

amplifon





WE ARE CHANGING THE WAY HEARING CARE IS PERCEIVED

WHO ARE WE LISTENING TO?

Our communities and the younger generations, whose awareness on the value of hearing wellbeing we want to raise.

WHAT DO WE GIVE BACK?

Increased awareness on the importance of prevention to allow people to achieve their full potential in life.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

5. COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1 AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Amplifon's products and services have a high social impact on community worldwide. This is why the Company is deeply committed to raising awareness around hearing health, with the ultimate goal of reducing the severe consequences related to hearing impairment and maximizing the positive impact of prevention. People experiencing hearing loss wait an average of seven years before seeking professional hearing care, even though there is a serious risk of negative consequences for their quality of life. It is therefore essential that people are given the necessary tools and information to promptly identify and manage potential hearing loss. Even though a formalized policy on communication and prevention activities has not been developed at a Group level, the Corporate Communication Strategic Framework was prepared and shared with top management during 2019. It consists of five focus areas: Performance & Results, Hearing Care Leadership, Innovation & Digitalization, Global Top Employer and Purpose Driven Citizenship. The Strategic Corporate Press Book is the main "glocal" alignment tool for the development of communication content, being a reference point for countries with respect to all topics concerning the Company and its role in the market and society.

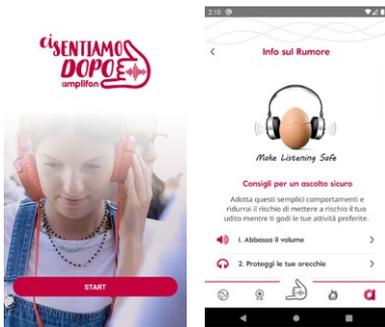
In addition to this, "We Care - Amplifon's Corporate Citizenship program" was launched. It gathers the Group's initiatives in favor of social inclusion and sustainability and supports the countries that implement them in order to enhance internal and external communication.

> AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

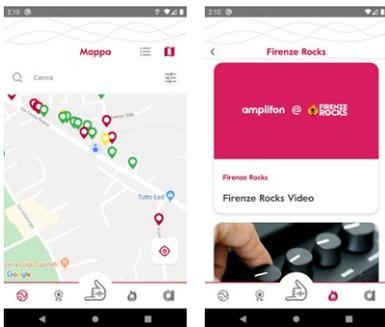
Amplifon is engaged in numerous prevention and information activities aimed at all age groups through targeted campaigns and communication initiatives, with an increasing focus on the younger generation. Estimates show that more than one billion people between the ages of 12 and 35 risk having hearing problems linked to noise exposure²⁰. The continuous use of headphones to listen to music on public transportation or on the street at increasingly louder levels in order to drown out the background noise must also not be underestimated. The little-known link between music that is too loud, and the risk of damage or early hearing loss lies at the heart of Amplifon's "Ci Sentiamo Dopo - Listen responsibly" [literally, "We'll talk later"] awareness and education project. In June 2019, Amplifon participated in Firenze Rocks to launch this project and to highlight the importance of safeguarding one's own hearing and listening to music responsibly, raising the awareness of thousands of young people and music lovers about the dangers that an incorrect use of music can hide for hearing wellbeing. During the music festival, 1,300 young people underwent a free hearing test and more than 200 latest generation hearing protection devices were distributed to dull noises that are too loud, without having to give up the experience of listening and having fun with others.

20. Source: World Health Organization.

“Ci Sentiamo Dopo – Listen responsibly” is a wide-ranging awareness and education project which aims to reach young people through several activation channels; it also represents a model that can be exported to other countries where Amplifon operates, a possibility that the Company is currently assessing. For the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, the project was also introduced to Italian schools involving about 20,000 young people from more than 800 classes to promote the importance of hearing wellbeing. In Italian classrooms noise levels can reach 70 decibels²¹ and 6.4% of Italian schools are built near sources of noise pollution²². It makes great sense, therefore, to start educating about hearing health in the classroom. Workshops with experts with different backgrounds and areas of expertise, as well as a gamification kit, allow students to explore sounds of the past and the future. The educational path also calls for citizen journalism: thanks to an online platform and to the “Ci Sentiamo Dopo” app, the students are invited to record the levels of noise in the environment and create an interactive map of Italy’s soundscapes using the noise tracker of the dedicated app – which has been developed by Otohub, a start-up acquired by Amplifon in 2019. The results will be shared with local and national representatives during International Noise Awareness Day (April 2020).



