplace culture.

Workplace Environment

Jobs tailored to individuals, respecting differences, and ensuring a barrier-free environment

People with disabilities expect to undertake flexible and inclusive duties customized to their unique needs, and have a fully accessible environment to facilitate better workplace integration.

Compensation and Benefits

Equal pay for equal work with secured basic rights and enhanced welfare benefits

People with disabilities demand equal pay for equal work to safeguard their fundamental employment rights. They seek reasonably assigned tasks and workloads with improved welfare benefits to boost their sense of fulfillment and well-being.

Promotion and Development

Accessible opportunities for skill development and promotion

People with disabilities desire equal chances for professional growth and advancement, with a keen interest in opportunities within state-owned enterprises and public (non-commercial) organizations.

Public Services

Diverse, specialized, and targeted employment services provided by the public sector

People with disabilities anticipate that public sectors like disabled persons' federations and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, in collaboration with enterprises and other societal forces, can provide diversified, specialized, and targeted employment services. They hope these efforts can effectively implement various employment support policies for the disabled.

Vocational Training

Full-lifecycle, targeted employment guidance and training

Individuals with disabilities desire employment training programs that are tailored to their unique abilities and stages of employment. They seek comprehensive services throughout the entire employment process, including introductions to career information, job hunting skills, career planning, workplace adaptation support, and skills enhancement.

Entrepreneurial Resource Support

Access to government and platform policy support for overcoming entrepreneurial challenges

Entrepreneurs with disabilities urgently need support in terms of entrepreneurial policies, funding, and premises. They also need backing from platform-based companies and targeted procurement assistance from governments and businesses to navigate the challenges and bottlenecks throughout the entrepreneurial journey.

Professional services for entrepreneurs

Access to financial and legal expertise to mitigate business risks

Entrepreneurship carries inherent professional and risk factors. Entrepreneurs with disabilities look forward to receiving specialized support in areas like business direction guidance, legal and financial consulting, and entrepreneurial training, which is crucial for reducing entrepreneurial risks.

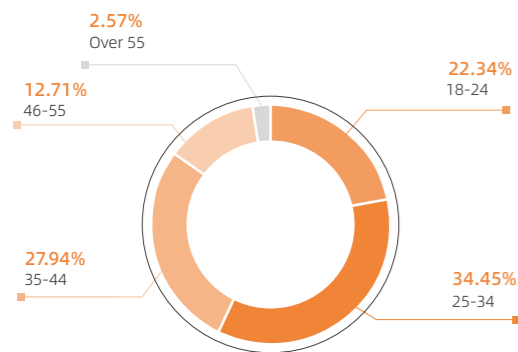


Analysis of Questionnaire on the Entrepreneurship and Employment of People with Disabilities

80% + of respondents start businesses or find jobs in their prime

According to the 2,180 valid responses, more than 80% of the disabled respondents interviewed are in their prime years (18-44 years old, mainly young and middle-aged individuals). They play a principal role in the employment of people with disabilities, with better skills and stronger motivation to work. More than 40% of the respondents have received higher education (junior college degree or above), showing higher expectations for employment in more aspects.

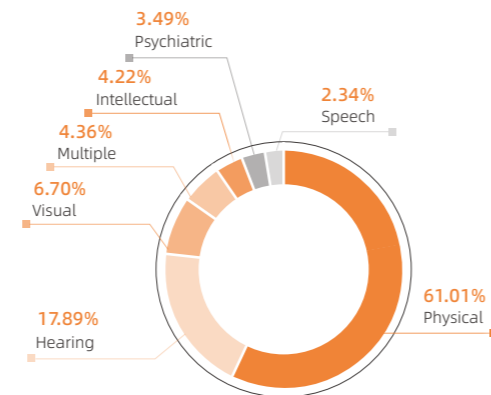
Age



People with physical disabilities and hearing disabilities make up the majority of disabled entrepreneurs and job seekers

Respondents include people with physical, hearing, and visual impairment. Specifically, more than 60% of them are physically disabled, followed by those with hearing and visual disabilities. Auxiliary technological tools and a barrier-free environment can help these groups better and faster adapt to their social lives.

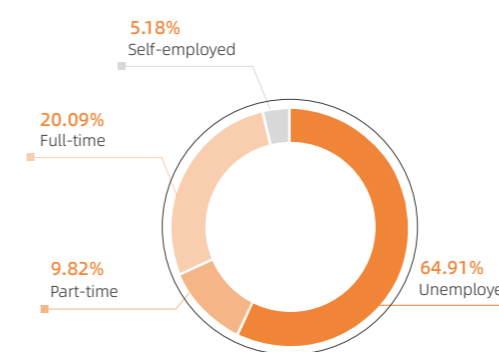
Disabilities categories



More than 60% of respondents with disabilities are unemployed

More than 60% of respondents are unemployed, 20% have full-time jobs, while part-time workers and the self-employed account for a small proportion. Since people with disabilities still face many obstacles to employment, the government needs to unite the whole society, including enterprises, to set up more targeted jobs, diversify employment channels, and support people with disabilities to find jobs and increase their incomes.

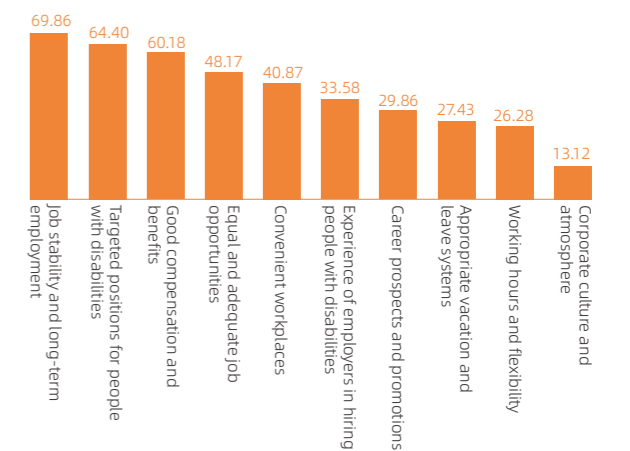
Employment status



Nearly 70% of respondents with disabilities yearn for job stability

Specifically, 69.86% of respondents are concerned about job stability and long-term employment, and 64.40% focus on targeted positions for persons with disabilities. Due to limited skills and lack of a clear understanding of reality, they confront challenges in job availability and stability. It is worth noting that respondents expect potential employers to have hired people with disabilities so that they can be understood and tolerated.

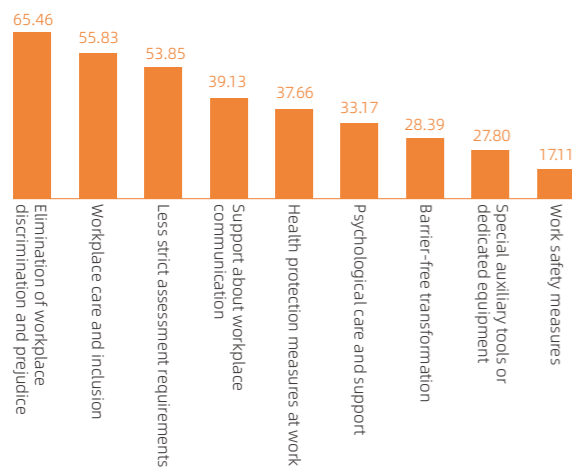
Job opportunities (%)



More than 60% of respondents expect zero workplace discrimination and prejudice

Among all respondents, 65.46% are concerned about eliminating workplace discrimination and prejudice, while 55.83% and 53.85% look forward to workplace care and inclusion as well as less strict assessment requirements. There is a lot to be desired in building a barrier-free culture and environment in workplaces.

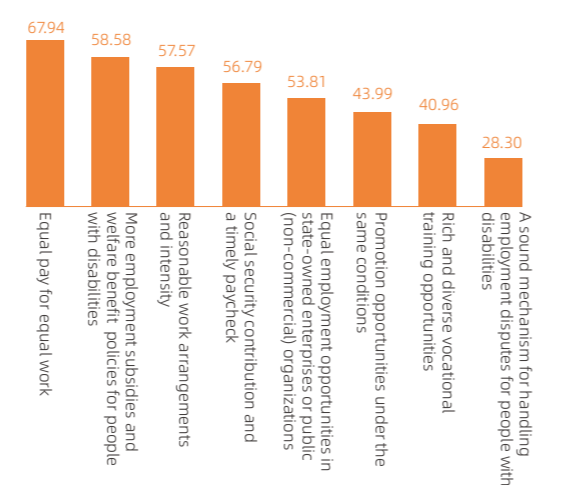
Workplace environment (%)



Nearly 70% of respondents hope to achieve equal pay for equal work

Among those respondents, 67.94% hope to achieve equal pay for equal work based on equal job opportunities, and 58.58% expect more employment subsidies and welfare benefit policies for disabled employees. Their concerns about employment rights protection are mainly focused on equal compensation and benefits as well as predictable career prospects.

