motivation
quality of life

Introduction to the WHO Wheelchair Guidelines
WHO estimate that 1% of the total population (about 65 million) need a wheelchair.

In the developing world, only 5-15% of people with disabilities have access to assistive devices which includes wheelchairs.

A conservative estimate of 20 million people living in low income countries require a wheelchair and do not have one.
Why WHO Wheelchair Guidelines?

- The UNCRPD suggests - states have an obligation to ensure personal mobility. (Article 20)
- A wheelchair is one of the most commonly used assistive devices for enhancing personal mobility.
- One of the aims of the Guidelines is to assist WHO Member States to improve wheelchair provision in order to meet article 20 of the UNCRPD.
Guidelines process

Some of the people
behind the scenes
WHO Guidelines

• **Scope:**
  • Manual wheelchairs
  • Long term wheelchair users

• **Chapters:**
  • Introduction
  • Design and production
  • Service delivery
  • Training
  • Policy and planning
What is a ‘less resourced setting’?

- A geographical area with limited financial, human and infrastructural resources to provide wheelchairs (a common situation in low and middle income countries, but also in certain areas of high income countries).
Significance

Guidelines on the provision of Manual Wheelchairs in less resourced settings

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What is an appropriate wheelchair?

A wheelchair is appropriate when it:

• meets the user’s needs and environmental conditions
• provides proper fit and postural support
• is safe and durable
• is available in the country and
• can be obtained and maintained and services sustained in the country at an affordable cost.
Products + Inclusive services = Effective wheelchair provision
Service delivery in low-income countries

- Few wheelchair users receive a wheelchair through a service.
- Limited training opportunities for service staff.
- Few people with wheelchair service delivery skills.
WHO Guidelines: Purpose

• Services chapter:
  • To improve the way in which users receive wheelchairs
  • To ensure that wheelchairs are appropriate

• Training chapter:
  • To develop the skills and knowledge of personnel involved in wheelchair provision
Core role of a local wheelchair service

- **Assessment** of individual wheelchair user needs,
- **Provision** – including ordering, preparing, fitting
- **Training** in maintenance and use
- **Support** – clinical and technical support including health care advice, follow up and repairs.
- **Referral** to other services
Good practise in service delivery

- Eight steps in wheelchair service delivery are defined
- Good practise guidelines provided for overall service provision and each of the eight steps
Strategies for establishing services

- Integrate wheelchair services into existing health or rehabilitation services and networks
- Training of local staff
- Wherever possible meet the needs of users at community level
- Two tiered model:

  1. Community
  2. Centre based

Referral network
Training service personnel

- Five key roles in wheelchair service provision have been identified:
  - Referral staff
  - Service management
  - Clinical role
  - Technical role
  - Trainer / user instruction role

- Roles may be fulfilled by one person or different personnel.
Strategies to further develop training

- Train existing personnel
- Link with existing training programmes and schools
- Utilise competency based training
- Explore ways to ensure training is recognised
- Build the capacity of local personnel to provide training
- Develop modular training packages
  - WHO Training Packages on their way.
Thank you!