

December 2024

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EKTG for eTechnology



Dear Colleague,

EKTG 34th Winter Newsletter

- December 2024 -

Somen Banerjee and the members of the EKTG Main Board send their greetings to all of our EKTG readers.

We are grateful for the continued work contributed by the EKTG Main Board Members, our EKTG Trustees, our marvellous contributing International Ambassadors and our excellent Website Manager.

Details of any changes are listed below each heading on the top of our website. We hope that you find the contents of our December Newsletter interesting.

We welcome your items for the Spring Newsletter which will be published in March and also suggestions for additional International Ambassadors from Nations not represented in our current group.

Please send all suggestions to our website manager, using this address: ektgwebmaster@gmail.com

Feature

Estonia - A quick look at this country's digital systems

[Presentation](#)

Spotlight on ...

Maia Garrigós - The Urban Agenda Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement

The Urban Agenda Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement is a PHP website build with the Drupal content manager. As things to highlight, it allows users to subscribe to a notification channel that monthly provides a summary of the changes that have been made on the website, news, events or activities on the blog. It also allows anonymous users to contribute contents that they believe are interesting, so that web owners can be analysed and published, if they are considered relevant to the website.

It is also prepared to support multi-languages, but for the high volume of work involved in the creation and validation of these contingencies, which are automatically translated by Microsoft, it is not currently enabled.

Note also that the website complies with the W3C's WCAG2.1 accessibility standards.

Greetings,
Maia Garrigós

[Find out more](#)

Perkeso Rehabilitation Centre

Since the last EKTG Newsletter there has been considerable interest in the work undertaken by our international ambassador from Malaysia, Mr. Eng Wah Tan.

Readers may remember we published a series of pictures and, in view of the interest, we are showing you a few more.



Equipment examples sent by our readers

Dolphin Computer Access



Dolphin Computer Access develops assistive technology for people who are blind or partially sighted. The Dolphin range improves accessibility and

empowers people with sight loss to succeed in the digital world.



GuideConnect

User-friendly tech that enables people with sight loss and are new to computers to stay independent, connected and entertained.

Straightforward menu layout makes it easy to complete everyday activities independently. Use GuideConnect on a computer, tablet or through your own TV, to:

- Send and receive emails
- Write letters and documents
- Make video calls
- Listen to talking books
- Scan and read print
- Browse websites
- Listen to radio stations
- And much more



EasyReader App

Opens a world of accessible books and removes barriers to reading for people with vision impairments. EasyReader App is free to use on your smartphone, tablet and computer. It enables you to find, download and read books from popular talking book and newspaper services. These include RNIB Reading Services, Calibre Audio and RNIB Newsagent.



SuperNova

A range of screen magnification and screen reading technology for people who are blind or partially sighted. SuperNova enables people with vision impairments to independently use Windows applications at work, in education and at home, or for leisure activities.

[Find out more](#)

VELA Chairs

Vela is a family-owned Danish company that specialises in designing and manufacturing ergonomic chairs and special seating solutions. These are specifically developed for users with disabilities and include special chairs, wheelchairs and seating with brakes.

All Vela products are made for high-level usage, so they are built with durable mechanical parts and wear resistant upholstery. Vela chairs are suitable to be used in offices, kitchens, schools as well as hospitals and other medical and laboratories environment.

[Vela official website](#)

Product showcase:

1. Chair with electric height adjustment (Model Tango 700E)
2. Chair with electric mobility support and power wheels (Model Tango 700E)
3. Chair for large individuals with electric height adjustment (Model Tango 300E)
4. Gait trainer designed to encourage self-movement in children and adults suffering from motor disabilities (Model Meywalk 4)





GripAble, the two-in-one upper limb assessment and training device for use by professionals, from hospital to home.

Delivered through an accessible mobile app with fun and engaging software, GripAble is able to measure and track activity progress for home-based users, and is a handy assessment tool for healthcare professionals.

[Find out more](#)

News

EU leadership in global climate action is needed

26 Nov 2024

The 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) concluded on 24 November in Baku, Azerbaijan, after over two weeks of heated discussions. This year's conference had a strong focus on climate finance, exploring ways for poorer countries – often the hardest hit by the climate crisis – to access funds from wealthy countries, which are largely responsible for the triple planetary crisis, to mitigate climate change and build resilience to its impacts. Despite numerous challenges and several deadlocks, negotiators ultimately reached a compromise text for a resolution.

The conference faced a difficult start, and expectations for significant breakthroughs were low. Critics attributed some of the pessimism to the host country's controversial reputation amid allegations of human rights abuses and its significant role in fossil fuel extraction. The outlook was further clouded by the absence of key global leaders such as China's President Xi Jinping, US President Biden, as well as Commission President von der Leyen. This absence, combined with the rise of anti-environmentalism and climate scepticism, given new impetus by Trump's re-election, has cast doubt on ambitious outcomes.

The final agreement addresses several issues, including the creation of new rules for a global carbon market under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, creating two different types of markets: bilateral carbon trading between countries, and a global crediting mechanism for countries to sell emission reductions. The most important and controversial aspect of the conference, however, is the agreement on the "New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance" (NCQG), also known as the "Baku Finance Goal" (BKF). It has been agreed that poorer countries would receive at least \$1.3 trillion a year by 2035 to help them transition to a low-carbon economy and cope with the impacts of extreme weather. However, only \$300 billion of this amount would come primarily in the form they need most – grants and low-interest loans from wealthier world. The rest would come from private investors and a range of potential new sources, such as levies on fossil fuels and frequent flyers, yet to be agreed. Under the UN framework, only 24 wealthy countries, including the US, the EU and Japan, have been required to provide financial resources to poorer countries. They sought to reduce their financial burden by trying to attract other contributors and the private sector. This is reflected in the second part of the final NCQG agreement. Poorer countries insisted that they needed \$1.3 trillion a year from wealthy countries alone. Instead, the text calls upon "all actors" to increase funding from "all public and private sources" to "at least \$1.3 trillion" by 2035. The new finance goal also leaves the door open for "voluntary" contributions from those countries that have not yet provided official climate finance, such as China.

The agreement has been met with fierce opposition and criticism that it is insufficient and not ambitious enough. The Azerbaijani COP Presidency has been largely blamed for the inadequate outcome, while other petrostates, such as Saudi Arabia, have been blamed for playing an obstructive role, repeatedly trying to remove references to the fossil fuel transition that was the greed of last year's COP28 in Dubai.

Next year's conference, COP30, will be held in Belem, Brazil, marking the third year in a row that the climate talks will be held in a country that plans to expand its domestic production of fossil fuels.

The global fight against the triple planetary crisis is suffering serious setbacks; the results of COP29 and the recent weakening of the deforestation law by members of the European Parliament are the latest evidence of this. Against this backdrop, the EU needs to step up its green diplomacy efforts, especially in the framework of the COP, and engage more with non-EU countries in order to strengthen its leadership in global climate action. The EU's own green transition strategy, the European Green Deal (EGD), sets out the EU's path towards the 1.5°C target under the Paris Agreement, with legally binding targets set out in the European Climate Law. In her political guidelines for the next five years, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reaffirmed her strong commitment to the EGD. She pledged to enshrine the 90% greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target by 2040 in the European Climate Law and to bring forward new legislative proposals such as a new Clean Industrial Deal and an Industrial Decarbonisation Act. The EU must deliver on its commitment to advance the fight against the triple crisis through a strong implementation of the EGD and step up its green diplomacy efforts to lead global climate action.

[Read the full article](#)

Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF)

We are pleased to share that the £22.6 million funding is being released to local areas shortly as part of the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF). As you'll likely be aware, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)'s ARF aims to boost the quality and accessibility of adult social care by supporting innovation and scaling, and improving care and support for unpaid carers. With a wealth of trusted expertise in working collaboratively to help local areas transform care, SCIE is providing hands-on support to projects to identify barriers and enablers, share key learnings and best practice, and support innovation.

