

Indian startups win big in bid to scale technology for persons with disabilities

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

On the eve of International Day of People with disabilities on 3rd December, Prosus based in Netherland, the global consumer internet group of Naspers, has announced that Sohum Innovation Labs, NeoMotion Assistive Solutions and Stamurai from Demosthenes Technologies, all early-stage Indian ventures developing technology to aid persons with disabilities, has been selected as the top three startups in the inaugural Prosus Social Impact Challenge for Accessibility (Prosus SICA). Prosus SICA identifies and supports talented entrepreneurs who are developing and deploying assistive technology. Prosus has committed INR 16,500,000 over three years to the initiative.

- Sohum Innovation Labs founded by Nitin Sisodia and based in Bengaluru was awarded first place for the ingenuity and impact shown by a highly accessible device that has been designed to detect hearing impairment amongst infants and small children. The Sohum device allows for a non-invasive procedure that captures a child's response to sound stimulus in just 90 seconds.
- In second place is Chennai-based NeoMotion, which makes bespoke wheelchairs, designed to ensure accurate posture, energy conservation, and compactness to enhance accessibility and mobility.
- Third place has been awarded to Stamurai, a highly cost-effective and easily accessible mobile app which addresses speech and language disabilities.

Sohum, NeoMotion and Stamurai will receive grants of Rs 2,500,000, Rs 1,800,000 and Rs 1,200,000 respectively.

In the fourth and fifth place are Cogniable and Thinkerbell Labs. Cogniable, co-founded by Manu Kohli, is an autism management tool which has aids with early automated screening and remote guided treatment.

All five startups will be inducted into a new Prosus SICA mentorship programme, which entitles them to business advice from Prosus, technical guidance and support from World Health Organization (WHO) and an opportunity to incubate with Social Alpha, a group focused on strengthening impact innovation and entrepreneurship across India.