

# The Educator



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*Human  
Resource  
Development*

*The Key  
to expanding  
educational services*



A Publication of



**The International Council for Education of  
People with Visual Impairment**

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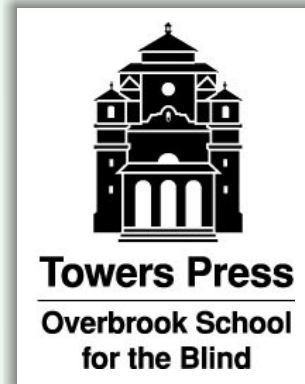
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Diane P. Wormsley is now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> printing. The book supports the goals of the National Agenda, emphasizes outcomes, features strategies for incorporating braille into the total curriculum, emphasizes learning media assessments, and provides an extensive list of practical resources. Available in print and braille, the *Curriculum* costs **\$36** plus shipping and handling.

*Technology for All: Assistive Technology in the Classroom* - \$40.00 ISBN 1-930526-01-6  
*Braille Literacy Curriculum* - \$36.00 ISBN 1-930526-00-8

Shipping and handling for both books is \$8.50 per copy (US) and \$22.00 per copy (outside US).

To place an order, or for further information, contact **Dennis Brookshire** by E-mail [Dennis@obs.org](mailto:Dennis@obs.org), phone (215-877-0313, ext. 263), or regular mail (Overbrook School for the Blind, Towers Press, 6333 Malvern Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19151).

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## *Letter from the President*

Philadelphia, PA  
December 6, 2003



**Lawrence F. Campbell**  
President

Dear Colleagues:

The Eid holiday has just passed and the lights of Hanukkah and Christmas are about to be lit, bringing with them a sense of joy and renewed hope. Outside my office window here at Overbrook the first big snow storm of the year is howling. This is a nice day to be inside in a warm and comfortable space with time to reflect on the year that is ending and to look ahead.

As I look back over the past year I am struck by just how much ICEVI has changed and how much we all have to be thankful for. Our organization has taken some bold steps forward this year, moving from the comfort zone of a familiar routine to face new challenges in new ways. Often such changes bring with them a fear of the unknown; but curiously that has not been the case, and I think I know why.

Any anxiety that might have been provoked by change has been eased by our members and supporters whose advice, encouragement and financial contributions have made these steps so much easier.

I will not enumerate these many changes and new developments here because you will find them on the pages that follow.

However, this seems the perfect opportunity to acknowledge, on your behalf, the many organizations that have made possible our work in 2003. While we have received support in many forms and at many levels, I would like to extend a special word of thanks to CBM, ONCE, SSI and the Asian Foundation for the Prevention of

Blindness who have made the decision to join us as "international partners" in our campaign to create equal access for visually impaired children and youth everywhere. The Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation has continued to provide critical support to our work in Africa, Asia and Latin America which this year alone has reached more than 3500 teachers, 55000 children and families.

Of course none of what we have achieved would be possible without the hard work of our Executive Committee, Regional Committees and a Secretariat headed by the most energetic Secretary-General that any organization could hope for.

As I look ahead to 2004 I am excited about new opportunities that will allow us to build upon the achievements of the past year. We are developing a strong relationship with the Lions Clubs International Foundation that I believe will soon bring global attention to the needs of the vast majority of visually impaired children who are without access to education. In early 2004, ICEVI will launch a campaign that will engage schools and other organizations throughout the world in a global effort to address the yet unmet needs of more than 5 million children with visual impairment.

May I wish each of you a happy, healthy and peaceful 2004. Let us join hands and pledge to work together to make the year ahead the best ever for ICEVI and for the children and families we serve.

Sincerely,

**Larry Campbell**

President

## *Letter from the Editor*



**Steve McCall**  
Editor

I am writing this in my house on Christmas Eve and am looking back on a year that has been one of the busiest I can remember. The global work of ICEVI continues to develop at a breathless pace but there is so much that needs to be done if

we are to meet our goals of equal educational opportunity for children with a visual impairment by 2015.

A key requirement in reaching our goal must be the availability of teachers who understand the needs of children with a visual impairment. This is a subject that is close to my heart – I am a trainer of teachers of the visually impaired by profession. In this edition of *The Educator* we have contributions that reflect a few of the developments in personnel preparation in different parts of the world, however it is only possible to scratch the surface of this subject in this edition. A visit to the ICEVI website will give you access to a wider range of resources on this topic, including a range of papers from last year's ICEVI World Conference on exciting developments such as the training of teachers through the use of the internet and satellite technology. A visit to the European section of the website will provide you with insights into the efforts to development of common curricula for the training of teachers in the region.

