

Annual Report 2023

Center for Rehabilitation in Global Health Systems



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1 Summary

The University of Lucerne's Center for Rehabilitation in Global Health Systems (CRGHS), established in October 2017, is hosted by the department of rehabilitation and functioning sciences of the Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine. In 2023, the CRGHS, led by three co-directors with support from a coordinator and an administrative assistant, included 18 members and a scientific advisory board of seven experts.

During 2023, the CRGHS is in its second four-year designation period as a WHO Collaborating Center. This collaboration involved active engagement with established Terms of Reference (TORs), focusing on key WHO initiatives such as "Rehabilitation 2030," the "Make Listening Safe" initiative, and the "UN/WHO Decade of Healthy Aging."

The pivotal year of 2023 witnessed significant advancements in the field of rehabilitation. The 194 member states of the World Health Assembly unanimously endorsed the landmark Resolution on "Strengthening Rehabilitation in Health System". Additionally, the third global meeting of the WHO initiative Rehabilitation 2030 and the official launch of the World Rehabilitation Alliance, of which the CRGHS is a member, marked significant milestones. Actively participating in these events, the Center dedicated substantial efforts and organized activities related to the Rehabilitation Resolution.

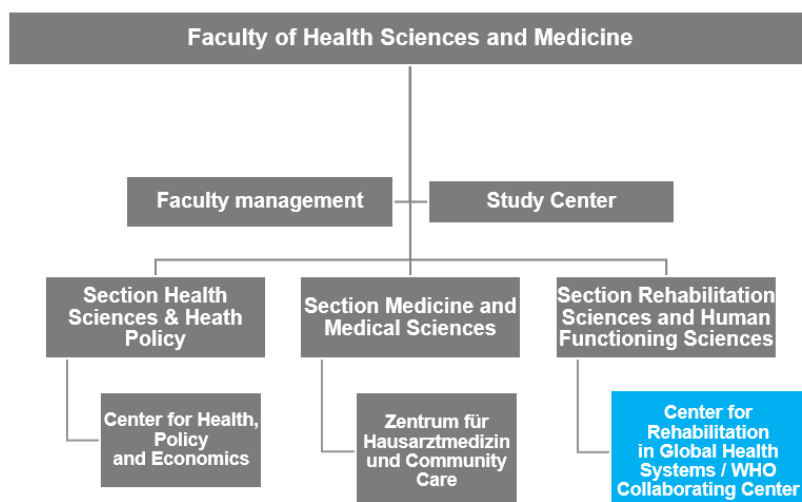
Furthermore, in 2023, the CRGHS made noteworthy contributions to academic literature in the field of rehabilitation, publishing thirteen articles and editorials under its affiliation.

The Center for Rehabilitation in Global Health Systems' major goals are to pursue educational, research and implementation activities leading to the development of expertise and the know-how necessary to strengthen rehabilitation in global health systems.

2 Governance, members, advisory board

2.1 Governance

The CRGHS is located in the Section of Rehabilitation and Functioning Sciences in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine (as of February 2023) as is demonstrated in the following organigram:



2.2 Directorate CRGHS 2023

Name	Affiliation	E-Mail Address
Gerold Stucki Director CRGHS Head of WHO Collaborating Center	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine, Rehabilitation Sciences and Human Functioning Sciences	gerold.stucki@unilu.ch
Carla Sabariego Co-Director CRGHS Co-Head of WHO Collaborating Center	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine, Rehabilitation Sciences and Human Functioning Sciences	carla.sabariego@unilu.ch
Peter Kirchschräger Co-Director CRGHS	University of Lucerne Faculty of Theology, Institute of Social Ethics	peter.kirchschräger@unilu.ch

2.3 Administration CRGHS 2023

Name	Affiliation	E-Mail Address
Roxanne Maritz Coordinator (maternity leave until April 2023)	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine, Rehabilitation Sciences and Human Functioning Sciences	roxanne.maritz@unilu.ch
Daniela Dombrowski Coordinator (Maternity replacement)	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine, Rehabilitation Sciences and Human Functioning Sciences	daniela.dombrowski@unilu.ch
Colette Lenherr Administrative Assistant	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine, Rehabilitation Sciences and Human Functioning Sciences	colette.lenherr@unilu.ch

