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Prosus SICA reveals India's most innovative assistive tech startups in 2021

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- *Prosus Social Impact Challenge for Accessibility (SICA) selected the top three startups from over 170 applicants*
- *Top startups offer solutions in the area of visual impairment, speech disability and locomotor disability*
- *Announcement made on the eve of International Day of Persons with Disabilities*

New Delhi, December 2, 2021 : India's most innovative startups developing assistive technology (AT) to aid persons with disabilities have been revealed as **Trestle Labs** (Bangalore), **SignAble Communications** (Bangalore) and **Lifespark Technologies** (Mumbai). The announcement was made today by Prosus at the conclusion of year two of the Prosus SICA initiative in partnership with Invest India, Social Alpha and the World Health Organization.

Revealed on the eve of [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#), the top startups represent diverse themes supporting visual, speech and language disabilities and neurodegenerative disease. Trestle, SignAble and Lifespark will receive grants of INR 2,500,000 (25 Lakh), INR 1,800,000 (18 Lakh) and INR 1,200,000 (12 Lakh), respectively. The grants are intended to help them scale and expand their businesses so more persons with disabilities can benefit and lead independent, empowered lives.

The top three startups will also be inducted into the Prosus SICA mentorship programme, along with **TinkerTech Labs** from New Delhi (hearing impairment solution) and **Visioapps Technology** from Gurgaon (visual impairment solution), which were placed in fourth and fifth position respectively. This provides each company with access to a global network of strategic advisors from Prosus, technical advisors from WHO, AT sector experts from Social Alpha, and knowledge and partnerships specialists from Startup India, Invest India. Additionally, eligible startups may get follow-on funding and an opportunity to incubate with Social Alpha.

Launched by Prosus in 2020 in partnership with Invest India, Social Alpha and World Health Organization, Prosus SICA identifies and awards the most innovative Indian startups working on assistive technology solutions. Prosus has committed \$250,000 (INR 16,500,000) over three years to this challenge. With more than 70 million Indians estimated to live with some form of disability* the societal impact of improving lives and empowering people by supporting the development of India's AT ecosystem can be immense.

The top startup, **Trestle Labs**, aims to support the visually impaired community to avail of inclusive education and employment through real-time content access. It has developed a solution – Kibo – that translates and digitises printed, audio, handwritten and digital content in 60 global languages (including 12 Indian languages). The Kibo app is already being used by 40,000+ users in 15 countries including India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria and Bangladesh.

Placed second, **SignAble Communications** addresses speech and language disability through a video remote interpretation (VRI) solution that provides live interpretation in Indian Sign Language (ISL) via a mobile app. Essentially, the solution provides live human interpreters-on-demand for anyone, anytime, anywhere, affordably, and at the touch of a button.

In third place, **Lifespark Technologies** is a healthcare technology company building a platform for continuous, optimal therapy in chronic neurodegenerative disorders starting with Parkinson's disease (the fastest growing neurological disease). Their product comprises a wearable device and a linked digital platform. The device provides sensory cue-based therapy to improve gait, reduce falls and improve quality of life, while the app provides data to physicians and therapists as well as emergency alerts to caregivers.

Congratulating the winners and all applicants, Sehraj Singh, India Managing Director, Prosus, said: *"The quality of applicants this year was exceptional and is a testament to the promising AT ecosystem emerging in India. We are pleased that SICA is helping to identify and support the best startups and entrepreneurs in this sector. We look forward to supporting their journey as they progress to make a positive and transformational impact in society."*

Deepak Bagla, MD & CEO, Invest India, said: *"I congratulate all winners of SICA 2021 and look forward to our continued association. The role of startups in developing assistive technologies for persons with disabilities will ensure a truly Digital and Inclusive India. We are delighted that the challenge showcases made-in-India innovations to solve global problems."*

Manoj Kumar, Founder, Social Alpha, said: *"Addressing the market gaps in assistive technologies space has been the cornerstone of our venture development model at Social Alpha. SICA is playing a key role in identifying and supporting social innovators and helping them create new markets by addressing the demand for high quality yet affordable solutions."*

Dr Chapal Khasnabis, Head, Access to Assistive Technology and Medical Devices, WHO, Geneva said: *"The quality of talent and the problems being tackled by participants in SICA 2021 was truly exciting and revelatory. It is heartening to witness Indian researchers and entrepreneurs are focusing on AI and Robotics in AT, especially for the geriatric population and people living with neurodegenerative diseases. We congratulate the winners and look forward to supporting them in their journey."*

Bonny Dave, Founder of Trestle Labs, the startup that placed first in SICA 2021, spoke about their experience : *"SICA has been a unique and enriching experience for us with a rigorous evaluation process including presentations and direct feedback from the end-users and beneficiaries. We are thrilled to make the top spot and receive recognition for our efforts. We plan to utilise the grant to enhance our tech capabilities, grow our team and scale our solutions across three states in India. We are also eagerly looking forward to leveraging the expertise and experience of stakeholders in SICA partner organisations through the mentorship programme."*

In the second year of SICA, over 170 startups that had built a prototype and completed user testing were evaluated by an [expert jury](#) on criteria of product readiness, market need, financial sustainability, business scalability, and future roadmap. Special attention was paid to the user-friendliness of the products outside of controlled therapy and rehabilitation sessions.

