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## Life Line Consultancy and Rehabilitation

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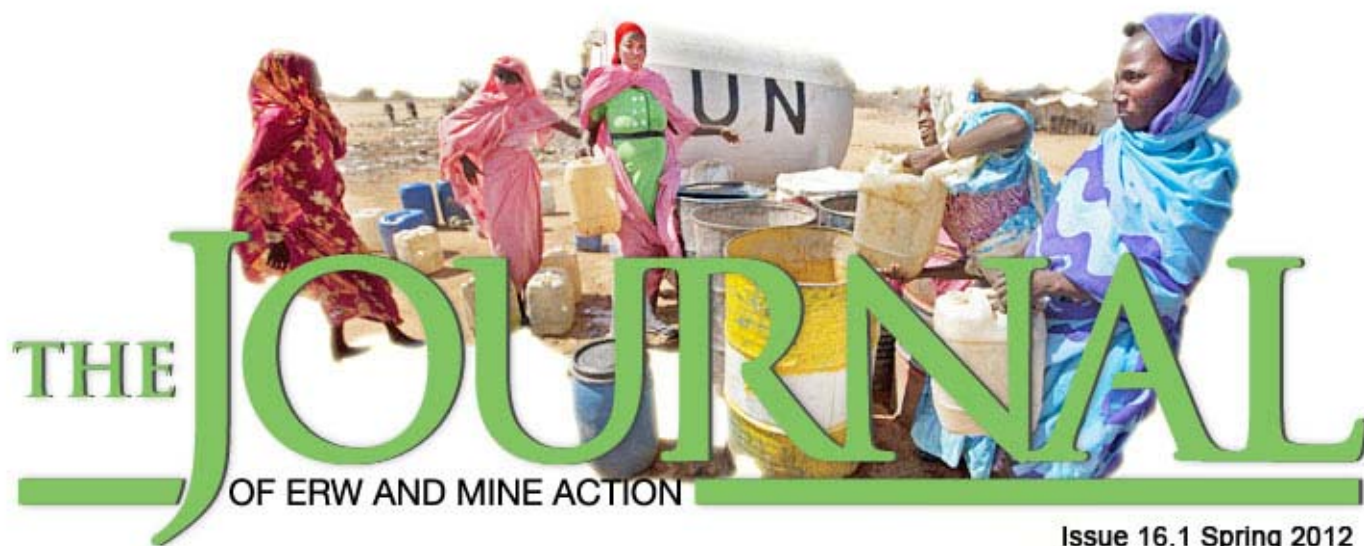
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## Life Line Consultancy and Rehabilitation

At the age of 14, Kamel Saadi became a landmine survivor and amputee. On 16 March 1979, Saadi was enjoying a barbecue picnic with family and friends near Umm Qais, an area along the Jordanian-Israeli border contaminated with landmines from Jordan's conflicts with Israel during the 1960s and 1970s. While walking along a hilly pathway, he stepped on a rock concealing a landmine that caused severe damage to his foot; eight hours later, doctors amputated his left foot.<sup>1</sup>

In the coming years, Saadi underwent rehabilitation and networked with other amputees. In 1985, he had to terminate his college studies at Glendale Community College in Los Angeles, California (U.S.), to return home for a third amputation to reach an eight-inch below-the-knee stump (a so-called perfect amputation).

Inspired by his and others' experiences, he founded Life Line Consultancy and Rehabilitation in 2007 to provide assistance to other landmine survivors and persons with disabilities. LLCR is a Jordanian national nonprofit that assists survivors with their physical, emotional and financial needs, while also striving to educate the public about persons with disabilities (particularly amputees regardless of the cause) and landmine hazards through mine-risk education.<sup>2</sup> LLCR comprises a three-person staff and contracts with others when needed depending on the projects. According to Saadi, "Our style is based on simplicity, heart to heart, direct interaction, involving professional knowledge based on specific demands, and the provision of immediate needs; a hug or a handshake to your surprise may often be an immediate need."<sup>3</sup>

### Mission

LLCR's mission is to instill self-confidence in survivors and help them reach their goals and objectives by utilizing their capabilities. LLCR aims to create an atmosphere that encourages landmine/explosive remnants of war survivors and other amputees to be independent, productive members of society. Its training, rehabilitation and confidence-building courses, consultations and workshops seek to address survivors' needs beyond physical rehabilitation. For successful



reintegration into communities, LLCR helps create conditions within remote areas that allow survivors with limb loss and/or deformities to obtain their required care.<sup>2</sup>

LLCR employs various creative outlets, such as painting, drawing, sculpture, mosaic and carving into rehabilitation. In addition, it uses theatrical production to teach schoolchildren in Jordan's mine-affected regions how to identify and avoid the threat of ERW. LLCR developed a play called "We Love Life" in 2008 in partnership with James Madison University's Center for International Stabilization and Recovery in response to Jordan's landmine-stricken communities, their critical need for mine-risk education and the hopes of preventing future landmine incidents.<sup>4,5</sup> Jordanian survivors and amputees serve as actors in the play. In addition to creating opportunities for survivors to find themselves through the theater, this project helps create job opportunities for them in the arts business. LLCR and CISR worked closely with Jordan's National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation which provided guidance regarding landmine incidents and assisted with selection of performance locations and implementation of the project.<sup>6</sup>

The play's success led to the incorporation of MRE into Jordan's local schools' art and theater programs in mine-affected areas. Evidence of "We Love Life's" success could be observed in the children's art projects, which demonstrated a heightened understanding of the play's key messages. "We Love Life" was financially supported by a grant CISR secured from the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA). It was performed in Jordan for two years, in 2009 and 2010, with 29 performances.

Although created specifically for Jordan, "We Love Life" is not exclusive to the country. According to Saadi, "The play is always tailor-made to fit the mine-awareness needs of each country and community."<sup>3</sup> In 2011, a "We Love Life-Hammana" was created and held during CISR's Pathways to Resilience program in Hammana, Lebanon. Pathways to Resilience is an experience-based learning workshop LLCR helped design in partnership with CISR to address the psychosocial needs of survivors through reflective observations, the managing of new emotions and making sense of traumatic events.<sup>7,8</sup> It also was supported by a grant from PM/WRA.

In 2011, LLCR expanded its MRE on an exploratory mission to the Amazon region in Peru. Accompanied by The Polus Center for Social and Economic Development, LLCR departed from Lima, Peru, via plane, then traveled by bus, car and boat, and more than 24 hours later arrived at a remote location at the confluence of the Rio Santiago and the Amazon rivers. The Peru *Contraminas* team led the mission. Saadi says, "We interacted with the community, delivered mine awareness to [more than] 250 schoolchildren and gave advice about ... proper interaction with amputees/disabled members of the community to children and community members and leaders."<sup>3</sup> LLCR also held a brief "We Love Life" discussion, where Saadi and two Amazonian teenage students expressed the importance of mine awareness and safe behavior when living in a contaminated area.

### Looking Ahead

LLCR continues to implement the strategic approaches of Pathways to Resilience and "We Love Life" in its ongoing efforts. Saadi hopes to combine the two projects into one program and reach other mine-affected areas such as Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan, Libya, Palestine, Sudan, Yemen and "anywhere we could be of any use and help to the people."<sup>3</sup> Returning to South America is also a possibility. LLCR plans to branch out into prosthetic development as well, and Saadi dreams of a "whole-package" prosthetic center offering not only prosthetics but athletics, art, psychological and physical therapy, peer support, gait training, selective challenges and social and economic reintegration. "LLCR has just begun," Saadi says.<sup>3</sup> ↴

~ Amy Crockett, CISR staff

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### Endnotes

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