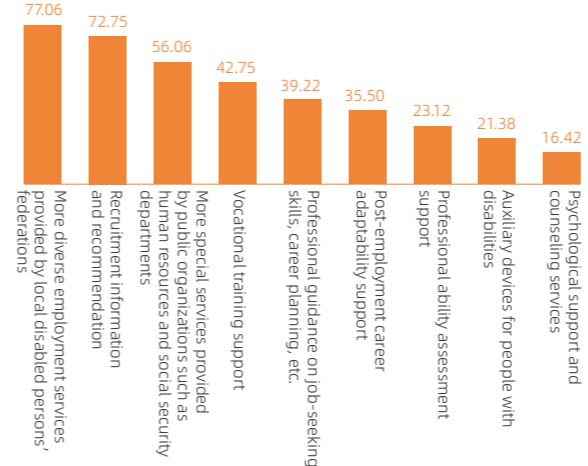
Employment rights (%)



In general, people with disabilities expect diversified employment services

More than 70% of respondents hope that local disabled persons' federations can provide more diversified employment services, recruitment information, and job-seeking support. Over 50% of respondents expect public organizations such as human resources and social security departments to provide more special services, while more than 40% look forward to vocational training support. The general expectation is for the government and social stakeholders, such as enterprises, to provide high-quality employment services together.

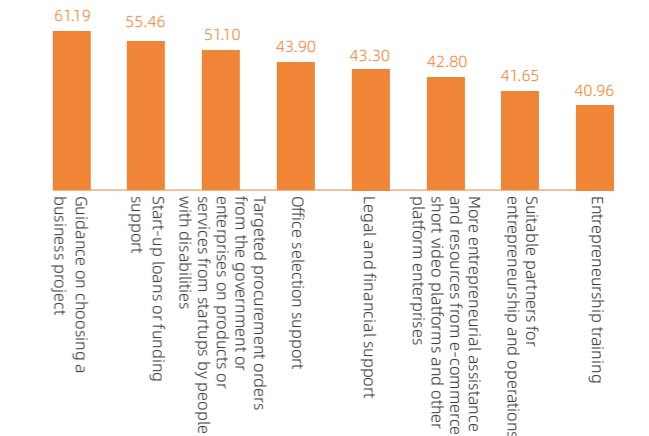
Employment services (%)



Entrepreneurs with disabilities expect systematic and professional support

Among all respondents, 61.19% hope to receive guidance on choosing business projects. More than 50% hope to get start-up loans, funding support, or more targeted procurement orders from the government or enterprises. Over 40% are concerned about support in office selection, legal and financial affairs, partner-seeking and entrepreneurship training as well as entrepreneurial assistance from platform enterprises, like e-commerce platforms. The process of entrepreneurship by disabled individuals requires systematic and professional support to clear bottlenecks and reduce risks.

Entrepreneurship (%)



Expert Insights on the Employment and Entrepreneurship of People with Disabilities

The year 2024 concludes the Three-Year Action Plan for Promoting Employment of Disabled Persons, marking the transition of setting the outlook and plan for the employment of persons with disabilities during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030). Based on the survey on "Top Ten Concerns for Disabled Entrepreneurs and Job Seekers", this report solicits opinions from experts and scholars specializing in entrepreneurship and employment for people with disabilities. Their viewpoints are expected to provide food for thought for the high-quality employment and entrepreneurship of people with disabilities during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

Enterprises should thoroughly understand and make good use of favorable policies that promote employment of people with disabilities

The CPC Central Committee and the State Council prioritize the employment and entrepreneurship of people with disabilities. The *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities*, revised and adopted in 2008, clearly provides that the state implements a proportion-based employment mechanism for people with disabilities. The *Regulation of the PRC on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities* stipulates that the proportion of employees with disabilities shall not be less than 1.5% of the total number of employees on the payroll, and prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment. China has introduced policies to encourage and support people with disabilities to start their businesses: self-employed individuals with disabilities are entitled to tax incentives and premises support by relevant departments. They are also exempted from administrative fees for management, registration, and licenses. In addition, support such as low-interest or interest-free microloans is provided within a certain period.

Hiring people with disabilities is conducive to corporate development, especially at a time when the economy overall is under pressure. Enterprises that employ disabled persons can leverage their human resources and reduce the government's expenditure on securing jobs for the disabled. It can also lower corporate costs and improve efficiency, corporate image, and brand influence. Enterprises that employ more people with disabilities than the required proportion can receive rewards, subsidies, tax incentives, etc. If the number reaches an even higher level, they can apply for value-added tax refunds. Therefore, it is necessary for enterprises to fully understand

and make good use of relevant policies.

When enterprises recruit people with disabilities or when disabled persons start a business, it is recommended to use the China Disabled Employment and Entrepreneurship Network Service Platform. As the official platform of the China Disabled Persons' Federation to provide employment services for the disabled, the platform features two core themes of publicity and employment services for people with disabilities. It cooperates with government departments, disabled persons' federations at all levels, social organizations, and dedicated enterprises to communicate information on people with disabilities and employment policies, raising public attention to the group. With over 10,000 job-seeking interactions and employment guidance every day, the platform supports more than 400,000 people with disabilities to obtain vocational training each year. It helps more than 300,000 employers report whether they hire the required proportion of employees with disabilities every year. These services make it convenient to match disabled individuals with employers and greatly support full and high-quality employment for people with disabilities. Going next, the platform will expand jobs available for job seekers with disabilities through social cooperation, industrial collaboration, policy publicity and implementation to provide disabled persons with suitable and more diverse jobs covering a wider range of industries.

Xie Jingwei, Head of the China Disabled Employment and Entrepreneurship Network Service Platform

Strengthening the "carrot" model for employment of people with disabilities and stepping up support for enterprises

Among the core concerns for disabled entrepreneurs and job seekers, job opportunities and employment stability are issues that stand out. As for the current employment channels for people with disabilities in China, 47% are engaged in rural farming and breeding, followed by flexible employment at 30%. Higher-quality channels,

such as employment due to the "proportion" requirement (890,000), centralized employment (246,000), and non-profit sector employment (178,000), account for less than 15%. The self-employed and government-assisted employment (158,000) make up about 9%. These numbers show that although the employment

of people with disabilities in China has improved significantly, there remains a pattern of "two lows and two poors", namely, low career thresholds, low salaries, poor labor protection, and poor stability.

Employment due to the "proportion" requirement, centralized employment, non-profit sector employment, and government-assisted employment are all channels of government intervention, with "protection" measures that make it difficult for people with disabilities to integrate into wider society. In contrast to this, "competition-based" employment stresses the development of human resources and enhances the competitiveness of people with disabilities in the job market. Practices in developed countries show that private companies are the main employers of people with disabilities. This will also become the norm in China in the future.

Competition-based employment requires the involvement of private companies. They need to provide basic support for the employment of people with disabilities, including position adjustment and matching, the creation of a barrier-free workplace, etc. Specifically, competition-based employment calls for the following: first, eliminate discrimination and prejudice against people with disabilities in the job market and step up crackdown on employment discrimination; second, strengthen the evaluation

of human resources for people with disabilities, adjust positions, and guarantee accurate matching between candidates and jobs to achieve higher-quality employment for people with disabilities; third, ramp up whole-process support, including post-employment social security support and labor rights protection, career planning for people with disabilities, and life support for their families.

At present, to promote the employment of people with disabilities, the government should fine-tune its policy model from "stick" to "carrot", namely, increasing support for enterprises. It includes: reforming the employment security fund system for people with disabilities, lending more support for enterprises that hire people with disabilities; expanding the scope of use of employment security funds, supporting enterprises to shift toward a barrier-free environment and positions; funding pre-employment and regular vocational training for people with disabilities; prioritizing the procurement of products from enterprises that employ people with disabilities, etc.

Prof. Yang Lixiong, Vice Dean of the Institute for Disability Affairs Development at Renmin University of China, and Vice President of the China Disability Affairs Development Research Association

Improving the digital skills of people with disabilities is a priority in training

Based on the core concerns for disabled entrepreneurs and job seekers, in my opinion, it takes both supply and demand sides to improve the quality of employment for people with disabilities.

On the supply side, systematic and targeted training is expected to improve the skills of disabled workers. Positions such as online customer services and work order reviews often guarantee efficient workers with disabilities a monthly income of RMB 8,000 and even RMB 10,000. These jobs do not require higher education, and brief targeted training will suffice. They also support remote working, making it possible for people with disabilities in rural areas to get employed.

On the demand side, improving the employment rate of people with disabilities needs to break down the stereotypes held by employers against disabled individuals about their capabilities. Employment discrimination will result in capable candidates with disabilities losing job opportunities, a frequently-mentioned issue among the "top ten concerns" for people with disabilities. Therefore, building an inclusive workplace is essential. A harmonious atmosphere

and the support of a barrier-free environment are of great help in improving the efficiency and self-value of workers with disabilities.

Looking ahead, we notice that the digital economy will attract an increasing number of disabled persons. It is suggested that relevant departments prioritize improving the digital skills of people with disabilities in their training and build a complete training system for employment in the digital sector. At the same time, the government should work with employers to develop more positions suitable for people with disabilities in the digital economy, enabling them to adjust themselves to the digital era, realize their value, and contribute to socio-economic development.

Liao Juan, Associate Professor of the School of Management at Capital Normal University, Executive Director of the China Disability Affairs Development Research Association, and Deputy Director of the Professional Employment Committee for the Disabled

Spotlight Injecting New Energy into Disabled Entrepreneurs' Ventures

— Taobao's Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities

Just after midnight on November 12, the 11.11 Shopping Festival Promotion results flashed before Zhong Ming, the owner of the "Zangpiker" flagship store: during the event, consumer spending reached eight times that of last year's 11.11 Shopping Festival, surpassing 90% of similar businesses, with the first-hour sales soaring by 317%! Zhong Ming, who has nearly two decades of experience in e-commerce with Taobao, once again witnessed a monumental leap in his online business career.

Unlike other Taobao merchants, Zhong Ming started his entrepreneurial journey on Taobao because his dream of becoming a teacher was hindered by his hearing impairment.

While studying at Hangzhou Normal University, Zhong Ming attended a lecture by Jack Ma before graduation in 2004, sparking his interest in Taobao. Despite his initial plan to become a teacher, his congenital level-three hearing impairment made it difficult to hear his students from the podium, which significantly impacted his teaching. Unable to pursue teaching, he turned to Taobao at a time when the platform was just starting to gain prominence.

Zhong Ming discovered that being a Taobao store owner allowed him to communicate online, thus bypassing the challenges posed by his hearing impairment. Moreover, the entrepreneurship and employment model of Taobao e-commerce broke the barriers of time and place, bringing new opportunities to people with disabilities like him.

After careful consideration, he committed himself to the e-commerce industry. Over more than a decade of operating online, Zhong experimented with various product categories before eventually specializing in leather goods and accessories. From sourcing products, managing shipments, to processing photos, shooting videos, and running the online store, Zhong continuously learned and explored new strategies.

Sales at Zhong Ming's "Zangpiker" store have steadily increased, breaking through the milestones of RMB one million and three million, and in 2024, he reached a new height with sales exceeding RMB 760,000 just during the 11.11 Shopping Festival Promotion. From taking buses and pulling carts to stock up on inventory to buying his first car, and eventually buying a home and starting a family, Taobao has provided Zhong Ming not only a platform for learning and showcasing his abilities but also a stage for fulfilling his personal dreams.



▲ Taobao "Customer Service Representatives" explain the flash sale rules to disabled merchants.

The digital economy also brings opportunities for the disabled

Represented by models such as e-commerce and live-streaming sales, the digital economy, with its inclusion and flexibility, has opened up new avenues for employment and entrepreneurship for people with disabilities, becoming one way for them to achieve self-worth and financial independence. They can work from home using computers or smartphones in roles such as online customer service, graphic design, online store operations, short video production, and live broadcasting. These new forms of entrepreneurship and employment break the physical constraints of traditional industries, providing a platform for people with

disabilities to showcase their talents and pursue their dreams.

Liao Juan, Associate Professor of the School of Management at Capital Normal University, said that flexible employment has become an important form of employment for disabled individuals. It breaks the traditional industry constraints of time and place, bringing fresh job opportunities to people with disabilities. According to statistics from the China Disabled Persons' Federation, each year more than 68,000 disabled individuals find employment online, with over 200,000 engaging

in entrepreneurship on e-commerce platforms. Notably, based on available statistics, more than 100,000 disabled individuals have opened their own shops on the Taobao platform alone.

Lu Hong from Jiangsu, who developed cerebral palsy from toxic encephalitis in childhood, has impaired speech and limited control over his limbs, which has led some to unfairly label him as "useless." After several setbacks, in 2007, Lu Hong opened his own Taobao store, marking a turning point in his life. He began selling photo albums he produced, distributing them to prestigious scenic spots such as the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace, and even exporting them overseas. His company now earns an annual revenue of RMB 13 million and has helped over 150 disabled individuals out of poverty. Lu Hong

was honored with the "Touching China" award for 2022 by CCTV, showcasing how people with disabilities can leverage e-commerce platforms to realize their self-worth and contribute to society.

Zhang Zhenfei, Deputy Director of the China Employment Service Guidance Center for Disabled Persons, said on the Digital Public Welfare and Charity Development Forum at the China Internet Civilization Conference, that with the advent of the internet era and the information society, more and more disabled people are becoming participants, beneficiaries, and creators on the internet. They not only fully showcase themselves through the internet but also seize numerous employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in the new internet economy.

One group chat, one community: a simple act of kindness spurs a supporting program

People with disabilities engaging in e-commerce entrepreneurship caught the attention of Taobao's merchant operation team. During 2021-2022, while analyzing data, they discovered that this group lacked operational skills, with the majority struggling at the lower end of sales, leading to poor store performance. Driven by Alibaba's culture of philanthropy, and with a desire to lend a hand, a few Taobao operation team members spontaneously created a DingTalk group chat. They added certified disabled merchants to the group chat, periodically sharing e-commerce operation tips and lectures, and directly or indirectly resolving their operational challenges.

"At first, these support activities were just small-scale and intermittent, initiated by a few Taobao operations staff and continued for nearly a year. Gradually, more employees joined the group chat, and the number of disabled merchants in the group chat also began to increase." The Alibaba Foundation team quickly recognized the value of this program for enabling disabled merchants to create entrepreneurship and employment opportunities on the platform.

In their research into entrepreneurship and employment for people with disabilities, Alibaba Foundation and Taobao teams found that building capabilities was key to helping disabled individuals secure stable, high-quality jobs. The program focused on empowering disabled merchants with the knowledge and skills needed for e-commerce operations, which could directly boost their income. This, in turn, encouraged further participation

and learning among disabled merchants, creating a positive feedback loop.

At the core of capability building is providing e-commerce training courses for disabled merchants. With years of e-commerce development, professional training has become a mature service. Some top e-commerce operation training courses can cost thousands or even tens of thousands of RMB, a significant investment for disabled merchants. Moreover, the real challenge lies in applying what is learned in these courses to real-world scenarios. Teaching practical skills that address real issues and providing hands-on guidance during the entrepreneurial process are crucial. These are urgently needed to help novices overcome seemingly small hurdles that might otherwise deter them, especially for the disabled.

With over 100,000 disabled merchants on Taobao, this is a significant community. A support plan tailored to the needs of disabled merchants began to take shape within Alibaba Foundation and Taobao. They reached out to volunteers from the support group chat to discuss the possibility of expanding their initiative to reach and cover more disabled merchants, transforming an individually initiated support action into a joint philanthropic program sponsored by Alibaba Foundation and Taobao platform. With more structured planning, they aimed to help disabled merchants succeed on Taobao. The idea was unexpectedly met with immediate agreement, and they quickly began to plan.

Uniting for change: from accessibility to fraternity

On May 22, 2023, during the thirty-third National Day for Assisting Disabled Persons, the Alibaba Foundation, in collaboration with Taobao, launched the Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the "10,000 Merchants Program"). The initiative aims to offer free e-commerce operation courses to over ten thousand disabled merchants within three years and establish a "Development Fund for Disabled Entrepreneurship and Employment." Yao Yao, Secretary-General of the Alibaba Foundation, explained that the 10,000 Merchants Program, in partnership with Taobao, seeks to enhance the operational capabilities of disabled merchants in five key areas: event operations, store performance diagnostics, educational courses, employment tutoring, and community activities, nurturing exemplary disabled merchants. By establishing a dedicated fund, the program supports model merchants and partners who embody profound social commitment, facilitating more disabled individuals to achieve entrepreneurial and employment success through mentorship and support.

Additionally, on the implementation level, the 10,000 Merchants Program not only invites e-commerce operation experts to share their knowledge but also connects with Alibaba's customer support staff to offer assistance in the group chat as dedicated "supporters".

They not only listen to the concerns of disabled merchants but also actively link them with more resources, further empowering them.

Soon after, Zhao Yutong, who has years of experience in nonprofit work, joined the 10,000 Merchants Program team as the program execution lead and became a part of the disabled merchants' community. She swiftly invites certified disabled merchants into the group chat, connects them with instructors for necessary course guidance, and quickly addresses any operational issues they encounter. She is also responsible for gathering new needs and expectations from the merchants concerning the program, keeping her ear to the ground for any new tools or features launched on Taobao, which she promptly introduces to the disabled merchants' group chat. She loves reading the warm conversations in the group chat, "Every day, there are hundreds of chat messages, sometimes they are about sharing operational tips, and other times about sharing personal feelings. The group chat feels like a circle of good friends, where everyone supports and warms each other up, making them become friends."

Since the launch of the 10,000 Merchants Program, over 4,200 disabled merchants have received support, with Zhao Yutong and many volunteers behind the scene from Alibaba providing the backbone of this effort.

Riding the wave of AI, exploring more avenues of support

Zhong Ming, who has fought on his own through hardships and difficulties on the Taobao platform for nearly 20 years, joined the 10,000 Merchants Program in 2023. "Previously, my experience and knowledge in e-commerce were fragmented. After taking courses shared in the group chat, I found that I could integrate these scattered pieces of knowledge, which was truly enlightening," shared Zhong Ming. "In the group chat, there are both novices and veterans who have been

in the business for ten to twenty years. Naturally, we have developed a mentorship atmosphere. Unlike other industry group chats where competition prevents sharing of expertise, in our group of disabled merchants, everyone is very willing to help each other, empathize with the problems newcomers face, and share their experience. When issues arise that we can't solve, there is always someone ready to help."

With the support of the Taobao Live - Digital Avatar team, the 10,000 Merchants Program invited some disabled merchant representatives to try the digital avatar live streaming feature. By feeding text data and other methods, the digital avatar presenters are trained, helping deaf, mute, and physically disabled merchants better operate their stores and increase their revenue. Zhong Ming is among the first disabled merchants to gain access to Taobao's AI digital avatar live streaming service. "The 10,000 Merchants Program secured the rights to AI digital avatar live streaming for us, providing AI presenters for free and organizing digital avatar teams to guide us on how to use it," he said. He believes that this service is extremely beneficial for people with disabilities, "Some in our community may not present well visually, and others may not speak clearly, but digital avatar can effectively address these issues."

As an experienced disabled merchant on the Taobao platform, Zhong Ming actively participates in the 10,000 Merchants Program's online and offline exchange events. Thanks to the empowerment from the program, his store "Zangpiker" has achieved new breakthroughs in sales. "The insights gained from the 10,000 Merchants Program and the experience shared in the DingTalk group chat were proved effective when applied to this year's 11.11 Shopping Festival Promotion, as shown by the significant increase in sales!" Zhong excitedly commented. "The program has genuinely helped disabled merchants, and we are filled with gratitude."

Correspondent **Deng Mingwen**



▲ Barrier-free exchange meeting in Hangzhou for the "Entrepreneurship and Employment Assistance Program for 10,000 Merchants with Disabilities"

Spotlight

Fulfilling Dreams through Cloud Service

— Alibaba Cloud Customer Service as an Employment Bridge for the Disabled

Just an internet connection and a computer allow a special group within Alibaba's Cloud Customer Service to transcend traditional workplace barriers. These employees, challenged by physical disabilities, often struggle to integrate into society and earn their own bread. Alibaba Cloud Customer Service, recognizing their capabilities, offers them not just job opportunities but a transformative platform where they can thrive and pursue personal growth.

An opportunity for equal employment

"Working as a cloud customer service representative has given me a second life," said Du Yan, who has been engaged in the service for over a decade and feels incredibly fortunate to have this opportunity in the first place. She became disabled due to a work-related injury soon after beginning her career, a devastating setback during her prime years. After years of isolation, her resilient spirit drove her to reengage with society.

Finding a job that accommodates the disabled is challenging; merely stepping out of home and making it to the office can be a barrier for many like her. An opportunity for equal treatment was something she deeply yearned for. Discovering "cloud customer service" on the China Disabled Persons' Federation website in September 2014 opened a new chapter in her life.

Internally known as "special cloud customer service representatives," these Alibaba employees are part of an initiative that began in 2010. At that time, online shopping was in its nascent stages, with the internet revolutionizing consumer behaviors and work practices by removing the constraints of time and space, facilitating convenience through technology. Taobao, acting as an intermediary between consumers and merchants, needed substantial manpower and resources to ensure smooth handling of pre-sales and post-sales services. Initially, students, stay-at-home moms, and freelancers filled these roles, forming the first cohort of cloud customer service representatives.

Embracing a core philosophy of mutual aid and sharing, Alibaba has consistently sought to harness technology to serve social values. From 2014, the company began focusing on integrating disabled individuals into the cloud customer service workforce, gradually expanding

a dedicated team of these special representatives. Yu Fei, the manager of the cloud customer service resource operation team, feels deeply moved by this initiative. "After over eight years here, I see Alibaba as a company profoundly committed to social responsibility. Our recruitment of these staff reflects our dedication to creating social value and making a positive impact," she said.

The recruitment specifically targets individuals with physical disabilities and mobility challenges, many of whom are well-educated and possess prior work experience. Their professional capabilities are not inferior to those of non-disabled individuals. "Our main goal is to create jobs for our disabled partners, equipping them with training and personnel support," added Yu Fei.

Alibaba Cloud Customer Service extends these opportunities as a lifeline for integration into society. Yu Fei introduces collaborations with the China Disabled Persons' Federation and various disabled welfare organizations across regions like Fujian, Henan, and Hebei. Recruitment slots for these roles are regularly announced through exclusive channels, welcoming all applicants eager to reengage in the workforce and supporting them through the training and selection process.

Upon discovering the recruitment advertisement, Du Yan was initially skeptical about the legitimacy of such a flexible work-from-home option. Nonetheless, she applied, overcoming setbacks and challenges with substantial support from the China Disabled Persons' Federation and Alibaba, ultimately securing successful enrollment.

Fair and scientific management system

At Alibaba's Cloud Customer Service team, there is a tailored program specifically for disabled colleagues. This move is part of what makes Yu Fei feel genuinely touched by Alibaba's commitment to making a real difference for people with disabilities. Here, the special cloud service representatives are treated just like any other employee in terms of business requirements. Successfully application doesn't guarantee a job placement; before official employment, they must pass through a rigorous assessment process. This begins with online knowledge training, where they learn the theoretical knowledge needed for pre-sale and post-sale customer service. The training progresses to an AI system simulation of customer service dialogues, and concludes with a comprehensive exam. Only those who pass all these stages can become special cloud service representatives officially.

As Yu Fei put it, the opportunities and expectations placed on the special team are equal. "Our management and requirements for them are the same as for regular representatives because maintaining high standards ensures the healthy development of our

business and the sustainability of the project."

The daily management of these special cloud service staff has been refined over years, forming a mature management system. "More work, more gain; better work, better gain," underlies Alibaba's motivation for cloud customer service staff to continuously improve and progress. Work assessments are based on piece-rate pay, with additional rewards for handling higher volumes. There are different allowances for varying degrees of task difficulty. Regarding work quality, faster response times lead to higher customer satisfaction scores and, consequently, more rewards.

In this competitive yet fair system, where rewards and penalties are clearly defined, Du Yan strives to prove herself through hard work and dedication. In her first month, she earned over RMB 100—a modest sum, but a delightful surprise for her.

Sharing a similar story, Wang Sen became quadriplegic due to an accident. Encouraged by friends and supported by the local disabled persons' federation, he



joined the team of special cloud service representatives. Having been disconnected from society and unfamiliar with even the basics of online shopping, Wang Sen started from scratch, progressively honing the skills necessary for his job. From feeling out of place to embracing his role with passion, he earned his first income from this work while finding personal worth and dignity.

"Seven years ago, if someone had told me I could have a job, earn a salary comparable to non-disabled people, secure a better life, and independently support my family, I would have dismissed it as a fairy tale. But now, I have

slowly made it a reality," said Wang Sen, who cherishes this hard-won opportunity and has extended his working hours from 6 to 8 hours daily, hardly ever taking a day off unless there's a power or internet outage.

In over a decade of working in cloud customer service, Du Yan has also achieved her personal goals; she bought a house and paid off her mortgage with her earnings. "Because of my physical condition, my family and friends always used to take care of me and buy things for me. Now, I make my own money and can give back to them," she said with a smile, reflecting on her fulfilling life today.

Ongoing adaptive improvements

Securing equal employment opportunities is merely the starting point. As special cloud customer service representatives become an integral part of the Alibaba family, the company actively seeks ways to enhance their work experience, making it more convenient and enjoyable through ongoing adaptations.

Alibaba practices a nuanced approach to equality, especially evident in how it adapts for special cloud customer service representatives. Cloud customer service scheduling relies on a sophisticated big data system, which allows these special colleagues to choose their shifts freely, adjusting according to their personal circumstances. The system assigns shifts based on personal choices, occasionally leading to competition for shifts when demand exceeds availability. To ensure these special staff maintain a stable workload, Alibaba has implemented "protected shifts." This addition to the scheduling rules guarantees a base number of shifts for these employees, with extra allocations for those who perform exceptionally well, thus ensuring they have a reliable workload.

As technology advances rapidly, the Alibaba platform undergoes continuous upgrades. "Our tech team carefully considers the needs of our special cloud customer service representatives during system upgrades, ensuring our business operations are inclusively designed," said Yu Fei. To support these efforts, Alibaba has established a dedicated coordination team that maintains real-time communication with the technical and product departments to facilitate necessary adaptations and updates.

Expanding the reach of disability recruitment, Alibaba initiated the "Glimmer Program" early in 2019, aimed at recruiting visually impaired individuals for cloud customer service roles and providing them with job opportunities. To aid them in performing tasks that typically require visual interaction, Alibaba developed the Glimmer Accessible Workstation, which assists in converting text to speech and vice versa.

A cycle of mutual support and goodwill

An optimistic and uplifting spirit is highly contagious, spreading among the special cloud customer service representatives and between them and non-disabled individuals. They inspire and elevate each other, embodying the true essence of integration between disabled and non-disabled individuals.

After mastering her skills, Du Yan applied for a mentor position and took under her wing over twenty apprentices. She guided the newcomers through theoretical knowledge and practical skills, often staying late into the night, nearly to the point of forgetting to sleep and eat. Although exhausting, she found it immensely fulfilling. Recalling her own early days in cloud customer service, where she received generous mentoring from more experienced colleagues, Du Yan wanted to pass on this kindness. She aimed to help others with similar backgrounds overcome challenges and secure valuable employment opportunities. In 2016, with the introduction of the "Senior Cloud Service Experts" mechanism, she reached a new level, gaining clearer goals and renewed motivation. In her words, "Every day, I wake up with a purpose and come home from work feeling fulfilled."

As Yu Fei interacted with more special cloud service colleagues, she noticed a change in herself. "Their resilience and relentless spirit motivate us and inspire many others." As part of the management team, Yu Fei is recognized for her decisive leadership and professionalism. However, her involvement with the special cloud service team has tempered her approach, infusing her decisions with greater compassion and bringing a sense of serenity and acceptance into her personal life, especially during challenging times.

Beyond helping hone work skills, Alibaba collaborates with non-profit bases for people with disabilities across the country to offer online interviews and study

tours, providing psychological counseling, emotional support, and team-building services for special cloud service staff. Their internal DingTalk circle serves as a social platform where they share daily life and work experiences, creating a supportive online community. Remarkably, several colleagues have even found their life partners through this job, leading to marriages.

Looking towards the future, Yu Fei hopes to expand the initiative's reach and enhance its impact and services, continually providing more opportunities and conveniences for the special cloud service community in both their professional and personal lives.

Inspired by the goodwill, Yu Fei's team has also attracted colleagues passionate about philanthropy. She reflected, "We're engaged in actions that contribute to social good, and this part of our business will surely garner increased attention and respect. I believe these small acts of kindness will accumulate and eventually spread like wildfire."

Correspondent **Li Sichu**



▲ A special cloud customer service representative works at the public welfare base of Gengdan Institute, Beijing University of Technology.

Spotlight

Breaking Hearing Barriers: Dreams Without Limits

— Ele.me Hearing-Impaired Riders Care Program

"Can a person with hearing impairment really work in a job that requires frequent communication, like delivery?" Reflecting on his life before becoming an Ele.me hearing-impaired rider, 41-year-old Huang Yi used sign language to express himself. "Initially, I couldn't imagine it," he said. "Before I became a delivery rider, all my jobs required no verbal communication—I lived in a silent world, feeling disconnected from society and other people."

At the age of three, Huang Yi lost his hearing due to a high fever. When he was 15 years old, he left his hometown of Quzhou for Hangzhou to study and decided to stay in the city after graduating. Over the next two decades, he took on various jobs: doing odd jobs, working on assembly lines, operating computers, and even painting traditional fans in a fan factory for many years—jobs that were manual with limited income but required no social interaction.

By chance, Huang Yi heard from a hearing-impaired friend that delivering food could be quite lucrative. Struggling with a low income, he decided to give it a try. In 2020, he resolved to step out of his comfort zone and entered the "noisy yet silent world" of food delivery, working as an Ele.me delivery rider.

Hearing-impaired riders: Opportunities and challenges

Huang Yi's career shift reflects the employment trends for disabled individuals in the digital economy era. The rapid growth of various digital platforms has not only reshaped the entire economic system but also opened up more diverse employment opportunities for vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities. Platforms like Ele.me, which only require registration and identity verification to join, offer many socially excluded disabled individuals rare and relatively high-income job opportunities.

However, seizing these opportunities is not easy. According to the study by Yuan Zhe, Researcher and Doctoral Supervisor under the Hundred Talents Program at Zhejiang University, surveys show that about 14% of disabled individuals never complete a delivery after registering on the app, a rate significantly higher than that of other non-disabled riders. The two core rules of successful delivery—timely communication with customers and using navigation to enhance efficiency—pose significant challenges for the disabled, especially newcomers. They must endure much more stress and difficulties and exert far more effort than non-disabled peers to adapt to a dispatch system designed for non-disabled riders and earn a sufficient income.

To this day, Huang Yi still remembers the panic of his first delivery during a mealtime rush. The long wait for pickup led to an anxious customer calling to hurry the order. Trying to

get the restaurant staff to explain to the customer only added to his frustration as he struggled to make himself understood through gestures. Soon after, he received a complaint. During that period, Huang Yi suppressed feelings of discouragement and defeat, slowly figuring out delivery tactics: unable to hear order notifications, he learned from colleagues and noted busy times and neighborhoods; unable to use voice navigation, he familiarized himself with routes and memorized maps at night. Through continuous trial and error, Huang Yi developed his own set of "delivery secrets," gradually growing into a top performer delivering 80 to 100 orders daily, nearly 2,000 orders a month.

At the same time that Huang Yi was overcoming these challenges, the Ele.me team responsible for rider experiences began noticing issues encountered by this special group through various information channels. "We received customer complaints mentioning that sometimes when they called the rider, the call was either not answered or there was no response after picking up. After looking into the issue, we realized some riders were hearing-impaired. Some delivery station managers and hearing-impaired riders themselves also proactively reported these issues to us," recalled Ma Tao, current head of the Hearing-Impaired Riders Care Program. "Initially, there were no grand objectives; once we noticed the situation, we decided to work out a solution."

Identifying pain points through field survey

In 2020, Ele.me quietly launched the Hearing-Impaired Riders Care Program. For the Ele.me team, the challenges were twofold: first, the team consisted entirely of non-disabled individuals, requiring significant effort to accurately meet the needs of the hearing-impaired riders. Second, although the care program was a small part of Ele.me's overall business, the accessibility features required cross-platform coordination. "It involved the participation of various modules, making it a collaborative effort," said Ma Tao.

Addressing these challenges, the Ele.me team not only conducted regular interviews with the hearing-impaired riders but also had team members from different departments experience deliveries firsthand. They also analyzed platform data to identify the critical points affecting the delivery pace of these riders.

Yuan Zhe's study indicated that while disabled individuals tend to work harder—completing about 5% more deliveries per week than other riders—their efficiency drops during the "order acceptance to restaurant pickup" and "pickup to delivery" stages, taking an average of 10.2 seconds and 27 seconds longer per order, respectively. The primary issue is the communication barriers these riders face with merchants and customers. This not only slows down order processing but also increases the likelihood of mistakes, thereby affecting service quality and customer satisfaction.

