



ICRC

Kunming Physical Rehabilitation Centre

Briefing Paper

September 06

The Kunming Physical Rehabilitation Centre is operated by the Yunnan branch of the Chinese Red Cross Society with the financial and technical support of the ICRC. The centre opened in early 2004 and began to expand its follow-up services in 2005 with the opening of two repair workshops in the south of the province. Since its opening the centre has provided orthopaedic and physiotherapy care for 850 amputees.



ICRC Project Manager, Jean-François Gallay, assesses patients during a follow-up outreach visit in Mengdong Town, Malipo County.

What is physical rehabilitation?

Physical rehabilitation services respond to basic needs of disabled persons. They include the provision of adequate prostheses, orthoses and physiotherapy care, as well as walking aids and wheelchairs. Physical rehabilitation helps restore the dignity of persons with mobility impairments, not only in terms of physical movements, but also by facilitating their reintegration into family and community activity and enabling them to work, or gain an education.

The centre

The centre is located in the premises of the Yunnan Provincial Red Cross in Kunming. It is composed of an orthopaedic workshop where artificial limbs are custom made and a physiotherapy department where patients learn to walk and correctly use their prosthesis. The centre can accommodate some 50 amputees in its dormitory during the fitting period. Physical rehabilitation services are provided by two graduate prosthetists/orthothists, five bench technicians and three physiotherapist assistants.

Besides the production and fitting of the prostheses, the centre also trains amputees on how to best use their new artificial limbs. Therefore, depending on the level of amputation, a patient remains in the centre between ten to twenty days.

To ensure access for regular assessments and maintenance, amputees have the possibility to have their artificial limbs repaired at two workshops located in Malipo, Wenshan prefecture and Kaiyuan, Honghe prefecture.

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All prostheses, walking aids and wheelchairs as well as lodging are provided free of charge. The Yunnan Provincial Red Cross also reimburses the patient's travel costs.

The beneficiaries

The centre prioritizes services to amputees who are victims of the conflict between China and Vietnam in 1979, but also services destitute disabled who cannot afford basic prosthetic care.



A bench technician aligns a trans-femoral prosthesis at the centre's orthopaedic workshop



During a follow-up outreach visit a national physiotherapist-assistant assesses a group of women, victims of landmines

The selection of amputees is carried out by the local Red Cross branches, who visit villages to identify and register amputees. So far, 1080 amputees in Wenshan and Honghe prefectures have been identified. Another 500 patients have been selected in the four prefectures or districts along the Myanmar border.

The ICRC's role

The ICRC provided the initial know-how and equipment to set up the centre; in particular it has supplied the technology to manufacture low-cost, quality prostheses based on award-winning polypropylene technology. ICRC maintains a regular presence of orthopaedic and physiotherapy specialists, who oversee the production and fitting of artificial limbs, as well as training in gait exercises which are designed to help amputees adjust to the use of their prostheses. This presence of specialists has been main-

tained to build the capacity of the Yunnan Provincial Red Cross to ensure regular and adequate physical rehabilitation services.

Outlook

The ICRC's technical and financial support for the centre is planned to cease in 2008 when the Yunnan Provincial Red Cross will take over the management of the centre. In the meantime, ICRC will focus on facilitating access of amputees from remote areas, whilst maintaining the quality and continuity of the services of the centre.



First steps of a trans-femoral amputee at the centre's physiotherapy department

MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



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COVERING

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ICRC regional delegation ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre