

The Educator



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See pages 27-32 for
important information
on ICEVI's 12th World
Conference

Sports and Recreation for Persons with Visual Impairment

Playing the game of your life

A Publication of



The International Council for Education of
People with Visual Impairment

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ICEVI: PREPARING TO THE LAUNCH THE EFA CAMPAIGN

Ever since ICEVI developed its strategic plan in 2002, one of its main objectives was to launch a global campaign to facilitate education for all children with visual impairment by 2015. A draft paper was discussed at the executive committee meeting of ICEVI held in Kuala Lumpur in 2004 and it was refined on the basis of the suggestions of the members. In the process, the paper also accommodated ideas of the joint educational policy statement of the ICEVI and World Blind Union and also the joint educational policy of the CBM and Sight Savers. ICEVI took the lead to prepare the draft INGO strategy paper on education to increase the services to children with visual impairment at the country levels. Leading organisations such as the World Blind Union, CBM, Sight Savers International, Norwegian Association for the Blind and Partially Sighted, Overbrook School for the Blind, Perkins School for the Blind, Foundation Dark and Light Blindcare, etc., along with ICEVI will be meeting in Madrid in late 2005 to chalk out detailed plans of action to take this EFA campaign to the grassroot levels. The summary of the draft paper circulated to the international umbrella organisations and also to the Non-Governmental Development Organisations is presented here for the benefit of the readers of *The Educator*.

Global Campaign for providing Education For All Children with Visual Impairment – What, Why, and How? - Executive Summary

Background

Since 1990, a global initiative led by The World Bank, UNICEF and UNESCO has been underway to ensure universal access to primary education to all children. This effort, commonly referred to as "Education for All" (EFA) has secured the commitment of all governments to assure universal access to primary education by 2015.

What is the ICEVI "EFA-VI Campaign"?

With less than 10% of children with visual impairment in most developing countries having access to any form of education, ICEVI feels that a global campaign needs to be launched to call world attention to this fact and to assure educational equity for all children with visual impairment by 2015.

Who will be involved?

ICEVI envisions a global initiative involving the international community concerned with the needs of persons with visual impairment along with intergovernmental organizations, national governments and local non-government agencies concerned with general and special education.

How will it work?

In each country the central focal point of the campaign will be a multi-sectoral National Task Force. The work of National Task Forces will be assisted by a Global Task Force and Regional Steering Committees.

What areas will require attention?

Since the current situation will vary widely from country-to-country, it is not possible to define the full range of needs at this stage. However, based upon best available current evidence, ICEVI anticipates that to achieve the goal of educational equity National Task Forces will need to address the following:

- a clear needs assessment,
- policy formulation,
- awareness creation,
- early identification,
- development of educational service delivery models,
- human resource development,
- provision of specialised educational materials and equipment,
- adequate financial resource mobilisation, and
- monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

A campaign of this magnitude will require significant resource mobilisation both at the international and local levels. ICEVI anticipates that once awareness of need and the objectives of the EFA campaign are made known, significant support can be generated from International Non-Government Organizations, Foundations, Corporations, and national and local organisations who share our vision of educational equity for all children and youth with visual impairment.



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Message from the President

Washington, Maine
July 21, 2005



Larry Campbell
President

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

When I looked at my "to do" list this morning, completing a final review of this issue of *The Educator* and preparing this message was on the top of that list. However, I also had a nagging feeling that something else about today's date seemed to have a familiar ring to it. What was it? A few minutes later I made the connection. Exactly one year from today our 12th

World Conference will come to a close along with my term as your President. They say time seems to move more quickly the older you get and the past three years have melted away faster than a pound of butter on hot stove.

This issue of **The Educator**, dedicated to the topic of "sports and leisure" is the product of ICEVI's collaboration with IBSA and is another example of how, over the course of the current quadrennium, ICEVI has developed a series of active partnerships; all of which share the same goal; to expand equity to children with visual impairment no matter where they live in this world. Our active collaboration with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), Deafblind International (DBI) and the World Blind Union (WBU) are showing good results. In November, a group of international non-government organizations working to improve the situation of children with visual impairment along with the partners mentioned above will meet in Spain to craft a global campaign that will focus on bringing about dramatic changes for these children and their families in the decade ahead. A concept paper that has been developed by the ICEVI Executive Committee is now being reviewed by all involved partners and we hope to announce and introduce this exciting global initiative at the 12th World Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

Speaking of the 12th World Conference, I want to call to our attention to the information you will find in this issue of **The Educator** regarding our conference. Prof. Ismail Salleh and the Host Committee at the Malaysian Association for the Blind has been doing a tremendous amount of work to prepare for what I expect to be our largest and best world conference ever. They have kept registration costs affordable and the hotels are top-notch facilities adjacent to the Putra World Trade Center and as you will see are available at very reasonable cost. Those of you who have never been to Malaysia are in for a special treat and I guarantee a year from now you will all understand why Malaysia has become one of the top tourist destinations in Asia. Add to all of this Heather Mason as Program Committee chair and you know that you will be participants in a professional program of the highest quality.

It gives me great pleasure to tell you that the "Scholarship Committee" headed by our Treasurer, Mrs. Grace Chan has exceeded our target of \$150,000 to support participants who

would otherwise be unable to join us. The fact that we have achieved this goal more than a year ahead of our conference means that our Regional Committees will have the time they need to be sure that those funds are most effectively used to support persons who not only demonstrate need but are in a position to make solid contributions to the conference program. Each ICEVI Regional Committee now knows what their regions allocation will be and has been given the responsibility of screening and identifying those that will receive support from this fund.

During this quadrennium ICEVI has made significant strides forward and I expect this momentum to continue and to accelerate in the years ahead. However, we can only continue this momentum with your active involvement and support. I hope that many of you who read this message will make a special effort to be with us in Kuala Lumpur and to be part of the planning process that will move this organization onward and upward in the years ahead.

I also want to use this message to call your attention to some important developments between ICEVI, UNESCO and UNICEF. In this issue you will read about a recent meeting that our Secretary General, Dr. Mani and the Immediate Past President of WBU, Mrs. Kicki Nordstrom had in Paris with officials of UNESCO. I would like all of you, particularly those working in developing countries will read about some important progress that has been made with UNICEF. Dr. Susan Spungin, ICEVI's North America-Caribbean regional chair very kindly filled in for me at a recent meeting with Ms. Ann Veneman, UNICEF's new Executive Director. Susan and June Waugh, Chair, WBU Committee on Children have done a fine job of convincing UNICEF of the need to develop a Committee on the Disability with the NGO Committee of UNICEF. This is indeed an important step forward and June Waugh and I along with representatives from other organizations concerned with the needs of disabled children will be at UNICEF for further discussions on August 8th.

While we have much to be thankful for and gratified by; the sad fact is that the vast majority of children with visual impairment still live without access to education. This means that we must redouble our determination to change this situation. The global campaign we will launch in 2006 to create "educational equity for all" will require every available human and material resource we can bring to bear on this challenge. I ask you to become an active partner in this process and I hope ICEVI can count on your support.

Sincerely,

Larry Campbell
President

Message from the Editor



Steve McCall
Editor

I was delighted when I heard the news that IBSA had entered into an agreement with ICEVI to collaborate on an edition of the Educator dedicated to sport for people with visual impairment. I love sport and it has always played a big part in my life both as a participant and spectator.

In sport, as in many things in my life, I was always an enthusiastic rather than a skilful participant. My favourite sport has always been football (or “soccer” if you live in the USA). In spite of my technical limitations, I was able to play amateur football for forty five years and even now still play occasionally with other old men who find it equally hard to give up the game. For me it didn't really matter that I wasn't particularly good, I just loved to play. My sport gave me fulfilment, friendship, fun, it kept me fit (apart from three broken legs) and when I played I was totally immersed. Talking about the game with teammates afterwards, and reliving moments from the game, were almost as much fun as playing itself.

As a sports spectator I have been a fan of my home town team Liverpool FC since early childhood when my dad first took me to see Liverpool play. A few weeks ago Liverpool became European Champions, coming back to win in miraculous fashion after being three goals down at half time in the final. The sense of identity that people had with their team manifested itself in celebrations that lasted for days. An estimated half a million fans turned out to greet their heroes on their return to Liverpool.

So as you can gather I need no persuading of the benefits that sport can bring and the power it has to move people. I wouldn't go as far as Bill Shankly, a legendary manager, who once joked that “Football is not a matter of life or death – it's much more important than that!” however I do believe that sport has the power to help us to fulfil ourselves in a unique way and that all children should have the opportunity to participate to the best of their ability. As spectators, players or administrators, people with visual impairment can become directly involved in achieving personal fulfilment through activities that provide direct social and emotional engagement with their peers.

In their article about soccer for the blind, Gabriel Mayr and Eveline Ribeiro make a strong case for seeing football (and by extension sport in general) as a powerful vehicle for the social inclusion of people with a visual impairment. A passion for watching and playing football cuts across all social boundaries in Brazil and the authors illustrate through some telling interviews, how the opportunity to play the “Beautiful Game” has changed the lives of people who are blind giving them direct

physical and psychological benefits that spill over into their everyday lives.

At the highest levels sport now offers the opportunity for people with a visual impairment to gain national recognition of their achievements through the olympic movement. IBSA has been a catalyst for developing and promoting participation of people with visual impairment in international sport and in this issue IBSA illustrates how a range of games have been adapted to ensure exciting and fair competition. It is important that we encourage children to play sport, primarily because it is fun but also because of the benefits it brings. Not everyone can be an olympic champion but everyone needs to know that the opportunity to be a champion is there if they are good enough. By removing the barriers to involvement in sport IBSA has enabled young people with visual impairment to live the dream of achievement at the highest level. Only a few can be the best in the world but everyone deserves the opportunity to the best they can.

Not all sporting activities are concerned with competing with others and in this edition we look at Mountaineering, a pursuit that pits the individual against the environment. We see in the article by *Hena Basu*, the wide range of benefits that mountaineering brings to both children with visual impairment and to their guides. It is great to read that the initiative has the full support of national and international mountaineering organisations and I'm sure you will want to help the efforts of the Society for the Visually handicapped to secure the future of this exciting development.

We also look at a well established sport for people with a visual impairment: golf. The article by *David Blyth*, president of the International Blind Golf Association provides some excellent pointers for all you would-be Tiger Woods or weekend hackers. Thanks also to Oral Miller for a fascinating article.

It could be argued that children with visual impairment have a greater need for sport than sighted children. We know that in reality without an early introduction to sport they are likely to become more passive and sedentary in adulthood, missing out on many social opportunities that sport provides. In the crowded curriculum of mainstream schools it is all too often physical education lessons that children with visual impairment are withdrawn from to enable them to attend lessons in mobility or other areas of the additional curriculum. Even some out of school sporting activities are likely to be at risk, especially when the child has to travel some distance to attend school. We need to look further than academic skills, as we can see from this edition, sport and leisure are essential to the well being of all children with visual impairment. Go play!

Steve McCall

Message from the Thematic Editor

SPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT



Enrique Pérez
Former President, IBSA

Everyone knows that sport is good for everyone – it improves your health and mobility and provides an opportunity for social interaction. For people with a visual impairment it is also a means to overcome their disability and make socialisation and integration a reality.

IBSA exists to provide a framework for international competition for people with a visual impairment in a number of sports, with the ultimate aim of bringing about the full integration of every person with a visual impairment, regardless of any other factor. This is an ambitious objective - perhaps even a utopian one – but nonetheless it is a worthy goal shared by blind athletes and their relatives and coaches worldwide.

IBSA sanctions, oversees and organises world and continental championships where elite level blind athletes are offered the opportunity to compete with their peers from other countries. This is a key task, but to achieve our aims we must focus not only on top-level competitions and athletes, but also on grassroots sport and school sport.

Sport at grassroots level for any person with a visual impairment is a key tool to overcoming disability and achieving social normalisation. We must encourage all visually impaired kids to take part in grassroots sports activities and, through our national members and in cooperation with educators, provide them with the means to do so. Where possible, a blind child should participate with his or her non-disabled peers, while taking into account the difficulties the visual impairment may cause.

If we turn to school sports, IBSA and its partners must continue to develop and implement programmes aimed at getting children with a visual impairment involved in sport at their school. We need to ensure that they are

given the chance to take part in extra-curricular sporting activities, whether they attend a school for the blind or are mainstreamed. Particular emphasis must be given to kids in developing countries, where very often these opportunities are unfortunately very scarce at the present time. We need to work together to support these schemes and monitor the results; we must talk to the parents to make sure they are aware of the benefits of taking part; and we should guarantee educators, coaches, PE teachers and instructors are properly trained and receive the backing they need, as they play a crucial role in organising school sports events. We must never forget that these events provide the setting for the elite blind athletes of the future to cut their teeth.

When athletes move on to competitive sports at a higher level, we must ensure the conditions are in place for them to compete to the best of their abilities, assisting our national associations in the hosting of championships that are well organised from a technical and logistical point of view and facilitating the participation of the greatest number of blind athletes possible. Furthermore, we should continue to promote their participation in championships and events organised by external organisations and approved by IBSA. Elite blind athletes, in the same way as elite able-bodied athletes, need the best technical and organisational support, equipment and personnel in order to perform to the best of their abilities. It is our responsibility to make sure they receive this.

IBSA will continue to support the setting up of national blind sports organisations: we believe they are key tools in the fight for the normalisation and integration of people with a visual impairment. These bodies must be the reference point for all blind sports issues at national level and must be given full responsibility for competitive events within their national boundaries.

Enrique Pérez
Former President, IBSA
and Thematic Editor of the current issue

Message from the President - World Blind Union



William Rowland
WBU President

Sport can change lives and it is timeous for The Educator to feature this theme in the wake of the recently held IBSA General Assembly in Beijing. I commend ICEVI and IBSA for their collaboration in preparing this issue of The Educator and the WBU hereby strongly associates itself with the initiative.

To IBSA must go the credit for the establishment of an independent worldwide movement of blind sports with multiple sporting codes, and a self-reliant administration supporting an organization that has full Olympic recognition. Some 50 countries now have IBSA membership, which in itself is a notable achievement, while the potential for growth is obviously enormous. It also is appropriate to recognize the crucial role of ONCE in promoting the world movement of blind sports.

As an active participant in sport from the early years of my youth, I have enjoyed the benefits of amateur wrestling, fencing, bowling, and particularly road running, not to mention the pleasures of recreational activities ranging from hiking to deep sea fishing. Not only does sport bring physical exhilaration and the rewards of competition, but it extends the social circle and makes for a far fuller life. Would that blind people the world over could have such opportunities for self-realization and fun.

Even in communities of poverty and high unemployment, and where blind people live on the very margins of society, sport has its place in the development of individual talent and the discovery of self-worth. It therefore seems to me that the value of sport and the teaching of sporting skills should become part of educational programmes at every level, for children, youth, and adults. Let there also be a special emphasis on the inclusion of blind women, thereby to achieve the true spirit of universality that needs to characterize all sport.

WILLIAM ROWLAND
President, World Blind Union

Strategic Update

Points emerging from the Executive Committee Meeting

A meeting of the ICEVI Committee was warmly hosted by ONCE in Madrid, Spain on 4-5 March 2005. Here is the Strategic Update from that meeting for the benefit of our readers.

1. Efforts are underway to register ICEVI as a Charity in the United Kingdom
2. The Executive Committee has suggested a structural change in the ICEVI Principal Officers group calling for the addition of one more Vice-President in the place of Secretary. This suggested change will be placed before the General Assembly for a decision at the 12th World Conference.
3. Efforts are being made to encourage more organisations to become International Partners of ICEVI
4. ICEVI approved the text of a Memorandum of Agreement with Deafblind International.
5. ICEVI will develop on-line subscription scheme for all organisations and individuals.
6. ICEVI has taken the lead in developing a joint INGO strategy document on education for all children with visual impairment by 2015. This global campaign will be introduced at the World Conference in July 2006.
7. ICEVI will develop a series of concept papers on various themes for the benefit of professionals and practitioners in the field.
8. ICEVI has prepared a draft curriculum for teacher preparation in the area of visual impairment, which will be made available for program developers.



ExCo and Program Committee Members

SPORTS AND RECREATION – THEME OF THE CURRENT ISSUE

ICEVI and International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in February 2004 to promote sports in educational services for children with visual impairment. One of the clauses of the MOU is that ICEVI should coordinate with IBSA to publish one issue of The Educator with its major theme as Sports and Recreation. ICEVI and IBSA are proud to present articles and news on this subject in the current issue for the benefit of the readers of The Educator.

Welcome MICHAEL BARREDO, the New President of IBSA:

The IBSA General Assembly was held in Beijing, China on 9-11 June 2005. It began with a one and half day seminar/conference, which was attended by around 120 participants. The key issues were on increasing participation from Asia and South America, to increase participation of B1 athletes, to increase personnel for training (coaches) and officials (referees). 49 country delegates and over 70 observers attended the General Assembly. Enrique Perez stepped down as the President of IBSA as he had assumed the job of Secretary General of the World Blind Union. Mr. Michael Barredo from The Philippines, who served as the Asia Chairman of IBSA was elected to the post of the President, IBSA unopposed. Congratulations Michael. ICEVI is looking forward to stronger collaboration with IBSA in the future.

VISION 2005 – FORWARD LOOKING STRATEGY



Presentation by ICEVI Team

Larry Campbell, President ICEVI, Jill Keeffe, Regional Chair of ICEVI Pacific region and Mani, Secretary General attended the Vision 2005 conference in London held from 6 to 10 April 2005 and organised a symposium on education for children with visual impairment. They highlighted the global campaign of ICEVI and appealed to international organisations to be on

board to fulfil the objectives of the campaign. The opportunity was also utilised to develop links with the participants of the Middle East sub-region to promote and strengthen educational activities for children with visual impairment.

ABOUT IBSA

International Blind Sports Association (IBSA), with 107 member countries in five continents, is a full member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and is proud to have among its sponsors and partners organisations such as ONCE (Spanish National Blind Organisation), the Ministry of Sports of the Government of Brazil and Ibermática, an IT service provider. With the support of these and other partners IBSA is able to continue making blind sports grow worldwide.

Sponsoring or partnering with IBSA contributes to the social integration of many blind and partially sighted children and youngsters through sport all over the world. It also secures direct contact with consumers, organisations and official bodies involved worldwide in sport. As IBSA is registered as a non-profit organisation, sponsorship brings important tax benefits.

IBSA's image is closely tied to social, interracial and educational values: in short, those values intrinsically linked to the Olympic spirit. Also worth mentioning is the media coverage blind sports enjoys. Approximately 1000 athletes from all corners of the globe gather to compete in the IBSA World Championships, guaranteeing ever-wider press, radio and television coverage.

IBSA - MEDICAL CLASSIFICATION

Certain criteria must be met and equipment made available for athletes to undergo medical classification to compete internationally. These are set out in IBSA's Medical Procedures. IBSA has determined three classes in international competition for blind and partially sighted athletes:

- B1** : From no light perception in either eye to light perception, but inability to recognise the shape of a hand at any distance or in any direction.
- B2** : From ability to recognise the shape of a hand to a visual acuity of $\frac{2}{20}$ and/or visual field of less than 5 degrees.
- B3** : From visual acuity above $\frac{2}{20}$ to visual acuity of $\frac{6}{20}$ and/or visual field of more than 5 degrees and less than 20 degrees.

IBSA - COMMITTED TO FAIR PLAY

As part of its stated aim to guarantee fair play in sport, IBSA is a signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code and has developed and adopted its own Anti-Doping Code to fight against doping in blind sports and protect the health of its athletes.

Victor Ludorum award to Enrique Pérez



Outgoing IBSA President Mr Enrique Pérez has been granted the Victor Ludorum award. The Victor Ludorum is IBSA's highest award and is given to people who have made a significant contribution to the cause of blind sports worldwide. It was presented to Mr Pérez by incoming President Mr Michael Barredo at the closing gala dinner of the 7th IBSA General Assembly and 1st World Blind Sports Conference, held in Beijing from the 8th to the 12th of June.

The Victor Ludorum is a sculpture by renowned designer Javier Mariscal. Mr Mariscal is responsible for many celebrated designs, including "Cobi", the Barcelona 92 Paralympic Games mascot. The first recipient of the award was the then IOC President Mr Juan Antonio Samaranch.



Know your IBSA Rules

TRACK EVENTS

Athletics is the most widespread IBSA sport, practised in international competitions by more than 70 countries. Competition is organised according to the IBSA classification system. IAAF Rules are followed in their entirety by class B3 athletes, but there are necessary modifications in the case of the more severe visual impairments - Class B2 and B1.

Athletics competitions for blind and partially sighted athletes have a long history, and since the formation of IBSA in 1981 there has been a regular programme of international competition at a continental and world level. Currently, athletics championships at a continental level take place regularly in Europe and Pan America. In addition, blind athletes have competed in Paralympic Games under IBSA auspices since Long Island (1984) and athletics forms a central part of the IBSA World Championships, which were held for the first time in Madrid in 1998.

Blind and partially sighted athletes compete in the full range of athletics events with the exception of the hurdles races, the steeplechase and the pole vault.

JUMPS

In the long jump, totally blind athletes use a take-off area measuring one metre by 1.22 metres. There are normally two guides or callers, one at the take-off area and the other near the spot where the athlete starts his or her run up.

THROWS

The guide orients the athlete in the throwing circle or runway.

TANDEM CYCLING

Tandem cycling is very similar to mainstream cycling except one rider needs to be visually impaired, with the guide or “pilot” sitting at the front and the blind or partially sighted rider at the rear. Blind tandem

cycling began in 1973 in France, although it did not become part of the IBSA programme until 1988. Blind riders competed at the Paralympic Games for the first time in Barcelona in 1992 and IBSA has organised world and continental championships on a regular basis since 1989. All three categories – B1, B2 and B3 – compete against each other in men’s, women’s and mixed events in road races, time trials and track events (sprint, individual pursuit and 1 km time trial).

SKIING

Nordic skiing is a very popular sport in Northern and Eastern European countries. Blind and partially sighted skiers are guided by a fully sighted skier using the same adaptations as in Alpine skiing. Blind and partially sighted skiers compete in the same events as fully sighted skiers; slalom, giant slalom, downhill and super-G. The FIS (International Ski Federation) rules apply with some adaptations made by IBSA and IPC. The so-called “white sport” has become one of the main attractions at the Winter Paralympic Games, with skiers reaching speeds of up to 120 km per hour. Besides the Paralympics, blind skiers compete in IBSA world and regional championships, IPC world and cup events and FIS world and Europa cup races. Alpine skiing is practised by all B categories (B1, B2, B3), while in IPC and FIS competitions all three classes compete together and a factor system is applied to take into account the different levels of visual disability. Blind skiers have competed in every Paralympics and World Championships since the 1970’s.

Nordic Skiing

Guide: A sighted skier guides the blind or partially sighted skier through the race course. The pair work as a team, so if one is disqualified or fails to complete the course the team is eliminated.

Communication: Technology and blind skiing go hand in hand. In the past a loudspeaker was used to guide

the blind skier, but modern technology has developed a sophisticated electronic system worn by the guide around his waist. Some B2 skiers receive information from their guide by means of a communication device fitted in both helmets.

FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL

Blind footballers chose to play five-a-side football, rather than the traditional eleven-a-side, due to orientation problems caused by the size of the pitch. The FIFA Futsal rulebook has been adapted to make it possible for the blind to play under similar conditions to sighted players. Matches last fifty minutes, split in two halves lasting twenty-five minutes. Teams are made up of four blind outfield players and a sighted goalkeeper who also guides the players in the first third of the pitch. Two more guides are used; one for the central third of the pitch and another behind the opponent's goal to orient players when attacking. Countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Spain have a strong tradition in the sport and the most important blind five-a-side football championships are the IBSA World Championships and the Paralympic Games Blind Football Tournament. Blind football is a new Paralympic sport, making its debut at Athens 2004.

The ball: The ball is similar to a normal five-a-side football, the only difference being the ball bearings it has inside. These make a noise, which helps to orient the blind player.

The pitch: The pitch measures 40 by 20 metres and is equipped with kickboards to keep the game flowing. The kickboards are 1.2 metres high and also help to orient the players and make the game safer.

Equipment: Part of the player's equipment in the B1 category is a blindfold, which must be worn during play. Some players also wear a protective headband as shown in the photo below.

GOALBALL

Goal ball was designed specifically for the blind in 1946 by Austrian Hanz Lorenzen and Sett Reindle

from Germany. The first Paralympic Goal ball Tournament took place at the Toronto games in 1976 and the sport has been a permanent fixture on the Paralympic programme since then. Two years later the first IBSA Goal ball World Championships were held in Austria. Goal ball has experienced constant growth since then and is now played in the majority of IBSA member countries. Goal ball is a team sport, with two teams of three facing each other at either end of the court. The aim of the game is to score by throwing the ball into the opponent's goal.

The court dimensions: 18 by 9 metres

Team area: a three-metre area in front of each goal. Players are free to move in their team area and throws must touch the ground at least once before passing over the high-ball (6 m) line and once in the six-metre neutral area in the centre of the court.

Tactile markings: The lines of the court, used to denote the different areas of the playing surface, are marked using a cord covered with tape to make them tactile and help orient the players.

Eyeshades: Eyeshades must be worn at all times to prevent players with residual sight gaining an advantage.

The ball: The ball is fitted with bells, which makes it audible and allows players to locate it.

SWIMMING



Swimming for the blind and partially sighted uses a rulebook drawn up by IBSA and based on the FINA (International Swimming Federation) rules, with

modifications to take into account the three IBSA sight classes (B1, B2 and B3). Blind swimmers compete in the same events as sighted athletes (freestyle, butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke).

The main differences in blind swimming are the starting position (swimmers are allowed to start the race in the water if they wish) and the technique used in turning (a guide known as a tapper lets the blind swimmer know he is approaching the end of the pool by tapping him). In relay events the coach plays an important role. He is responsible for telling the swimmers when they should dive in to take over from their teammates.

The highlights of the blind swimming calendar are the IBSA World Championships and the Paralympic Games, while continental championships are also held regularly.

Goggles: All totally blind (B1) swimmers must wear opaque goggles to guarantee fair competition.

Tapping: In the early 1980's, a technique was developed of letting the swimmer who is blind know that the end of the pool is coming. Dedication, experimentation, and hard work by Wilf and Audrey Strom resulted in the technique known as tapping. Swim tappers must synchronize their tap with the swimmer's stroke movement and momentum - at exactly the right time to enable the swimmer who is blind to swim at top speed, without fear of crashing into the end of the pool, and to execute a racing turn without losing precious fractions of seconds in a race. A high level of trust is crucial.

POWERLIFTING

Power lifting is a relatively new sport in IBSA that has now held three world championships: Holland (2000), Czech Republic (2002) and in Quebec in 2003. Blind lifters follow the same rules as sighted lifters with one modification – the coach may lead the athlete to the platform and accompany him until he adopts the lifting position. Competition consists of three types of lifts;

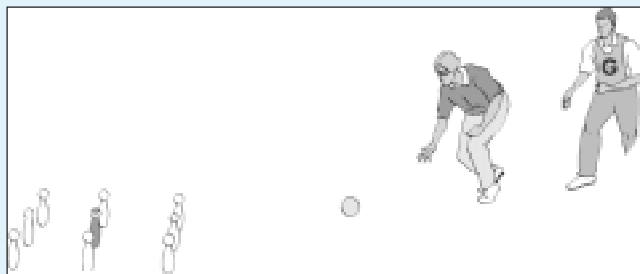


bench press, squat and dead lifts. Each lifter is allowed three attempts at each lift and the best valid attempt counts towards his competition total. Often confused with weightlifting, power lifting is in fact a separate sport.

Lifting position: The coach leads the blind lifter to the platform before the lift and may remain nearby to orient the athlete during the lift.

Bar: The grooves on the bar are very important for the totally blind lifter to use his sense of touch.

NINEPIN BOWLING:



Ninepin bowling originated in Germany and was exported to the United States, and especially Texas, during the 19th century. It is now most widely played in Texas and throughout Central Europe. Played in normal bowling alleys, the main differences with respect to tenpin bowling, apart from the number of pins, are that the alley or track is shorter and the pins and ball smaller. The blind bowler is aided by a guide who leads him to the bowling position and tells him how many pins he knocks over with each bowl, allowing the bowler to aim his next shot. The aim of the first throw is to knock down the eight pins placed

around the central or “king” pin in a diamond formation without knocking it over. Maximum points (12) are won if the king pin is knocked over with the second throw.

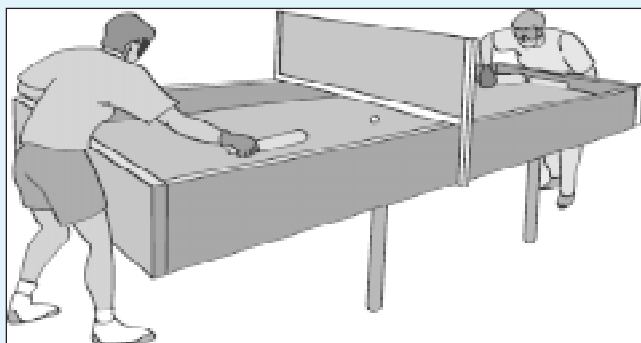
TENPIN BOWLING:

Blind tenpin bowling is played in more than twenty countries in North America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. It was accepted as an official IBSA sport at the Executive Committee meeting held in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, in May 2000. Tenpin bowling can be played at all ages. B3 bowlers use the WTBA (World Tenpin Bowling Association) rules without modification, while B2 bowlers may use a guide rail and B1 bowlers can compete using a guide rail and a sighted guide.

Sighted guide: Guides the bowler to the throwing position and makes sure the bowler is aiming at the pins. He also tells the bowler which pins he has knocked over and which pins remain standing, allowing him to aim his next throw.

Guide rail: The guide rail is a metal bar situated on either side of the approach area. Bowlers slide their hand along the rail while throwing with the other hand.

SHOWDOWN



Showdown was invented by Canadian Joe Lewis in 1960 and is now played in Asia, America and Europe. The game has been growing constantly since it was played recreationally at the 1984 Paralympic Games in Long Island, USA. Showdown is played by two

people on a table equipped with two goals, one at either end. The aim of the game is to bat the ball off the side wall, along the table, under the centre screen, and into the opponent's goal. Each player serves five times in a row. Player score two points for a goal and one point when their opponent hits the ball into the screen, hits the ball off the table, or touches the ball with anything but the bat. The first player to reach eleven points, leading by two or more points, is the winner. One thing that is common to all ball games for the blind is that the ball makes a sound to orient players.

TORBALL

Torball is a ball game designed specially for the blind and partially sighted. Developed in the seventies, the sport is played widely at grassroots level. Torball is similar to Goal ball, with two teams of three players throwing a ball with the aim of scoring in the opponent's net. Games last ten minutes and are split in two five-minute halves. The sport is currently played in more than thirty countries and is particularly popular in Central Europe and South America.

Court: The court is a rectangle 16 m long and 7 m wide. Three cords fitted with bells are placed 40 cm above the central part of the court and the ball must pass under the cords without touching them. If the ball touches the cords the bells ring and the throw is not valid.

Positions: Players use mats placed in each goal area for orientation during play. The texture of the mats, different from that of the court, lets them know where they are on the court.

Eye shades: All players must wear eye shades to ensure fair competition.

Ball: The ball is made of a synthetic material and weighs 500 grams. It is fitted with a sound device, which helps the defending team know where it has been thrown.

THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCCER FOR BLIND CHILDREN: A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE



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ABSTRACT

This article aims to show the benefits that involvement in football (Soccer) brings to the lives of children who are blind through an interdisciplinary study involving the fields of psychology and physical education. We argue for the importance of football in Brazil as a means of promoting social integration and heightening visually impaired children's self-esteem and cultural identity. We outline key activities used to introduce children to this sport and highlight the improvements football brings to children's mobility and sense of orientation, justifying the use of football as a strategy to stimulate the development of children with visual impairment.

Key Words: Blind children; soccer; cultural identity.

This article intends to show the benefits that involvement in Football (Soccer) brings to blind children, but first we need to make the reader realize the importance of this sport in Brazil. Football is a manifestation of the cultural identity of the Brazilian. Stuart Hall defines cultural identity as all those aspects of our identities that promote our sense of 'belonging' to ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and, above all, national culture (2005, p. 8). National culture is not something that we have in our genes, our national cultural identity is formed and transformed by our life experiences. We can say that being Brazilian involves identification with a set of meanings that together make "Brazilian-ness".

The national culture, as Hall shows, defines the broad sensitivities that shape and influence our actions and the idea that we have of ourselves (2005, p. 50) and for this reason national culture has a crucial role in

building the identity of individuals within a country. Brazil is a country renowned worldwide for its football. Playing football, watching a match, supporting a team, following competitions, taking pride in the performances of our star players are all common interests of the Brazilian people, regardless of age, race, social class or gender. Football works in many ways as an agent of social integration within the country.

In this sense playing football with your neighbours, with friends from school, or at the local club, is a vehicle for socialization in childhood. Children learn how to behave within a group and within a set of rules, they learn how to handle the emotions involved in belonging to a group, in competing, winning, and in being defeated. In short, football offers the personal experiences that are the building blocks of social citizenship.

The problem is that blind children, most of the time, do not have the opportunity take part in such interactive games. There is a general feeling that people who are visually impaired are incapable of performing in these types of fast moving activities. But being excluded from soccer deprives children who are blind of opportunities to socialize with the children around them and deprives them of a sense of group participation and personal involvement in the national cultural context.

This desire to be included was the main motivation of AD¹ – athlete, gold medalist in the five-a-side soccer competition at the Athens Paralympics games in 2004 – to start playing soccer as a child:

¹ Interview made on May 2005

I discovered that if I put the ball inside a plastic bag I could play by listening to the sound it makes. I used to play with my brothers, uncles... from when I was about six years old. I wanted to play like a normal child who, despite his blindness, was not different.

ML² – 22 years old, blind and a soccer player of the Caixa Escolar do Instituto Benjamin Constant team – also talks about the importance of this adapted sport to his childhood:

I started playing when I was a little child. A blind kid is usually victim of his own friends' prejudice against his disability and I believe that sports, first and foremost, work to provide children with the necessary self-esteem to make them feel integrated. For me, sports have always been of great importance because I could feel I was able to play, talk about my involvement, and act like any other child.

Through football, the seven-year-old student V. has been making important strides in his social development. Totally blind, V. has a twin brother who is fully sighted. This difference used to be a major cause of arguments between them. V. was never invited to join in games with his sighted friends, and was often treated as an outsider. Feeling excluded, V. went through a period of depression, even to the point of presenting with symptoms later diagnosed as being of psychosomatic origin.

Always very attached to soccer, V followed football on the television and was a keen supporter of Clube de Regatas Vasco da Gama³. V started to practise soccer in the beginning of 2005 and the experience of discovering that he was capable of playing soccer was of enormous value for V's relationship with his brother and friends. His mother⁴, who follows his progress closely, talked to us about the benefits.

He is a different person since he started playing. You should see how much V looks forward to the days that he has soccer classes, they make him so happy. He is now much closer to his brother; they

talk about how well they have played and about the goals they have scored. He showed he could play like the other children. Now, his dream is to be a Paralympics athlete.

The Paralympics enjoyed a high profile at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens and Brazil achieved excellent results, winning several medals, including the gold medal in the blind soccer competition, beating Argentina by 5 goals in the final⁵.

The results showed that the individuals who have disabilities can also achieve high levels in sport, and perhaps more importantly for people with a physical impairment (even for those who are not involved in sport) it showed that they can achieve international recognition for their capabilities and achievements.

To further illustrate the possibilities that sport offers for the inclusion of children with visual impairment, in this rest of this article we will concentrate on how professionals in physical education can adapt their approaches to work with groups with special needs.

The main focus for teachers of Physical Education should be on the development of coordination through games and activities that students enjoy. (BIELINSKI, 1998, p. 42). This approach has the additional bonus of being highly beneficial to students' self-esteem, since they can practise a sport that they follow and like.

Five a side football was introduced into the official program of the Paralympics in the Athens Games under the title of "soccer five" for athletes in the B1 category. The athletes in this category must have no more than light perception, and must be unable to recognize shapes or forms. In other words players must be totally blind or only aware of the presence of light.

In official competitions, as specified in the rules of International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA), all the line

² Interview made on May 2005

³ Traditional soccer team of Rio de Janeiro – Brasil

⁴ Interview got on March 2005

⁵ It is worth it bringing out the emotional value of this victory, being Argentina Brazil's main opponent on soccer matches

players should be blindfolded, so that it is impossible to gain any advantage through residual vision.

The activities we describe below are designed for children that come into the B1 category.

We suggest that when being introduced to soccer for the blind, children should not be blindfolded. This avoids children feeling uncomfortable (because they are not used to wearing blindfolds) but also motivates them to use their residual vision, and helps to develop their autonomy.

The football exercises described below also help develop orientation and mobility skills. João Álvaro Felipe defines orientation as “the use of the senses to obtain information from the environment” (2001, p. 5) and mobility as “learning concerned with the control of the movements in an organized and effective way” (p. 5).

Teachers should not demand technical perfection, on the contrary, they should encourage students to express themselves and enjoy the wide variety of movement that can develop their body awareness to the maximum.

The activities should be appropriate to the student's stage of development, always presenting challenges, but challenges that the students are capable of achieving. Through this strategy, the teacher can often set activities in which the students surprise themselves about what they can accomplish, and this leads to an increase in their self-esteem.

S. L.⁶ — a 23 years old who plays for the Brazilian national blind soccer team – illustrates the importance of Football in the process of developing orientation and mobility, and shows how the key to his own mobility and independence was soccer.

Soccer helped me a lot. Firstly, it helped maximize agility in my movements: it taught me to move more lightly, with less fear and it improved my reflexes... I often say it's like this: a blind man will not necessarily be a sensational soccer player, but soccer is an excellent orientation and mobility

class. In fact, I'm sure it's the best orientation and mobility class that exists...

In soccer there are eight of us, all blind, running after a noisy ball that demands our total attention ... There is a goalkeeper, a caller, a coach, teammates and opponents constantly calling and we must pay attention to all of it. On top of all that we still have to run at full speed and avoid collisions, the game demands balance and concentration.

Souza (2002) suggests a set of safety procedures that should be followed before any activities involving running:

- *All students should be familiarized with the area so that they can be confident that there are no obstacles*
- *When moving, the student should be taught to hold his hands in front of his body in the correct position to offer protection*
- *The teacher should shout instructions to one student at a time and allow a safety gap between one runner and the next*
- *The teacher should signify the end of the run with a clear command. Teachers should ensure that the run is free from obstruction and allow a safety margin of least five meters*

Souza (2002) also talks about the necessary material for the development of soccer activities:

The fact that the equipment needed for Soccer players who are blind is not so different from that used by fully sighted players makes things much easier. The ball should contain material that rattles or, if that is not possible, you can wrap up a normal ball in a plastic bag to make it audible

We would particularly like to commend this idea of using of an ordinary ball wrapped in a plastic bag - we have found this to be a very effective alternative for children, especially when balls with rattles are not commercially available.

Márcia Ortiz, who is a researcher with a particular

⁶ Interview got on May 2005

interest in leisure for the people with disabilities, makes a point which is fundamental to our promotion of soccer for children who are blind. She says that “sport must awaken in all people, whether they are disabled or able-bodied, the desire to participate” (2001, p. 53).

Based around this principle, we suggest the following activities which have evolved over years of soccer training classes with blind children at the Benjamin Constant Institute.

Stretching

The main function of stretching in this context is not just to promote flexibility, but to develop body awareness. Through stretching, students learn the full extent of the movement of which they are capable, and find out about muscle groups - an important part of developing a clear body image.

Teachers should vary the stretching exercises, allowing the student to experience a more and more diverse range of movements.

Walking /running with a guide

To begin with, intervention should involve the trainer walking beside the student. As has been already said, children with visual impairment often find it difficult to move around freely in unfamiliar spaces and it is worth reinforcing the point that the space where classes take place needs to be thoroughly explored. Guided walking presents the student with the opportunity to orient themselves fully to their surroundings.

We must remember that many people with visual impairment have had restricted opportunities to develop coordinated freedom of movement, and in the early stages it is essential to create a bond of trust between the athlete and the coach. By working directly alongside the coach, students will certainly feel more secure about putting into practice the activities described here.

The needs of each individual need to be taken into consideration, but after this first stage we usually introduce students to running alongside the teacher so

that they can feel more confident. We always use this technique in the warm up and at the start of each activity. The teacher should be very careful to nurture the bond of trust that is gradually established between the student and teacher. Student safety, and consequently, their progress and enthusiasm for the activity are intrinsically related to their confidence in this relationship.

Running unaccompanied

The teacher stands ahead of the student, and tells the student to run towards the teacher's voice. For the success of this activity students must have a clear mental map of the space in which they will be expected to run, and be absolutely certain that they will not experience any shock encounters on the way. The teacher must also maintain a clear safety gap between each athlete, so that they won't collide with one another.

In this activity, it is common for students to experience great excitement because they usually have had very few opportunities in their life to run freely.

The teacher should begin the activity with short runs (3 - 5 meters) and increase the distance little by little, always being attentive to the students' safety.

Searching for the ball

The Teacher throws the ball and asks the student to follow the sound of the rattle, find the ball, and return it to the starting point. The student should try to intercept the ball before it stops moving and is no longer producing a sound. The distance the ball is thrown must only increase gradually.

If the ball stops, the teacher should encourage the student to try to remember the direction in which the ball was thrown. Students should be asked to point towards where they think the ball is, and then try to find the ball with the verbal instructions from the teacher. The teacher should take note of the accuracy of each student's orientation when they point in the direction where they think the ball has stopped, and should always give students clues about the direction

and the distance that the ball lies away from them.

Controlling the ball

Firstly, the teacher will throw the ball in the student's direction, then, the student should stop it with the part of the body indicated by the teacher, either their hands, their feet, or their midriff.

The teacher continues throwing the ball from gradually longer distances. The student will have to move increasingly to stop the ball. This activity resembles a common exercise in Goalball, a sport created for the blind and visually impaired (see IBSA article).

The teacher should be creative and show students a variety of ways of using their bodies to stop the ball, and encourage them to create new moves for themselves.

Dribbling with the ball

Dribbling is the technique of moving while controlling the ball with the feet. When practising this technique, the teacher should stand ahead of the student, as in the free running exercise. However this time, the student should move forward with the ball at his feet. This technique can be very hard to master because dribbling involves a state of constant imbalance. At higher levels players control the ball by touching it with the inside of the foot at each step. However in the beginning this movement is difficult, and students should be encouraged to be creative in developing their own methods of ball control.

Shooting

Having learned how to control the ball, the student has to learn to kick it towards the goal. Special attention should be given to the student's standing foot (the foot that stays on the ground during the shot). If it is badly positioned, the student's posture, and consequently his balance, will both be affected.

To help players orient themselves, the teacher (this time standing in the goalkeeper's position) can tap the crossbar, providing students with a mental image of the goal. It is essential that children should have a clear notion of what the goal is like, and they should be given

opportunities to pace out the goal from one post to the other, to lean against the crossbar and to touch the net. Exploring the goal is another activity that should be carried out with the teacher's help.

The Game

Soccer for the blind is a very dynamic game in which players have to "reach the goal without a predetermined plan, with sudden variations in pace, and past four 'opponents'," (SOUZA, 2002), therefore the teacher should be very careful about introducing competition.

Each player should be taught how to run with their hands in front of the body for protection from collisions and to shout the word "Voy" when moving towards the ball to warn the other players that he is on the move and not to get in his way.

The teacher should be very careful before asking children to against one another in matches. Teachers should only begin to organize matches when all the players have some mastery of the skills described above, otherwise they can be unstimulating.

Our experience with students of the Benjamin Constant Institute⁷ suggests that there is no need to rush towards introducing team play, because the activities outlined above are sufficiently demanding to maintain students' interest levels.

Soccer brings countless benefits for people who are visually impaired. Souza (2002) identifies the following advantages:

Life imposes on us many challenges and one of the greatest is how to keep our motivation to overcome them all. For the person who is blind, undoubtedly, it (football) provides an opportunity to develop aptitudes that help improve orientation and mobility and lead to independence in daily living, thereby improving the quality of that person's life.

Besides these benefits, we can point to the general

⁷ The Benjamin Constant Institute is a Federal organ and a national reference center in the area of visual deficiency.

advantages that practising sport brings, for instance improvements in posture, in the cardiovascular condition and in balance.

Navarro (2004), in his study of children's motor development, reached the conclusion that children who are blind display weaker balance and motor coordination when compared to sighted children, and he suggests early intervention through specialized techniques that will reduce this gap. We believe that soccer provides an ideal vehicle for development in these areas.

Navarro (2004) also argues that specialized intervention with children can result in an improvement in their social integration and in their quality of life – benefits that soccer clearly offers as we have already shown in the beginning of this text.

Final Considerations

The transdisciplinary approach we have taken to football in this article makes us realise how much we need to enlarge our knowledge in this area. In talking about a child who is blind we are, first and foremost, talking about a person who operates within in a broad socio-cultural context. Viewing children only in terms of their visual deficiency is to reduce their potential.

With this in mind, we began the article by emphasising the cultural context of Brazil, addressing the importance of soccer as a vehicle for the socialization and inclusion of children who are blind. Then, we went on to describe the adaptations developed by professionals in physical education for introducing of soccer to people who are blind and visually impaired. We tried to make clear how this activity has benefits for the orientation and mobility of children who are blind and, above all, how it can provide them, with autonomy and self-esteem.

The personal accounts of soccer players and a the review of literature show that sport is an excellent tool for encouraging the development of children with visual impairment, because it offers countless physical, psychological and social advantages. In this article, we share the professional experiences that motivate us to

promote soccer for blind children as a positive educational experience.

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GOLF FOR PLAYERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

David Blyth AO

President, International Blind Golf Association

Golf is a simple sport which is popular worldwide. Players who are blind or who have low vision have been involved both socially and competitively in the sport for over sixty years.

Golf for players with visual impairment could be described as a team sport, since players need a sighted caddie to enable them to play. Associations variously refer to the caddie as a “guide” or a “coach”, but the role is the same regardless of the term used. Full details concerning the role of the caddy can be found on The International Blind Golf Association website www.internationalblindgolf.com or are available from any National Association. The Caddie/Guide/Coach makes it possible for a visually impaired golfer to play the game by giving information about the direction, the distance and the possible hazards in the player’s field of play. For totally blind or severely visually impaired players, the caddie places the clubhead behind the ball and helps them to position their body so as to hit the ball in the desired direction. The Caddie also acts as a sighted guide for players to find their way around the golf course. The success of the caddy/player relationship is crucial if both are to enjoy the game.

The first known association for blind golfers, the United States Blind Golf Association [USBGA] was established in the late 1940’s. The association was a founder Member of The International Blind Golf Association (IBGA) which was established in 1997 at a meeting held in Perth, Western Australia, with sponsorship from Mr. Handa of Japan. The IBGA website has links to Associations for Blind Golf throughout the world and provides descriptions of

how Blind and Vision Impaired Players play the game and rules and conditions of play.

With two exceptions Blind Golf is played to the same rules as the sighted game. All rules are approved by the Royal and Ancient Club of Saint Andrews [R&A] and the United States Golf Association [USGA]. The rules for Golfers with a disability are published in the official Rules of Golf Handbook.

Golf is a particularly good sport for blind and low vision players, as both the ball and the hole on the green are fixed targets and the players have time to address the ball correctly. Players can play as a sole player, play alternative strokes with their caddie or play in a team event and family members and friends can act as caddies.

Most Blind Golf Associations have programs for beginners and their contact details can be found on the website referred to above. Social golf is a pleasant and often exciting pastime but the competitive game is a serious business. All Member countries conduct local and National championships and the IBGA conducts a world championship every two years with the next one scheduled for Japan in April 2006.

The contact details of the Directors of IBGA are provided below and they would all be delighted to hear from any persons interested in progressing the game of Golf for Blind and Vision Impaired Persons, particularly in relation to children and young adults.

The directors will be delighted to put enquirers in contact with organisers in their own country.

Name	Country	Telephone	E-mail
Denis McCulloch	Canada	1 (204) 831- 0562	bdmcc@mts.net
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Jan Dinsdale	Northern Ireland	44 28 9187 8487	nibga@hotmail.com
Neil Baxter	England	44 1992 524 024	baxter.ebga@btopenworld.com
Haromi Fujimoto	Japan	81 3 3333 5481, 81 90 9380 9471 (M)	fujimoto@jbga.org
David Blyth	Australia	61 3 9555 1984	dcblth@bigpond.net.au
Kay Hancock, Secretary	Australia	61 3 9587 2718	kayhan@ozemail.com.au

ROWING AS AN OUTSTANDING SPORT FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED ATHLETES: MY FOUR YEARS AT THE OARS

Oral O. Miller, Washington, D.C., USA

Can you describe a racing shell, a racing sweep, a coxswain (pronounced “coxon”), or a gig? If you cannot, do not feel especially uninformed. During my senior year in high school (at the Kentucky School for the Blind and at Louisville Male High School in the 1950s) I couldn’t have described or even recognized one of them because they were part of the lingo of a sport I had never tried or even seen. I had already participated in several sports with a degree of success, but I did not expect to take up a new one upon entering college. As a high school junior I had lost only one wrestling match, and as a senior I had been undefeated, while my track team did not lose a meet either year, so I expected to continue with one or both of those sports in college. Later that summer, at a dinner given by the Princeton Club of Louisville for prospective freshmen, one of the younger alumni suggested going out for crew (“rowing”), saying I had the right build for a crewman. (I was six feet four inches tall and weighed 200 pounds.) Yes, I had to ask in order to confirm my vague understanding that “crew” is a sport in which rowing teams or crews race against one another in long, narrow boats called “shells.”

During freshman orientation week at Princeton University the following September it was announced that all freshmen interested in fall crew practice should report to the boat house. About 60 of us showed up that first day, and I realized that the other 59 knew more about crew than I did. About two-thirds of them had graduated from Eastern prep schools where crew was a popular sport, and all of the others had at least seen races. When I asked the freshman coach whether he objected to having a blind student try out, he, in his usual quiet way, said “no,” but that he would have to check with the head coach – a blunt-spoken, leather-

lunged, muscular mountain of a man. The head coach’s words were surprising: “There’s no reason why a blind fellow can’t row. Half of the oarsmen I have ever coached rowed like they had their eyes closed anyway.” With that send-off, I seated myself at a strange device known as a hydraulic rowing machine. It consisted basically of a wooden bar like an oar handle, a hydraulic cylinder and a small hard seat with small metal wheels which ran on a short narrow track. I knew that the object was to pull the oar handle and that the hydraulic cylinder controlled the amount of strength needed to pull the handle, but I had never seen anything like that peculiar seat on wheels. It soon became clear that the wheeled seat allowed an oarsman to bend his legs before pulling on the handle – thus adding the enormous strength of his bent legs to that of his arms and back.

I was just catching on to the somewhat complex series of movements when the coach walked by and informed me that I was leaving out one of the most important motions. I had been correctly grasping the handle with both hands, extending my arms forward about shoulder level, bending forward at the waist and bending my legs so that my knees were against my chest, and then going through the motions of rowing. However, I had overlooked “feathering” the oar handle. It is necessary to lift the oar blade out of the water at the end of a stroke and to slip it back into the water before the next one. Anyone who has ever rowed a boat of any kind knows about these simple hand movements, but the average rowboat oarsman is not familiar with “feathering” or turning the oar handles slightly so as to turn the oar blade almost parallel with the surface of the water between strokes. The purpose of feathering is to reduce the wind resistance of the oar. I soon saw that feathering my oar would be a problem because

the handle was perfectly round, and I could not discern the exact angle of the oar blade. Thus ended my introduction to rowing, although I had never gone within 30 feet of the water.

The physical conditioning aspects of crew, as introduced to me that same fall afternoon, were not really new to me. The freshman coach directed us to run a prescribed course totaling about a mile and a half. Fortunately for me, the course went over fairly smooth ground. Although I made no effort to lead the pack of runners, I covered the distance satisfactorily by sometimes lightly touching the shoulder of another runner (with his consent, of course) and by sometimes following the pounding of the feet of a runner ahead of me. I was already acquainted with these training techniques, having used them in high school.

Our first day on the water was an unforgettable experience for those of us who had hardly seen even an oar before. We took to the waters of Lake Carnegie in “Cleopatra’s Barge” – a training vessel that carried about a dozen oarsmen plus several people who were passengers until it came their turn to row. The coach observed us from a walkway that ran the length of the barge – much as ship captains must have done in the days of the Roman galley ships manned by slaves chained to their oars. The pace at which we flailed away at the water with our long oars was set by the counting of a coxswain – a small fellow who sat in the back of the barge and steered it. My most vivid recollection of that first afternoon on the water is of enormous blisters which appeared on my hands after about 10 minutes. However, I was still having trouble feathering my oar. Whenever I started a stroke with the blade at the wrong angle, the handle at the other end of that nine-foot oar came back furiously and unexpectedly at face level, and I defended myself reflexively by wrestling the blade out of the water. In short, my rowing style was lacking in several respects, and it was not likely to improve much until I mastered the art of feathering. When I reported for practice the next day, the coach handed me an oar to which he had attached on the round handle a very thin strip of wood. It was placed so that, from its position, I knew the angle of the blade at all times.

The thin strip punished my hands even more than did the handle alone, but it served the all-important purpose, and I used it for the next several weeks while improving my rowing technique. In later years the coach and I agreed that a less punishing marker could have been used — such as a short piece of heavy string taped in position on the oar handle.

I first experienced the true feeling of rowing through the water when we were promoted later in the fall from the barge to the “gigs,” a long, narrow boat with virtually a round bottom in which the oarsmen sat in a row. Each gig carried eight oarsmen (seated in a line) plus a coxswain. The oarsmen faced the stern of the gig, but the coxswain, who sat in the stern, faced forward so he could see where the boat was going. The oarsman nearest the bow pulled an oar which extended to his left; the oarsman seated in front of him and designated as position number 2 pulled an oar going to his right; position number 3 pulled an oar going to his left, and the positions alternated that way through position number 8, referred to as the stroke oarsman. During the intervening years, some boat builders have changed with alternating configuration from the arrangement described above. When we first moved into the gigs we continued rowing to the shouted counts of the coxswain, but gradually the number eight oarsman assumed that responsibility, by merely rowing at the desired pace. Each oarsman was supposed to watch the man ahead of him, and this caused the entire crew to row in unison – an absolute necessity. I could not see the movements of the oarsman in front of me, but I discovered that I could, by anticipating the stroke by a split second, detect every stroke by listening for the sound of the other oars being feathered (turned in the oar locks). I cannot over-emphasize the importance of precise timing in rowing, and as I gradually became more experienced, my ability to anticipate the stroke, my ability to react to new situations and my own sense of timing improved markedly.

Rowing or just sitting in that comparatively narrow gig, which had an almost round bottom, felt like sitting on a log in the water. It was held more or less upright by the weight of the four oars extending from each side, but

it was by no means stable in the sense that an ordinary rowboat is stable, and even minor shifts of position by one oarsman would cause the boat to lean. At first those of us who were inexperienced tried to hold the boat absolutely steady, but we discovered that was impossible, and we had to make ourselves accept on faith the fact that it would not turn completely over, although its gunwales or edges were only inches above the water.

It was in such a vessel that I rowed through that fall, covering about six miles a day, five days a week. The coach, who rode along in a motor launch and communicated with us by shouting through a megaphone, was constantly switching the make-up of each gig's crew in an effort to improve the combination, but as cold weather approached, he switched us less and less in order to let us prepare for our first race – an intra-squad event. The high point of the fall for eight other fellows and me came one cold, blustery November afternoon when we powered our gig across the finish line about a gig's length ahead of the other freshman crews. With the onset of winter, Lake Carnegie froze over, so there was no further crew practice until very early the next spring, although some of the freshmen occasionally worked out on the hydraulic rowing machines inside the boathouse.

My hopes as an oarsman took a big step backward about 10 days before the beginning of spring practice. During a college wrestling match I suffered a broken ankle, which was then in a cast for about six weeks. When the cast was taken off, I reported, still with a slight limp, to the boat house, where my classmates were already far ahead of me in physical conditioning and rowing technique. The coach agreed to work me back into his practice routine. It was then that I discovered the freshmen had already graduated from the practice gigs to the long, low, streamlined racing "shells" which were about 65 feet long and about 2 ½ feet wide. The unsteady gigs felt like rocks compared with the shells, which were devoid of all unnecessary weight, frills, comforts, conveniences, etc. In fact the body of the wooden shell was so thin that there were only a few

areas where the boat could bear the oarsmen's weight when getting in or out. The only safe, reinforced area was between the tracks on which the seats rolled.

Merely launching or landing a shell was an art. To launch it from a dock all of its crew members placed one foot between the tracks, grasped the oar handle and a gunwale with one hand, grasped the other gunwale with the second hand and, upon command from the coxswain, pushed the boat away from the dock with the second foot – which then had to be pulled into the boat quickly as the oarsman was sitting down. Landing a shell had to be done with the same precision.

Since I had reported for spring practice several weeks late, I simply had to work much harder to make up for the lost time and to get accustomed to the unsteady feeling of rowing in the shells. I often practiced on the rowing machines after finishing regular practice, but I still needed the oar with the strip on the handle. Although a specific oar was usually used at the same position regardless of who was rowing there, my crewmates were happy for me to take my oar with me wherever I went because that small strip made it very uncomfortable to use. Before long I was advanced from the third boat to the second, and with that crew I took part in my first intercollegiate race – a close one which we lost to Yale.

A week later we broke into the victory column against Kent and enjoyed for the first time the thrill of throwing our coxswain into the river (a tradition in rowing). Since we were only the second freshman crew, the university had not authorized us to "bet our shirts" on the outcome of our race. It is customary for the losing crew members to give their rowing shirts to the winners, who, of course, look upon won shirts as worthwhile trophies. Since it is also traditional for an oarsman to pay personally for almost all the shirts he loses in this manner, let it suffice to say that consistent losing could become expensive. I suppose crew is the only sport in which the losers literally lose their shirts. Of course, whether rowing shirts would be given as trophies can be a matter of local practice.

Near the end of my freshman season the coach asked me to make a tremendous rowing change – to switch from rowing on port (left) side of the boat to the starboard (right) side. That is almost like asking a right-handed bowler or baseball pitcher to start performing with his left hand overnight. The new position movements felt clumsy at first, of course, but I became more comfortable at it while preparing for the intercollegiate rowing regatta in Syracuse, N.Y. I went to Syracuse as a starboard oarsman for our first crew after rowing on that side for about a month. I believe our freshman crew finished in third place that year.

As a sophomore I moved to the varsity squad and into the tougher training and practice routine of the late and great head coach Delos “Dutch” Schoch. I also switched back to my original position as a port oarsman and said good-bye forever to the oar with the strip on its handle. The strip had served its purpose very well, but with experience I had learned to determine the angle of my oar blade by the feel of the oar as it turned in the oar lock. As a sophomore I rowed approximately 1,500 miles and took part in a number of intercollegiate races in the spring, ending with the national regatta in Syracuse.

A few events stick vividly in my memory, and perhaps they will give you a chuckle. For example, as a junior, while rowing out to the starting line on Lake Cayuga in upstate New York, we encountered a terrific storm, which whipped up the water so much that, as each wave broke over us, our shell gradually accumulated water and began to sink. Although a couple of us were not good or even average swimmers, all heads remained very cool as we decided that we would probably go down before we could get back to the Cornell University boat house. When we were still about a mile from the boat house, our prow quietly slipped beneath the surface, and we calmly slipped over the sides to wait for the race officials, our coaches and the Coast Guard to pick us up in their motor launches. A privately owned pleasure cruiser, whose passengers had known for some time that we were in trouble, was the first to pull up, but the race officials and the Coast Guard urged the big cruiser to back off, because the sunken shell,

with the oars still in place, was floating just beneath the surface, and the officials knew that the yacht’s propeller and rudder would become tangled with it. One nice, grandmotherly little lady aboard the yacht had visions of college boys drowning all around her and, motivated by the kindest intentions, threw a line with a boat hook into our midst, almost hooking our coxswain. At that point, the Coast Guard, seeing that the situation was about to get out of hand, ordered the yacht to back off so the rescue could continue as planned. The grandmotherly little lady shouted as the yacht backed away, “You can buy more boats, but you can’t buy boys!” Thereafter the rescue went smoothly, and the shell was salvaged.

I shall always remember the send-off we received just before my last intercollegiate race – against Yale and Cornell. We were slowly rowing down Lake Carnegie from the boat house to the starting line. Since we were merely warming up for the race, and since our coxswain had the other two crews in sight, it did not occur to him that there might be a fourth boat in the area – a rented canoe containing two fellows and two girls who were out for a warm, relaxing paddle on a spring afternoon. One of the other crews shouted at us when it became obvious that our coxswain did not see the canoe, on which we were bearing down rapidly. (I want to point out in defense of our coxswain that, since all of the oarsmen sit in a row directly in front of him, the canoe was very difficult for him to see.) Our coxswain gave the command for us to stop as fast as we could, but that was not fast enough. The two girls in the canoe were paddling at the same time, and in their excitement, when they saw our boat bearing down on them, they both started paddling furiously on the same side, thus turning the canoe broadside in our path. Yes, we did a thorough job of ramming it; our metal prow went in one side of the canoe and came out the other, knocking the two girls and one fellow into the shallow water and leaving the canoe, with one fellow clinging to it, stuck on our prow. The fellow abandoned the canoe, and we managed to pull away from it. After determining that our shell was not damaged, we proceeded to the starting line. When our coxswain reported the incident

to our coach, the coach shouted back in his own inimitable way: “Good! Damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead!”

My most touching experience as an oarsman took place late in my senior year when I received the Biddle Award – which is presented to the senior who, in the opinion of his fellow oarsmen, has contributed most to crew at Princeton that year. In my athletic life I have been fortunate enough to win a number of honors, but the Biddle Award is among my most treasured. Although I have not had it on in a number of years, I still treasure that heavy black sweater which has the large orange “P” (my varsity letter in crew) across the chest.

During my four years at the oars, the press was very kind and complimentary to me, inasmuch as I was believed to be the first fully blind athlete ever to compete successfully and letter in a true team sport such as crew. It was a challenge and also a pleasure for me because it opened up an entirely new world. If I had it to do over again, I cannot think of a thing I would do differently, because I believe I benefitted more from it than I will ever realize. I have reservations as to

whether crew is a sport that should be undertaken by an entire crew of blind oarsmen, but there is no technical reason, as far as I know, why another blind oarsman can’t someday pull one of those long sweep oars in a big regatta. In many communities in the USA now there are rowing clubs in which blind members participate on a recreational or competitive basis, usually rowing with fully sighted teammates but occasionally rowing or ‘sculling’ alone with directional guidance from a sighted colleague. In short, rowing is clearly a sport that is absolutely feasible for blind athletes requiring little or no accommodation by their sighted crew mates and my experience proves that a determined blind athlete can attain the same physical and psychological benefits as those received by his sighted teammates whether he rows as a member of his college or club’s first crew or third crew.

A quiet word of thanks goes to my late varsity coach, Dutch Schoch, and my freshman coach, Peter Gardner, for it was they who, although a bit skeptical, agreed to give that tall blind young man from Kentucky a chance to see what he could do in a sport which he knew nothing about previously.



ICEVI-DBI

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



One of the strategic goals of ICEVI is to network with organizations around the world who serve all categories of children with visual impairment and also in a variety of service areas. In the past ICEVI had signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Hadley School for the Blind and the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) for the promotion of distance education and sports respectively. ICEVI and the Deafblind International (DBI) have recently agreed to sign a MOU that articulates their shared values and outlines a series of collaborative actions. The ICEVI Executive Committee welcomed and endorsed the MOU and the DBI Council is expected to endorse it at its meeting in the Slovak Republic later this summer.

MOUNTAINEERING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT 1989-2001

Hena Basu

Society for the Visually Handicapped, Kolkata, India

Our Society for the Visually Handicapped (SVH) was instrumental in persuading the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling, under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence, the Government of India, and the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), New Delhi, to conduct Mountain Adventure training for young blind people and their sighted escorts.

On this page is an image of the special cover released by the Postal Department of India to commemorate the initiative which is sponsored by the WBDPEP Project of the Dept of Education, and the Government of WB, with DFID support.

This national initiative is now officially recognised as one of the HMI scheduled training programmes. Between 1989 and 2001 the training, coordinated by our Society, was an annual event. The components of the training are almost identical to those used on the HMI Basic Course with only a small number of adaptations. Under the experienced leadership of Mr Nima Tashi, Deputy Director Field Training (A), and other instructors at HMI, the programme comprises: rigorous physical training and acclimatization; familiarization with the environment and the terrains; rock climbing; artificial wall climbing; high altitude trekking up to Dzongri at 13,000 ft.

Qualitative impact of this training

Impact on trainees

The training generated improvements in students' body-awareness and physical confidence. They were empowered by the experience of group living and cultural exchange, and were stimulated to explore Nature in all its understandable, tangible and

communicable aspects. Building on this experience, some qualified trainees went on to organize and participate in other high altitude mountaineering expeditions. Others inspired their sighted colleagues in the work place to take up trekking and travel, and at least one trainee, Arup Chakravorty, an announcer in the Eastern Railway, has taken up bird-watching and nature study as an active hobby.

Impact on escorts

The achievements of the visually impaired trainees left a deep impression in the minds of their escorts. They realized that it was only because of their service to this cause that they had the privilege of entering the prestigious HMI campus, which is very selective about its trainees. It also generated admiration and mutual respect for what differently-able persons can achieve.

Social benefits and awareness raising

The programme gave students with visual impairment an opportunity to interact with the media and a wide range of individuals, corporate bodies and other institutions while raising funds and creating awareness about the abilities of Persons with Disability. Ms Lorraine Nicholson from Scottish Mountaineering Foundation flew to join the team to learn more about the subject of handling adventure programmes for the visually impaired in the UK and, on her return, replicated the scheme in a fundraising event for Sight Savers International in Africa.

Present status

Unfortunately several factors including funding constraints, increases in the escort fee, pressures of financing and managing priority Education Support

Projects, made it difficult for the Society to sustain the project beyond 2002.

However in 2003, with the kind support of Mrs Sue Rogers, Vision Management Team leader, Bristol, UK and Mrs Cynthia Bradley, a research scholar in Bengal, India, it was possible for the Society to organize a Nature Study and Adventure Camp for Visually Impaired children in the reserve forest area of North Bengal. Three such camps have been organized to

date and over 75 children (the majority of them from low socio-economic groups and from families below the poverty line) both from Special Schools and from Inclusive Settings had an exposure to the thrills of the open air life. Music, games, theatre, body language tuition and trekking gave them a taste for new life.

Please visit us at www.svhwestbengal.org for further details.

Meeting with HSBC Officials

Larry Campbell, President, Grace Chan, Treasurer, and Mani, M.N.G. Secretary General, ICEVI met with Bernard J. Rennell, Managing Director – Asia, Global Wealth Solutions, Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation, Fiona Hsu, Director and Head of Relationship Management, and Helen Ching, Assistant Manager on 24 June 2005 and appraised them about the implementation of projects supported by Drs. Richard Charles and Esther



Larry and Grace presenting memento to Lee Foundation

Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation Grant. The ICEVI team highlighted the tremendous impact the projects have created in the Asia region and the recognition of organizations and individuals showed towards the Foundation for its support for the cause of educational services for children with visual impairment, particularly in the developing nations. During the East Asia Conference held in Jomtien, Thailand in February 2005, Her Royal Highness Princess Soamsowalli presented a memento to Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation for their significant contribution for improving services to children with visual impairment in the region. Larry Campbell presented that memento given by the Princess to Mr. Bernard Russell at the HSBC, Hong Kong on 24th June 2005 with a request that the memento be handed over to Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation on behalf of ICEVI.

SUGGESTED STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE PRINCIPAL OFFICERS GROUP OF ICEVI

In November 2004 our President circulated a concept paper to members of the ICEVI Executive Committee suggesting some structural changes in the Principal Officers group that he felt would be in keeping with recent changes within our organization. That concept paper suggested that with the appointment of a full-time Secretary General made the position of Secretary redundant and that the role of Immediate Past President, that had been established to assure “institutional memory” was no longer needed with the creation of a Permanent Secretariat. This concept paper was initially circulated to the Principal Officers who expressed agreement with the suggestions and then was placed before the full Executive Committee in Madrid for discussion and recommendation.

The Executive Committee discussed the proposed changes at length and in summary agreed with the creation of a position as Second Vice President but felt that the position of Immediate Past President should be retained.

It was agreed that a proposal would be put before the General Assembly calling for the necessary constitutional changes to allow the restructuring of the Principal Officers group as follows:

1. President
2. Immediate Past-President
3. First Vice-President
4. Second Vice-President
5. Treasurer

Other points discussed with regard to the restructuring of the Principal Officers are as follows:

1. *Each of the two Vice-Presidents, should have responsibility for a specific portfolio to be determined by the new Executive Committee and based upon their strengths and interests.*
2. *No Principal Officer shall serve in the same position for more than two terms.*
3. *These suggested changes in the constitution will be to publish in the January 2006 issue of **The Educator** and put before to the General Assembly in July 2006 for a decision.*
4. *All ICEVI Regions and International members are encouraged to consider a two-term limit for their representatives to the EXCO noting that there may be circumstances when such procedures are not appropriate.*

The EXCO also felt that adequate consideration should be given to the following factors in building future leadership within the organisation both at the global level and at the regional level.

- *Gender, age, and disability representation should to be addressed.*
- *At the regional level, there is a need to groom Deputy Regional Chairs*
- *Orientation programmes are necessary for all potential leaders and particularly for new officers of the organization and should be planned early in each new quadrennium.*

With the suggested changes, ICEVI is likely to grow stronger in the years to come as projected in its Strategic Plan.

MOMENTUM BUILDING UP FOR THE 12TH WORLD CONFERENCE



The International Council for Education of
People with Visual Impairment



12th World Conference

Achieving Equality in Education: New Challenges and Strategies for Change

16 - 21 July 2006 ★ PUTRA World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Reminder for Call For Papers

Have you looked at the ICEVI website yet? It contains important information about the 12th World Conference! If not, the Host Committee (Malaysian Association for the Blind) and the Programme Committee are pleased to announce that preparations for the 12th World Conference are well advanced! We have an exciting programme with the opportunity for you to participate in keynote sessions with highly regarded speakers, a choice of interesting concurrent presentations and poster sessions, a half day interactive workshop and of course a fabulous series of inclusive evening functions and half day sightseeing tour!

Do have a look at the '[Call for Papers](#)' section on the website as the Programme Committee is seeking high quality presentations in the form of:

- thought provoking papers reflecting innovative practice or research;
- interactive workshops;
- poster sessions;
- new video, CD Rom or DVD materials

Please follow the instruction on the website and submit your abstract for consideration no later than **15 September 2005**

REGISTRATION AND ACCOMMODATION - GENERAL DETAILS

The 12th World Conference of ICEVI will be conducted at Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur from 16 to 21 July 2006. The Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) is the host organization of the conference. The Registration and Accommodation arrangements are being looked after by the MAB whereas the ICEVI Secretariat looks after the submission of Abstracts.

Here are the details regarding Registration and Accommodation:

Registration Fee

The Registration Fee for the Conference is as follows:

- Registration before 15 March 2006 - US \$ 450
- Registration after 15 March 2006 - US \$ 500
- Accompanying person - US \$ 150

The registration fee is inclusive of conference bag, book of abstracts, all lunches and dinners, and half-a-day official tour organized by the organizers. Pre and post-conference tours may also be organized (e-mail: icevi2006@mab.org.my) on request.

Registration Fee may be paid to MAB Conference Account No 0061-10-002875-0 (Name of the account 'Malaysian Association for the Blind – ICEVI 2006, Name of Bank 'EON Bank Bhd', Address of Bank: Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Swift code: EOBBMYKL) through electronic transfer or bank draft. For payment through credit cards, the credit card details with authorization should be faxed to the conference secretariat.

Hotels

The following are the conference hotels. Rates are for one room, so if you are sharing with a friend or colleague it is a real bargain. When you send in your registration indicate if you plan to share the room with another.

1.	Pan Pacific Hotel (4 star rating – 525 rooms – connected to PWTC on Level 2)	-	US \$ 66 per night
2.	Legend Hotel (5 star rating – 572 rooms – walking distance - 5 minutes)	-	US\$ 61 per night
3.	Dynasty Hotel (4 star rating – 700 rooms – walking distance 12 minutes)	-	US \$ 45 per night
4.	Grand Pacific Hotel (2 star rating – 180 rooms – walking distance 10 minutes)	-	US \$ 24 per night

The tariff is inclusive of taxes and complimentary breakfasts. The rates are final and no further revision will be made.

Conference Languages

The official language of the conference will be English. During the main sessions and some of the parallel sessions, simultaneous translation will be available in Japanese, Chinese and Spanish.

Post-Conference Workshops

The Program and Host Committee are working together in planning post-conference workshops on Low Vision, Multi Disabled Visually Impaired and Early Childhood Intervention. The workshops are designed primarily for participants from developing countries. The fee for post-conference workshop is US \$150, which is inclusive of the registration fee, lunches, workshop materials, and transportation from the hotels to the workshop venue. Separate registration forms should be used for post-conference workshops. Please refer to the websites of ICEVI (www.icevi.org) and MAB (www.mab.org.my) for registration forms.

Exhibition Stalls

The fee for non-government organisations wishing to exhibit is US \$ 1000 and for commercial vendors the fee will be US \$ 1500.

Official Airline

Malaysian Airlines is the official airline of the conference.

For further details, contact:

GEORGE THOMAS, Executive Director

MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

Kompleks MAB, Jalan Tebing, Off Jalan Tun Sambanthan 4, 50470 Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA

Tel: + 603 22722677; + 603 22722680. Fax: + 603 22722676

E-mail: mablind@po.jaring.my or icevi2006@mab.org.my

KUDOS TO THE HOST COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Prof. Ismail Salleh, Chairperson of the Host Committee states that elaborate arrangements are being made to host the world conference to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in July 2006. The following have taken place till date

- A Professional Conference Organiser has been appointed to look into the day-to-day transactions regarding conference registration, arranging pre and post conference tours, etc.
- Hotels have been pre-booked for the participants.
- Various sub-committees such as the transport committee, exhibition committee, post-conference committee, etc., have been formed to ensure effectiveness in the conduct of the conference.
- The post-conference venues have been fixed and more details on this will be available on the website of ICEVI.
- Besides the sponsorship from ICEVI to enable participants from the developing countries to attend the conference, the Host Committee is also mobilising substantial funds to help participants from the ASEAN countries.
- Internet facilities will be made available at the conference venue. However, there will be a nominal charge for the users.
- The Professional Conference Organiser will send conference updates once in three months to those who register for the conference now. The updates of the conference will also be published through The Educator and Newslines of ICEVI.

The Secretary General of ICEVI will coordinate with the host-committee conference secretariat staff on the above issues and inform the Principal Officers about the progress from time to time.

AWARDS COMMITTEE INVITES NOMINATIONS

Herman Gresnigt, former Regional Chairperson of ICEVI Europe and a recipient of ICEVI's International Excellence Award in 2002 has been appointed by the Executive Committee to Chair the 2006 Nominations committee. Bill Brohier (East Asia), Gladys Nyaga (Africa) and Susan Spungin (North America/Caribbean) are the other members of the Awards Committee.

The Awards Committee has been charged with selecting a maximum of four (4) persons to be the quadrennial recipients of its International Excellence Award. The award will be presented at the 12th World Conference in Kuala Lumpur in July, 2006.

Each ICEVI Region is invited to submit to the Awards Committee the nominees who meet the following criteria:

1. have made a significant and lasting contribution to the field of education of blind and low vision persons that has had impact beyond their own school or organization and
2. have made a significant and long lasting contribution to ICEVI.

Nominations should be prepared in an abstract that does not to exceed two single space typewritten pages. This document should explain how the person meets these criteria and why they would be a worthy recipient.

Nomination papers must be forwarded by fax or e-mail to the ICEVI Secretariat (sgicevi@vsnl.net) with a copy to Dr. Gresnigt [<herman.gresnigt@wxs.nl>](mailto:herman.gresnigt@wxs.nl) not later than February 20, 2006. The Secretariat will consolidate the list for the Award Committee shortly after the nominations deadline.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

The Program Committee of the 12th World Conference met on 6-7 March 2005 in Madrid. Heather Mason Chair of the program committee reported that all speakers for the plenary sessions have been confirmed and most coordinators of Focus Day workshop sessions have also been finalized. More than 80 abstracts for parallel and poster sessions have already been received. The following information has been sent to ICEVI contacts and we ask your help in forwarding this information to persons whom you feel might be interested in attending the 12th World Conference. The last date for the receipt of abstracts is September 15, 2005.

Criteria for Selecting Papers, Posters and Workshops: The following procedures will be followed in selecting abstracts for presentation at the conference:

The Programme Committee will be sending the submitted Abstracts to a panel of reviewers. The panel will have the following criteria to make a decision regarding whether each Abstract will be accepted or not.

- Abstract form is completed correctly (length, English etc)
- Abstract is written in a scholarly manner for example
 - *the title clearly reflects content;*
 - *there is an appropriate use of English that is grammatically correct;*
 - *it is well constructed and balanced;*
 - *the issues are clearly introduced and logically defined with suggested outcomes or conclusions*
- Fits into Focus Area
- Fits into Topic area
- Presentation shows original content/research
- Has universal interest
- Of interest to an ICEVI Region
- Contents reflects the results of a national or larger project or relevant local project

In some instances, the Reviewers may feel that a proposed paper may be better presented as a Poster. The author concerned will be informed of this decision and given this option.

Unfortunately, some Abstracts will not be accepted. This is usually because

- It does not fulfil the criteria outlined above and in the Call for Papers document
- It would be of very limited interest to the participants

- It does not reach the required standard for an international conference
- It does not fall naturally into one of the focus/topic areas
- The subject area is outside the remit of the conference

If persons wishing to submit abstracts require further help, they should contact Heather Mason, Chair, Programme Committee <masonfamily@talk21.com> with a copy to the ICEVI Secretariat <sgicevi@vsnl.net> and their Regional Chairperson. More details on the conference papers are available on the website of ICEVI <www.icevi.org>

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The constitution of ICEVI states that a Regional Chairperson appointed by the Executive Committee shall act as Chairperson of the Nominations Committee. The Executive Committee of ICEVI at its meeting held in Madrid, Spain in March 2005 nominated Lucia Piccione, Regional Chairperson of the Latin America Region as the chairperson of the Nominations Committee.

The criteria used to select the members of the nominations committee were as follows:

- 3 regional chairpersons selected amongst the regional chairs of ICEVI regions.
- One from the founding organisations of ICEVI, and
- One from the International partner organisations

Members of the Executive Committee belonging to the above categories met in groups during the Madrid meeting and selected the following members to serve on the Nominations Committee subsequently approved by the full Executive Committee.