Naturally I want to thank all the authors for their contributions to this edition, but I want to say something here about ideas triggered by two articles in particular. The articles from the Philippines and from Uganda tell such encouraging stories about programmes that are challenging and turning around negative attitudes towards disability

in the community by ensuring the educational success in local schools of children who are blind. These achievements have transformed the lives of so many children and their families and have done so in a relatively short period of time. But there are worrying undercurrents that threaten to claw back the hard won gains in education in these regions and in many other parts of the world.

I have recently returned from a visit to Uganda with our Secretary General in connection with the ICEVI research project that you can read about elsewhere in this edition. While I was there I heard and read a number of news items about the effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Central and Southern Africa. In some countries it is estimated that 40% of the population is HIV positive. The epidemic affects all levels of society attacking particularly the age ranges that are economically productive and it is setting back economic and social progress. The average life expectancy in many African countries has dropped alarmingly since the AIDS outbreak. Even though it is still regarded as a stigma in some countries and spoken about in hushed tones, almost everyone has a relative or friend who has died from AIDS. Schools are losing trained teachers to HIV/AIDS and some of these teachers are teachers of the visually impaired. In Uganda the fight back has begun. The issues are spoken about openly and there are successful new initiatives in public education. The drive to make drugs available more widely and cheaply in Africa should help to improve matters in Uganda further, but in other countries the situation remains desperate.

In the article from the Philippines we see a threat to progress of a different order. Countries clearly need well trained and qualified teachers of the visually impaired to build up services and reach

more children. But an inevitable by-product of training is that the better trained and qualified individuals become, the better become their opportunities for personal and professional advancement. This advancement often takes them away from the post for which they are trained and sometimes even away from the country they were trained in. We can see how in the Philippines some of the best teachers of the visually impaired are leaving their country attracted by the possibility of salaries thirty times greater than those they can earn at home.

Successful trained and qualified teachers of the visually impaired are in demand all over the world. The problem is - to put it bluntly - that rich countries can drain poor countries of an already scarce resource and set back progress by luring away trained doctors, nurses and teachers with promises of better salaries. This kind of drain is potentially crippling to the development of services for children with a visual impairment in many countries, and a solution is far from clear. Who can blame people for wanting to advance themselves? What is amazing is the number of talented people I have been privileged to meet in countries like Uganda who have decided to spurn the opportunity for social and economic advancement, and choose to stay in their poorly paid jobs because of their commitment to the children with a visual impairment they are working with. They are truly the heroes and heroines of the battle to achieve equality in education.

As the New Year begins let us wish all our teachers and teacher trainers good luck and success. It will be a struggle to reach our goal of equality, but let us recognise the threats to our progress but not be dispirited by them. We have enough evidence in the pages of this edition of The Educator to justify hope for the future.

Happy New Year

**Steve McCall**

Editor



## ICEVI - FACT SHEET

### Mission

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), is a global association of individuals and organizations that promotes equal access to appropriate education for all visually impaired children and youth so that they may achieve their full potential.

### History of the Organization

Started in 1952 in the Netherlands, the ICEVI conducted its Golden Jubilee conference in the Netherlands from 28 July to 2 August 2002.

### ICEVI Regions

The 7 regions of ICEVI and their coverage of countries are as follows:

Africa Region	: 52 countries
East Asia Region	: 19 countries
Europe Region	: 48 countries
Latin America Region	: 19 countries
North America and the Caribbean Region	: 15 countries
Pacific Region	: 14 countries
West Asia Region	: 26 countries

The current database of ICEVI has nearly 4000 professionals and organizations working for persons with visual impairment throughout the world.

### Networking with other organizations

ICEVI works closely with International Non-Governmental Development Organizations (NGDOs) and UN bodies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and WHO.

### Publications

ICEVI, publishes a biannual magazine **"The Educator"** which is available in English Braille form besides the print version. The Educator is printed in Spanish and Japanese languages too and sent to nearly 4000 individuals and leading organizations in more than 150 countries around the world. ICEVI's online Newsletter 'Newsline' is published twice a year and reaches nearly 4000 persons and organisations.

