

# WORLD REHABILITATION ALLIANCE POSITION STATEMENT

## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN QUALITY REHABILITATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The World Health Organization (WHO) established the World Rehabilitation Alliance (WRA) in 2022 to promote rehabilitation “... as an essential health service that is integral to Universal Health Coverage and to the realisation of Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. [1]

About 1 in 3 people throughout the world live with a condition that would benefit from rehabilitation. [2]

There is a vast unmet need that is most acute in low-and middle-income countries. It is expected to grow as populations age and non-communicable diseases increase worldwide. [2]

Rehabilitation is relevant to all people throughout their life course, not just those with long-term disabilities. Its primary focus is to improve functioning so that people can live as independently as possible and perform to their maximum capacity. This allows for increased inclusion and participation in the family, the community, education, and leisure activities, thereby benefitting not only the individual but also society as a whole.

A capable rehabilitation workforce is imperative to meet a population’s health needs. The WRA calls upon healthcare decision-makers in WHO Member States to increase their investments in rehabilitation education and training to improve access to quality rehabilitation services.

The members of the WRA are advocating for increased investment in quality education and training for all rehabilitation disciplines to meet the population’s needs.

This will allow for more equitable access to the full array of rehabilitation services enabling people to function at their highest capacity.

### How to Invest in Quality Rehabilitation Education and Training

Globally, the demand for rehabilitation services exceeds the available workforce capacity. [3]

To meet the global demand for quality rehabilitation, the WRA recommends investments to:



Increase the number of colleges and universities that educate the rehabilitation workforce

1



Develop training programs for the full array of rehabilitation professions to comprehensively address the needs of people with functional limitations;

2



Mentor and train faculty to ensure relevant and up-to-date curriculum standards to graduate a competent, high-quality workforce;

3



Enhance educational programs to include multi-modal teaching strategies, competency-based training, and relevant technology;

4



Support continuing professional development to ensure evidence-based quality services and promote workforce retention;

5



Develop collaborations and partnerships with stakeholder organizations (e.g. ministries, WHO, international development partners, and international associations of rehab professionals;

6



Implement strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation to assure sustainability of a culturally responsive and competent workforce.

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[1] World Health Organization, "World Rehabilitation Alliance," 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/world-rehabilitation-alliance>. [Accessed 29 February 2024].

[2] A. Cieza, K. Causey, K. Kamenov, S. W. Hanson, S. Chatterji, and T. Vos, "Global estimates of the need for rehabilitation based on the Global Burden of Disease study 2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019," *Lancet*, vol. 395, no. 10267, pp. 2006-2017, 02 December 2020.

[3] World Health Organization, *Rehabilitation in health systems: Guide for action*, 2019 Revision, World Health Organization, 2019.