2.4 Members CRGHS 2023

Name	Affiliation
Jerome Bickenbach	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine
Diana Pacheco	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine
Vanessa Seijas	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine
Sara Rubinelli	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine
Stefan Boes	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine
Sarah Mantwill	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine
Nicola Diviani	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine
Bernhard Rüttsche	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Law
Mira Burri	University of Lucerne, Faculty of Law
Oliver Stoller	ETH Zürich, Competence Centre for Rehabilitation Engineering and Science
Urban Schwegler	Swiss Paraplegic Research, Nottwil, Arbeit und soziale Integration
Anke Scheel-Sailer	Swiss Paraplegic Centre, Nottwil, Paraplegiologie
Claudio Perret	Swiss Paraplegic Research, Nottwil, Neuromuskuloskeletal Functioning and Mobility
Thomas Nyffeler	Lucerne Cantonal Hospital, Neurorehabilitation/Research
Christian Sturzenegger	SUVA, Chief Medical Officer, Rehaklinik Bellikon
Jan Reinhardt	Sichuan University, Chengdu, China, Institute for Disaster Management & Reconstruction
Birgit Prodingler	Universität Augsburg, Medical Faculty
Reuben Escorpizo	University of Vermont, Department of Rehabilitation and Movement Sciences

2.5 Advisory Board CRGHS 2023

Name	Affiliation
Melanie Behr	Quality Management, REHAB Basel
Mirjam Brach	Swiss Paraplegic Research, Nottwil
Stephanie Christensen	Versorgungsmonitoring, Gesundheitsdepartement Kanton Basel-Stadt
Dorothee Guggisberg	Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Art, Division Social Work
Claudia Gabriel	Neurorehabilitation, Luzerner Kantonsspital
Luise Menzi	Soziale Arbeit, Berner Fachhochschule
Robert Riener	ETH Zurich, Competence Centre for Rehabilitation Engineering and Science (RESC)

2.6 Regulations

The [CRGHS Regulations](#) were adapted to the new Faculty Governance structure, in contrast to its former Department structure.

3 CRGHS activities and projects

3.1 Educational activities

MOOC ICF-StARS Course

In 2022, the Swiss National Science Foundation provided extra funding for a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) related to the NRP 74 StARS project. Using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and innovative statistical methods, the project showcased the creation of a Standardized Assessment and Reporting System (StARS) for rehabilitation functioning information. The ICF-StARS methodology, incorporating qualitative and quantitative methods like ICF-linking and Rasch analysis, facilitates harmonization and standardization of functioning information across various datasets and assessment tools.

The ICF-StARS MOOC aims to highlight the significance of standardized assessment and reporting in the health system, demonstrate StARS development, and explore potential applications. The target audience includes stakeholders involved in or assessing functioning information, such as healthcare professionals, quality managers, clinic management, government officials, health insurance officers, health science researchers, and students. The course spans over 5 weeks with a workload of approximately 30 hours, equivalent to 1 ECTS.

In 2023, two course runs of the ICF-StARS MOOC took place. The first course run in May 2023 had 92 participants, while the second course run in September 2023 had 122 participants. Both courses attracted international participants from various regions worldwide, including diverse healthcare professionals, government representatives, and NGO staff.

In 2024, there will be two more course runs, one in April/May and one in August/September. Additional information on the course and registration can be found [here](#).

CAS Programme Rehabilitation Management and Clinical Rehabilitation

Two directors and the coordinator of the CRGHS were involved in the development of the CAS Program in Rehabilitation Management and Clinical Rehabilitation, a collaborative effort with the University of Lucerne, Swiss Paraplegic Centre, and Suva.

The objectives of the CAS are to empower individuals to assume active and leadership roles as specialists in clinical rehabilitation management within an interprofessional rehabilitation setting. Additionally, the goal is to establish partnerships and build a network within the Swiss health and rehabilitation sector. The content of the CAS covers topics such as rehabilitation in health systems, functionality, insurance and reintegration, and interdisciplinary care in rehabilitation. The target audience includes healthcare professionals, individuals responsible for quality management and insurance, as well as those interested in the Swiss health and rehabilitation sector.