The hearing-impaired riders have also tried various solutions themselves. Some have formed mutual aid groups at their stations to help each other with unclear delivery addresses; others prepare text messages in advance to inform customers of their hearing impairment. However, these measures are sometimes ineffective due to merchants overlooking the messages during busy periods or customers ignoring the texts and calling to rush orders. Moreover, since most hearing-impaired individuals use sign language, which can differ significantly from standard Chinese, unexpected communication challenges can lead to misunderstandings due to slow responses or unclear expressions.

It's clear that to truly address these issues from the root, the platform needs to play a role. Through innovative, digital empowerment strategies, the platform can help remove obstacles for hearing-impaired riders ahead of time, while also providing a smoother service experience for users, achieving a all-win situation for all parties involved.

饿了么“无声骑手”无障碍沟通再升级

一键智能外呼，语音实时转换，信息醒目提示……听障骑手有了智能助手

全方位优化 全过程覆盖

用户服务 信息更充分

骑手 送单无障碍

商家 沟通更方便

用户提示信息更充分

- 1 下单后，推送通知，温馨提醒，做好预期
- 2 履约中，全程提示，包括饿了么app首页履约卡、派送地图页
- 3 联系时，醒目提醒，在线沟通更有效

商家沟通更方便

- 1 接单后，明确提示，做好预期
- 2 联系时，提示在线沟通外，提供站长、调度员电话备用

骑手送单无障碍

- 1 一键智能外呼：面向用户，将文字变成智能语音电话，告诉顾客
- 2 电子沟通卡：送达、问路、取餐等场景下，直接展示，还可转为语音播放
- 3 语音转文字：在线聊天实时转换，让无声骑手看见商家、顾客说了什么

Facilitating dignified employment through accessibility adaptations

Having identified the pain points of hearing-impaired riders, the Ele.me team began to implement accessibility adaptations across three areas: technology upgrades, business policies, and public welfare initiatives.

Technology upgrades were at the core. Since the care program's inception, Ele.me has progressively optimized its entire process. For users, the app now pushes conspicuous notifications at various stages—after placing an order, during fulfillment, and when contacting riders—reminding them that the rider is hearing-impaired. For merchants, besides prompting for online communication when a hearing-impaired rider accepts an order, phone backups for station managers and dispatchers are provided. For hearing-impaired riders, the app automatically switches to a customized version, incorporating features like one-click smart dialing, electronic communication cards, and voice-to-text capabilities. These tools enable them to quickly understand audio information from merchants and customers and respond promptly and effectively, whether through text or voice, tailored to different scenarios. When riders initiate contact with customers via the smart text-to-speech feature, the phone call option is automatically disabled for customers, and the customers are directed to communicate online.

After launching each feature, the Ele.me team conducted long-term tracking and analysis of usage data to evaluate effectiveness and made further improvements. According to Yuan Zhe's study, the one-click smart dialing feature notably reduced the delivery time gap between hearing-impaired riders and non-disabled riders from 27 seconds to 16.7 seconds per order, and the average number of weekly deliveries increased by 5.8 orders. This not only enhances the employment competitiveness of hearing-impaired riders but also provides robust empirical support for how digital technology can help integrate disabled groups into socio-economic activities.

In terms of business policies, when a complaint is filed, hearing-impaired riders can report or log the incidents via the app. This allows the platform to adjust assessments and penalties according to the rider's specific circumstances, and to excuse them from responsibility for any anomalies during delivery. Meanwhile, the Ele.me team combines real issues of communication and safety in training programs, further assisting station managers in supporting the riders effectively. Regarding public welfare initiatives, Ele.me also enhances the life quality of some hearing-impaired riders by donating devices like cochlear implants.

"However, 'mere philanthropy' is not our ultimate goal," said Ma Tao, who had many times of in-depth interactions with Huang Yi, a notably spirited and optimistic "Delivery Master" who seems unaffected by life's hardships. "His sign language teacher told me that he wasn't always like this; being a rider has significantly changed his temperament," reflected Ma Tao. "This convinces me that our efforts fundamentally aim to help these hearing-impaired individuals integrate into society more dignifiedly through employment."

Dignity is also a term frequently mentioned by many hearing-impaired riders. On the stage of the 2024 Alibaba Philanthropy Awards - Kindling Projects final, Huang Yi shared, "Being a rider has brought a lot of 'sunshine' into my life. This sunshine comes from increasingly rider-friendly product features, the sense of accomplishment from delivering meals on time, the thumbs-up from customers who know I'm hearing-impaired, the sheets of paper filled with densely written words from teammates trying to communicate, and the gradually established connections with others and society..." He told everyone, "I feel this is a dignified job, one that brings a sense of achievement!"

Building an inclusive society: Still on our way

Over the past four years, Ele.me has developed a relatively mature workflow for accessibility adaptations. Moving forward, the Ele.me team plans to continue upgrading based on feedback, gradually introducing new features like vibration alerts for smart devices, while also connecting with more government and community organizations to expand care initiatives for other types of disabled riders.

Speaking of the achievements in accessibility adaptations, Ma Tao is notably modest. He believes that there is much more Ele.me can and will do. The future direction of the program aims for true accessibility—by systematically remodeling Ele.me's operational links to integrate human and business functions, achieving a universally "user-friendly" experience.

These four years have also invisibly transformed many Alibaba employees involved in the accessibility adaptations. "Take myself, for example. I used to be very by-the-book in work, but now I realize that work isn't just about numbers and targets; there's a lot of humanity involved. This isn't something that can be measured in business value alone. Every team member involved has an inner drive," Ma Tao shared. He hopes to draw more attention to this effort, "Their hard work should not only

influence Alibaba employees but also touch a broader public, fostering a dignified and inclusive employment environment for more groups."

Over these years, from initial confusion to now excelling in his role, Huang Yi has become a seasoned rider. "Last year, I was named the Delivery Rider of the Year in Zhejiang Province, and I also volunteered at the 19th Asian Games. I've never felt more profoundly the value of my contribution to society," Huang Yi conveyed with a strong sense of confidence through his silent sign language.

Today, on the Ele.me platform, there are over 5,000 hearing-impaired riders like Huang Yi. Dressed in blue uniforms, riding electric bikes, carrying large delivery boxes, they rush towards customers and their dreams. They may never hear the "thank you" from their customers, but with the support of technology and the platform, the care of peers and society, their passion for life transcends the silence, shining brightly in the wind as they ride.

Correspondent **Zhu Lin**



▲ Ele.me's hearing-impaired riders now deliver orders with the help of smart assistants.

Dialogue

Sun Lijun, Alibaba Partner,
Talks with Tan Yujiao, a
Paralympic Gold Medalist,
on a Better Life from
Accessibility

04

On November 14, upon the upcoming International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Sun Lijun, Alibaba Partner and Chairman of the Alibaba Foundation had a conversation with Tan Yujiao, a Paralympic gold medalist and the first Chinese elected as member of the International Paralympic Committee Athletes' Council. The two discussed Tan's efforts in her Paralympic Games journey, China's accessibility development, and Alibaba's actions in support of disability. They looked forward to leveraging Alibaba's capabilities to serve the needs of people with disabilities for a shared better life.



Sun Lijun Leveraging Technology to Share a Better Life with Disabled Partners

On championship: breaking world records 21 times, including 20 records set by herself

Sun: Hi, Yujiao, as a gold Para-powerlifter, you have shattered the world record 21 times and claimed 43 gold medals. What motivates you to achieve these miracles?

Tan: I was incapacitated by an illness at seven. The treatment put my father in heavy debt. At 13, I started practicing weightlifting, and it has been 21 years. In Paris, I won the gold medal for the third consecutive Paralympic Games. It made me realize that a championship is a globally respected glory. Every hard-won victory and the ultimate satisfaction from prevailing over myself and my opponents make me feel that I am so alive. Despite my disability, I work to have China's national flag hoisted on the international stage. This is my mission and value. I fight for the honor of my motherland, as every athlete does.

Sun: Incredible. You did fight for the honor of China.

Tan: My winning formula is to keep going forward, fight for the glory of my country, and stay hungry for success.

Sun: Breaking a world record is challenging, but you did it 21 times.

Tan: When I was interviewed yesterday, a journalist asked me how many times I broke a world record held by myself in my 21 feats. I told her it was 20. Only at the first time did I surpass another athlete's record. Since then, I have been challenging my own records. Although it sounds a little complacent, it was indeed difficult. I made it, and I am very proud of myself.

