

A close-up, over-the-shoulder view of a woman with long dark hair tied in a ponytail. She is wearing a cochlear implant on her left ear. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or meeting setting with other people.

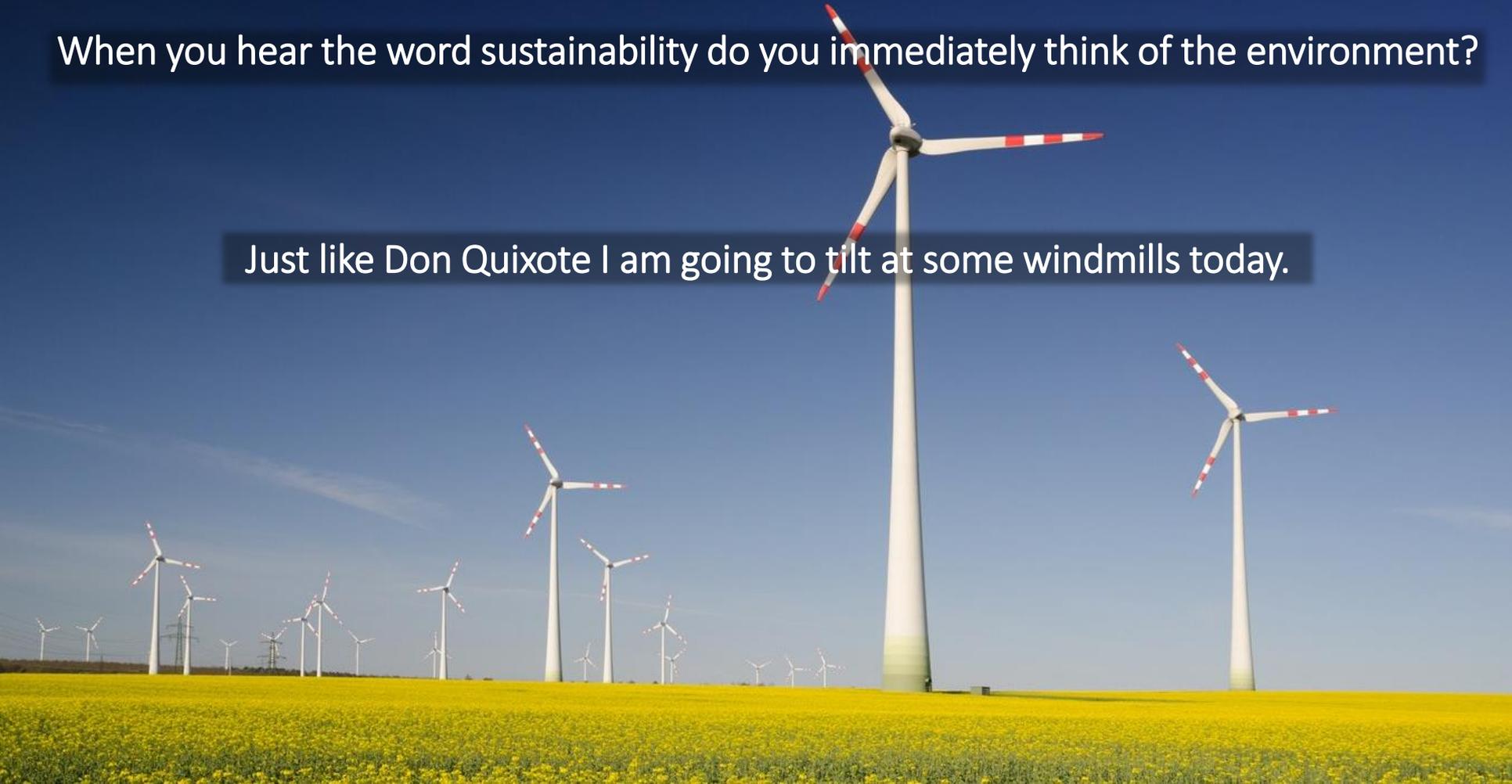
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A sustainable approach to
accessibility and inclusion.

Atos

When you hear the word sustainability do you immediately think of the environment?

Just like Don Quixote I am going to tilt at some windmills today.





We have a skills shortage in accessibility.
There are simply not enough people to do the work we already have.
And most people come to accessibility as a second career.

A close-up photograph of numerous small, green seedlings growing in clear plastic trays. The seedlings are arranged in rows, and the focus is sharp on the ones in the middle ground, while the foreground and background are slightly blurred. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the vibrant green of the leaves against the dark soil.

How do we grow the next generation of accessibility professionals?
IAAP is one part of the equation but in the UK we have another
opportunity – Apprenticeships.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a black pen, poised to write on a detailed road map spread across a table. The map shows various roads, rivers, and geographical features. In the background, there is a glass of water, a cup of coffee, and a small bowl of food. The scene is lit with natural light, creating a warm and focused atmosphere.

We are working with the Institute for Apprenticeships to develop a national apprenticeship standard for accessibility.

This means that it will be a recognised occupation and that we can support people to acquire transferable skills in accessibility to an agreed standard.

We have formed a “Trail – Blazer” Group and the intent is to agree a standard for a first intake late in 2019.

Why link accessibility & sustainability?

WHY

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If life expectancy continues to grow at the rate of 2-3 years every decade, as it has done over the last 150 years, then a child born in Japan in 2007 will have a more than 50% chance of living past the age of 107.