The CAS Programme is scheduled to commence in March 2025 and will undergo further development and promotion throughout 2024. More information on the program can be found [here](#).

Joint Lecture Series CRGHS & RESC

In 2023, the CRGHS organized and conducted an online Lecture Series in collaboration with the Competence Centre for Rehabilitation Engineering and Science (RESC) from ETH Zurich. The series, titled "Strengthening Rehabilitation

in Switzerland - Research and Aspects of Implementation," comprised five online lectures held in November and December 2023. The lectures covered different dimensions of health system building blocks, addressing topics such as the shortage of rehabilitation professionals, WHO's Package of Interventions for Rehabilitation, innovative technologies for strengthening rehabilitation services, rehabilitation within Swiss health information systems, and financing mechanisms in Switzerland. Renowned speakers from Switzerland, representing academia and health systems stakeholders, presented these lectures. For additional information on the lectures and respective recordings, please refer to the [Activities Section on our CRGHS homepage](#).

3.2 Research Activities

Many different research activities were conducted and facilitated by the CRGHS in 2023, three of which are presented in more detail in the purpose of the 2023 annual report:

- A national stakeholder consultation on Swiss rehabilitation stakeholders' perceptions of the relevance, opportunities, and challenges of the WHO's Rehabilitation Resolution in Switzerland through an online survey. The survey, ongoing as of the report release in February 2024, has garnered over 250 responses, covering a representative sample of various health professionals and language regions in Switzerland.
- A scoping review (WHO CC Task) aiming to describe rehabilitation delivery models utilized to optimize the functioning/functional ability of the ageing population and promote healthy ageing. The review included 283 articles, offering a comprehensive overview of six delivery models used for rehabilitation in the ageing population. It highlighted research gaps, such as the absence of systematic assessment of functioning/functional ability, a prevalence of disease-centred rehabilitation, and a scarcity of programs addressing common issues like pain, hearing/vision loss, fall prevention, incontinence, and sexual dysfunctions.
- An international stakeholder consultation for Rehabilitation and Healthy Ageing (WHO CC task). In collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the CRGHS conducted a global online survey consultation on the current delivery of rehabilitation for individuals aged 60+. Available in all WHO official languages and German, the survey addressed challenges outlined in the United Nations and WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030). The survey, closed in December 2023, received an impressive 3000+ responses, and its results should complement findings of the scoping reviews.

3.3 Other activities

World Rehabilitation Alliance

The World Rehabilitation Alliance (WRA) network, hosted by WHO for stakeholders to promote rehabilitation, expand their professional network and share experiences. The WRA's mission is to support the implementation of the Rehabilitation 2030 Initiative through advocacy activities. The CRGHS became a member upon its establishment in 2022. In 2023, the WRA was officially launched at the first WRA meeting in July, with representation from the CRGHS. During 2023, the CRGHS actively contributed to the WRA working group focusing on advocacy for health systems and policy research in rehabilitation. This effort resulted in the publication of [an editorial](#) advocating for health systems and policy research for strengthening rehabilitation in health systems, which was featured in over 30 international and national journals in the field of rehabilitation. Additionally, [a workshop](#) introducing health systems and policy research to WRA members was organized as a tangible outcome of the working group's efforts.

Guidance Note on Rehabilitation Advocacy

The CRGHS contributed to a Guidance Note for in-country advocates: "[Using the World Health Assembly Resolution as a tool to strengthen local and national advocacy for rehabilitation](#)".

This Guidance Note is the result of a long and collaborative process, initiated and guided by the Learning, Acting, and Building for Rehabilitation in Health Systems (ReLAB-HS) Initiative. The guidance note is available in English, French and Spanish. On the same webpage, one can also find a short introductory video and a survey to help the readers identify the most relevant section(s) of the Guidance Note, according to the contexts where they advocate.

Preparation of the LIFE Forum event

Together with the Lucerne Initiative for Functioning, Health, and Well-being (LIFE) the CRGHS played a key role in organizing the inaugural LIFE Forum Rehabilitation event, which took place at the University of Lucerne on February 15th, 2024 with the topic "The WHO resolution *Strengthening Rehabilitation in Health Systems* What does this mean for Switzerland?"

4 Current activities and projects WHO CC

The CRGHS is currently in its second designation period as a WHO Collaborating Centre (WHO CC) for the years 2022-2026, affiliated with the World Health Organization (WHO) Department for Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability, Violence, and Injury Prevention, Unit for Disability and Rehabilitation. The workplan for the second designation period consists of the following three Terms of Reference (TORs). TOR 1 and TOR 2 were established in collaboration with the WHO Headquarters in Geneva, while TOR 3 involves a collaborative project with the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

TOR 1:	Contribute, under WHO's leadership, to the implementation of the WHO "Rehabilitation 2030: A Call for Action" initiative.
TOR 2:	At WHO's request, provide input towards the development of health communications for WHO's "Make Listening Safe" initiative.
TOR 3:	Contribute, in agreement with WHO's healthy ageing agenda in the scope of the "2021-2030 UN Decade of Healthy Ageing"

5 Outreach activities

5.1 Publications 2023 (CRGHS members and affiliates displayed in bold)

- Kiekens, C., Duttine, A., Mishra, S., & **Sabariago, C.** (2023). Health systems, rehabilitation care and COVID-19: Challenges and opportunities. *Frontiers in rehabilitation sciences*, 4, 1134461. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fresc.2023.113446>
- Gosling, J.**, Kleinitz, P., Quinn, M., & Mishra, S. (2023). Health Emergencies Provide an Opportunity to Strengthen Rehabilitation within Health Systems. *Health systems and reform*, 9(1), 2207306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23288604.2023.2207306>
- Seijas, V.**, Kiekens, C., & Gimigliano, F. (2023). Advancing the World Health Assembly's landmark Resolution on Strengthening Rehabilitation in Health Systems: unlocking the Future of Rehabilitation. *European journal of physical and rehabilitation medicine*, 59(4), 447–451. <https://doi.org/10.23736/S1973-9087.23.08160-1>
- Mishra, S., **Gosling, J.**, Laplante-Lévesque, A., Zapata, T., & Azzopardi Muscat, N. (2022). The need for rehabilitation services in the WHO European Region is substantial and growing. *The Lancet regional health. Europe*, 24, 100550. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanepe.2022.100550>
- Mishra, S., **Gosling, J.**, & Laplante-Lévesque, A. (2023). The game changing year for rehabilitation in the WHO European Region?. *Disability and rehabilitation*, 45(20), 3407–3408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2023.2210308>
- Bernard, R. M., **Seijas, V.**, Davis, M., Volkova, A., **Diviani, N.**, Lüscher, J., & **Sabariago, C.** (2023). Mobile Health Self-management Support for Spinal Cord Injury: Systematic Literature Review. *JMIR mHealth and uHealth*, 11, e42679. <https://doi.org/10.2196/42679>
- Seijas, V.**, Hrzic, K. M., Neculhueque, X. Z., & **Sabariago, C.** (2023). Improving Access to and Coverage of Rehabilitation Services through the Implementation of Rehabilitation in Primary Health Care: A Case Study from Chile. *Health systems and reform*, 9(1), 2242114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23288604.2023.2242114>
- Gosling, J.**, Peterson, C., Quinn, M., Tofani, M., & Mishra, S. (2023). We have a duty to promote disability inclusive refugee responses to achieve the highest attainable standard of health in the European region. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, 381, 1416. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.p1416>
- Oña, A., Athanasios, K., Tederko, P., **Escorpizo, R.**, Arora, M., Sturm, C., Yang, S., & **Barzallo, D. P.** (2023). Unmet healthcare needs and health inequalities in people with spinal cord injury: a direct regression inequality decomposition. *International journal for equity in health*, 22(1), 56. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-023-01848-z>
- Raguindin, P. F., Mueller, G., Stoyanov, J., Eriks-Hoogland, I., Jordan, X., Stojic, S., Hund-Georgiadis, M., Muka, T., **Stucki, G.**, Glisic, M., & SwiSCI Study Group (2023). Burden of Cardiovascular Risk in Individuals With Spinal Cord Injury and Its Association With Rehabilitation Outcomes: Results From the Swiss Spinal Cord Injury Cohort. *American journal of physical medicine & rehabilitation*, 102(12), 1043–1054. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PHM.0000000000002276>
- Sabariago, C.**, Ehrmann, C., **Bickenbach, J.**, **Pacheco Barzallo, D.**, Schedin Leiufrud, A., Strøm, V., Osterthun, R., Tederko, P., **Seijas, V.**, Eriks-Hoogland, I., Le Fort, M., Gonzalez Viejo, M. A., Bökel, A., Popa, D., Dionyssiotis, Y., Baricich, A., Jucevicius, A., Amico, P., & **Stucki, G.** (2023). Ageing, functioning patterns and their environmental determinants in the spinal cord injury (SCI) population: A comparative analysis across eleven European countries implementing the International Spinal Cord Injury Community Survey. *PloS one*, 18(4), e0284420. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0284420>