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For details of the winners of SICA 2020 (year one of the challenge) see [here](#).

For more information on SICA see [here](#).

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About Prosus

Prosus is a global consumer internet group and one of the largest technology investors in the world. Operating and investing globally in markets with long-term growth potential, Prosus builds leading consumer internet companies that empower people and enrich

communities.

The group is focused on building meaningful businesses in the online classifieds, food delivery, payments and fintech, and education technology sectors in markets including India, Russia, and Brazil. Through its ventures team, Prosus invests in areas including health, logistics, blockchain, and social commerce. Prosus actively seeks new opportunities to partner with exceptional entrepreneurs who are using technology to improve people's everyday lives. Today, Prosus companies and associates help improve the lives of more than two billion users globally.

LinkedIn: ProsusInIndia

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About Invest India

Invest India, set up in 2009, is a non-profit venture under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

As the national investment promotion and facilitation agency, Invest India focuses on sector-specific investor targeting and development of new partnerships to enable sustainable investments in India. In addition to a core team that focuses on sustainable investments, Invest India also partners with substantial investment promotion agencies and multilateral organisations. Invest India also actively works with several Indian states to build capacity as well as bring in global best practices in investment targeting, promotion and facilitation areas.

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About Social Alpha

Social Alpha is a multistage innovation curation and venture development platform for science and technology start-ups that address the most critical social, economic and environmental challenges through the power of entrepreneurship and market-creating innovations. Since its inception in 2016, Social Alpha has supported more 150+ start-ups including 50+ seed investments. For more information, please visit www.socialalpha.org.

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About World Health Organization

The World Health Organization provides global leadership in public health within the United Nations system. Founded in 1948, WHO works with 194 Member States across six regions, to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. Its goal for 2019-2023 is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and well-being.

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Every day, billions of customers use the products and services of companies that Prosus has invested in, acquired or built, including [99minutos](#), [Airmeeet](#), [Aruna](#), [AutoTrader](#), [Autovit.ro](#), [Azos](#), [BandLab](#), [Bibit](#), [Bilt](#), [Biome Makers](#), [Borneo](#), [Brainly](#), [BUX](#), [BYJU'S](#), [Bykea](#), [Captain Fresh](#), [Codecademy](#), [Collective Benefits](#), [Creditas](#), [DappRadar](#), [DeHaat](#), [Detect Technologies](#), [dott](#), [EduMe](#), [ElasticRun](#), [eMAG](#), [Endowus](#), [Eruditus](#), [EVERY](#), [Facily](#), [Flink](#), [Foodics](#), [Good Glamm Group](#), [GoodHabitZ](#), [GoStudent](#), [Honor](#), [iFood](#), [Imovirtual](#), [IndiGG](#), [Klar](#), [Kovi](#), [LazyPay](#), [letgo](#), [Luno](#), [Mensa Brands](#), [Meesho](#), [merXu](#), [Movile](#), [Oda](#), [OLX](#), [Otodom](#), [OTOMOTO](#), [Oxford Ionics](#), [PaySense](#), [PayU](#), [Pharmeasy](#), [Platzi](#), [Property24](#), [Quick Ride](#), [Red Dot Payment](#), [Republic](#), [Sharebite](#), [Shipper](#), [ShopUp](#), [SoloLearn](#), [SpotDraft](#), [Stack Overflow](#), [Standvirtual](#), [Spendflow](#), [Superside](#), [Swiggy](#), [Thndr](#), [Tonik](#), [Ula](#), [Urban Company](#), [Vegrow](#), [Virgio](#), [watchTowr](#), and [Wayflyer](#).

Hundreds of millions of people have made the platforms of Prosus's associates a part of their daily lives. For listed companies where we have an interest, please see: [Tencent](#), [Delivery Hero](#), [Remitly](#), [Trip.com](#), [Udemy](#), [Skillsoft](#), and [SimilarWeb](#).

Today, Prosus companies and associates help improve the lives of more than two billion people around the world.

Prosus has a primary listing on Euronext Amsterdam (AEX:PRX) and secondary listings on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (XJSE:PRX) and a2X Markets (PRX.AJ). Prosus is majority-owned by Naspers.

For more information, please visit www.prosus.com.

<https://preview.presspage.com/prosus/en/prosus-sica-reveals-indias-most-innovative-assistive-tech-startups-in-2021/>

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