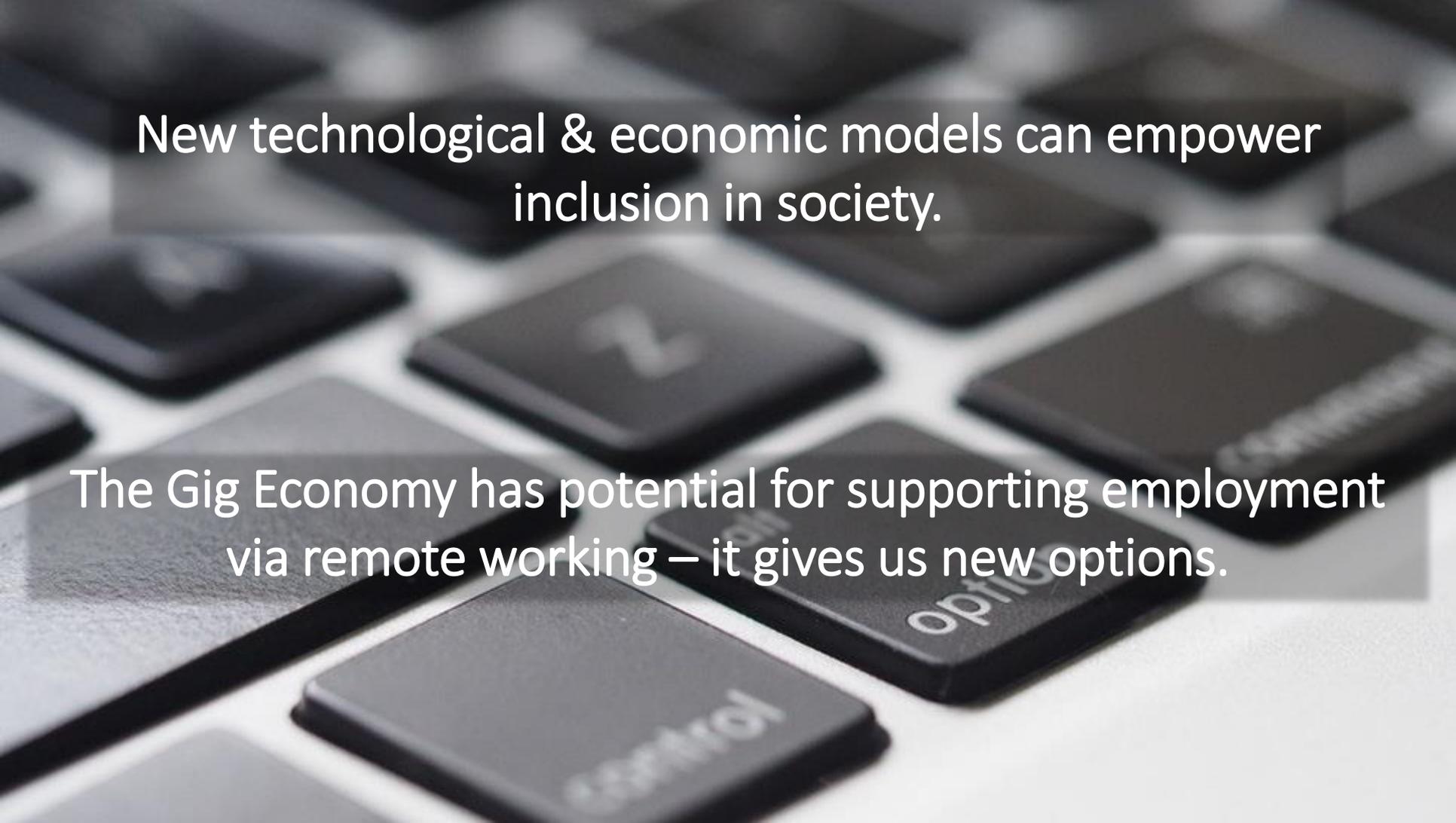


Under the same assumptions, children born in that year in most of the advanced economies will have similar odds of living past their 100th birthday.¹

A close-up photograph of a middle-aged man with a full, grey beard and mustache, wearing glasses and a dark vest over a light-colored shirt. He is looking intently at a tablet computer held in front of him. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a professional setting.

Most Disabilities Are Acquired As People Age
The Numbers Are Huge & Will Continue To Grow

It's imperative that we enable people to remain independent & economically active for as long as possible.



New technological & economic models can empower inclusion in society.

The Gig Economy has potential for supporting employment via remote working – it gives us new options.

A close-up photograph of a Zmorph 3D printer in operation. The printer's extruder is positioned above a metal build plate where a black, curved prosthetic foot is being printed. The printer's frame is made of polished metal, and a control panel with a small screen and the Zmorph logo is visible on the right side. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

Additive manufacturing is delivering the prospect of personalised and localised accessibility solutions for people with disabilities & long term conditions such as 3d printed prosthetics & even replacement organs.

A black smart speaker with three glowing white dots on its top surface is positioned on the left. To its right, a tablet displays a 'Welcome Home' interface with a 'Device setup' section and a notification for '1 device found'. The background is a soft-focus, light-colored textured surface.

Smart devices may unlock the potential to make our homes & cities much more inclusive.

Augmented Reality coupled with ubiquitous computing give us opportunities to support people with cognitive disabilities.

Accessibility puts customers, employees, you & me in control.



Sometimes for the 1st time ever.

But so much new technology isn't accessible.

We make hurdles for people to jump over before they can realise the potential of the technology & their own potential as individuals.

Disability Employment Gap

Only 47% of people of working age who report a long-term health condition or disability are in work compared to 80% of the population who don't have a disability.

Globally the figures are even worse.

Under employment is unnecessarily burdensome on the individual, the societies and economies that they live in.

Poor accessibility directly impacts the employment prospects of millions of people with disabilities.

MIND THE GAP

A man with a dark beard and mustache, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is looking directly at the camera with a skeptical expression. He is in a cluttered room with various items hanging on the wall behind him, including a yellow ladder-like structure and several packets of 'CENTO' brand instant noodles. The lighting is somewhat dim, and the overall atmosphere is one of a lived-in, perhaps modest, environment.

How is this stuff that benefits individuals
linked to sustainability?

Do I sense a little scepticism?
Let me make the connection.

Businesses already report on sustainability and the reporting metrics are starting to include social factors such as disability.



Disability inclusion is embedded in the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:

Goal 4 Equal & Inclusive Education – building inclusive learning environments and providing support where needed

Goal 8 Promoting inclusive economic growth – Allowing persons with disabilities to access the job market



Goal 10 Emphasising the social & economic political inclusion of persons with disabilities

Goal 17 Underlining the importance of data collection and monitoring of the SDGs with an emphasis on disability disaggregated data.