The exhibition Play!, a project dedicated to the theme of playing organized in the first months of 2020 at the Triennale di Milano for which Amplifon is a Hearing Experience Partner, will be the first event in which infant and junior school children involved in the project “Ci Sentiamo Dopo” will be able to test the noise tracker. At the heart of the project is the OooOo installation, a skatepark that is animated by electronic music. Skating instructors, accompanied by responsible listening guides and with the help of the app, will involve participants in an interactive experiential session. Playing and music will be accompanied by moments of information and education regarding responsible listening.



Generally speaking, raising awareness among young people around hearing care is also monitored on social networks, where Amplifon has developed an effective communication strategy dedicated to them to disseminate prevention tips and “information pills”. In addition to this, to mark World Hearing Day held every year in March, Amplifon launches dedicated awareness campaigns on its social media pages, to amplify the messages conveyed by the World Health Organization on problems linked to hearing and untreated hearing loss.

Amplifon is also committed to helping overcome the psychological obstacles and prejudices that prevent people with hearing loss from rediscovering the pleasures of hearing. To this end, Amplifon carries out targeted campaigns in all its proprietary communication channels with the aim of communicating the joy of a life full of sounds. In 2018, Amplifon Italy launched “Amplifon Smile”, an advocacy program involving Company clients taking on the role as spokespersons and telling their experience to help overcome individual and social barriers related to ageing, fighting stigma and facilitating the adoption of hearing solutions. In 2019, the program was also extended to the Netherlands and Portugal.

Amplifon awareness campaigns also target the so-called influencers (families and friends of people with hearing loss). Understanding what happens when loved ones show the first signs of hearing loss can help influencers to communicate better with them and look for assistance to improve their interaction with the world around them. Amplifon has an entire section of its websites dedicated to influencers, which it uses to provide information on how to identify family members or friends who may be experiencing hearing difficulties.

21. Source: Progetto De.C.I.So - Deaf Children: Improvement of classroom Sound quality; 2014.

22. Source: Ecosistema scuola. XIX report by Legambiente on the quality of school buildings, structures and services.

Psychological barriers are indeed still a strong obstacle to hearing care. For instance, 7.3 million Italians suffer from hearing problems, that is, 12% of the population. Despite this, only 29.5% of them use a hearing aid. Amplifon has therefore decided to launch an experimental research project to investigate the role of language in the evolution of stereotypes concerning hearing loss and accessibility to solutions for hearing care. The project provides for the analysis of neurophysiological parameters and implicit cognitive correlates, and is conducted together with the Department of Social Psychology at the Università Cattolica di Milano [Catholic University of Milan] with a multidisciplinary team of linguists and psychologists coordinated by the start-up Diversity & Inclusion Speaking. Amplifon aims to create a platform for an in-depth study of this phenomenon, to understand how a more conscious use of language can help to treat a condition that in Italy is destined to grow by 55% in the next 30 years, eventually affecting 11 million people.

Amplifon has also joined the ecosystem project "Ambizione Italia per l'Inclusione e l'Accessibilità" ('Ambition Italy for Inclusion and Accessibility'), launched by Microsoft Italy for World Human Rights Day. The initiative translates into a strategic alliance with corporations, institutions and associations that work together to develop new projects to support accessibility and inclusion in daily life and in corporations, leveraging new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Cloud Computing.