- Diaz, M. A., **Bickenbach, J. E., Sabariego, C.,** & Bernard, R. M. (2023). Qualitative methodological approaches involving participants with intellectual disabilities: Scoping review of literature exploring death and dying. *Journal of applied research in intellectual disabilities*. JARID, 10.1111/jar.13119. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.13119>
- Ruoss, M., **Brach, M., & Pacheco Barzallo, D.** (2023). Labor market costs for long-term family caregivers: the situation of caregivers of persons with spinal cord injury in Switzerland. *BMC health services research*, 23(1), 676. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-023-09565-7>

5.2 Conferences and WHO Meetings

- World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, 21-30 May, 2023. Stucki G., Role: Participation
- WHO 2030 Meeting in Geneva, 10-11 July, 2023. Rubinelli S. Role: Presentation The power of advocacy. Bickenbach J., Sabariego C., Stucki G., Role: Participation
- WRA Meeting in Geneva, 12-13 July, 2023. Bickenbach J., Diviani N., Maritz R., Rubinelli S., Sabariego C., Seijas V., Stucki G, Role: Participation.
- Annual Meeting CRGHS & WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 23 August 2023. Bickenbach J., Maritz R., Sabariego C., Stucki G.
- WHO Regional Summit on Healthy Ageing in Lisbon, 10-11 October, 2023. Sabariego C., Seijas V. Role: Session Lead on Rehabilitation Services and Healthy Ageing.
- EURO WHO Nursing & Midwifery Collaborating Centers' Meeting (online), 9 November, 2023. Maritz R., Seijas V. Role: Presentation on CRGHS efforts on Rehabilitation and Healthy Ageing.

5.3 Consultation and working groups

- WRA Working Group on Health Systems and Policy Research for Rehabilitation, monthly meetings, Member: Maritz R.
- Member of the WHO Consortium of Metrics and Evidence for Healthy Ageing of the former WHO Department of Healthy Ageing since 2021: Sabariego C.
- Member of the research work stream of the World Rehabilitation Alliance since 2023: Sabariego C.
- Expert reviewer of several WHO Rehabilitation 2030 tools, including the Rehabilitation Indicators Menu and the Rehabilitation in Health Financing: Sabariego C.

5.4 Events held by the CRGHS

- Co-Organization of World Health Assembly side event “Strengthening Rehabilitation in Health Systems – Responding to the new WHA Resolution”, Geneva, 25 May 2023, with Stucki G. as a panellist
- CRGHS Member Assembly, University of Lucerne, 28 June 2023
- CAS in Rehabilitation Management and Clinical Rehabilitation Information Event, online, 2 November 2023

5.5 CRGHS Communication channels

Newsletter

Regular CRGHS newsletters were sent out, totalling six in 2023. These newsletters provided information to CRGHS members, the advisory board, and colleagues about current activities and events.

Homepage

The CRGHS homepage was updated in 2023, incorporating new sections related to the annual report, WRA membership, and CRGHS activities, including courses, events, and current projects.

CRGHS LinkedIn Page

Regular LinkedIn posts, with over 40 posts and reposts in 2023, were created to inform the network about CRGHS events, publications, projects, employment opportunities, and other topics connected to the mission of the Center.