### Website of ICEVI

[www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)

## *Strategic Update : Meeting of the Principal Officers*

*The meeting of the Principal Officers of ICEVI was held in Bensheim, Germany on October 24th and 25th 2003. Bensheim was where the ICEVI Strategic Plan had been developed by the Executive Committee in February 2002 and so it was a fitting venue to review the organization's achievements against the plan over the last year. The Principal Officers were satisfied that almost all of the goals identified in the Strategic Plan are being addressed successfully. Below are some of the key points from the meeting.*

1. A range of ICEVI projects have been successfully launched in Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and West Asia funded by grants from the Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Foundation. Thus far these projects have focused on developing awareness about the abilities of persons with visual impairment and providing in-service training for teachers and professionals working with children with visual impairment. As a result of the insights gained during the first year of implementation, it was decided that in future priority should be given to projects that would have impact regionally rather than locally and to projects that had specific long term outcomes such as a learning package, or innovation in the curriculum that would enrich educational services for children with visual impairment across a region. Each Regional Chairperson has been approached individually to develop region specific strategies.
2. Because of the considerable costs involved in production and distribution of The Educator, it was decided to rationalize distribution policy. The Educator, will continue to be supplied free of cost to organizations for the blind throughout the world, however individuals who wish to continue to receive a personal copy will be asked to pay a subscription for the quadrennium.
3. ICEVI is in the process of developing a concept paper on "Education for all visually impaired children by the year 2015". In developing the paper, ICEVI will draw upon the ideas found in the WBU-ICEVI joint draft position paper on "Education" and the joint policy statement of the CBM and Sight Savers International.
4. A draft Memorandum of Understanding may be signed between ICEVI and the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) in the near future.
5. ICEVI is exploring the possibility of holding pre or post-conference workshops or symposiums on education related themes around the 12<sup>th</sup> International Mobility Conference to be held in Hong Kong in 2006.
6. Institutions working for the welfare of persons with blindness around the world will be invited to become subscribing members of ICEVI.
7. As specified in the new constitution of ICEVI, country delegates need to be elected to vote at the general assembly held during the world conferences. The Principal Officers suggested that each of the 7 regions should elect 10 delegates to vote at the general assembly. These will vote alongside the members of the executive committee and two deputy regional chairs from each region. In all, 106 members will be eligible to vote at the general assembly and this process is being examined by the Executive Committee of ICEVI.
8. The 12<sup>th</sup> World Conference of ICEVI will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 16 to 21 July 2006 and the Program Committee of the Conference has already been formed.
9. ICEVI will be bringing out an annual report from now onwards for its constituency. The first report for the year 2003 will be tabled at the meeting of the Executive Committee to be held in Kuala Lumpur on 6-7 February 2004.

## *Regional Up-dates*

*The seven regions of ICEVI are active as usual. As per the strategic plan, ICEVI's focus should be more on the regions, and is being achieved by ICEVI in the last one year. The activities of the Regions carried out in the last six months are summarized as follows.*

Following the successful Southern Africa sub-regional committee meeting held in Stellenbosch, South Africa during March 2003, the **Africa Region** started developing national networks for ICEVI in other sub-regions. The West Africa meeting held in Accara, Ghana brought together those involved in ICEVI and was also used as a platform to demonstrate collaboration with international non-governmental development organizations. Besides the implementation of projects under the Lee Foundation grant, the region is also exploring the possibility of linking other leading funding agencies into ICEVI's campaign. The Regional Chairpersons and sub-regional chairs are in touch with the Hiltons Perkins Program, Bartimeus, Force Foundation, etc., to co-fund projects proposed by ICEVI. CBM and SSI are already working in partnership with ICEVI and this collaboration will go a long way in expanding educational opportunities for children with visual impairment in the Africa region. The Secretary General and the Regional Chairperson of Africa region met in Nairobi, Kenya in December 2003 and worked out strategies for the region for the next two years. The Africa region proposes to focus its attention mostly on collaboration and in persuading Governments to include services for persons with visual impairment under the overall system of education. Because of the vastness of

the region which includes 52 nations, the strategy will be to implement specific projects in a few countries at a time and gradually spread projects across the region, while creating awareness in the entire region through publications, brochures, etc.

The **East Asia Region** conducted its regional committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in August 2003. Though the progress of the region was delayed to some extent due to the outbreak of SARS during the early part of 2003, the region has swung back into action in the later half of 2003. The East Asia region has successfully revised its entire database with the help of country representatives of the region. Considering the need for the affluent countries to assist less developed countries within the region, a Task Force consisting of representatives from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan will be formed to find out the status of educational services available in other member countries in the region, especially Myanmar, East Timor Leste, Laos and Cambodia. In addition to the projects supported by the Lee Foundation, China has undertaken a project in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to publish 7 books in the area of education of visually impaired children. The East Asia Regional Conference will be held in Bangkok from November 29 to December 1, 2004

and the ICEVI Thailand Network will be the host organization. The region has also come out with a proposal that the country representatives, using the ICEVI national networks, conduct surveys to identify persons with visual impairment who require educational services. With the venue of the 12<sup>th</sup> world conference of ICEVI being Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the East Asia region is drawing international attention.

The **Europe Region** has its own website and it is encouraging educators, parents, other professionals and organizations for the blind to become subscribing members of ICEVI. ICEVI was represented at the International congress for staff working at institutions or in the field for visually impaired people in Dortmund University, Germany, which was attended by nearly 900 people from 17 European countries. During the congress, a meeting was held to discuss the Training Seminar of the region to be held in 2004. The second meeting of the Program Committee of the European region conference to be held in 2005 was also conducted at the time of the international conference. The region has recently published its European Newsletter and is inviting application for membership. The Regional Chairperson met with Mr. Rafael Gonzales recently, who is responsible for international activities of ONCE and appraised him of the work of the Europe region in Spanish speaking countries.

The **Latin America region** has published a version of the Strategic Plan in Spanish and the Spanish version of the ICEVI website is almost complete. The Latin America region is operating through five sub-regions and three Special

Groups on 'Early Intervention', 'Low Vision' and 'Education of persons with Multidisabilities'. Most of the projects supported by the Lee Foundation are on schedule. ICEVI activities are mostly co-funded by CBM which is active throughout the Latin America region. In addition to the 27 workshops, assessment of institutions and courses developed in the region, the major 'Sub-regional Congress on Early Intervention' jointly organised with the support of CBM, was held in October 2003 in Bolivia. More than 300 teachers, professionals, parents and members of the community participated. The Principal Officers meeting of ICEVI is likely to be held in Costa Rica in November 2004 jointly with 'ICEVI sub-regional Conference', where some officers will submit papers.

The officers of the **North America and Caribbean region** held teleconferences in May and again in October 2003 to discuss ICEVI activities in the region. Dr. Kathleen Mary Huebner has become the co-chair of the region. The region is collaborating with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Caribbean Council for the Blind, Richard Feinbloom Designs for Vision Inc., to organize training, expansion of services, etc. Dr. Susan LaVenture, who is one of the key coordinators of Parents' Movement in ICEVI, who is also the Executive Director of United States based National Association for Parents of Visually Impaired Children (NAPVI) assisted parents in Canada in establishing their own association which will provide a collective voice to the parents of visually impaired children. At present, students from Belarus, Egypt, Estonia and Palestine are undergoing training at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. ICEVI

members actively took part in the “Getting in Touch with Literacy” conference held in Vancouver, BC, Canada from 4 to 6 December 2003. The region will also be taking active part in the AERBVI International Conference to be held in Orlando, Florida in July 2004. The region is also looking forward to the China – U.S. Conference on educating students with special needs to be held in Beijing, China from June 14 to 17, 2004. In short, the vast region is expanding its activities throughout the member countries.

The **Pacific region** is actively collaborating with the South Pacific Educators of the Visually Impaired (SPEVI). The Newslines of SPEVI will be posted on the Pacific page of ICEVI website. ICEVI will make a presentation about its activities in the forthcoming conference of the SPEVI in 2005.

The **West Asia region** conducted its regional committee meeting in Katmandu, Nepal from 30 September to 1 October 2003. The regional committee suggested that Lee Foundation projects of the region should be implemented in most of countries of the region. It also decided to influence the local governments to include education of visually impaired children under the Education For All network. The Regional Chairperson took part in the national consultation to discuss the Biwako Millennium Framework organized by the Government of India in October 2003. The region is proposing to hold its regional conference in early 2005 in Katmandu, Nepal. Most of the countries of the former Middle East region are now members of the West Asia region. The Regional Chairperson is in touch with these countries to try to create an ICEVI network.

## ***Webtalk Initiative of ICEVI***

We are constantly trying to improve with the layout, content, and accessibility of the ICEVI Website. When it comes to a decision between the visual attractiveness and the accessibility of the website, ICEVI naturally gives precedence to accessibility as it is committed to the principle of full accessibility for persons with visual impairment. In order to develop the website, ICEVI has set up a webtalk initiative a group comprising the following members:

1. **Steve McCall** - Convener
2. **Larry Campbell** - Member
3. **Martina Kobolkova** - Member
4. **Mani, M.N.G.** - Member
5. **Peter Rodney** - Member
6. **Harry Svensson** - Member
7. **Victor Tsaran** - Member

The convener has already written to the members of the “webtalk” initiative inviting their suggestions for improving the website of ICEVI by addressing the accessibility issues. One of the immediate tasks of the team is to identify organizations which are actively involved in serving persons with visual impairment and provide links to their websites through ICEVI website.

Users of the ICEVI website are invited to send their suggestions to the ICEVI Secretariat ([sgicevi@vsnl.net](mailto:sgicevi@vsnl.net)) or to the ICEVI webmaster, ([webmaster@icevi.org](mailto:webmaster@icevi.org)) which will be discussed by the webtalk group and appropriate action will be initiated.

