

Raising the Voices survivors presentation for May 2003

We agree with the Standard Rules which state that rehabilitation is a precondition to every other step required for a disabled person to become fully integrated into society. Rehabilitation is not only a technical service. It is a complex and continuous process whose goal is to allow a person to achieve as much normalcy as possible. For amputees the process lasts a lifetime. In fact, what we see missing in our region is accessibility to rehabilitation services such as

- Knowledge of services
 - Transportation to and from services are beyond the affordable means of many survivors
 - Food and lodging while living away from home is also a major concern.
- Finally, we believe it is the responsibility of states to allocate funds for these services to ensure their sustainability.

It is important for landmine survivors and other people with disabilities to be able to move in and out of public places so they don't feel needy and incomplete, without having to ask for assistance. Accessibility to public places is fundamental and directly connected to our rights to earn a living, to get education, to get health care, and to participate in society.

To ensure equal participation in society and independence and self-confidence we need a means of achieving economic empowerment. This would also ensure that we are able to provide for ourselves and our families. If this does not happen we will be a burden to our families society and country.

We need a law and policy on the rights of persons with disabilities that will provide a framework for equal participation without the implementation of such a framework we will have no adequate tools that will allow us to progress on society.