



Strengthening management systems to help people walk and work again

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Across the world, people with physical disabilities have poorer health, lower education achievements, fewer economic opportunities, and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. The *World Report on Disability* (World Health Organization, 2011) estimated that 30 million of these individuals in Africa, Asia, and Latin America need prostheses or orthotics and related services, and many live in countries whose health and social systems lack the capacity to meet their rehabilitation needs.

For over 30 years, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been a global leader in providing physical rehabilitation services to vulnerable groups, particularly those affected by conflict. Through the Physical Rehabilitation Programme (PRP) and the Special Fund for the Disabled (SFD), ICRC has helped hundreds of thousands of people regain their mobility. Restoring mobility through the provision prostheses, orthotics, walking aids, and wheelchairs is a critical first step toward improving the quality of life for people with physical disabilities to participate fully in society.

Supported by USAID's Special Programs to Address the Needs of Survivors (SPANS), the Leadership, Management, and Governance Project (LMG) is working with the ICRC's PRP and SFD to promote the long-term viability of local physical rehabilitation centers. ICRC has been working with these physical rehabilitation centers to improve the quality of services by providing materials to customize mobility devices for individual users, training prosthetic and orthotic professionals and other providers, and supporting additional capacity-building activities. LMG aims to complement ICRC's good work and technical expertise through strengthening the centers' leadership and management capacity.

LMG at the Bahir Dar Physical Rehabilitation Center, Ethiopia

In July, LMG staff traveled to Ethiopia to see ICRC's activities on the ground, and to develop a strategy for our collaboration. We visited the Bahir Dar Physical Rehabilitation Center (BDPRC), one of two government physical rehabilitation centers in the Amhara region. Bahir Dar is a lakeside town in northwestern Ethiopia, and one of the fastest growing urban centers in the country. According to the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (2011), there are approximately 33,000 persons with physical disabilities in BDPRC's service area.

On the outside, the physical rehabilitation center looked like an average public building, fairly nondescript, with plain concrete walls in a small compound off a gravel road. Inside the building we found an extremely welcoming and committed small staff who were busy modeling prostheses, treating a young girl with clubfoot, and fitting a wheelchair to an older man. We met with BDPRC's manager, Endalkachew Getachew, who himself is physically disabled—though we never would have known if he had not shown us his prosthetic leg beneath his pants.