## *Message from the President - World Blind Union*



*Kicki Nordström*  
WBU President

*Dear Readers,*

Hello once again. As usual, I am happy to meet you through *The Educator*. The last couple of months have been hectic with so many activities happening around the world. I thank

Larry Campbell, President, ICEVI who attended the executive committee meeting of the World Blind Union held in Sofia in September 2003 and shared so many valuable ideas. Following the success in developing the ICEVI-WBU joint position paper on "Inclusive Education for Children with Visual Impairment", ICEVI and WBU have again come up with a comprehensive policy paper on education covering Braille literacy, orientation and mobility, technology, teacher preparation, etc. I am glad that the Principal Officers of ICEVI have endorsed this paper which is going to be placed before the Executive Committee of ICEVI in February 2004. The position paper will be placed before the Officers Meeting of WBU to be held in Cameroon in May 2004. While I went through the minutes of the Principal Officers meeting of ICEVI, my joy had no bounds when I read that ICEVI will be looking into the salient features of the ICEVI-WBU joint policy paper on education in its process of developing a perspective paper on Education for All Visually Impaired Children by the year 2015. I am looking forward to this paper and wish that all Governments and organizations working for the blind should be determined to achieve the goal of education for all.

The current issue of *The Educator* is devoted to Human Resource Development. In serving persons with visual impairment, human resource development plays an important role, and therefore, we have to ensure quality in our teacher preparation programmes. Alongside the specialist teacher preparation programmes, the general teacher education programmes should be revamped to include special education components as these general teachers play a major role in inclusion of visually impaired children in mainstream education. Developing countries should come up with cost-effective strategies in teacher preparation approaches and also explore the possibilities of alternative methods such as open school, distance education etc., for addressing the human resources requirement. Unfortunately most developing countries first need to establish adequate infrastructure before measures like distance education can be instituted. In this context, the collaboration of ICEVI with the Hadley School for the Blind to provide distance education courses is a timely intervention, and I am sure educators, parents, and visually impaired persons will take advantage of this facility.

The collaboration between ICEVI and WBU at the global as well as at the regional levels will be a formidable force to urge Governments and the larger education system to include disability issues in the priority list so that millions of visually impaired children in the developing countries can be brought under the umbrella of education in the decades to come.

## ***IBSA - Sports for the Blind***

*(Editor's Note: We are pleased to inform our readers that beginning with this issue, The Educator will regularly carry a column on sports prepared by our colleagues at IBSA)*

In a world which seems to be ever smaller, thanks to new technologies, organisations that have common interests should do everything possible to co-operate and work together. This is especially true in the case of the blind, where IBSA and ICEVI are delighted now to be working closer with each other for the benefit of the blind and partially sighted.

Many of you may not know who we are. IBSA, the International Blind Sports Federation, is the worldwide governing body in the field of sports for the blind and partially sighted. A non-profit, non-governmental organisation registered in Spain, IBSA was founded in Paris in 1981. IBSA has one hundred and ten member countries from all regions and continents of the world, and currently approves and helps to organise world and regional championships in fourteen official sports. Our mission is to provide a wide range of sports opportunities to blind and partially sighted athletes in all parts of the world and to develop new sporting opportunities and sports.

IBSA is proud to be a founding member of the International Paralympics Committee, the international body in charge of organising the summer and winter Paralympics Games, the equivalent of the Olympic Games for athletes with a disability.

The sports which currently enjoy IBSA support are; athletics, alpine skiing, football, goal ball, judo, nine-pin bowling, Nordic skiing, power lifting, shooting, showdown, swimming, tandem cycling, ten-pin bowling and torball. But these sports are just the tip of the blind sports iceberg - many other sports and games such as archery, equestrian sport, cricket, chess and beep baseball are practised in many countries of the

world, and we welcome applications for official status from these and other sports.

While IBSA is responsible for events for elite blind athletes, such as our multi-sport World Championships (Madrid '98, Quebec '03), we are also committed to development at grassroots level, co-operating with our expertise and experience in seminars and courses aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of sports and recreational activities in the all-round education of children with a visual impairment. These opportunities to get our message across are now taking on a particular significance with the expanding policy of mainstreaming, which unfortunately often results in children with any type of disability being excluded from physical education classes and denied the opportunity to participate in any sports or recreational activities with their peers. On many occasions, even in so called "developed" countries, this is due to a complete ignorance of the range of sports and activities which blind children can take part in and the great advantages in terms of integration, mobility, rehabilitation and self-esteem which this brings.

As we enter a new era of co-operation with ICEVI and the World Blind Union, IBSA is pleased to have the opportunity to share our thoughts with you here in the pages of "The Educator". In future articles we will go into more detail on how this co-operation translates to the field and benefits blind children. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like to receive further information on IBSA please contact either [info@ibsa.es](mailto:info@ibsa.es) or [ibsa@ibsa.es](mailto:ibsa@ibsa.es).

**Enrique Pérez**  
IBSA President

## ***ICEVI on the move – Review of 2003***

To empower people with a visual impairment and facilitate their full inclusion in society, ICEVI is stressing the need for high quality services.. These services include appropriate early intervention, support from families and communities, creation of environment free from social stigma and stereotypes, provision of learning materials in accessible format, etc, to facilitate their full inclusion in the society.

In order to realize the goals, ICEVI prepared a strategic plan in February 2002 which was endorsed at the world conference held in July 2002. Since then, ICEVI's activities have been geared towards achieving the goals set forth in its strategic plan. The year 2003 has been productive. The review of the goals and what has been achieved in 2003 are summarized as follows:

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Strategic Goal</b>	<b>Important Activities of 2003</b>
1	The ensure access and full participation in education for all visually impaired children and youth by 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the conviction that inclusive education is a viable option for achieving education for all by 2015, ICEVI in collaboration with the World Blind Union brought out a joint policy paper on “Inclusion of Children with Visual Impairment” and it was disseminated to Governments and organizations throughout the world.</li> <li>• ICEVI-WBU joint position paper on education has been finalized and will be placed before the EXCO of ICEVI in February 2004.</li> <li>• ICEVI is preparing a policy document on EFA by 2015 which will be placed before the EXCO in February 2004 for adoption.</li> <li>• The Regional Chairpersons of Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and West Asia are working with the local Governments at the regional level through the Lee Foundation projects and highlighting the measures to be undertaken for achieving education for all</li> <li>• All countries, particularly those in the developing world are encouraged to develop action plans to achieve education for all to be realized by 2015.</li> </ul>
2	To promote and assist in building of local capacity to develop curricula, to provide training and to identify and provide equipment and materials to children and youth with visual impairments and their parents, teachers and others in their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the help of Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation, this year ICEVI has organized 79 capacity building programs in the Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and West Asia regions covering more than 3500 teachers and other professionals and helping them update their skills in serving visually impaired children. In many places, these are the only capacity building programs currently available.</li> <li>• Through these projects, ICEVI is developing expertise in service development at the local level.</li> </ul>

S. No.	Strategic Goal	Important Activities of 2003
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local capacity building in many places is facilitated through cooperation with Universities, training institutes and voluntary organizations, and ICEVI is helping them to develop appropriate programs to train quality teachers and personnel to work with children and youth with visual impairment.</li> <li>ICEVI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hadley School for the Blind to facilitate distance education courses in order to develop the skills of teachers, parents, and visually impaired persons. ICEVI believes that this is one of the best methods to increase human resource development in its mission to achieve education for all by 2015.</li> </ul>
3	To ensure that ICEVI initiatives are based on current evidence of best practice, based on the assumption that a Research Committee will be established which includes regional representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A research committee has been formed and it has already initiated a study to find out the factors that should be in place for providing quality services to visually impaired children in Uganda. The findings of the research, which will be ready by the end of 2004, will be made available to - other countries in Africa and elsewhere to help plan services.</li> <li>ICEVI is collaborating with the Overbrook Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) and developing a package that will help teachers teach mathematics to visually impaired children. The package, which will be ready by late 2004, will be available for use in countries all over the world.</li> </ul>
4	To collaborate with and make use of networks to ensure that substantially more visually impaired children and youth receive quality and comprehensive education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICEVI is encouraging its regional chairs and country representatives to collaborate with national networks to facilitate expansion of services for visually impaired persons.</li> <li>In order to recognize the efforts of parents and also to involve them in expanding services, ICEVI has created "Parents' Column" in the Educator.</li> <li>ICEVI has assisted the World Bank in developing a "Tool Kit" pertaining to services for persons with visual impairment</li> <li>ICEVI is collaborating with the IAPB and emphasizing the need for early intervention under the comprehensive eye-care program.</li> <li>ICEVI will be signing a Memorandum Of Understanding with the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) for promoting the importance of sports for persons with visual impairment.</li> <li>ICEVI is working with UN bodies by taking part in the Literacy and Education Campaign, the Flagship Program of UNESCO, etc.</li> </ul>