Sun: At the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, you lifted 142 kg. That was powerful enough to throw an adult man over your shoulder. What did you gain from weightlifting? What touched you in your journey?

Tan: In Paris, I lifted 142 kg, crushing the 141 kg world record I set at the Hangzhou Asian Para Games. Some reporters fondly named me the weightlifting queen, but I would rather see myself as a warrior who clears a path through thorns. Although I have remarkable strengths, weightlifting is an art that requires wisdom. Some mock athletes as empty heads with well-developed muscles, but I strongly disagree. I need to seamlessly coordinate every muscle to let my strengths burst. In addition, despite fatigue and high pressure from traveling abroad to attend competitions, I need to adapt to the jet lag and adjust daily routines in a very short time for the best physical condition and tempo. This involves the control of the brain.

Sun: Weightlifting gives you honor, brings out your talent, and makes you wiser.

Tan: My youth is devoted to weightlifting. Starting my career at a young age, I am still practicing it. I know that it is more than difficult to obtain three Paralympic gold medals and maintain world records. However, these intimidating challenges have given me the courage and confidence to tackle difficulties in life. When I lie on the weightlifting

bed, I pull the barbell close to my chest and then push it up. If I don't try my best to push it, I will be crushed. It reminds me of the moments when difficulties emerge. You need to gather all your strengths to overcome them, or you will be overwhelmed. Barbell practice has strengthened me, encouraging me to face challenges head-on and tackle them.

Sun: Impressive. I believe your experience will inspire many people and change their perception of difficulties. You have my sincere admiration.

Tan: Weightlifting also benefits me financially. At 19, I became a member of the national team for the first time. I phoned my father, telling him that in three years, I would make it to the London 2012 Paralympic Games. I also said when I achieved something, I would buy him a car. I did it. I won a silver medal in London. I spent my reward on a car for my father, who used to earn a living as a tractor driver in the rural area but now owns his private car. Seeing my family live a happy life also gave me the confidence to win gold medals.

On Alibaba: Alibaba's culture unleashes the strength of technology to support the disabled and the disadvantaged

Tan: Alibaba has launched many projects in support of disability. Have you participated in some of them? Could you share your experience?

Sun: I have participated in many activities organized by Alibaba's dedicated "Hugs and Help" groups for people with disabilities. For example, I once volunteered to climb the Great Wall with physically- and visually-challenged people and helped autistic children socialize through badminton games, etc. These activities left a deep impression on me. Last weekend, I participated in an equestrian therapy activity for autistic children in Qingdao, Shandong. It is difficult for autistic children to control their behavior, but when they ride horses, they will be very focused. Another time when I went to Fujian for an activity with autistic children, I found a child particularly sensitive to numbers. He could remember up to 100 digits of pi. These children are immersed in their worlds with unknown amazing aspects. Helping them requires different strategies.

Tan: Yes. We need to be patient and caring to break the ice in interacting with autistic children.

Sun: Autism is a huge burden for a family, and we have the responsibility to do our part. Alibaba is working on addressing issues such as autism by using AI.

Tan: Today, technologies such as AI provide new possibilities for philanthropy. How does Alibaba leverage the digital tools, AI, and other technologies to support people with disabilities live and work better?

Sun: Technologies such as AI open the door to a better life. Elon Musk said he planned to resolve visual impairments via smart chips in a few years to help the blind see the world as we do. We are exploring that possibility in Alibaba, too. For example, we make it easy for blind users to shop online on Taobao and enjoy movies on Youku without barriers. Amap contributes to barrier-free travel for people with disabilities. We also help partners with disabilities on the Taobao platform open stores and work as cloud customer service remotely. Ele.me helps hearing-impaired riders get a better income through the platform. We develop the digital avatar to assist partners with speech and hearing impairments. We use AI tools to help autistic children make picture books... Alibaba's "Medical AI Multi-Cancer Early Screening Non-profit Project" applies AI cutting-edge technology outside of laboratories in Lishui, Zhejiang Province, protecting the health of rural residents with technology, including the disabled. We will continue to tap into the strength of technology to share a better life with partners with disabilities, and we expect more breakthroughs.

Tan: I also look forward to better technological development in the future, so that people with or without disabilities can live a more convenient and happier life. I was surprised that supporting the disabled and the disadvantaged has become one of the four pillars of the Alibaba Foundation. Why is helping the disabled a priority?

Sun: I define philanthropy in four words: touch, trigger, act, and influence. Supporting the disabled and the disadvantaged has become an important task for us. It is not a deliberate endeavor. At Alibaba, more than 25% of non-profit projects are devoted to helping the disabled every year. Many of Alibaba's dedicated "Hugs and Help" groups continue to act for people with disabilities, and an increasing number of Alibaba employees have benefited from disability-related volunteer services. Throughout the process, the kindness in everyone's heart will be kindled to help those at a disadvantage. When you help people with disabilities, you are recharged with greater energy for a better self.

Tan: I do feel the strong atmosphere of helping people with disabilities in Alibaba. Where do you think Alibaba draws the passion for this effort?

Sun: It all comes from caring employees, a responsible enterprise, and a heartwarming ecosystem. As an integral part of Alibaba's culture, philanthropy defines our employees. We hope that Alibaba will become a good company that will last for 102 years. Only truly responsible, dedicated, and kind employees can constantly create truly trustworthy, purpose-driven, and warm products. Such products can be better applied to make a difference and help the company go further.

On Paralympic Games: every athlete with disabilities deserves respect

Tan: Let's move on to my area. Who is the Chinese athlete with disabilities that impressed you the most at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games? What impressions did you have?

Sun: The one who impressed me the most was Cui Zhe, a Shandong girl as good as you in weightlifting. After she won the championship, she helped an athlete from another country as they left the podium. Despite her mobility challenges, she still lent a hand to others. I was touched by her strong perseverance and selflessness.

Tan: Yes, Cui Zhe pushed the wheelchair of her Nigerian opponent, a scene recorded in the video of our conclusion and commendation meeting. It is a particularly precious shot. I admire her very much because she sets a good precedent.

Sun: Later, I watched her interview. The reporter asked why she pushed the wheelchair. She said that it was out of her habit and what she should do. It was spontaneous. I appreciate her very much.

Tan: Disabled athletes may be different from ordinary people with disabilities in that we live more independently. We need to take care of ourselves in the team. If we see someone who needs help more than ourselves, we will help them right away. By the way, since Alibaba is a partner of the Olympic Games, if you had an opportunity to watch the competition, which event would you prefer?

Sun: During the Hangzhou Asian Para Games, I spent almost all the nights watching the Games with my children. Every disabled athlete deserves our respect. It is touching to witness their extraordinary perseverance and commitment as well as final honor. If I had an opportunity to watch the Paralympic Games, I think it would be worth watching every event.

Tan: It is the twenty-first year into my career now. I hope to attend the next Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. If I were so lucky, it would be my fifth Paralympics. I hope you would come and watch the Games.

Sun: Thank you very much. If I had time, I would go there to feel the atmosphere and learn from athletes.

Tan: You have been taking action to help the disabled, such as climbing the Great Wall with the visually impaired and delivering motivational speeches to people with disabilities. I also have a dream--many disabled athletes have entrepreneurial dreams, especially after retirement. However, we will encounter many difficulties. In 2025, can you give a lecture on starting businesses to people like me?

Sun: Absolutely, I'd love to. Athletes especially gold medalists have extraordinary qualities: perseverance, persistence, and strong power to make breakthroughs. They outperform individuals without disabilities in these areas. In starting a business, they should know how to make good use of these qualities and embrace business challenges. I look forward to the opportunity to communicate with retired athletes with disabilities.

On accessibility: it takes both facilities and care

Tan: Speaking of support for people with disabilities, what do you think are the core issues faced by our group?

Sun: People with disabilities face many challenges in life, work, etc. However, the biggest challenge is their mental struggle. What matters most is to open their minds and support them in bravely integrating into society. People without disabilities need to embrace them and help them feel a sense of belonging.

Tan: I can't agree more. Despite inconveniences caused by physical disabilities, people around us have made our lives easier, but changing our mindset is up to us.

Sun: You have participated in many international competitions and visited many countries. What do you think of China's accessibility compared to other countries?

Tan: Major cities in China are better equipped with barrier-free facilities and an inclusive social environment. In my recent years of living in Hangzhou, I have seen that people with disabilities in Hangzhou are leading a happier life. Every time a disabled passenger in a wheelchair enters the station, a staff member will help him get on and off, tell him the nearest barrier-free elevator, and escort him to the exit.