Lucia Piccione	(Regional Chair– Latin America)	..	Chairperson
Jill Keffe	(Regional Chair – Pacific region)	..	Member
Eberhard Fuchs	(Regional Chair – Europe)	..	Member
Mavis Campos	(Regional Chair – East Asia)	..	Member
Susan Spungin	(Representative: Founding Members)	..	Member
Peter Ackland	(Representative: International Partners)	..	Member

The Nominations Committee will propose 2 slates of officers

1. On the assumption that the structural changes suggested by the Executive Committee are adopted, the Committee will propose a slate consisting of President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President and Treasurer.
2. An alternative slate that will include President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer will also be prepared in the event that the General Assembly rejects the structural changes suggested by the Executive Committee

The ICEVI Executive Committee suggested that the following criteria be considered by the Nominations Committee as it looks for suitable candidates for Principal Officers.

- The Principal Officers should have adequate organisational support to carry out their activities.

- As the positions in ICEVI are voluntary, the Principal Officers elected should be in a position to allocate adequate time for ICEVI work.
- They should have adequate professional background in serving persons with visual impairment /MDVI / Multi-sensory impairment
- They should be well connected internationally as ICEVI's work demands international coordination and networking.
- Ability to work as a "team player" should also be considered since as the Principal Officers must regularly make collective decisions on many matters affecting ICEVI.

Persons wishing to suggest names for the positions of Principal Officers may contact the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee lpiccione@arnet.com.ar before December 31, 2005 with the consent of the proposed person.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The "scholarship committee" headed by Grace Chan, Treasurer of ICEVI has raised just over \$150,000 to help make it possible for those who cannot otherwise afford to participate in the World Conference.

Allocation of these funds to each region is based upon a formula agreed upon by the Executive Committee that takes into account three factors for each region that include:

1. **population**
2. **average per capita income and**
3. **average cost of airfare** from points within each region to Kuala Lumpur.

Based upon the above formula the funds available will be distributed to regions as follows:

Africa	..	20%
East Asia	..	15%
Europe	..	11%
Latin America	..	17%
North America and Caribbean	..	09%
Pacific	..	08%
West Asia	..	20%

Decisions on how participants will be sponsored from the regions will be made by the Regional Committees concerned. However, the Regional Committees have been asked to give priority to those applicants who have had a presentation accepted by the Program Committee. In addition, the financial need and the ability of the applicant to raise part of the support from other sources will also be looked into in extending support from the ICEVI scholarship fund.

Those who feel they may be eligible to apply for such support are encouraged to contact their regional chairperson and to consider early submission of an abstract to the Program Committee. Contact information of all regional chairs can be found on the inside cover of The Educator and on the website of ICEVI www.icevi.org.

LEE FOUNDATION PROJECTS – STRATEGIES FOR LONG TERM IMPACT

The World Health Organization estimates that nearly 90% of the global population of persons with visual impairment lives in Africa, Asia, and Latin America Regions. Many developing countries in these regions still do not have human resource development programs to prepare qualified teachers to serve children with visual impairment. While some nations have such programs to prepare teachers at the pre-service level; in-service programs are conspicuously missing. ICEVI with the financial assistance from Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation is providing technical assistance to these countries to work towards effective human resource development as a vital strategy to achieve education for all children with visual impairment. The grant made available by the Lee Foundation has allowed ICEVI to attract organizations in Germany, United Kingdom, Spain and Hong Kong to provide matching funds to implement capacity building programs in the Africa, Asia and Latin America regions.

Process used in the ICEVI-Lee Initiative:

The Lee Grant scheme was launched in the presence of delegates assembled from over 70 countries in The Netherlands in July 2002 on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Conference of ICEVI. The following broad objectives helped the regions to prepare specific project proposals.

- Creating awareness of the capabilities of blind persons
 - Developing expertise and encouraging innovative practices among educators of blind persons.
 - Helping teachers, parents and other related professionals to provide better services to persons with visual impairment.
- A comprehensive Needs Assessment Questionnaire was developed and shared with the Regional Chairpersons of ICEVI to fix priorities within their regions. Evaluation criteria were also developed for the selection of projects supported under the Lee Foundation Scheme and the regional chairpersons were encouraged to generate matching contributions in the form of materials, manpower, etc., for the projects implemented in their regions. These projects were then reviewed by the Secretary General and the Principal Officers of ICEVI before final approval was given. Therefore, the procedures adopted for project selection, monitoring and reporting were rigorous.

Themes of capacity building Programs conducted in 2003 & 2004

- Advocacy and networking
- Braille codes
- Braille reading and writing
- Career guidance
- Community based rehabilitation
- Competency based curriculum
- Computer literacy
- Daily living skill development for visually impaired children
- Developing teaching-learning materials
- Development of e-text materials
- Development of skills in using assistive devices
- Early identification of children with visual impairment and intervention
- Education of children with multiple disabilities

- Education of deafblind children
- Education of low vision children
- Effective teacher preparation strategies
- Evaluation strategies
- Inclusive education
- Information and communication technology
- Integration
- Maintenance of Brailers
- Non-formal education
- Orientation and mobility
- Parent education
- Regional and national networking
- Teacher preparation curricula
- Teaching mathematics
- Use of teaching materials
- Visual stimulation

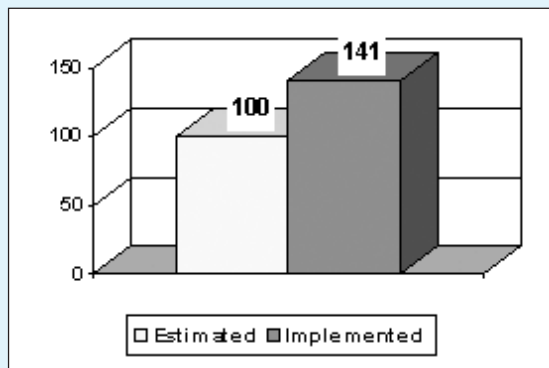


Countries served in 2003 & 2004

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| • Argentina | • Bangladesh |
| • Bolivia | • Botswana |
| • Brazil | • Cameroon |
| • Chile | • China |
| • Colombia | • Costa Rica |
| • Ecuador | • Egypt |
| • El Salvador | • Ethiopia |
| • Gambia | • Guatemala |
| • Honduras | • India |
| • Indonesia | • Kenya |
| • Malawi | • Mexico |
| • Namibia | • Nepal |
| • Nicaragua | • Nigeria |
| • Paraguay | • Peru |
| • Philippines | • South Africa |
| • Swaziland | • The Gambia |
| • Uganda | • Uruguay |
| • Venezuela | • Vietnam |
| • Zambia | • Zimbabwe |

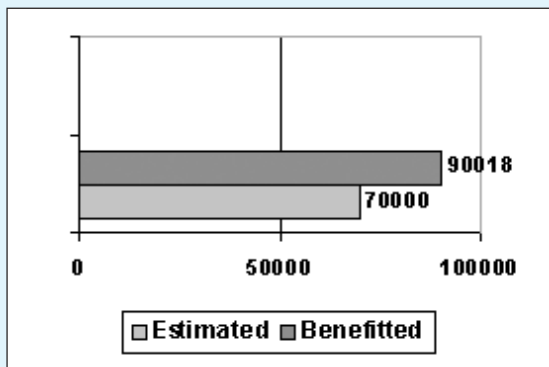
Projects Implemented in 2003 & 2004

Estimated - 100
Implemented - 141



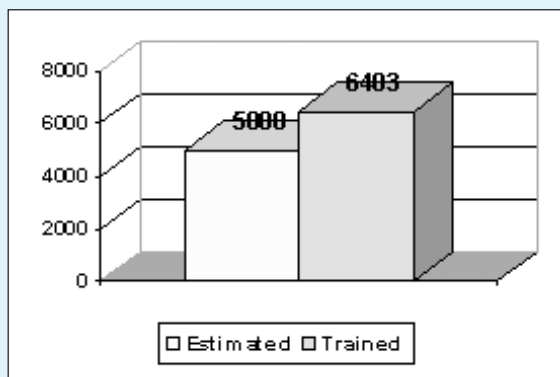
Beneficiaries (Children with Visual Impairment)

Estimated - 70000
Benefited - Over 90000



Teachers and Parents Trained

Estimated - 5000
Trained - 6483



Lee Projects – Making a Difference:

Almost every week in 2003 and 2004, Dr. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation made a contribution to the improvement of education of persons with visual impairment in some part of the developing world. Additionally, the scheme has generated tremendous awareness regarding the education of children with visual impairment throughout the world and built confidence in those that teach children with visual impairment.

Long-term impact of the Lee Projects

The projects implemented in 38 countries during the past with the assistance of Lee Foundation have created a tremendous impact on the need for educational services to children with visual impairment. The local Governments and private sectors realize that education of children with visual impairment is a basic human right. With the heightened awareness created about the need to provide quality education to these children, **ICEVI wants to spearhead the global education for all campaign in order to actualize the elusive dream of Education For All children** with visual impairment by 2015. ICEVI has already published a joint educational policy statement with the World Blind Union and further work is on to formulate a joint INGO policy statement keeping in view the global campaign of Education For All children with visual impairment.

A campaign of this magnitude will require significant resource mobilization both at the international and local levels and ICEVI requests the Lee Foundation to extend its support for five more years to carry forward the EFA movement based on the goodwill it could create in serving children with visual impairment in the developing nations since 2002. ICEVI anticipates that once awareness of need and the objectives of the EFA campaign are made known, significant support

can be generated from International Non-Government Organizations, Foundations, Corporations, and youth with visual impairment. Several international organizations have already agreed in principle to become a part of this Global Campaign.

Priority Areas

The following priority areas have been suggested by the Regional committees of ICEVI regions as strategies to achieve education for all children with visual impairment. Here are the priority areas for the launch of the Global Campaign.

- **Early Intervention:** Identifying children with visual impairment early and providing appropriate early intervention
- **Awareness Creation:** Developing awareness about abilities of persons with blindness and building determination within the local communities
- **Human Resources Development:** Supporting courses that prepare regular classroom teachers and special educators to help blind and low vision children to learn in their community school.
- **Production of Teaching-Learning Materials:** Providing the basic learning tools such as braille writing frames, long canes, low vision aides and other basic educational materials.
- **Developing non-formal education:** Developing village based non-formal education for children in communities where formal education is not yet a priority.

Therefore, Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation will continue to make an impact through ICEVI's global campaign to facilitate education for all children with visual impairment by the year 2015.

NEWS FROM ICEVI REGIONS

AFRICA REGION

Regional Committee Meeting

An Africa regional committee meeting was held at Accra, Ghana on 19-20 May 2005. Besides the members of the regional committee, the meeting was attended by Catherine Cross and Simon Bush from Sight Savers, country representatives of the West Africa region of the SSI, Carl Becker and Ben Pizer from CBM and Mani, M.N.G. Secretary General, ICEVI. Other country level officers of CBM and SSI working in the West Africa region also attended the meeting.

Wilfred Maina, the Regional Chair presented an overview of the work done by the region in 2003 and

2004 and also listed the priorities for 2005 and 2006. The region continues to demonstrate its effective triangular collaboration between CBM, ICEVI, and SSI in implementing projects. The following key points were the highlights of the discussions.

1. Though the region listed Teacher Preparation, Mathematics Education, and Low Vision as the three priority areas, the committee reviewed the current status of planning to conduct these programmes and also introspected the preparedness and ability of the sub-regions to carry out the activities in the stipulated time. After a thorough discussion, it was agreed to implement programmes as per the following schemata in 2005 and 2006.

S.No.	Title	Year	Duration	Trainees	Provisional Venue
1	Regional Workshop on Teacher Preparation	2005	3 days	30	KAMPALA
2	Regional Workshop - Mathematics	2005	3 weeks	20	NAIROBI
3	EA Sub-Regional Workshop on Maths	2005	1 week	20	NAIROBI
4	WA,CA Sub-Regional Workshop on Maths	2005	1 week	20	JOS
5	NA Sub-Regional Workshop on Maths	2005	1 week	15	CAIRO
6	Low vision project - Ghana	2005	3 days	20	ACCRA
SUB-TOTAL 2005				125	
7	Teacher Preparation Follow-up Activities	2006		15	MALAWI
8	EA Sub-Regional Workshop on Low Vision	2006	1 week	15	KENYA
9	Country level workshops on Maths - 9	2006	1 week	20	To be decided
10	Country level workshops on Low Vision – 9	2006	1 week	20	To be decided
11	Country level for Teacher Preparation – 9	2006	3 days	20	To be decided
12	WA, CA Sub-Regional Workshop - Low Vision	2005	1 week	15	GHANA
13	SA Sub-Regional Workshop on Maths	2005	1 week	20	NAMIBIA
SUB-TOTAL 2006				125	
GRAND TOTAL 2005-06				250	

2. Both CBM and SSI have committed to meet part of the budget to support the projects in 2005.
3. Ben Pizer and Wilfred Maina will contact the Teacher Preparation Centres in the Africa region and collect curriculum being followed, which will be compared and presented at the Regional Workshop on teacher preparation along with ICEVI's suggested curricular contents.

4. The trainees for the Mathematics workshop will also be selected by the regions as per the guidelines used in the ICEVI/ON-NET East Asia workshop.

In short, the Regional Committee meeting provided an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between CBM, ICEVI, SSI, and also other organisations for persons with visual impairment working in the region.

EAST ASIA REGION

Regional Conference

The East Asia region includes two of the most populous countries of the world, namely China and Indonesia. The 9th World Conference of ICEVI held in Bangkok in 1992 created a forum for ICEVI at the UNESCO Regional office and other regional bodies to raise issues related to services for persons with visual impairment. As the Education For All initiative emerged in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, conducting the East Asia regional conference held in the same place again after more than 15 years was an opportunity to revisit the progress made with respect to education for all children with visual impairment. With this overall objective in view, the East Asia regional conference was held in Jomtien, Thailand from 20 to 23 February and attended by delegates from 14 of the 19 countries of the region.

The conference was inaugurated by Her Royal Highness Princess Soamsowalli. ICEVI President, Larry Campbell, delivered the presidential address and Bill Brohier, Past-President of ICEVI delivered the keynote address. Representatives of UNESCO and major international organizations made presentations at this seminar. In addition to the plenary and concurrent sessions, exhibitors were given an opportunity to talk to interested participants about their products. This session was considered by the participants useful in knowing about the latest technological advancement in the field of visual impairment. The 236 participants assembled in Jomtien resolved with one voice that networking in the region is a must to maximize educational opportunities for children with visual impairment. Considering the differences that exist between the countries in terms of resources, educational opportunities, etc., the affluent countries of the regions came forward to support the developing countries to expand educational opportunities. The region also echoed the mission of ICEVI that educational equity



Organizers with Her Royal Highness Princesses of Thailand

should be ensured first, which will lead to the attainment of the EFA goals. A meeting of the regional committee was also conducted during the conference and the country representatives resolved to strengthen ICEVI activities within their countries. The regional conference became a prelude to the World Conference of ICEVI to be held in July 2006 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ICEVI is also supporting publication of teaching learning materials for preparing teachers of visually impaired children in China.

Vietnam meeting–Synergy to develop a national plan

Under the leadership of ICEVI's Vietnamese country co-ordinator Dr. Ng. Duc Minh, Deputy Director for Special Education, National Institute for Educational Strategies and Curriculum, ICEVI, along with Christoffel Blindenmission and the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology supported a very important meeting that developed and adopted a National Action Plan for education of children with visual impairment supported for the period 2005-2015.

Key Vietnamese stakeholders from consumer organizations, special and inclusive schools and teacher training programs along with managers, researchers and policy makers gathered in Hanoi on 20-22 March 2005 to discuss, debate, develop and adopt this National Action Plan. On the final day of the meeting the Vietnamese stakeholders were joined by representative from twelve international non-government organizations working in Vietnam on service provision to persons with disabilities. The development of such national plans and the collaboration between the government and non-government sectors to achieve “education for all” is a dream that ICEVI has for every country.

The Vietnamese experience with its concrete outcomes can be replicated by all countries that do not yet have a national action plan for education of children and youth with visual impairment. Certainly, this process will be critical to the success of ICEVI's emerging “Education For All” campaign.