Many of the ARF projects have the potential to drive productivity through early-support schemes and preventative systems, using digital and other tools to innovate in hospital discharge, carer-identification, and support for unpaid carers. This is the first ever such fund for social care innovation, so it's crucial that we gather evidence from both success and failure on ways to tackle the barriers to scaling innovation. We are excited by the opportunities of the ARF and know learnings will be critical to laying the groundwork for a future social care service, one that better meets the needs of people who draw on care, their family carers, and local communities. Innovation offers us a way forward, creating new possibilities for offering early support and enabling independence.

[Read more about ARF](#)

Mental Capacity Act (MCA) - for senior staff and managers

The Social Care Institute for Excellence CPD-accredited training course will give you better knowledge and understanding of the MCA.

This is a more in-depth study of duties and responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) for senior staff and managers.

[Find out more](#)

Safeguarding adults - for managers and newly appointed safeguarding leads

A specialist training course for senior managers or newly appointed safeguarding leads who are responsible for safeguarding adults from neglect and harm.

Next dates: 13 & 14 January, 4 & 5 March

[Find out more and book](#)

The NIHR School for Social Care Research (SSCR) announces Career Development Awards (CDA) open for applications

The School for Social Care Research (SSCR) is delighted to announce that their Career Development Awards (CDA) are open for applications.

The SSCR's CDA will fund bespoke career development activities for individuals who are committed to developing the evidence base for social care in England. This opportunity is open to a wide range of individuals working in social care research, education or practice at any career stage. SSCR is keen to support pathways that develop existing social care researchers, and support moves between practice and academia, and between disciplines.

Application forms and supporting documents must be emailed to sscr-training@york.ac.uk before the deadline of 5pm, Friday 14 February 2025.

If prospective applicants would like assistance exploring links with the SSCR to develop their application, please email sscr-training@york.ac.uk with a brief outline of your proposed topics and they will aim to link you up with an appropriate member from the School. A number of frequently asked questions

are also available on the funding webpage.

[Find out more](#)

The Valuable 500 Inclusive Leadership Whitepaper

3 Dec 2024

This timely whitepaper provides an in-depth look into the psychology of disability-inclusive leaders.

[Find out more and download the report](#)

Circles eBook: 5 best practices to improve the workplace experience

4 Dec 2024

Transform your office into a destination employees love.

[Find out more and download the report](#)

eBook: Exploring the Employment Rights Bill 2024

4 Dec 2024

Loch Associates Group has put together an eBook exploring key takeaways from the Bill.

[Find out more and download the report](#)

Valuable 500 exposes disability inclusion gaps and how to close them

3 Dec 2024

Disability inclusion isn't just about compliance; it's a catalyst for innovation and competitive advantage.

[Read the full article](#)

What practical action can employers take to genuinely make the workplace welcoming for those with disabilities?

2 Dec 2024

Small adjustments can often have a big impact.

[Find out more](#)

YuLife co-founder Sam Fromson: a sense of spirituality can sit alongside capitalism, as well as compassion, at work

4 Dec 2024

What potential benefits are there if you believe in something even bigger than just your personal actions being meaningful?

[Find out more](#)

In the age of AI, do Gen Z need to be in the office to further their careers?

29 Nov 2024

How businesses can better understand their Gen Z employees, in order to retain, nurture and grow their skillsets.

[Find out more](#)

Office design in 2025: Balancing sustainability and style

4 Dec 2024

Sustainable office design has become more than just a trend – it is a necessity for businesses looking to align with modern environmental and operational demands.

[Find out more](#)

One-in-four workers take time off due to stress

28 Nov 2024

'Even though many feel their organisation cares about their stress and emotional wellbeing, rampantly high levels of stress and burnout suggest that current efforts are just not enough.'

[Find out more](#)

Long-term efficacy and safety of two short standardised regimens for the treatment of rifampicin-resistant tuberculosis (STREAM stage 2): extended follow-up of an open-label, multicentre, randomised, non-inferiority trial

Dec 2024

The management of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis is a global challenge; until the past few years, the disease was treated with long regimens of toxic medications resulting in poor outcomes and frequent losses to follow-up. STREAM stage 1, the first international phase 3 trial of a new regimen for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, showed that a shorter, 9-month, regimen had non-inferior outcomes to the 20-month regimen that had been recommended by WHO since 2011, but concerns about toxicity remained.¹

