

Catalyst Team Executive Summary

The World Health Organization declared disability the fastest growing global health need. Globally an estimated 80 million people need a wheelchair. However, the majority don't have access to one or their chairs are not suitable for long-term use. There is an urgent global need for intermediate pediatric chairs that can be appropriately provisioned for children with cerebral palsy, the most common childhood disability.

The Catalyst team is composed of researchers, physicians, occupational therapists, physical therapists, nurses, pastors, and business operators. Our goal is to support and equip mission hospitals to provide optimal whole-person care for those with disabilities. This will include reliable access to training, resources, and locally appropriate assistive technology devices. The Catalyst team will seek to collaborate with existing local and international initiatives. This is underway with several networks.

We have chosen to work primarily with mission hospitals because they are already operating high-quality clinics that provide much of the medical care in their areas. They also have large stable referral bases; many of them serve over a million people. Most mission hospitals are locally owned and run with strong community health initiatives and a long history of working with local governments. Most have no reliable wheelchair or assistive technology supply and no supply of pediatric wheelchairs. These hospitals are not one organization, but they have a unity of purpose, collaborate in training programs, and understand the value of rehabilitation and assistive technology, yet are unable to meet the need.

TRAINING

The Catalyst team has identified several training programs that will be integral to providing whole-person care. Individuals with disabilities and their families are often told that they have done something shameful to deserve a disability. Caregiver training programs can be put in place to teach the nature of disability, promote care-giving skills and encourage parent support groups. If one has physical help, and yet is still isolated and shamed, whole person care has not happened. Local churches are key to community life; spiritual training will help to reshape views and increase community engagement for people with disabilities. Training for rehabilitation staff and technicians will facilitate appropriate therapy and follow up care. Our goal is that hospitals will excel in providing whole person care and in following the World Health Organization's eight steps for appropriate wheelchair provisioning.

RESOURCES

The Catalyst team will provide access to standards, training resources, and research tools, as well as networking opportunities between hospitals and other organizations active in this field. This network will drive innovation, evidence-based practice, collaboration, and community.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES

The Catalyst team has provided seminars and training to teams in Kenya and enabled shipments of wheelchairs. However, in many countries, our goal will be for wheelchairs to be made locally to reduce cost, establish consistent availability, increase serviceability, and to effectively meet the demand. We have partnered with Invigorate Inc., a non-profit started with the purpose of providing an operating entity to build manufacturing facilities in strategic countries to make wheelchairs and other assistive technology devices in-country. Invigorate will provide governance, enforce manufacturing standards, simplify procurement and logistics, and shipping to mission hospitals for provisioning. As a first step, Invigorate is in the process of partnering with BeeLine and BethanyKids to make pediatric supportive chairs in Kenya. Conversations are also underway with CEML hospital in Angola and Soddo Hospital in Ethiopia.

SUSTAINABILITY

Invigorate will focus on generating commercial and other revenues to make the wheelchairs sustainably affordable. Sustainability in medical care, rehabilitation, and community integration is possible through mission hospitals.