



A Role Playing Exercise of a Wheelchair Program in Central America

# Wheelchairs for the World

Written by Will DelHagen

This sheet of paper describes your role and gives you instructions. In order to achieve the intention of the exercise, please do not share this paper or discuss the contents with anyone else unless directed to do so by an instructor or these instructions.

After reading these instructions, you will get together with the other people who have been assigned your role to discuss it and make sure everything is clear to you. After this, you will join a group of the other players in this exercise. Your role is listed below:



## ***Paraleptic Wheelchair Rider:***

Simon(a) Silla-de-Ruedas

You are participating, as the character described below, in a meeting with a visitor from the United States, Martin Moneybags. Stay in character and follow the special instructions below.

You are an 18-year-old bus-accident victim with a spinal cord injury that has left you a paraplegic. Your family is very poor and your medical care was only possible through an international health organization. You had completed primary school before your accident, but since then, your time has been spent in the hospital recovering and after that, in a room at your family's house because you have no way to get around. An organization in your country has offered you vocational training, but you need to commute two miles over rough, unpaved and sandy roads to get to and from the classes every day. Without this training you will never be able to find a job and support yourself, so a wheelchair is vital to your hope of being reintegrated into society. You have no income yourself, so you have absolutely no money to pay for a chair.

During your time in the hospital, you witnessed many disabled people who returned to the hospital for treatment of pressure sores and other potentially fatal complications of inappropriate or poorly fitting chairs. Since your accident, you are keenly aware of every wheelchair and every disabled person you see. You have lost count of all of the old broken wheelchairs you have seen because they were not built to withstand the rough terrain of your country. And now the riders who rode those chairs are back to dragging themselves along on the ground, if they get out at all. You know that you could never make it even 100 yards outside of your house in one of those chairs that was built for pushing grandmothers around on the smooth linoleum floor of a hospital.

### Special Instructions:

Only provide information in response to direct questions. Do not offer additional information beyond what is specifically asked of you.