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 productive members of their communities. For many people with disabilities, an appropriate, well designed and well fitted wheelchair can be the first step towards inclusion and participation in society. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) highlights the responsibility of states to ensure **personal mobility**. There are often very few training opportunities for service providers to ensure that wheelchair users can attain personal mobility with the greatest possible independence, be productive and enjoy a good quality of life.

To ensure that people with disabilities can access an appropriate wheelchair, “WHO” developed the Guidelines on the provision of manual wheelchairs in a series of Wheelchair Service Training Packages (WSTP): Basic Level (WSTP-B) and Intermediate Level (WSTP-I)

The main purpose of the training package (Basic & Intermediate) is to develop the minimum skills and knowledge required by personnel involved in wheelchair service delivery. An important aim of the training package is to get it integrated into the regular paramedical/rehabilitation training programs such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, prosthetics and orthotics, rehabilitation nursing.

The **Basic Level** training package is designed to support the training of personnel to provide an appropriate manual wheelchair and cushion for persons who have mobility impairments but can sit upright without additional postural support

The **Intermediate Level** focusses on addressing the needs of people who have severe difficulties in walking and moving around and also having poor trunk control and cannot sit upright on their own and needs additional postural support

The training package includes:

• A core knowledge which include: wheelchair users, wheelchair service, wheelchair mobility, definition, causes & prevention of pressure sores, definition of an appropriate wheelchair, and types of cushions and their use and finally transfers

• An overview of the key steps of wheelchair service delivery: Referral and appointment, Assessment, Prescription, Funding and Ordering, Product preparation, Fitting, User training, Maintenance, repair and follow up

This package includes a theoretical part as well as a practical part

The course was held in Jordan by “Al Hussein Society” from September till December 2017 in collaboration with USAID and World Learning, and animated by Mobility India.

I had the opportunity to represent the Order of Physiotherapists in Lebanon in attending “WHO Basic and Intermediate WSTP as well as Training of Trainer’s course (TOT)”.

The course was delivered by professional trainers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and orthoprosthetics from Mobility India. This package contained all the necessary forms and checklists, manuals and guides including trainer’s manual and set of posters and presentations.

This experience is a pioneer experience in the region and should be a start for several changes in Wheelchair Service Delivery. In Lebanon the health system is not very developed in this field. There is no certificate nor a curriculum at the universities.

On a personal level, it was a beneficial training. 20 years ago, Wheelchair Service Delivery was unknown; Wheelchairs were given to the users as a mobility aid without any “posture management”. Assessment, fitting and follow up almost did not exist. The development started with personal initiatives of people believing in this field.

My experience began 20 years ago as physiotherapist, responsible of the Technical Aids Unit at SESOBEL. SESOBEL is a non-governmental organization founded in 1976, for the welfare of the child with disability and his family.

SESOBEL takes all possible steps to implement a coherent and monitored service of assisting children with disability and to accompany their families as partners in facing life’s challenges, and works equally hard with all elements of society for them to recognize the value, dignity, and respect for children with disabilities.

At SESOBEL every child is unique and an appropriate program that meets his specific needs is designed for him. We use a holistic and multidisciplinary approach which takes into account the child’s needs on every level, including a “Wheelchair Service Delivery” in which we do seating assessment, manufacturing of different kind of seating equipment for all beneficiaries in the center and at their home, such as, customized insert chairs and contoured cushions using wood, foam and Dartex, as a raw material. We also do fitting, repairs and follow up.

Over the years, I learned from various trainings by international experts, conferences, courses abroad, internship on products, trial and error. I got the know how experience, so, I have been able to develop some standards and establish an assessment sheet and procedures to meet the needs of all beneficiary in accordance with our environment and depending on the means available in our country.

The WSTP confirmed the knowledge acquired during my years of experience.

The course covered many basic topics needed in Wheelchair Service Delivery and validated the majority of the work we did throughout the past years in a structured way (theory and practice).

The content is a basic knowledge, not incorporated in the university courses nor studies. The practical part is very useful for people handling service & delivery aspects.

At the basic level, the content is about the sitting posture, its objectives, the problems caused by a wrong sitting, the benefits of an appropriate wheelchair and how the pelvis affects the way we sit. Pressure sore is taken into consideration in the package and is well developed.

In addition to the above, there is a section about wheelchairs: types, accessories, and seated cushions essential for any sitting position.

The transfers are well mentioned and the package exposes different transfer techniques adapted to the beneficiaries.

At the intermediate level, the content is more advanced: working with persons with complex postural problems. Given in a structured way, it encompasses different types of handicap, different postures adopted from infancy to adulthood.

In both basic and intermediate level, the 7 steps of the wheelchair service delivery is considered and well structured. Each step is very well explained with details concerning the user and the material delivered (from the appointment to the delivery) according to the international guidelines. This theoretical and practical part is the basis of wheelchair service delivery and gives added value to the course.

Finally, the training that was held in Jordan promises changes at the national level. Due to this training certified by the WHO, we can officially act at several levels: Government, universities and NGOs working in the field. We can also follow international recommendations, give courses at the universities and review& change laws according to international evidence and recommendations.

**References**

*Wheelchair Service Training Package – Basic Level*

*Wheelchair Service Training Package – Intermediate Level*

*The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities*