



# BOSE VENTURES LEADS \$8.3M FUNDING ROUND INTO HEARX GROUP TO STRENGTHEN ITS HEARING CARE STRATEGY

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*hearX Group (hearX), an impact-driven scale-up with a mission to increase access to hearing healthcare through smart digital solutions, has completed a multimillion-dollar funding round led by Bose Ventures, the United States venture capital group within Bose Corporation. Bose Ventures invested \$3m in the round. HAVAÍC, which invests in and supports early-stage, high-growth African businesses, led the local funding round in South Africa, with co-investments from two other prominent institutional investors, Futuregrowth Asset Management and Sphere Holdings.*

Bose Ventures invests in, and collaborates with, start-ups focused on technologies to help people live and feel better. Recognizing the value that hearX and its suite of smart hearing technologies can bring to the world was a critical factor in Bose Ventures' commitment to invest at the end of 2019.

Co-investors HAVAÍC contributed \$1.3m to the round. Futuregrowth, a fixed-interest asset manager backed by Old Mutual Investment Group in South Africa contributed \$3m through its Futuregrowth Development Equity Fund (DEF), and Sphere Holdings, a high-performing investment holding company contributed \$1m in this round, closing out the round in 2020.

Supplying disruptive, innovative digital technologies that support audiologists is central to the hearX global hearing care strategy. To expand its reach, the company is applying its audiological expertise to also offer a solution to a consumer market segment.

This investment has boosted the hearX launch of its premium, direct-to-consumer hearing aid solution, in the United States called Lexie Hearing. Using smart technology, Lexie offers a comprehensive and affordable US developed hearing aid solution from as little as \$39 over 24 months without compromising on quality. Consumers can enjoy the convenience of purchasing quality hearing aids online, program them from the comfort of their homes, and have access to hearing experts on-demand. The award-winning solution includes the world's first behavior-change financing model within the hearing space, with the Lexie Rewards™ program, landing it the MTN App of the Year award at the end of 2020 for the Best Health Solution. Since launching in the United States, Lexie Hearing has collaborated with Walgreens, the second-largest pharmacy store chain in the country, to sell the Lexie Lumen hearing aids online across 38 States.

Founded out of the University of Pretoria in South Africa, hearX started trading in 2016 with the purpose of commercializing digital technologies to change the face of hearing care. hearX initially focused on clinical digital audiometers, later branching out into lead generation tools for audiologists and retailers. Its latest offering includes an end-to-end hearing care solution that allows role-players in the hearing aid industry to compete in the direct-to-consumer and over-the-counter markets through the groundbreaking Lexie Hearing platform. hearX has, quite literally, grown at the *speed of sound*.

Says Amrish Narrandes, Head of Unlisted Equity Transactions at Futuregrowth,

“We remain committed to our stance of backing entrepreneurs that are creating proudly South African products, services, and IP and taking it to the rest of the world, thus raising the South African flag high. What we particularly liked about hearX is that it is disrupting the traditional hearing healthcare industry by democratizing and decentralizing access to hearing care.”

According to Memory Denalane, Director at Sphere Holdings,

Sphere is excited to have invested in hearX, a business poised for considerable growth and global impact with its world-leading South African developed hearing technology, dynamic management team, and solid investor base.”

In the last 4 years, hearX has grown into a scale-up with global impact across 68 countries touching over one and a half million lives and it boasts a client list that includes 23andme and The World Health Organisation. hearX received further industry attention at TechCrunch in San Francisco, where it was invited to the Startup Alley, eventually winning a “Top Pick” award, as well as being noted by Forbes as “one to watch”. hearX has amassed an impressive list of dozens of awards across the world in its short lifespan, a testament to the dynamic team behind the Group.

When asked about working with Bose and how it will impact the hearX mission, CEO, Nic Klopper said,

Support from Bose Ventures will enable hearX to more aggressively tackle hearing loss and advance hearing care solutions. Our team has worked tirelessly to touch over 1.5 million lives globally, so an investment of this magnitude in hearX is tremendously rewarding and motivating for us all.”

More than 466 million people worldwide suffer from disabling hearing loss and access to hearing care is severely limited, especially in developing countries. Hearing test equipment is prohibitively expensive and hearing aids unaffordable to most. As such, this latest round of funding helps support the hearX suite of technologies to lead the way towards its vision of healthy hearing for everyone, everywhere.

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