Goal 11 Creating accessible cities, providing universal access to safe, inclusive accessible & green public spaces.

The Concept of Externalities



We frequently did not include the environmental costs people paid for goods when they were sold & manufactured.

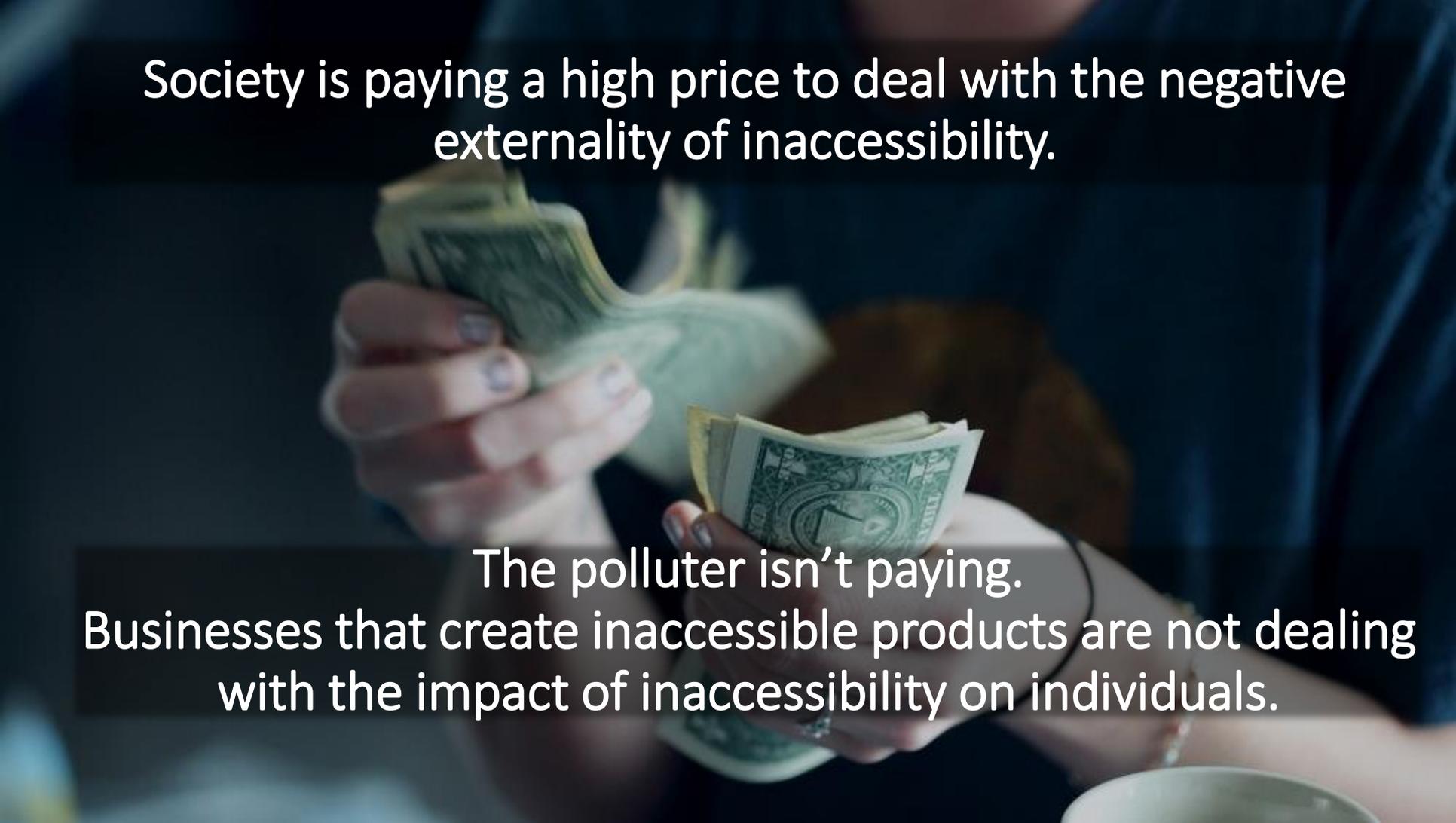


This meant society met the additional costs of pollution & emissions.