EUROPE REGION

The regional committee meeting of the Europe region was hosted by VISIO at Huizen, The Netherlands from 10 to 13 February 2005. The full report of the 4th

workshop on training of teachers of the visually impaired in Europe, held from 23 to 26 September 2004 in Budapest, Hungary is available at the Europe website www.icevi-europe.org. The Europe region has contributed significantly to teacher training strategies in the past and it will continue to do so in the years to come. Mr. Eberhard Fuchs, the Regional Chair, Europe region will step down and Dr. Hans Welling, Director of Visio, will take over as the Regional Chair for the next quadrennium. The 4th European conference will be held in Chemnitz, Germany from 14 to 18 August 2005. ICEVI thanks Eberhard for his good work and extends a warm welcome to Hans Welling.

LATIN AMERICA REGION

The Congress on Early Intervention was organized by ICEVI-CBM in Antigua, Guatemala from 13 to 18 February, 2005. In the opening ceremony, held on Sunday 13th, authorities of the Guatemala Government, CBM and ICEVI representatives addressed 200 teachers and professionals from Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panamá, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Ecuador and Peru. A new perspective of Early Intervention was developed for children with different disabilities: visual impairment, deafness, hearing impairment, motor disabilities, mental deficiency and multidisabilities in the programme. A Meeting on Low Vision, which was attended by Representatives from CBM, IAPB, ICEVI, LIGHTHOUSE, ORBIS, PAHO-WHO, and VISION 2020 was held in Santiago de Chile on March 19, 2005. The members were actively involved in discussion on future coordinated actions to provide a comprehensive approach to the Low Vision area in this region.

A Course on Braille Maintenance was organized by ICEVI, ULAC and the Ministry of Education in Buenos Aires, Argentina on May 30th to June 8th. Two master trainers from Howe Press-Perkins School for the Blind trained 20 participants from different provinces of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and Brazil. Each participant was given a Handbook on 'Repair of Perkins Braille Machines' and a tool kit for repairing machines.

The Regional Chairperson Lucia Piccione visited México, Venezuela, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua during April, May and June 2005 to assess the situation of services for people with visual

impairment in these countries. Besides meetings with authorities from the Ministry of Education, a meeting of representatives from local institutions was also organized to prepare plans of action in order to improve the quality of the services for people with visual impairment.

NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION

The North America and the Caribbean region continued its networking activities with other national and international organisations. The Regional Chairperson Dr. Susan Spungin has contacted more than 100 organisations in the region encouraging them to become subscribing members of ICEVI. Members of the region are also planning to attend the 12th World Conference of ICEVI. Dr. Spungin attended the breakfast meeting with Ms. Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of UNICEF on May 6, 2005 and highlighted how ICEVI, WBU and UNICEF can work together for the betterment of educational services for children with visual impairment.

PACIFIC REGION

SPEVI Conference

The conference of the South Pacific Educators of the Visually Impaired (SPEVI) is conducted once in two years in the Pacific region. As most of the members of the SPEVI are also associated with ICEVI, the SPEVI conference also serves the functions of a regional conference of ICEVI. Since 2003, ICEVI and SPEVI are working closely in the region. ICEVI sponsors delegates from the less developed countries of this region to attend the SPEVI conference and organises pre-conference workshops. During 2005, the SPEVI conference was held in Melbourne from 9 to 14 January 2005 and it was attended by Jill Keefe, Regional Chair of ICEVI for the Pacific region and Mani, Secretary General, ICEVI. Both spoke at the plenary and concurrent sessions of the conference. While Jill conducted workshops on low vision education, Mani conducted a workshop on effective ways of teaching



mathematics to children with visual impairment. A regional committee meeting of the ICEVI Pacific region was conducted on January 13, 2005 and it was resolved that a workshop on Mathematics be conducted to assist participants from the Pacific Islands. Discussions were also initiated on how the World Blind Union, organizations for the blind in Australia and New Zealand and ICEVI can work together for the promotion of educational services in the Pacific Islands. Many organisations which attended the SPEVI conference also desired to become institutional members of ICEVI by paying annual subscription fee.

WEST ASIA REGION

Regional Conference

Since 2002, the West Asia region has been implementing a number of capacity building projects supported by Dr. Richard Charles Lee and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation and this opportunity has been used to increase the visibility and presence of ICEVI in most of the countries within the region. The enthusiasm towards the activities of ICEVI was evident from the fact that the West Asia regional conference held in New Delhi, India from 23 to 25 January 2005 attracted more 370 participants, which was the largest number for any regional conference of ICEVI. Addressing the global demand of facilitating education for all children with visual impairment, the West Asia regional conference deliberated on the theme, "Inclusion: The Right Approach. The inaugural address by Larry Campbell, President, ICEVI entitled "Getting the Rights-Based Right Approach Right" stimulated discussions in the conference and participants deliberated on what measures should be in place to ensure the rights and equity to persons with visual impairment. In addition to the plenary sessions,



15 concurrent sessions were also conducted. The speakers included professionals in visual impairment, policy makers, administrators, University personnel, and representatives of international funding organisations. Participants expressed that the presentations were of high quality. Besides academic sessions, cultural programmes projecting skills of visually impaired children were also organised. The classical dance performed by visually impaired children drawn from different parts of India, which exhibited their sheer skills was one of the highlights of the conference. Honorable Union Minister for Textiles Mr. Shanker Sinh Vaghela, Mrs. Sarita Prasad, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Mr. B.S. Baswan, Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development, etc., were some of the dignitaries who participated in various events of the conference. As the West Asia region presents a large number of persons with visual impairment, the conference felt the importance of reaching out to these persons through education and rehabilitation and therefore, resolved that the countries in the region should lobby at various levels to create equal educational opportunities for persons with visual impairment under the global campaign of ICEVI to achieve education for all children by 2015. The proceedings of the conference and other details are available on website: www.iceviwestasia.org Those wishing to have more information about the conference, photos, etc., may contact Dr. Bhushan Punani, Regional Chairperson of the ICEVI West Asia region.

ICEVI Assistance to Iraq

A meeting of leading international non-governmental organizations was held in Amman, Jordan on March 15, 2005 to discuss ways to help persons with visual impairment in Iraq. The meeting was chaired by Arnt Holte, International Department, Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted. Bhushan Punani, our Regional Chairperson, West Asia represented ICEVI at this meeting. ICEVI used this occasion to express our solidarity with blind children, youth and their families by donating, 375 Braille writing frames and financial assistance for the purchase of 300 tape records for children with visual impairment in Iraq. ICEVI has also pledged to organize capacity building programmes for teachers and other professionals to strengthen educational services for visually impaired children in Iraq.

BLOSSOMING INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

THE WORLD BANK AND DISABILITY: SOME PROMISING SIGNS

Networking is one of the major strategies of ICEVI in convincing stakeholders to make education of children with visual impairment a priority. Readers may recall the effort of ICEVI to work with the World Bank in producing a tool kit entitled “EnVisioning services in low income countries.”

Larry Campbell, President, ICEVI, and Mike Collins, member of the Executive Committee of ICEVI participated in a World Bank meeting on “Disability and Development” from November 30 to December 1, 2004 in Washington D.C.

Larry summarises his impressions of the meeting as follows:

“The World Bank is definitely taking the issue of including persons with disability into development programs seriously. Judy Heumann and her “disability team” have clearly had a positive impact on staff of the Bank. In his keynote address World Bank President James Wolfensohn apologized for their late entrance in addressing this issue but it was clear that this is not “window dressing” and the Bank is taking it seriously. Mr. Wolfensohn seems keenly aware that with an estimated 600 million persons with disabilities that it will be virtually impossible to reach the Millennium Development Goal of “poverty alleviation” unless The Bank more effectively addresses the needs of persons with disabilities within ongoing development initiatives. It is interesting to note that Wolfensohn had a connection with the disability community long before assuming his post at the World Bank and he is comfortable and conversant with the issues and challenges.

Regarding the session on Inclusive Education here are some of the impressions I took from that session

that had speakers from UNICEF, UNESCO, OECD, Inclusion International and The World Bank.

- 1. There has been a noticeable moderation in the viewpoint of many on inclusive education. It is an encouraging sign that people are looking beyond philosophy to the realities of implementation on inclusive education and doing so in a more thoughtful way. I think the position papers that ICEVI and WBU have developed along with the work that WBU and IFD have brought to the table at IDA meetings is being heard and appreciated.*
- 2. All panelists seem to express the feeling that the most significant challenges we now face with inclusive education relate much more to good implementation rather than good policy. While all agree that the policy issues will continue to need attention that we really have to direct our attention to good implementation; particularly in those developing countries where issues such as class size, lack of trained teachers and shortages of materials pose significant challenges.*
- 3. There was pretty much universal agreement that we face real challenges that are related to lack of data on the scope of the need and classroom cost analysis data that will be required to make the case with policy makers who are juggling competing priorities.*
- 4. The representative from UNICEF made the point that while there are some good model programs of inclusive education that we need to spend less time pointing to those success stories and more to successfully “scaling-up” programs to the point where we are reaching significant numbers of children.*

5. *Representatives from three World Bank regions; Latin America, East Asia/Pacific and Asia gave examples of World Bank work to support inclusive education.*
6. *UNESCO introduced a new publication “Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learning Friendly Environments”. The UNESCO speakers pointed out the need for better coordination between the various UN agencies working on this issue.”*

ICEVI and WBU Meet UNESCO Officials in Paris

Mani, M.N.G., Secretary General, ICEVI and Kicki Former President, World Blind Union had a meeting with Kenneth Eklindh, Senior Programme Specialist, UNESCO, Jill Van den Brule-Balescut, Section for Early Childhood and Inclusive Education, and Roselyn Wabuge-Mwangi, Programme Specialist on May 17, 2005 in UNESCO office and discussed various issues pertaining to the global campaign of ICEVI to facilitate education for all children with visual impairment. The points emerged during the discussion are enumerated as follows:

1. As “The Rights to Education for Persons with Disabilities Towards Inclusion” is one of the flagship initiatives of UNESCO, the proposed EFA campaign will augment global efforts. As UNESCO is concerned about all disability categories, it will support ICEVI’s efforts within the framework of the promotion of education for all children with disabilities.
2. UNESCO is willing to take part in the INGO planning meetings initiated by ICEVI to chalk out EFA implementation strategies.
3. The network of UNESCO with Governments can be used at the national levels to promote the EFA campaign.

4. The UNESCO office will provide the available contacts of its national EFA coordinators to ICEVI. ICEVI will ask its Regional Chairs and the country representatives to get in touch with such country level coordinators and strengthen the EFA concept at the national levels.
5. In response to the initiative of ICEVI in developing a teacher preparation curricula for training teachers of children with visual impairment, it was suggested that ICEVI can work with the flagship initiative dealing with “Teachers and the Quality of Education”.
6. The UNESCO team showed interest in the research work being carried out by ICEVI in Uganda and the mathematical package being developed by ICEVI and ON-NET. The research report, when ready, may be shared with UNESCO for wider dissemination.
7. The importance of Braille, celebration of Mother Language day, mathematical Braille codes, etc., were also discussed.

In summary, the meeting was fruitful to strengthen the link with UNESCO especially at a time when ICEVI is proposing to launch the education for all campaign to facilitate educational equity to children with visual impairment.

ICEVI AND WBU MAKE HEADWAY WITH UNICEF:

Susan Spungin, Chairperson of ICEVI’s North America and Caribbean region, and June Waugh, Chairperson of World Blind Union’s Children Education Committee met with Ms. Ann Veneman, Chief of UNICEF at a breakfast meeting on May 6, 2005 and discussed issues relating to education of children with visual impairment. The following is the report from June and Susan summarizes some interesting developments.

"The NGO Committee on UNICEF met on June 4, 2005 from 10:00 until 3:00. In preparation for that meeting there had been a telephone conference call the preceding week with Inclusion International and the Canadian Council for Community Living. The purpose of the call was to strategize on how to approach the NGO Committee as well as other members of UNICEF. As a result of that call a Brief was written to present to the Committee on our shared concerns regarding children with disabilities. Prior to the meeting the Brief was mailed to Tom Kennedy, Co-Chair of the NGO Committee. The NGO Committee was in the process of preparing a report for the UNICEF Board meeting and our concerns were included in that report. The Brief is attached with this report. Susan Spungin represented ICEVI and June Waugh represented the World Blind Union at all of the meetings with UNICEF. We also represented the other organizations who were unable to be present, Inclusion International, Rehabilitation International, and the Canadian Association for Community Living.

Our proposal to have a NGO Committee Working Group on Children with Disabilities was unanimously agreed upon. This was a very important step for us as we have the full support of the NGO Committee. The Working Group will be made up of the World Blind Union, ICEVI, Inclusion International, and CACL, and other interested parties. The work will be carried out through the Internet primarily. Our goal will be to work toward the inclusion of children with disabilities in all of UNICEF's programmes.

On June 6, 2005 we met with Alexandra Yuster who has the full responsibility of children with disabilities under the category of Protection. It was a very successful meeting. Alexandra spoke of the Guidance Note on Childhood Disability that she was involved in writing last year with the consultation of many interested parties. The Guidance Note is being held for distribution right now as UNICEF is trying to have it aligned with the new Medium Term

Strategic Plan that is being finalized this summer. The hope is to distribute the Note to all UNICEF programmes and have children with disabilities included across the board. Alexandra agreed to be the Working Group on Children with Disabilities link person with UNICEF. We discussed ways in which to partner with UNICEF. Two important ways in which we might be able to work together were discussed. The first is in gathering data on the numbers of children with disabilities. The second is perhaps working together in the Caribbean. This latter idea was appealing because both North America WBU and ICEVI include the Caribbean in their region.

The final meeting was the breakfast with Ms. Ann Veneman, new Executive Director of UNICEF. There were about 25 organizations represented, many with the CEO present. We each had the opportunity to tell her about our organization and our concerns for UNICEF. We spoke on behalf of all children with disabilities and about blind children in particular. We gave Ms. Veneman our Brief in print and Braille as well as the Invisible Children book and pamphlet. She showed interest in all the attendees and it is very good to have made personal contact.

There is much to do now as the Working Group gets started. We need to show up at as many UNICEF meetings as we can to keep our presence known. The climate has truly changed in UNICEF in favor of children with disabilities. It is a very good time to be involved. Thank you."

BRIEFING NOTE SUBMITTED TO UNICEF

UNICEF and Children with Disabilities: Moving Forward With Inclusion

(Prepared Jointly by the World Blind Union, Inclusion International, the Canadian Association for Community Living, and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairments)

UNICEF, with the support of the NGO Committee, should increase its focus on children with disabilities. This will enable UNICEF, as the lead agency for children, to better promote and advance the human rights and full inclusion of children with disabilities in its policies, programmes and partnerships.

Please Consider that:

- Children with disabilities make up approximately 10% of the world's child population (approximately 200 million); an estimated 80% of whom live in developing countries;
- Less than 2% attend school;
- An estimated 40 million of the 115 million children not in school have a disability;
- Children with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty.
- Mortality for children with disabilities may be high as 80% in countries where under-five mortality as a whole has decreased to below 20%;
- Young girls with disabilities are at an increased risk for AIDS/HIV infection because of assumptions that they are not sexually active and education campaigns do not target them.

The Challenges:

Children who have a disability are consistently among the world's poorest and most disadvantaged children. They face the double disadvantage of being both children and a person with a disability. The realization of their human rights requires strategies to promote inclusion in the home with their families, in their communities and in systems of education, early child development and health.

Children with disabilities have been largely invisible in international efforts and initiatives, even those specifically targeted at children. For example, UNICEF's State of the World's Children 2005 does not address the issue of disability in any great detail.

Without the inclusion of children with disabilities many international initiatives, such as the MDGs and Education for All, cannot be achieved. Currently, UN states parties are negotiating the development of a UN Convention on Disability. A critical question that remains unanswered is whether or not the Convention will contain a specific article on children with disabilities. In this regard we need the help and support of UNICEF.

