

# STRATEGY

## of the European Forum for Research in Rehabilitation (EFRR)





## Introduction and Summary

Founded in 1983, the European Forum for Research in Rehabilitation (EFRR) is now the largest and most well-known multidisciplinary rehabilitation research forum in Europe. The central task of EFRR is to act as an umbrella organization for all researchers and associations in the field of rehabilitation in Europe. For the benefit of people with chronic illnesses, disabilities or at risk for a disability, and their families, EFRR aims to support research and education in all biopsychosocial aspects of rehabilitation. In addition, EFRR aims to improve:

- a) Outcomes and experiences of rehabilitation services;
- b) The standard of social, vocational, health-care and other rehabilitation practice;
- c) The amount, quality and relevance of research into all aspects of rehabilitation.

In summary, EFRR objectives and activities are particularly focused on:

- *Fostering interdisciplinary research based on the biopsychosocial model of health and disability of the World Health Organisation (WHO), thus encouraging rehabilitation research on the domains of impairments of body functions and structures, activity limitations and participation restrictions, as well as the identification and consideration of personal factors, environmental barriers and facilitators. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) is increasingly being applied to provide a framework that can be used for all aspects of rehabilitation across the globe. It enhances and completes the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) of WHO.*
- *Facilitating exchange of information on rehabilitation practice and research*
- *Encouraging the exchange of ideas and the development of strong cross-disciplinary research collaborations and networks to improve rehabilitation research, practice and education.*

Focusing its activities on Europe, the EFRR aims to consider all aspects of rehabilitation of chronic illnesses and disability, which include not only assistive technology, independent living, vocational rehabilitation and return to work programs, but also legal, economic and socio-political aspects of disability. The EFRR and its members contribute to raising awareness and distributing information on rehabilitation research, rehabilitation services and rehabilitation rights of people with chronic illnesses, disabilities and their families.

## EFRR Vision

What EFRR expects to achieve is to:

- Be an important platform for rehabilitation research in Europe and beyond;
- Be an important platform for education in the field of rehabilitation research and service provision;
- Create a strong and sustainable network of researchers and educators in all relevant areas of rehabilitation;
- Promote the application of the WHO bio-psycho-social model in rehabilitation research, practice and education;
- Encourage up-to-date research in the field of rehabilitation;
- Promote evidence-based research on rehabilitation to support rehabilitation practice and health policy.



## EFRR Mission

The EFRR aims to act as a supporting network and serve as a liaison between different (mainly European) stakeholders involved in rehabilitation research and education on rehabilitation practice. These stakeholders include government and non-governmental actors, rehabilitation researchers and practitioners as well as other international (especially European) research associations in the field of rehabilitation and further candidates interested in disability prevention and European wide reliable rehabilitation.

## Supporting rehabilitation research through education

We believe that rehabilitation can be improved through evidence and learning! To support rehabilitation research, EFRR organises a biannual congress aiming to collate and disseminate relevant research on rehabilitation. The purpose of these congresses is to raise awareness of key issues in rehabilitation, prioritise needs for rehabilitation service across Europe more effectively, as well as to share the latest research results on rehabilitation. Evidence based, transparent decisions are essential for policy makers also. The aim of EFRR is therefore to facilitate the dissemination of research that can improve policy and practice.

With the help of education, the EFRR strategic framework and the biopsychosocial model of rehabilitation and rehabilitation itself can be supported not only as a health strategy but also as an inclusion strategy. We believe that by sharing knowledge and information as well as providing education on the needs of people with chronic illnesses and disabilities, we are better able to promote their inclusion into working life and society. To achieve higher productivity and quality in rehabilitation services, EFRR encourages an interdisciplinary, multiprofessional approach. It promotes cooperation and integration of medical and other health care professions in rehabilitation research.

Thus EFRR strongly **supports the World Health Organization in its call for action “Rehabilitation 2030”** which aims to:

- a) *Highlight the increasing needs for rehabilitation,*
- b) *Strengthen the role of rehabilitation, and*
- c) *Support concerted global action towards strengthening rehabilitation in health systems.*

“Rehabilitation 2030 – a call for action” was also the motto of the EFRR Congress 2019.

In order to reach the goals outlined above EFRR developed a strategic framework.

## Strategic Framework of EFRR

EFRR supports research and education in the field of rehabilitation in order to encourage all health care and other professionals and institutions that are active in the field of rehabilitation to provide the best possible, evidence-based services, to the right person at the right time. To ensure participation in all aspects of life for people participating in rehabilitation is one of the main strategic aims of the EFRR.



## Core Strategy

The core strategy of the EFRR includes the following:

- *Research in rehabilitation*  
The main goal of EFRR is to support research on all aspects of rehabilitation. We strongly believe in evidence-based practice and therefore, intend to undertake, support, collate and disseminate high quality, relevant research on rehabilitation.
- *Education on rehabilitation, including rehabilitation research and rehabilitation services* is important not only for people with disabilities but serves also as a reliable prevention strategy as people learn how to better manage their illness thus resulting in better health outcomes. In addition well educated service providers are most likely providing better services. By organizing a biannual congress, workshops, summer schools and presentations, EFRR intends to reach both people with disabilities, those at risk of a disability, rehabilitation service providers but also possible other stakeholders (e.g. other service users, health care providers, policy makers), and those interested in enhancing and disseminating knowledge on rehabilitation in Europe and beyond.

## Supportive Strategy

To support its core strategy, the EFRR Council:

- Ensures that the EFRR website (<https://www.efrr.org>) is up-to-date and transparent to all members;
- Leads a variety of public relation (PR) activities aiming at the promotion of rehabilitation;
- Collaborates with European and other international associations, single experts, stakeholders in the field of rehabilitation research to promote and foster its goals.

Across Europe, rehabilitation services tend to be successful when different stakeholders and advocates from private, public and civil society sectors interact with integrity, accountability, inclusive participation and mechanisms for innovative change. Transformational change occurs through the combination of: programmatic impact in our communities; the ability to influence policy makers and change agents at local, regional, national and European levels; and an enthusiastic, inventive programme of research. Based on these factors innovative solutions can be developed and offered. We seek to work in partnerships to create sustainable change at scale, and are aware that no single group can solve challenges to rehabilitation alone. Building strong policies and influencing legislation on regional, national or also international (European) levels requires involvement and cooperation of all relevant stakeholders.

Particularly EFRR members are motivated professionals to promote information on rehabilitation services and rights at the national and local levels. EFRR offers its members a place where best practices can be exchanged and partnerships can be developed. Moreover all EFRR members are invited to participate in the biannual General Assembly where they can commonly discuss the general policies of the organization and elect the EFRR Council and President.

## EFRR Council

31st of August 2020 (to be revised in 2022).