> **AMPLIFON CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND STUDIES**

As part of its efforts to raise awareness of hearing health, Amplifon strives to disseminate correct information based on clinical evidence. Thanks to the training courses and activities sponsored by the Amplifon Centre for Research and Studies (CRS), the Company contributes to spreading the culture of progress and innovation in audiology and otology within the medical and scientific community.

The Centre for Research and Studies was founded by Algernon Charles Holland in 1971 to use the Company's investments and resources for development, research and training in audiology and otology. Born in Italy and currently active in Spain and France too, the CRS has always aimed to contribute to the development and sharing of scientific knowledge in collaboration with universities and national and foreign scientific entities. Since its inception, in Italy alone, it has organized more than 700 scientific courses and conferences.

By means of the acquisition of the GAES Group, Amplifon has also been able to further enhance its training and information activities toward the medical community in Spain, thanks to the Centro de Estudios e Investigación GAES (CEIG) [GAES Center for Studies and Research] founded in 1999. Similar to the CRS, the CEIG aims to spread the culture of progress and innovation in audiology and otology to the medical and scientific community through publications and monographs on topics of scientific interest that are developed by industry specialists, as well as through programs, scholarships, congresses and refresher seminars. In 2019 alone, the CEIG promoted more than 300 events.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

National and international courses provide an important opportunity for in-depth study of hearing health issues, audiological services and prevention. Each year, the CRS Scientific Board suggests the most current topics in audiology and otolaryngology, which are then discussed and studied in-depth in an interactive manner within the sponsored courses. The International CRS Congress is now customary. It has long been a point of reference for the medical-specialist community in Italy and beyond, and enjoys the participation of world-famous speakers. Specifically, in 2019, there were two courses "abroad": in Berlin there was a discussion of "borderline" ear nose and throat (ENT) diseases in the neurology, neurosurgery, and ophthalmology fields, to highlight how disorders involving the ear, nose and throat affect numerous medical and surgical specialties; on the other hand, in Marrakesh, the discussion was about the most recent innovations in the areas of audiology and phoniatrics.

The CRS also contributes to the professional development of doctors and audiologists practicing in Italy: in collaboration with several universities, it sponsors a calendar of local ENT training courses each year. In 2019 the CRS promoted twelve training events held by prestigious national experts in the country; the topics ranged

from the assessment of hearing aids benefit, to oncology of the head-neck area, to endoscopic surgery of the paranasal sinuses. The common denominator was the presentation and discussion of clinical cases, which led to the sharing of the best clinical intervention protocols. For 2020, the CRS also plans to develop, in partnership with Italian post-graduate schools, a training offer to be dedicated to young people specializing in ENT, Audiology and Phoniatics.

CONGRESS PARTICIPATION

Again in 2019, the CRS participated in the National Congress of the Italian Society of Otolaryngology and Cervico-Facial Surgery (SIO). In honor of the event, by means of an equity crowd funding activity, €5,000 were raised for the Italian Alzheimer Federation. The goal was to support a project for the care and assistance of people suffering from this pathology, which is strongly correlated with hearing loss. In recent years, in fact, the close relationship between hearing loss and other pathologies, such as cognitive decline, frailty, depression, and diabetes, which have obvious repercussions on a person's quality of life, is increasingly gaining attention in scientific debates. In this regard, the CRS is committing itself to disseminating clinical evidence of the positive effects that hearing care has on social inclusiveness, the retention of cognitive resources and postural stability, in parallel with what Amplifon does for the community in general.

These matters were also discussed in the National Congress of the Italian Society of Audiology and Phoniatics (SIAF), in which the CRS participated by organizing a multidisciplinary symposium entitled "Hearing Loss in the XXI Century: the Right to Feel Good." Speakers at the event were an audiologist doctor, an Amplifon hearing care professional and a psychiatrist, who addressed the topic of hearing loss and the quality of life from different angles.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 2016, CRS Italia has offered doctors specializing in otorhinolaryngology and audiology scholarships worth €7,000, for the purpose of financing international research projects related to hearing. To ensure impartiality, the allocation of the scholarships is made by the CRS Scientific Board based on anonymous material. In 2019, the two winning projects were the following:

- "The role of synapse degeneration between internal hair cells (IHC) and Type I neurons in the pathophysiology of hidden hearing loss;"
- "New perspectives for the clinical and surgical management of malformations of the inner ear"

PUBLICATIONS

In 2018 and 2019 the CRS and Amplifon published two scientific monographs respectively: "Vertigo and Balance Disorders in Children" and "Diagnosis and Treatment of Respiratory Sleep Disorders." 2020 will see the scheduled release of the volume "Verbal Intelligibility Tests in Noise: Critical Review," which saw the involvement of Italian and French authors. Through the CRS, Amplifon also participates directly in the preparation and dissemination of scientific publications and the publication of consensus papers, or short scientific studies written for the general public.

To further support the training of specialists, CRS Amplifon also offers access to one of the richest private libraries in audiology and otorhinolaryngology, including the most authoritative international journals of the industry; consultation is available by appointment.

Furthermore, the CRS, with the collaboration of an international panel of Amplifon specialists, also regularly analyzes the most current scientific papers in order to write up short reports and critical reviews of the industry literature. Arising from this joint work is the quarterly CRS Scientific Journal, compiled in English and shared with all the countries of the Group. Much informative content is also available on the CRS website, which also serves as a communication channel for all the activities promoted by the institution.

5.2 CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY WELLBEING

In line with its core expertise and strengths, Amplifon is deeply committed to improving the access of the most vulnerable communities to hearing care and to sharing knowledge, resources and best practices on hearing services and solutions around the world. Amplifon is also committed to fund-raising and volunteer work with the aim of returning value to the communities in which it operates.

Although these initiatives are currently not coordinated by a policy at a Group level, the Sustainability Policy approved in 2018 formalizes Amplifon's commitment in this area. In addition, since 2018, the Company has started to gather greater information in relation to the social initiatives carried out in various Countries to analyze their social impact and to prepare common guidelines, such as, for example, the Giving Policy, which will be implemented in 2020, and will define the areas of action to which the Company resources must be dedicated when making donations and cause-related marketing initiatives.

Finally, in line with the goals of the "We Care" Corporate Citizenship program, from 2020 onwards Amplifon will support the Amplifon Foundation Onlus, a completely independent legal entity that works to enable individuals to achieve their full potential in life through social inclusion, by means of economic support and corporate volunteering initiatives. At the same time, Amplifon will continue to provide its support and expertise to the Miracle-Ear Foundation and the Fundación GAES Solidaria.

› AMPLIFON FOUNDATION ONLUS

The Amplifon Foundation is the corporate foundation created by Amplifon at the beginning of 2020, for its seventieth anniversary, to return value to the community and consolidate its social commitment. The Amplifon Foundation works to empower people to achieve their full potential in life through social inclusion. The operational strategy was conceived with regard to Amplifon's values and primarily around the value of "empowering people". Its strategy was designed to leverage three key elements: i) Amplifon's experience and expertise, ii) the know-how of the Amplifon Centre for Research and Studies and iii) the work of other foundations that are active in other countries. The Amplifon Foundation wishes to become a reference point for the implementation and financing of projects that are relevant to local communities in Italy and abroad, in line with its goals.

› MIRACLE-EAR FOUNDATION

The various social programs of the Miracle-Ear Foundation are supported both by direct shops and franchisees belonging to the Miracle-Ear network. Established in 1990, the aim of the former Miracle-Ear Children's Foundation was to empower and enhance the life experience of underserved children suffering from hearing loss in North America, by giving them the possibility of hearing again. Re-established as the "Miracle-Ear Foundation" in 2012, with the aim of serving a larger part of the community, the Foundation now provides hearing aids, follow-up care, and educational resources to those who do not have sufficient financial resources to meet their hearing health needs.

Through the Gift of Sound™ program, the Miracle-Ear Foundation donates hearing aids and provides free services to people and families in need. Moreover, another program that owes much to the contribution of Amplifon's customers is the Hear Again™ hearing aid recycling program, through which Miracle-Ear customers donate their no longer used hearing aids for recycling or reconditioning. Finally, The One Day Without Sound™ awareness campaign has become a keystone of the Foundation's prevention program. This event, which takes place in May with the Better Hearing and

Speech Month, is dedicated to helping individuals understand the difficulties of living with hearing loss, which is a particularly daunting challenge at school and in the workplace. During the One Day Without Sound™ campaign, participants are asked to wear earplugs to simulate a hearing deficit and directly experience what it is like to live without hearing.

➤ FUNDACIÓN GAES SOLIDARIA

GAES Solidaria, established in 1996 and consolidated as a foundation in 2018, is a project that unites employees, managers, collaborators and customers with a common goal: to fill the lives of those who need it most with sounds, music, communication and happiness. The GAES Solidaria Foundation's mission is to provide opportunities to people with hearing loss and without financial resources, so that they can develop language and communication skills, by means of developing local and international hearing care projects. In addition, the Foundation extends GAES Solidaria's original lines of action through the GAES Solidaria Foundation's awards allocated to the medical community which promotes research related to hearing disorders. In addition, it is also a way of raising public awareness regarding the importance of hearing health care as a basic element of wellbeing.



More than 800 employees voluntarily donate €1 of their monthly salary, which GAES doubles, to carry out a solidarity project, and many of them also contribute their skills by volunteering for certain initiatives. For example, some of the supported projects provide for the performance of hearing tests for children and adults in less developed areas of the world, such as India, Morocco, Burundi, Cape Verde and Mozambique. In 2019 more than 1,600 free hearing tests were performed on as many people thanks to these projects, to the work of volunteers and to the collaboration with several organizations. Some of these people have also benefited from hearing aids that were reconditioned and applied by volunteers. In fact, GAES Solidaria has a "bank of hearing aids" donated by customers, which are re-examined and reconditioned to find renewed utility in less developed countries. During the initiatives performed in 2019, more than 370 fittings with donated hearing aids were carried out.

➤ OTHER SOCIAL INITIATIVES

The Miracle-Ear Foundation and Fundación GAES Solidaria are important entities to which Amplifon dedicates its economic support as well as competencies through employee volunteering. However, there are many other initiatives carried out at local level, some of which are recurring and have been going on for several years, while others are more random. The recurring initiatives include the "Free to Ear Samoa" program, supported by Bay Audiology in New Zealand and "Amplicœur" by Amplifon France (for more information, see the dedicated box).

Among the random initiatives, collaborations are in place with local associations or NGOs to make a contribution towards facilitating access to hearing care rather than performing free hearing tests. For example, Amplifon Switzerland supported a digitization project promoted by a local school that follows the learning of children with hearing loss, while Minisom, in collaboration with a non-profit organization, sent a hearing care professional to perform free hearing tests and fittings on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe.

> NEW ZEALAND: “FREE TO EAR SAMOA” PROGRAM

Bay Audiology has been striving to help the Samoan population gain access to hearing care through the “Free to Ear Samoa” program since 2016. In Samoa, in fact, there are no qualified hearing care professionals and access to ENTs is very limited, which means that many of those suffering from hearing difficulties fail to receive the necessary care. Therefore, every year, a team of Bay Audiology goes to Samoa for three days in order to provide free audiological services.

In 2019, the team of Bay Audiology performed 215 free aspiration and 180 fitting with donated hearing aids.



> FRANCE: AMPLICŒUR

Since 2002, Amplifon France has collaborated with Les Enfants Sourds du Cambodge, a non-profit organization that takes care of children suffering from hearing disabilities in Asia.

Each year Amplifon donates €15,000 in order to finance audiologic material and hearing aids for marginalized children suffering from hearing loss as well as the necessary training to local personnel. Amplifon’s customers also contribute to the initiative by donating their no-longer-used hearing aids, which, upon reconditioning, have enabled many children to discover the joy of hearing.



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