



World Health  
Organization

# WHEELCHAIR SERVICE TRAINING PACKAGE

Reference Manual for Participants

BASIC LEVEL



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE





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Financial support:	US Agency for International Development and Australian Agency for International Development
Partner organizations:	ASSERT East Timor, Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK), Community Based Rehabilitation Unit of Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Education Development Center (EDC), Handicap International, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO), Kilimanjaro Association of the Spinally Injured (KASI), Mobility India, Motivation Australia, Motivation Charitable Trust (Motivation), Motivation Romania, and Tanzania Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists (TATCOT)

**WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

Wheelchair service training package / edited by Chapal Khasnabis and Kylie Mines.

Contents: Trainer's manual, basic level—Reference manual for participants, basic level – Participant's workbook, basic level – Posters and slides, basic level.

Trainer's manual and slides available on DVD only.

1. Wheelchairs – standards. 2. Disabled persons – rehabilitation. 3. Teaching materials. I. Khasnabis, Chapal. II. Mines, Kylie. III. World Health Organization.

ISBN 978 92 4 150347 1 (package)

(NLM classification: WB 320)

ISBN 978 92 4 150348 8 (DVD)

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Cover photo credits (clockwise, from top): Mile End Films / Jesse Moss; WHO / Chapal Khasnabis; Mile End Films / Jesse Moss; Panos / Dieter Telemans; WHO / Chapal Khasnabis.

Printed in Malta

Design by Inís Communication – [www.iniscommunication.com](http://www.iniscommunication.com)

# Terminology

The following terms used throughout the training package are defined below.

<b>Appropriate wheelchair</b>	A wheelchair that meets the user's needs and environmental conditions; provides proper fit and postural support and is safe and durable; is available in the country; and can be obtained and maintained and services sustained in the country at the most economical and affordable price.
<b>Manual wheelchair</b>	A wheelchair that is propelled by the user or pushed by another person.
<b>Wheelchair</b>	A device providing wheeled mobility and seating support for a person who has difficulty in walking or moving around.
<b>Wheelchair provision</b>	An overall term for wheelchair design, production, supply and service delivery.
<b>Wheelchair service</b>	That part of wheelchair provision concerned with ensuring that each user receives an appropriate wheelchair.
<b>Wheelchair service personnel</b>	Persons skilled in the provision of an appropriate wheelchair.
<b>Wheelchair user</b>	A person who has difficulty in walking or moving around and uses a wheelchair for mobility.

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## Preface

The wheelchair is one of the most commonly used assistive devices for enhancing personal mobility, which is a precondition for enjoying human rights and living in dignity and assists people with disabilities to become more productive members of their communities. For many people, an appropriate, well designed and well fitted wheelchair can be the first step towards inclusion and participation in society.

The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and World Health Assembly resolution WHA58.23, which deals with disability including prevention, management and rehabilitation, all emphasize the importance of wheelchairs and other assistive devices. To ensure that people with disabilities can access an appropriate wheelchair, especially in less resourced parts of the world, WHO developed the **Guidelines on the provision of manual wheelchairs in less resourced settings**, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO).

In order to train human resources appropriately and provide a good wheelchair delivery system based on the Wheelchair guidelines, WHO has developed this **Wheelchair Service Training Package – Basic Level**.



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# About the Wheelchair Service Training Package: Basic Level

## Introduction

Following the release in 2008 of *Guidelines on the provision of manual wheelchairs in less resourced settings*,<sup>1</sup> the World Health Organization has developed the Wheelchair Service Training Package: Basic Level.

The wheelchair is one of the most commonly used assistive devices for enabling personal mobility. For people who have difficulties walking, a wheelchair which meets their physical, lifestyle and environmental needs is an essential tool, enabling them to enjoy vastly improved health, social and economic well-being. Mobility opens up opportunities for wheelchair users to study, work, engage in cultural activities and access services such as health care.

The importance of mobility is reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which advocates for “effective measures to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for persons with disabilities”. To ensure effective personal mobility, wheelchair users need a wheelchair which fits them correctly and meets their specific needs. This requires an approach which is responsive to individual needs.

An effective way of meeting the individual needs of wheelchair users is the provision of wheelchairs through wheelchair services. However, statistics show that less than 5% of those in need actually have access to a properly fitted wheelchair. In addition, there are limited training opportunities for personnel to gain the skills needed to prescribe a wheelchair effectively.

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