STREAM stage 2 was designed to assess whether the inclusion of bedaquiline instead of the aminoglycoside kanamycin in the shortened regimen would be equally effective and would reduce the incidence of treatment-emergent hearing loss found in stage 1. A second experimental regimen given for only 6 months included bedaquiline throughout and 8 weeks of kanamycin and high-dose isoniazid in a short intensive phase. At 76 weeks after randomisation, the primary efficacy outcome timepoint, both experimental regimens containing bedaquiline were found to be not only non-inferior but also superior to the 9-month regimen when assessed through the primary composite outcome and a secondary tuberculosis-related outcome.²

Three other phase 3 trials,^{3–5} also evaluating all-oral regimens for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, published their results in the same year as STREAM stage 2, although the choice of both the experimental and control regimens differed from those in STREAM. The NExT trial, with 111 participants in South Africa, found that 51% of participants assigned to a 6-month all-oral regimen composed of WHO group A antituberculous drugs plus two other group B or C antituberculous drugs had a favourable outcome at 24 months compared with 23% assigned to the injectable-based standard-of-care regimen.³ The MDR-END trial, with 214 participants in South Korea, showed that a 9-month oral regimen with delamanid, linezolid, levofloxacin, and pyrazinamide was non-inferior to treatment based on the 2014 WHO guidelines; at 24 months after treatment initiation, 71% in the control group had treatment success according to WHO outcome definitions, compared with 75% on the shorter regimen.⁴ TB-PRACTECAL, an international trial with 301 participants in Belarus, South Africa, and Uzbekistan, published in late 2022, found that 11% of participants assigned to a 24-week all-oral regimen of bedaquiline, pretomanid, linezolid, and moxifloxacin had an unfavourable outcome compared with 48% on a 9–20-month standard-of-care regimen.⁵ The definition of an unfavourable outcome included treatment discontinuation, which accounted for the majority of events in TB-PRACTECAL; there were no treatment failures or recurrences reported in either treatment group.

[Find out more](#)

Real change in Rwanda – a Through the Roof article

A Wheels for the World team completed a distribution of life-changing mobility aids to many disabled people in Nyagatare and Kayonza in Rwanda earlier this year.

Rwanda is a country which experienced one of the most horrific genocidal conflicts ever witnessed yet, today, represents one of the most remarkable 'rebirths' of any country in human history. The TTR volunteers took part in this transformation in a small way, helping others like Clever – the man in the YouTube short clip below.

Watch this [video](#) to see how Clever has managed without a wheelchair for years after a double amputation, following a car accident.

Now Clever's dignity is restored with a wheelchair, given to him by Through the Roof.

Clever used sacks to wrap himself in for protection. He reckoned he used 3-4 sacks a week at 400fr each. He will now save that amount. He saved for 6 years in a local Cooperative but the person in charge ran off with all the money and everyone lost everything.

Jill, one of our Wheels therapists, was able to fit Clever with the right wheelchair for him. Now he may be able to work instead of begging to survive.

You can watch more of Clever's story in our partner FH Rwanda's [video](#) about the mission. You can also read more about the Rwanda Wheels trip in the blog linked below.

[Read the full article](#)

Healthcare CEO killed in New York

5 December 2024

Brian Thompson, the US healthcare insurance chief executive, was shot in the back by a masked assailant on 4 December as he was walking into a hotel where the company he led was holding an investors' meeting.
(Photo: BBC News)

[Read the full story](#)



Dear Reader,

We hope that you have found the EKTG December Newsletter interesting to you. We are welcoming new items and would be glad to have a contribution from you for the Spring EKTG Newsletter which will be published during the first week of March 2025. Please send any comments or suggestions you have to us well before that date and we can make sure they are included.

If you have suggestions for any New International Ambassador, especially from any nation where we do not have an International Ambassador at present, that would be really excellent.

Send any of these points to the EKTG Webmaster (ektgwebmaster@gmail.com) and Maggie Ellis, EKTG Main Board Member (westsqas@mac.com).

About EKTG

To find out more about us, please download a document that outlines [the background and history of EKTG](#).

If you have any questions about EKTG activities please send these to: Margaret Ellis, EKTG Main Board Member, westsqas@mac.com

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