Jim Tobias observed that “Inaccessibility is kinda like pollution.”

The logical extension of this idea is to take frameworks designed to address pollution & apply them to accessibility.

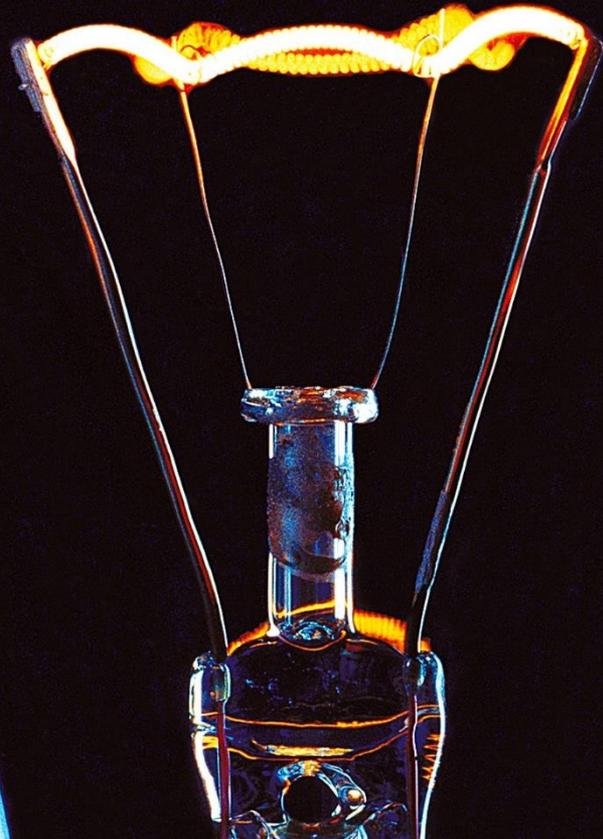


A close-up photograph of a person's hands counting a large stack of US dollar bills. The person is wearing a dark blue shirt. The background is blurred, showing a brown object, possibly a bag or container. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the paper money.

Society is paying a high price to deal with the negative externality of inaccessibility.

The polluter isn't paying.
Businesses that create inaccessible products are not dealing with the impact of inaccessibility on individuals.

A lightbulb moment.
Legislation alone isn't enough.





Incandescent bulbs were cheap to buy.

But their inefficiency created a negative externality of pollution...

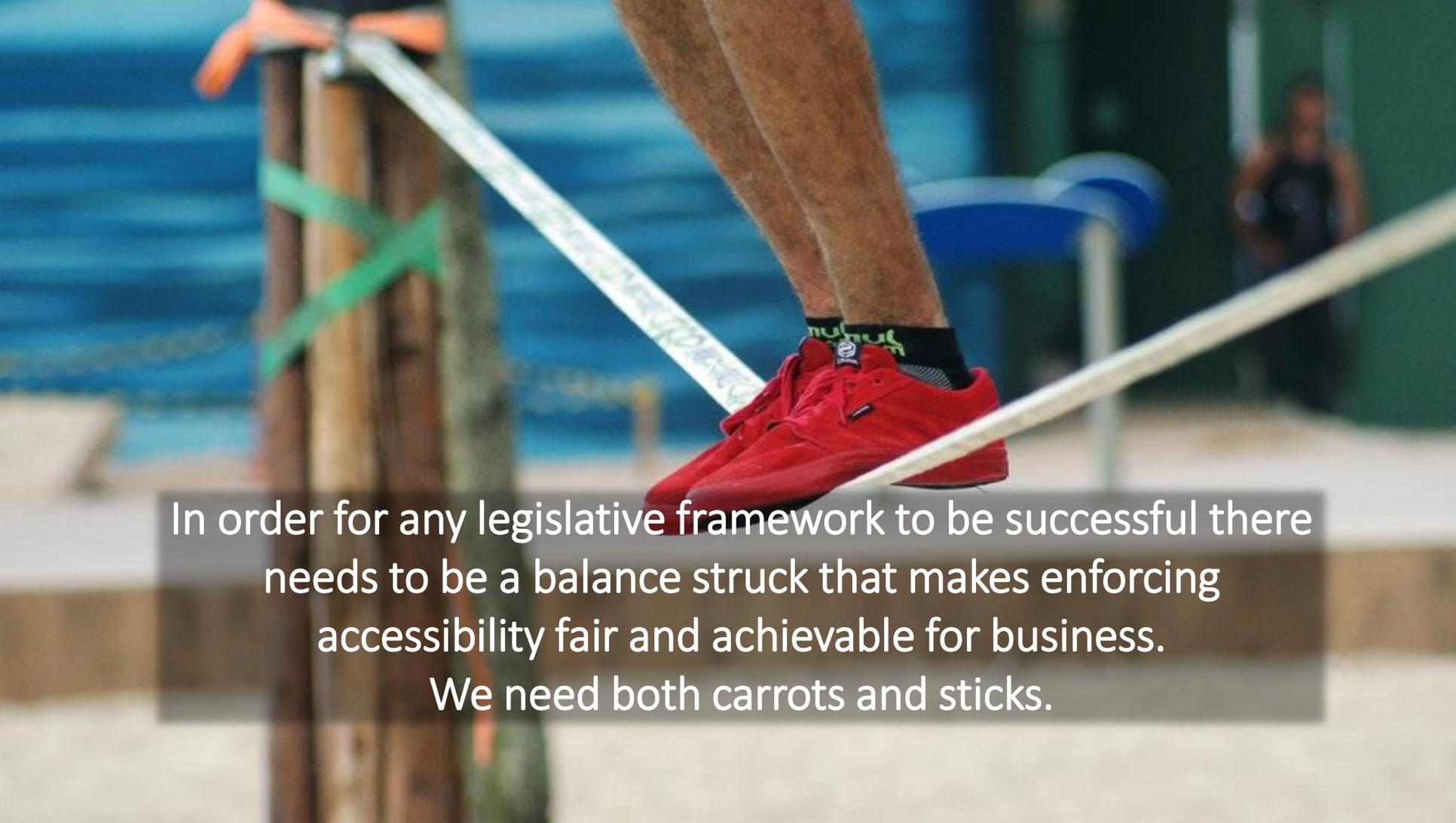
Efficient LED lights used to be very expensive.

A combination of legislation, regulation and a timeline for implementation has allowed industry to adjust.

Now LEDs are cheap to buy and run.

When legislation is not enforced businesses are often willing to gamble, taking a calculated risk that they will not incur penalties when they don't implement accessibility.