S. No.	Strategic Goal	Important Activities of 2003
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICEVI has initiated dialogue with the Lions Clubs International Federation to expand early intervention and early childhood education through its affiliated programs</li> </ul>
5	To provide information on ICEVI and its services through all possible and appropriate media to all target groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The website of ICEVI has been redesigned and made more accessible. The website is used extensively by readers around the world</li> <li>The quality of The Educator has been improved and it is distributed regularly to nearly 4000 individuals and organizations around the world.</li> <li>The Educator is published in English, Spanish, Japanese, and in English Braille</li> <li>The Newslines of ICEVI has been redesigned and the electronic Newsletter is being sent to nearly 4000 e-mail contacts.</li> </ul>
6	To build an appropriate and sustainable organizational structure for ICEVI, to include the required financial base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ONCE and Asian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness have become subscribing members on the EXCO of ICEVI</li> <li>A fundraising branch of ICEVI will be opened in Hong Kong soon</li> <li>Organizations working for the blind around the world will be invited to become subscribing members of ICEVI with a subscription related to their annual budget</li> <li>Individuals have been asked to pay a subscription for receiving the print copy of The Educator</li> </ul>

As is evident from this review of 2003, ICEVI's emphasis on the regional level activities is solid and its openness to collaboration and multi-sectoral linkages is stronger. By networking with NGOs we are building a common platform from which we all can address a common cause.

### Do you want to know about leading organisations involved in services for persons with visual impairment worldwide?

Log on to ICEVI's Website [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org) and click **Other Important Links** of the "Menu Bar" on the **Home Page**. All leading organisations supporting services for persons with visual impairment are listed and you can access them easily. The links will be updated from time-to-time.

## *The Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation Supported Projects in 2003*

### DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL OF TEACHERS AND CHILDREN

The Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation scheme was launched during the world conference in Netherlands in July/August 2002 with the ambitious objective of bringing out the hidden potential of blind children around the world and building the capacity of the teachers to address the educational needs of these children. The first year of implementation has been a major learning experience for ICEVI, and the Principal Officers are continuously assessing the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by ICEVI in achieving the desired goals.

The vast Africa region has used the opportunities provided by the Fund to create awareness about the educational needs of children with visual impairment. Three workshops on teaching mathematics to blind children were conducted in 2003 creating a heightened awareness about that subject among teachers from across Africa. Teachers who attended the workshop in Pretoria stated that their fear of mathematics had disappeared and that they now felt more confident in teaching the subject to visually impaired children. Another notable feature of the Fund's first year was the collaboration it



*Participants of Parents Awareness Program in Manila*

engendered between organizations serving children with visual impairment. ICEVI, CBM, and Sight Savers have been brought closer than ever before in the region complementing the services of each other to facilitate the funded projects. Africa is in the process of developing a long-term perspective in serving persons with visual impairment and with the assistance of the Lee Foundation Scheme, the region is concentrating on Teacher Preparation, The Education of Low Vision Children, Braille Literacy and Teaching Mathematics as the priority areas for future development. In short, the first year of the implementation of Lee Foundation scheme in Africa has facilitated effective collaboration and networking in Africa - a key strategic goal of ICEVI.

The East Asia region has organized diverse activities ranging from a Parents' Awareness Programme to the sensitization of Deans of



*Participants of a workshop in Caliraya*

Colleges about the education of persons with visual impairment. The region has focused on Parent involvement as a key factor for increasing the enrolment of children with visual impairment in schools. The Lee Foundation Scheme was used to fund projects in the Philippines, Indonesia and China during 2003 and other countries will be covered in 2004. The meeting of the Deans of Colleges organized in Baguio in August 2003 brought together nearly 40 Deans from Colleges and they were alerted to the need for developing an inclusive curriculum that would facilitate higher education for visually impaired learners. The East Asia region used the Lee Foundation grant to create awareness about the capabilities of visually impaired children at every level, another of the goals defined in ICEVI's Strategic Plan.

The Latin America region is a classic example of how the enhanced sub-regional structure of ICEVI has proved effective in expanding educational services. The Lee Foundation Scheme funding was predominantly used for the capacity building of teachers in four areas namely: early childhood and intervention, the education of low vision children, the education of visually impaired children with additional disabilities, and orientation & mobility. The sub-regional structure is helping the message of ICEVI to percolate to the grass-root level across the continent. It is noteworthy that the region has dispensed with the concept of Regional Committee meetings in favor of sub-regional level meetings which have proved a far more practical and effective way of addressing challenges. Instructional guidelines for applicants to The Lee Foundation Scheme have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese to help promote the program throughout the region. This region again demonstrates how effectively international organizations such as CBM and ONCE can support the efforts of ICEVI in building capacity among teachers and other professionals. The region has already prepared a blue print of action to be supported by the Lee Foundation Scheme during 2004 and it is confirming the belief

of ICEVI that the strength of the organization lies in its regional structure and activities.