Sun: Yes, especially since the Asian Para Games last year, accessibility has been getting better.

Tan: But accessibility in some small cities is not well-developed. First of all, both facilities and service awareness do not catch up. In some high-speed rail stations, barrier-free elevators are only provided for entry. Once I got off and wanted to take the barrier-free elevator to exit. But I was stopped by the staff, insisting that I use the escalator. After some argument, the staff reluctantly agreed to the use of the barrier-free elevator. However, the next time I was there, a staff member was really helpful. I was lamenting that it had less to do with the existence of a barrier-free elevator at the exit than service awareness and accessibility publicity. The development of a barrier-free environment embodies social progress and the civilization of a region or country. Therefore, both facilities and mindsets are important for accessibility.

Sun: Indeed, more people need to think in other people's shoes. Since we are talking about accessibility, you have visited around the Alibaba campus. What do you think of the barrier-free environment here?

Tan: Impressive. The U Link, an indoors corridor, connects all the buildings, making it easy for employees to move across buildings without being exposed to the outside. In addition, flat and wide ground ensures unimpeded wheelchair use. I can feel that Alibaba is a very caring company. Thumbs up.

Sun: Is there anything else that needs to be improved?

Tan: We have felt the tone of Alibaba, creating an accessible environment for all. This concept matters more than facilities. Here or outside, it is natural to encounter some physical obstacles. However, Alibaba's philanthropy culture convinces us that Alibaba's employees will always lend a hand, making physical obstacles less

intimidating. I think that facilities and culture make a real barrier-free environment.

Sun: Thank you. Based on your experience, what do you want to say to people with and without disabilities respectively, and to Alibaba?

Tan: To people with disabilities, always stay self-reliant, resilient, and positive, learn more, enjoy your life, and look on the bright side to maximize your life. We should always be grateful for the help from others and those lending us their hands. One day, when you are strong, please extend a helping hand and become a beacon of hope.

To people without disabilities, cherish your healthy body, which is our elusive dream. Instead of sympathy and pity, I hope they will put us on an equal footing, which is more important to us. I would like to thank people without disabilities for creating a more convenient environment for us and treating us kindly so that we can feel free to live, work, travel, and win glory for our country. I hope that in the future when people without disabilities age and need help, the barrier-free environment they created together will benefit them in return.

Finally, to Alibaba. As a very successful Internet company, Alibaba sets the mission to make it easy to do business anywhere. We understand that Alibaba is very friendly to people with disabilities in many fields such as employment, entrepreneurship, food, clothing, housing, and transportation. I want to express my gratitude especially when you said "leveraging technology to share a better life with disabled partners". It touched my heart. I wish all the best for Alibaba.

Comments

Committed Alibaba employees volunteer to help others in daily life. This has become part of their lives. Alibaba's "Three Hours for a Better World" is not only a symbol of volunteer services but also reflects the volunteerism and the people-oriented values of Alibaba employees. It touches me and deserves my admiration. "Three Hours for a Better World" are small steps to make a difference. Alibaba's commitment is also reflected in novel volunteer approaches. Next, our highlight is to enshrine volunteer services into law, so that everyone volunteers together to create a better world.

Lyv Shiming, Member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, President of China Disabled Volunteers Association

I have witnessed and experienced the innovative development of Alibaba's actions in support of disability. For example, Youku Barrier-free Theater has enriched the cultural enjoyment of the visually challenged. Amap's Barrier-Free Navigation has delivered the warmth of technology in helping people with disabilities. The support of the Alibaba Foundation for cultural activities of the blind has provided a platform for them to show their charms. I hope Alibaba will give full play to its high-tech advantages and play a greater role in leading the efforts to support the disabled.

Li Qingzhong, President of the China Association of Persons with Visual Disabilities

Alibaba brings together the strengths of its platforms and ecosystem and uses digital technology to include people with disabilities in sharing the fruits of development. Alibabas dedicated "Hugs and Help" groups for people with disabilities provide comprehensive care and support for the disabled. Alibaba Foundation works with the operation team to secure high-quality employment for people with disabilities for their independence. Under the guidance of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, China Foundation for Disabled Persons and Alibaba Foundation will work together for a better future for people with disabilities!

Zhou Lijun, Vice President and Secretary-General of the China Foundation for Disabled Persons

The endeavors for people with disabilities with Chinese characteristics in the new era require the involvement of more socially responsible companies like Alibaba. We look forward to gathering more resources from Alibaba for the rehabilitation, care, education, employment, community support, and social campaigns of the intellectually disabled so that they will receive more protection and services.

Hu Bin, Chairman of the China Association of Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Relatives

I am very excited to see that Alibaba has integrated "supporting the disabled and the disadvantaged" as one of the core philanthropic concepts. I look forward to and firmly believe that Alibaba will use its abundant resources and strong innovation capabilities to explore and practice a more caring and efficient new model of helping the disabled.

Tang Zhanxin, Vice President of the China Association of People with Physical Disabilities

Alibaba's engagement in entrepreneurship and employment, technology, volunteer services, and ecosystem support for barrier-free access for the disabled have opened a new door for our hearing-impaired friends. I hope that Alibaba will continue to innovate with its technological advantages, and also look forward to the involvement of more companies to diversify employment channels and positions for hearing-impaired individuals and jointly create an inclusive society.

Xu Cong, Vice President of the China Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

In 2024, I participated in the "Love in Heart, Accessibility in Harmony" Heart Star Partner Non-profit Music Festival hosted by Alibaba Foundation. I learned that Alibaba offered volunteer services (similar to respite care) and technology assistance for the disabled (AI projects such as AI tool for picture books for children with ASD) for autistic individuals. Alibaba's attention to that group is inspiring. I look forward to the important role played by Alibaba in autism-related services in China to encourage to whole society to pay attention to and improve mental health.

Feng Xin, Deputy Secretary-General of the China Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families

Alibaba has provided more job opportunities, learning resources, and interaction platforms for the disabled through practical measures so that they can equally integrate into social development and share the convenience and opportunities brought by sci-tech progress. I believe that Alibaba's leading role will inspire more companies and individuals to support the disabled and the disadvantaged and promote the cause of people with disabilities.

Yang Cong, Deputy Secretary-General of the China Association for Promoting News and Publicity on Disability Affairs

Over the years, Alibaba employees have paid attention to, cared about, and loved people with disabilities. They have pushed forward support for disabled persons in employment, technology, volunteer service, and the ecosystem support for barrier-free access. They have paved the way and walked hand in hand with individuals with disabilities, showing the example of a responsible company and a committed team. Thumbs up for you!

Chen Yiwei, Vice President of Zhejiang Provincial Disabled Persons' Federation

Committed to their original aspirations, Alibaba employees devote their knowledge, skills, and wisdom enthusiastically to its vision in support of disability: A Better Life for Everyone. They have worked with people with disabilities to share a better life with concrete actions. Because of Alibaba, residents with disabilities in Yuhang District are leading a happy life!

Liang Songying, Party Secretary and Chairman of the Yuhang District Disabled Persons' Federation of Hangzhou

Alibaba employees are firmly passionate about philanthropy. I have seen them stay up late at night to optimize disability assistance programs after normal working hours. They are sincere partners to people with disabilities. Once a blind user asked for help, and an Alibaba employee rose to help after driving a distance stretching half of Beijing. I appreciate Alibaba's efforts in philanthropy!

Liang Jiangbo, the first blind person to earn a postgraduate degree from Tsinghua University

It was difficult for people with disabilities to find a job, so I started my business. During the COVID-19 period, Taobao came to my aid, bringing together disabled merchants onto the platform and providing free operation courses. At first, I was suspicious because I had been cheated by many so-called agents. I did not take the courses seriously until an in-person meeting where many participants with disabilities shared their experiences of starting businesses on Taobao. It turned out that Taobao had supported many disabled merchants before. It dawned on me that Taobao did care about people like me. That was the moment I stopped seeing things negatively. Every time a course is held for us on the platform, I take notes from those informative lectures. I would like to thank Taobao for truly understanding our problems. It teaches us skills and acts as our friend in our journey.

Wu Li, a merchant with disabilities in Hangzhou

Annex

Contributing to the UN SDGs

Of the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), eight 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 contribute to achieving the UN SDGs.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS				
Barrier-free entrepreneurship and employment	5 GENDER EQUALITY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Barrier-free technology	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Barrier-free volunteer services	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Ecosystem support for barrier-free access	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

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