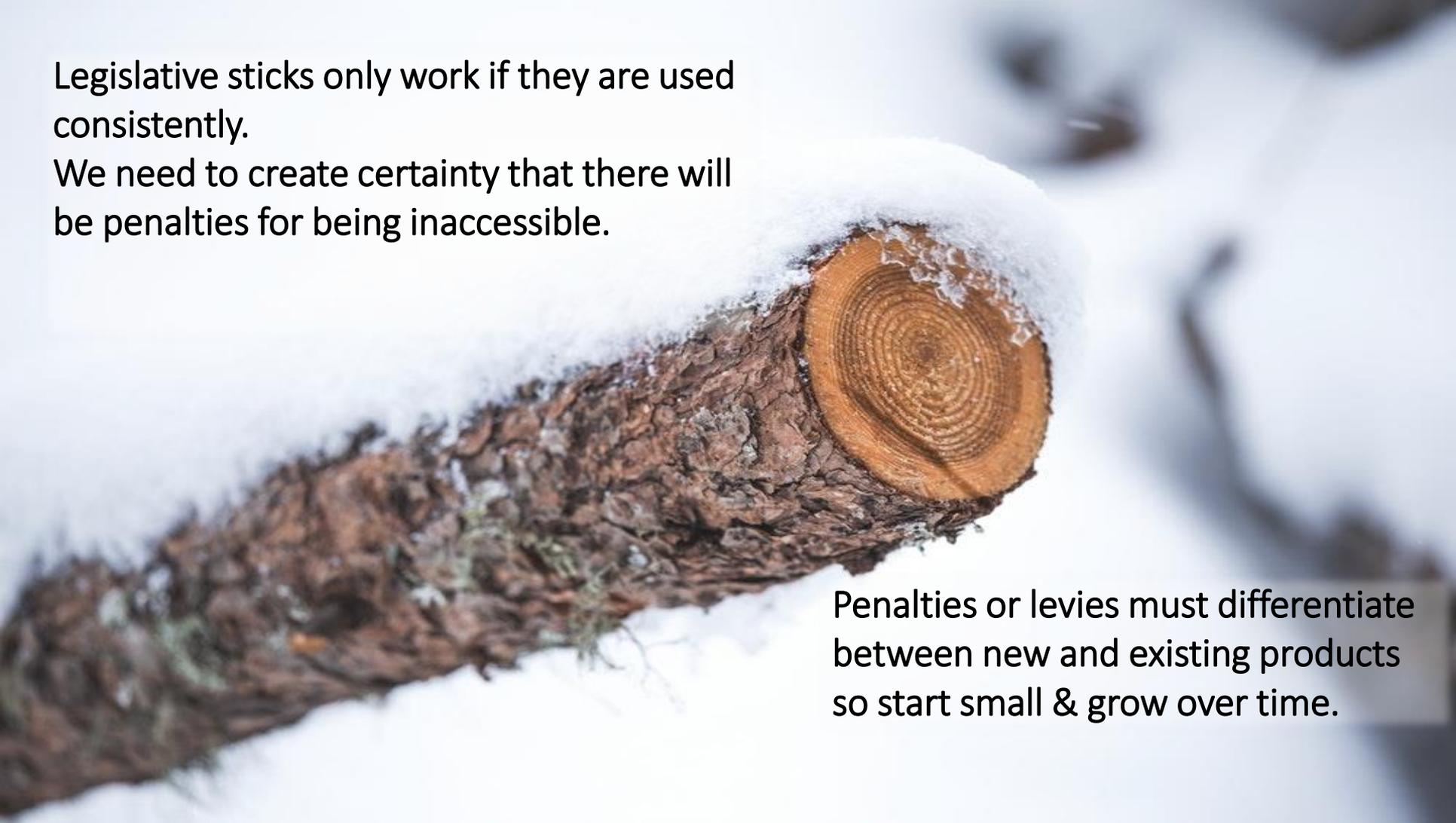


A close-up photograph of a person's legs as they balance on a tightrope. The person is wearing bright red sneakers and black socks with green accents. The tightrope is a thin, light-colored line stretched between two wooden posts. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with blue and green elements, possibly a park or a sports field. The text is overlaid on a dark grey rectangular background at the bottom of the image.

In order for any legislative framework to be successful there needs to be a balance struck that makes enforcing accessibility fair and achievable for business.
We need both carrots and sticks.

Legislative sticks only work if they are used consistently.

We need to create certainty that there will be penalties for being inaccessible.



Penalties or levies must differentiate between new and existing products so start small & grow over time.