Where children with disabilities are mentioned in the above initiatives, disability is often presented from a medical model understanding of disability. This broader monitoring framework often does not incorporate specific targets and indicators on children with disabilities. Without these, policies and programmes are often not held accountable for inclusion. Further, statistical information on children with disabilities has not been collected in a coordinated manner. Data collection on issues such as education often do not include questions on disability. These gaps in information present challenges to civil society, multilateral organizations and governments. Again, UNICEF can play a fundamental role in achieving these goals.

Ideas and Mechanisms:

- **Include disability as a cross cutting issue in UNICEF's MTSP** – while the current draft of the MTSP does mention disability as a component of a cross-cutting strategy, children with disabilities are largely missing in key areas throughout the document. In particular:
 - The five focus areas should explicitly recognize children with disabilities. For example, Young Child Survival and Development should recognize the gap in improvements of under-five mortality rates for children with disabilities. Specific efforts will be needed to decrease the gap between children with and without disabilities. Basic Education should recognize that, according

to the World Bank, disability may be the single most important factor in the exclusion of a child from schooling. As such, specific efforts will be needed to ensure that education for all really does mean *all*;

- ✎ A social model approach to disability should underlie discussions on disability. Disability should not be confined to just the medical perspective presented in the document. While some disabilities are a result of malnutrition, iron deficiency etc., the document should reflect that disability is a naturally occurring form of diversity.
 - ✎ Targets and indicators on disability should be incorporated;
 - ✎ Strategic intent and organization targets should reflect an understanding of disability issues and a commitment to act;
 - ✎ Key results should include specific goals for children with disabilities.
- ✎ ***Commit to a focus on disability in strengthening alliances within the UN family and beyond*** – the MTSP commits UNICEF to strengthening alliances within the UN family and beyond. As the voice for children, children with disabilities rely on UNICEF to bring their issues, voices and needs to these partnerships. In particular, where disability-specific issues are being discussed, such as at the World Bank, the UNESCO Flagship on Education for All and the UN Convention on Disability, UNICEF should be an active participant.

- ✎ ***Establish an NGO Committee Working Group on Disability*** – such a working group could explore strategic ways in which children with disabilities can get a higher profile within UNICEF. The Working Group could provide advice and assistance in developing and incorporating targets and indicators on disability and provide direction in including children with disabilities in UNICEF documents, such as the State of the World's Children. Working Group members could connect with others, such as the World Bank Disability Advisor, to work collaboratively on shared issues. The Working Group could act as the vehicle for implementing the first two mechanisms identified above.

Conclusion:

Children with disabilities need a champion in UNICEF. The extreme marginalization of children with disabilities results in their invisibility in policy and programme development, and in monitoring and public reporting. UNICEF is in a key position to promote and advance the human rights and full inclusion of children with disabilities and to provide both a profile and priority to the issues of exclusion and marginalization facing children with disabilities throughout the world. The continued exclusion of children with disabilities represents a real threat to achieving international initiatives and true progress in their development. Inclusive approaches to children's rights are the only way to achieve progress for all. Most importantly, UNICEF can play a key role in achieving these goals—thank you!



CONGRATULATIONS BILL

William G. Brohier, the Immediate Past-President of ICEVI has been conferred the Blindness Prevention Award by the International Organisation for Blindness Prevention at its meeting held in Kuala Lumpur in May 2005. Congratulations Bill. You deserve this honour and many more to come in the future.

COMING ATTRACTIONS: ICEVI CONCEPT PAPERS FOR PRACTITIONERS

ICEVI has started preparing concept papers on various themes. In order to prioritise the themes for which concept papers have to be prepared, the members of the executive committee were asked to list important areas that they and the colleagues in their regions considered most important. The following areas emerged as the top four priorities:

1. *Developing standards in education of children with visual impairment*
2. *Early Intervention strategies*
3. *Children with visual impairment with additional disabilities*
4. *Education of low vision children*

The executive committee suggested that the concept paper may be prepared for one or two themes to begin with and later other themes be addressed. It also endorsed an outline for the concept paper, which is presented below:

Outline of ICEVI Concept Papers on Themes:

1. **Purpose of the Paper:**
2. **Position of ICEVI:** The position of ICEVI regarding the issue, for example, early intervention, low vision, etc., should be defined. The members of the committee may refer to ICEVI literature on such issues and develop a position statement and share it with the Principal Officers before making it official.
3. **Target audience:** Should be clearly defined
4. **Statement of the Issue:** At the outset, a clear definition on the title may be necessary to avoid misinterpretation by the reader.
5. **Status of the Issue:** The current status on the subject, for example, "status of early intervention

services" may be described from the national and international perspectives.

6. **Human Resource Needs:** After the description of the status, the paper may include the human resource needs to strengthen services in this area and also delineate the competencies expected from the personnel involved in services.
7. **Curricula:** This section may include the competencies that are needed for each category of personnel to strengthen the area of service and also list the general outline of such curricula.
8. **What needs to be done to strengthen the area?:** Here the strategies for strengthening the area may be described by listing the roles that may be assumed by the Government, INGOS, NGOs, DPOs etc. After listing the general strategies, this section may highlight the role to be played by ICEVI in establishing links to strengthen this area.
9. **Resources:** The paper may list 10 resources that are most useful for the learners in this area. The publications, persons for contact, websites, etc., may be listed.

The concept papers when developed will be posted on the website of ICEVI and also published through The Educator.

VOCATIONAL PREPARATION - NEXT ISSUE OF THE EDUCATOR

The theme of the January 2006 issue of The Educator is Vocational Preparation. Those who are desirous of sending articles may send a soft copy of the article to the Editor Steve McCall s.mccall@bham.ac.uk with a copy to ICEVI Secretariat sgicevi@vsnl.net

PARENTS COLUMN

Carmel Hickey-Griffing, United Kingdom

When I mentioned to my ten year old son Thomas, that we were to write a column about him and sport, I asked him what sport meant to him. His immediate response was "Everything!"

He didn't give this answer because he is a child who is partially sighted - he gave this answer because he is a child who loves sport.

Sadly, it is often difficult for parents to find people in sport who are professionally trained to work with children who have visual impairment. But there are organisations that can help. We have recently been introduced to 'British Blind Sport' a Charity co-ordinating sport for the blind and partially sighted in the UK. www.britishblindsport.org.uk

This is an organisation that has already helped us greatly and I am sure it will open up even more opportunities for Tom in the future .

Tom has been keen on football since an early age is a passionate Arsenal supporter. Last year we attended the Blind Sport Annual Football Day at Aston Villa Football Club (a famous professional team in the English Premier League). It was a wonderful event organised to a very high standard. There were teams of youngsters with visual impairment from all over England, each playing in a full kit provided by their local professional team.

Tom attends his local mainstream school in Birmingham where he is supported by a visiting teacher. The event gave Tom a chance to meet other children with visual impairments who also lead a full and active life. Thomas has no colour vision

and he actually met another boy there called Tom who didn't know what colour was either; they even ended up playing on the same team!

I think many children with visual impairment in mainstream schools around the world must miss out on these sort of opportunities simply because of a lack of knowledge among mainstream teachers of Physical Education about the possibilities for specialist sport that are available. I hope this edition of the Educator will help spread the word.

Thomas is lucky. At the moment he is playing in a fully sighted local football team and that is a huge part of his life. He goes training once a week. His brother plays basketball in a national league and Thomas shoots hoops with the best of them.

From my point of view, without sport Thomas would not feel the same way about life. He can chat with friends about the latest scores in football and basketball and follow events in tennis and cricket. When he grows up Tom wants either to be a professional footballer or a lawyer!

If you are having difficulties finding sporting opportunities for your child, my advice to you would be to persevere. Ask your local sports club what provision they make for children with special needs – you may find, like I did when I approached my local club, that they are willing to help once they see what is needed. Unless the issue is drawn to their attention by parents like us things won't change!

You can contact Carmel through the Editor s.mccall@bham.ac.uk

The Games and their Legacy

ABDC (the Brazilian Blind Sports Federation) has enjoyed 21 years of success in organizing and hosting international and national sporting events. Central to this success has been the commitment and support of the Brazilian Sports Ministry, the State and City Secretaries of Sport, the Brazilian Paralympic Committee, local association members, athletes, coaches, guides, sponsors and the press and media.

Our main goal is to create a unique event that combines the world's most popular blind sports with opportunities for promoting cultural exchange and sportsmanship among its participants.

The event is a must for American blind athletes preparing for the Pan American Para Games and for anyone training for the 2008 Paralympic Games in Sao Paulo.

The legacy of this event to the city and to the country will become evident in the years to come, as new generations of young blind athletes are inspired by the games to become involved in sport. Not only will the games will have a profound effect on the competitors and their coaches, the press and media, but they will also convince government bodies that have been working to provide facilities for blind sport that sport truly is an effective vehicle for promoting the social inclusion of people with disabilities.

We hope to meet all the world's blind athletes here in 2007. This great event will show that anything is possible if the will is there!

Ricardo Gomes

Marketing Advisor IBSA World Championships Sao Paulo 2007

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ICEVI'S PARTICIPATION IN 88TH LIONS CONVENTION

More than 20,000 Lions from throughout the world gathered in Hong Kong from June 27 to July 1, 2005 for their annual International Convention. ICEVI mounted an exhibition at the convention on educational services for persons with visual impairment with particular attention to the needs



Lions at the ICEVI Booth

Treasurer, and Mani, Secretary General along with the staff of the Hong Kong Society for the Blind were present at the exhibition and interacted with thousands of Lions and reiterated the need for the local clubs to involve in services



ICEVI Pin among others

of the "Forgotten Children" in the developing

world. The exhibit attracted Lions from around the world and we believe helped to create the awareness we will need to succeed in creating educational equity for children with visual impairment everywhere. Larry Campbell,

President,

Grace Chan, Treasurer, and Mani, Secretary General along with the staff of the Hong Kong Society for the Blind were present at the exhibition and interacted with thousands of Lions and reiterated the need for the local clubs to involve in services for children with visual impairment to

realise the vision of Helen Keller that "no blind child should be left untaught". ICEVI hopes to involve the Lions International as one of the key players in facilitating education for all children with visual impairment under its global EFA campaign. We were encouraged to note that Lions International has included education of

children with visual impairment as one of the priorities of the Sight First Phase II campaign launched in Hong Kong.



Lions showing interest on how blind persons read



Listening to ICEVI's work

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The following events are directly or indirectly connected with ICEVI.

- ✎ The European Regional Conference will be held in Chemnitz, Germany from 14 to 18 August 2005. Contact: vbs-gs@t-online.de
- ✎ ICEVI will take part in the panel discussion on Education on September 16, 2005 at the meeting of the Council of Members of the IAPB to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam from 14 to 16 September 2005.
- ✎ ICEVI will participate in the International Symposium on Inclusion and the Removal of Barriers to Learning, Participation and Development to be held in Sumatra, Indonesia from 26 to 29 September 2005.
- ✎ ICEVI will be represented at the International Conference on Science and Mathematics Education (CoSMEd 2005) to be held in Penang, Malaysia from 6 to 8 December 2005.



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Charles and even publishers.

THE 2ND ASIAN CONFERENCE OF THE DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL

The above conference will be conducted in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 29 to 31 January 2006. The theme of the conference is "Deafblindness- Breaking Barriers in Asia" and is hosted by the National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD). Deadline for Submission of Abstracts is July 31, 2005 and the final Paper is November 15, 2005.

For any communication, or queries, please contact:

Mr A H M Noman Khan, Secretary, Conference Committee
NFOWD, 8/9 Block - A Lalmatia, Dhaka – 1207, Bangladesh
Tel : 880-2-9124487, 8120415,
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Website : www.senseintindia.org

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TACTILE DIAGRAM, MAPS AND PICTURES

This conference will be held on 1 & 2 December 2005 in Jurys Inn, Birmingham, UK and is hosted by RNIB National Centre for Tactile Diagrams.

For further details, contact : RNIB National Centre for Tactile Diagrams, 58-72 John Bright Street, Birmingham, B1 1BN, UK. Telephone 0845 257 2587 (UK); + 44 121 665 4257 (international) Fax 0845 257 2588 (UK); + 44 121 665 4201 (international), Website www.nctd.org.uk, Email info@nctd.org.uk

NEXT MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF ICEVI

Sight Savers International has graciously agreed to host the next meeting of the ICEVI Executive Committee. The meeting will be held in Haywards Heath, United Kingdom on March 1 and 2, 2006 and will give the entire Executive Committee the opportunity to meet with the new Executive Director of Sight Savers International Dr. Caroline Harper.



3rd IBSA World Championships and Games - São Paulo 2007

The main goal of the **IBSA World Championships and Games** is to show the world the importance of sport as a vehicle for the social inclusion of people with visual impairment. The Games will be a showcase for the technical excellence of blind and low vision athletes. The games will be a stage for world class performers backed by the best in professional coaching, administration and the latest developments in sports science.

The organizing committee is looking to involve the whole country, and can already count on the best facilities and support that the State and the City of São Paulo can offer. The full collaboration of the authorities, the press and media, sponsors and the general public will help make these games a landmark in the history of blind sport.

The third IBSA World Games will build on the successful achievements of its forerunners and will provide a national springboard for the Brazilian Blind Movement to promote education and employment opportunities for the visually impaired.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all participants and guests coming to the **3rd IBSA World Championships and Games - São Paulo 2007**. You can be sure that your stay in Brazil will be a comfortable and memorable one. We'll make the IBSA Family proud of this initiative!

Overcoming hurdles is our sport !

David Farias

*President of the Brazilian Blind Sports Association, ABDC
IBSA America Continental Delegate*



Welcome Dr. Caroline Harper

Dr. Caroline Harper OBE has joined the Sight Savers International as the new Chief Executive. She succeeds Mr. Richard Porter who has joined the IAPB. ICEVI welcomes Dr. Harper and looking forward to her continuous support for the augmentation of services to persons with visual impairment, particularly in the developing world.

A new sport for IBSA

At the 7th IBSA General Assembly held in Beijing in June, archery became the latest sport to be officially recognised by IBSA.

Archery is a very challenging yet rewarding sport for anyone, let alone someone who is blind or has vision impairment. It is a sport which a person can participate in at any level, recreation, local, regional, national and now international. VI archery has been in existence in some countries for more than 30 years.

You may ask, how can people who cannot see, shoot an arrow at a target?

Here is some very basic information; you will be able to access more information from the IBSA website.

Archers who can see the target use bow sights, depending on their vision impairment, they can use an adapted bow sight to suit their residual vision.

Archers who cannot see the target use tactile sighting aids.

Here is a brief description of a tactile sighting device.

The back of the hand tactile sight is a pressure button type device placed on a stand in front of the archer. The archer contacts the device with the back of the bow hand, which allows them to have a reference point for elevation, foot locators enables the archer to have direction toward the target, (together giving 'sight' for direction and elevation). The foot markers, a means of the archer feeling the position of their feet and stance, is an important part of retaining the same position when retiring from and returning to the shooting line. The archers' technique and balance is trained to be the same as any other archer. The tactile sighting device should be set to align the archer's natural draw force line; this is achieved when the archer becomes efficient and consistent.

There are no hard and fast rules about the actual make up of the tactile device especially in the beginning. Some countries have three component parts to the tactile device: foot locators, a tripod and the sighting device, others have the three components combined into one complete unit. It is about what is available and affordable to the individuals. There are some photographs which show one type of the three part device and how it is used. Otherwise, the basic equipment for VI archery is the same as any other archer would use, bow, arrows etc.

Coaching instruction information is available on the IBSA web site. This is designed to assist archery coaches to include VI's into existing archery clubs.

It is strongly recommended that a VI archer has a dedicated spotter, who will set up the sighting aid and relate the strike of each arrow on the target face to the archer by way of using the clock method of description, i.e. 12 o'clock blue, 4 o'clock red etc.

For specific VI competitions, there is no difference in distance shot by male and female VI archers, as there is an alternative VIIR (vision impaired international round) to be shot alongside other archers in recognized rounds shot in tournaments and competitions.

IBSA hopes this very brief article will inspire you to seek more information and encourage you to join the ever increasing number of VI archers internationally.