



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID's Five Focus Areas to Support Persons with Disabilities in the Wheelchair Sector

[Resources](#) | [Research](#) | [Programs](#) | [Procurement](#) | [Professionalization](#)

By expanding our focus on global initiatives to serve governments, donors and wheelchair providers, USAID endeavors to:

Ensure that persons with disabilities in developing countries have greater access to affordable and appropriate wheeled mobility devices and services.

Introduction

Over the past decade, USAID and other U.S. Government agencies have collectively invested more than \$70 million to help increase the mobility of persons with disabilities through the use of wheelchairs. Since 2007, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Wheelchair Program has worked to improve the availability of and access to appropriate wheelchairs and trained wheelchair service providers in the developing world.

Housed within USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, the Wheelchair Program seeks to apply new and existing technologies in innovative ways to help overcome barriers and promote advances in the wheelchair sector; and in turn promote the human rights of wheelchair users. This program provides the means for wheelchair users to enjoy better health and to achieve full and equal participation in society.

USAID's support for wheelchair programs has evolved to meet the demands of a maturing profession. It has grown from supporting discrete programs that provided affordable wheelchairs and advocated for barrier-free accessibility into a comprehensive approach to the provision of appropriate wheelchairs and the associated resources, research, training and systems strengthening that must accompany this work.

USAID addresses the needs of wheelchair users through five key investment areas:

Resources | Research | Programs | Procurement | Professionalization

This publication describes the materials, products, activities and programs included in these five focus areas.



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Resources

Resource materials are vital to standardizing and strengthening the wheelchair sector.

To date, USAID has supported the World Health Organization to develop five key resource documents.

GUIDELINES ON THE PROVISION OF MANUAL WHEELCHAIRS IN LESS RESOURCED SETTINGS (2008) Focuses on the needs of long-term wheelchair users; addresses key areas of wheelchair provision including design and production, service delivery, training, policy and planning.

WHEELCHAIR SERVICE TRAINING PACKAGE – BASIC LEVEL (2012) Five-day training for clinical and technical personnel on the theory and practice needed to work with wheelchair users who are able to sit upright without postural support.

WHEELCHAIR SERVICE TRAINING PACKAGE – INTERMEDIATE LEVEL (2013) Ten-day training for clinical and technical personnel on the provision of appropriate wheelchairs for those requiring postural support — especially children.

WHEELCHAIR SERVICE TRAINING PACKAGE – FOR MANAGERS (2015) Two-day training for managers provides information and guidance about the need for and benefits of appropriate sustainable wheelchair provision programs.

WHEELCHAIR SERVICE TRAINING PACKAGE – FOR STAKEHOLDERS (2015) Half-day sensitization on wheelchair provision that is accessible, cost effective and responsive to the needs of wheelchair users.

To download the World Health Organization's wheelchair resource documents, go to www.who.int/disabilities/technology/en.

Research

Research on wheelchair provision in low-resource settings is central to identifying products and processes that lead to the greatest outcomes and impact for wheelchair users.

Through USAID's Accelovate project, Jhpiego is assessing the **association of wheelchair services with wheelchair retention and utilization**. Research in the Philippines and Kenya was launched in May 2014.

In October 2014, USAID-Accelovate launched a **product development design challenge** to design and produce Postural Support Devices (PSD) prototypes for low-resource settings.

Other research supported by USAID:

- The influence of **peer group training for active wheelchair riders** in Romania (2011-2014).
- **Motorized adaptation** for a manual wheelchair was developed and piloted in Georgia (2012).
- A study on the **impact** of receiving a wheelchair was conducted by University of Pittsburgh's Human Engineering Research Laboratories (2013).
- A **tricycle comparison** study (seven tricycles) was completed in Indonesia (2014).
- **Adapted motorcycles** for use by wheelchair riders have been developed and tested in Indonesia (2014).

Programs

Wheelchair **programs** are targeted activities managed by one lead organization and implemented in one or more countries for generally 2-6 years.

Since 2002, the U.S. Government has supported over 20 lead organizations to implement programs in 42 countries providing over 70,000 wheelchairs.

In addition to providing wheelchairs, programs offer opportunities for wheelchair users to participate in sports and recreation, promote access to buildings and other infrastructure, provide training, facilitate advocacy and policy development, and conduct research.

Highlights include:

UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY/WHEELS FOR HUMANITY: Indonesian program integrates wheelchair service into the healthcare system.

WORLD INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY: Georgian program establishes wheelchair production and provision.

ARCANGELES: South American program develops wheelchair rugby teams and promotes competition across eight countries.

CHRISTIAN BLIND MISSION: Zimbabwean program trains basic and intermediate wheelchair service providers.

MOTIVATION ROMANIA FOUNDATION: Romanian program secures government recognition of “wheelchair provider” as a formal profession.

MOTIVATION: Multi-country program in collaboration with International Committee of the Red Cross staff supports appropriate delivery of wheelchairs in Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Pakistan and South Sudan.

Procurement

Procurement is the means by which wheelchairs are made available to country level service providers.

Procurement challenges include:

- extensive delays in wheelchair shipments,
- accessing a variety of wheelchairs from a single source,
- limited market reach for wheelchair suppliers.

To address these challenges, **USAID supports the CLASP (Consolidating Logistics for Assistive Technology Supply and Provision) procurement initiative.**

CLASP is managed by United Cerebral Palsy/Wheels for Humanity (UCP Wheels) and the core activity is to establish and oversee a Consolidation Hub (C-Hub).

C-Hub stores a variety of wheelchair products from a consortium of wheelchair producers and dispatches them in consolidated shipments of mixed containers to wheelchair buyers and providers.

With increased capacity of wheelchair providers, this added mechanism is key to ensure timely receipt of a variety of wheelchairs appropriate to user needs.

C-Hub enables governments and donor agencies to purchase a range of wheelchairs in varying volumes without involvement in supply chain management.

C-Hub also facilitates the introduction of innovative wheelchair products on the market.

Professionalization

Professionalization of the wheelchair sector promotes development of global norms of conduct and qualifications of members.

Standards in the wheelchair sector have varied greatly. To address this, USAID is partnering with the University of Pittsburgh to bring together a wide range of wheelchair initiatives, activities and advances and consolidate them under an overarching global mechanism. This mechanism is called the International Society of Wheelchair Professionals (ISWP).

The ISWP structure comprises an *Advisory Board*, organizational *Affiliates*, and organizational or individual *Members*.

The ISWP focus areas are:

- Training and testing of wheelchair providers;
- Collecting and sharing data on wheelchair provision;
- Promoting increased coordination and communication;
- Improving wheelchair product and supply;
- Advocating for recognition and resource allocation.

The establishment of the ISWP is a bold effort to unite the wheelchair community in order to effectively utilize funds and expertise to meet the global need of individuals requiring wheelchairs.

For more information on the International Society of Wheelchair Professionals, go to www.wheelchairnet.org.



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The U.S. Agency for International Development's Wheelchair Program wishes to thank its partner organizations who work with us to improve the availability of and access to appropriate wheelchairs and trained wheelchair providers in the developing world:

Albanian Disability Right Foundation
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Christian Blind Mission
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Handicap International
International Nepal Fellowship
International Orthodox Christian Charities
Jhpiego
Management Sciences for Health
Motivation
Motivation Romania Foundation
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Wheelchair Foundation
Whirlwind Wheelchair
World Health Organization
World Institute on Disability
World Vision

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