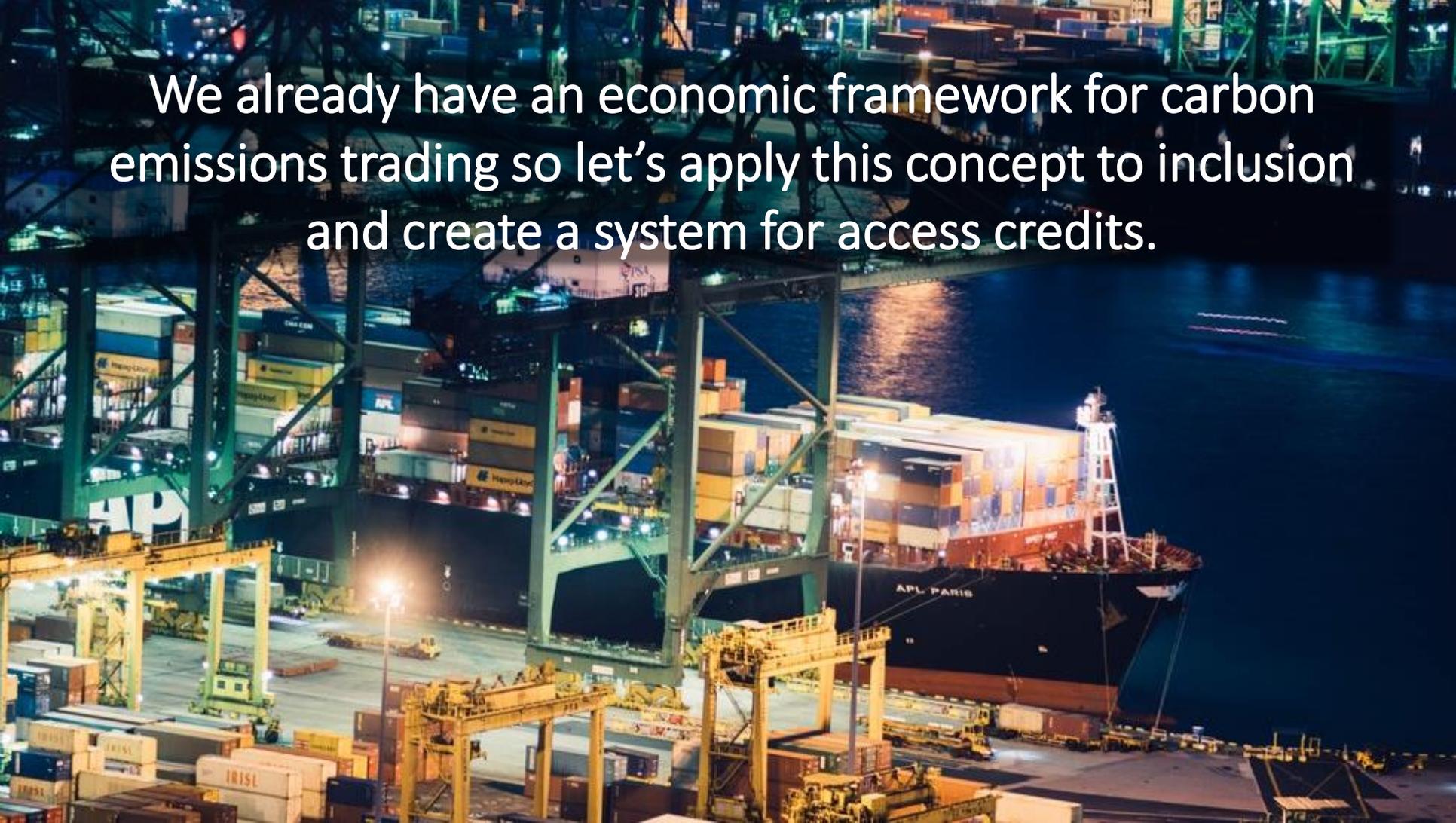
We need to offer business incentives to be accessible.

The Carrots - Money that we collect in fines should be used to reward businesses that are delivering inclusive accessible products and services.

And

Subsidise investments in accessibility.

We already have an economic framework for carbon emissions trading so let's apply this concept to inclusion and create a system for access credits.



When we enable people to participate through accessible technology
we are enabling them economically.

The word "OPEN" is rendered in a large, stylized font with a glowing orange-to-red gradient and a visible grid pattern. It is enclosed within a blue, glowing rectangular frame that has rounded corners and a grid-like texture. The entire graphic is set against a dark background.

Enabling the economic participation of 20% of the world's
population is a key sustainability topic.

Swap the word accessible with awesome.



Who doesn't want to be part of something awesome?

Thanks

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