*Participants of a Workshop in Kolkata*

The West Asia region has drawn on the support of the Lee Foundation scheme to focus more on resource development. It is collaborating with the Rehabilitation Council of India in developing a handbook on "disability management" for parents of visually impaired

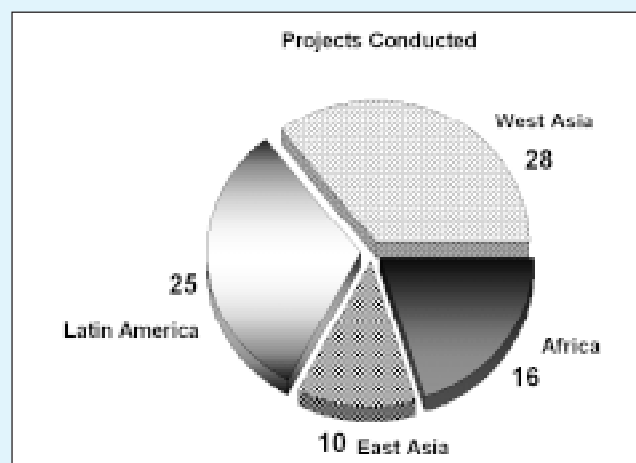
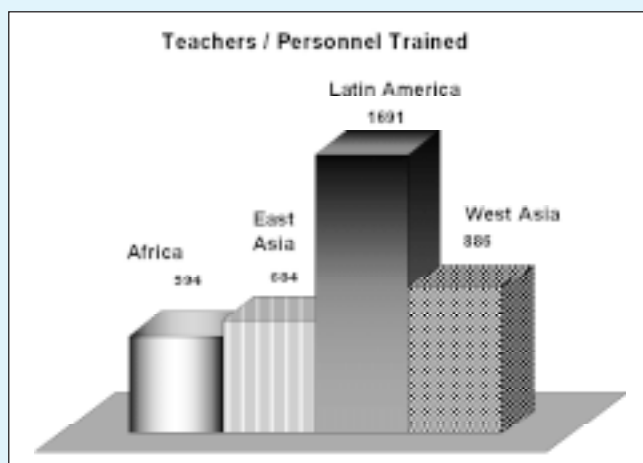
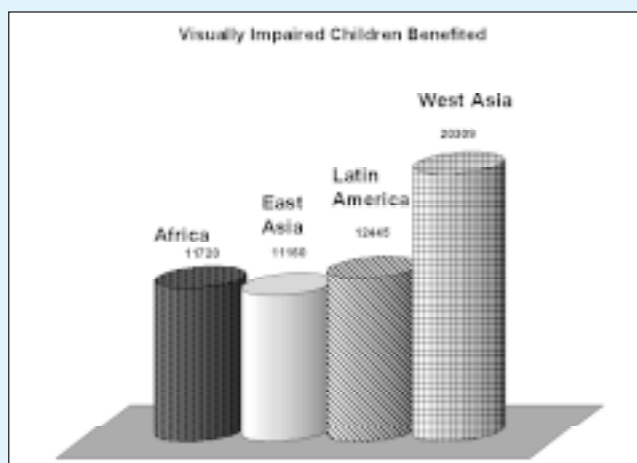
children. The E-Text Creation, a project supported by the Lee Foundation in India, is a collaborative initiative aimed at putting hundreds of books into an electronic text format to provide access for visually impaired learners. It is also supporting projects in Nepal to make visually impaired children computer literate in the growing world of information and communication technology. The region, which contains the largest number of persons with visual impairment, is trying to encourage international organizations and Government agencies to work with ICEVI in developing practices which can be replicated for the vast population.

As we can see, each of the four regions where the Lee Foundation projects are underway has adopted a unique approach. Out of the 99 projects approved in 2003, **the four regions have completed 79 projects** and the remaining will be carried forward to 2004. Inevitably, in this first year of implementation, project partners

needed time to understand the processes of setting up and implementing activities and therefore, the regional chairs were advised not to rush projects, and were permitted to carry forward projects to 2004 wherever they felt the conditions were not fully conducive for carrying out the project successfully by the end of the year. **The beneficiaries in 2003 include 55634 visually impaired children and 3855 teachers, parents, and other personnel**, a very satisfactory start.

Based on the experiences of the first year of implementation of the projects, the Principal Officers decided that a macro plan for each region should be prepared in consultation with the respective regional chairperson. The Secretary

General is in dialogue with the regional chairs and the second year of project implementation under Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation will be even more effective and focused than the ground breaking first year.



## ***ICEVI – HADLEY ‘GLOBE All’ Program seen as an Opportunity for Personal Development***

The ICEVI-Hadley GLOBE All (Growth and Learning Opportunities in Blindness Education) distance education program is attracting the attention of learners throughout the world. The launch of this prestigious collaboration between ICEVI and the Hadley School was featured in the last issue of The Educator (January to June 2003).

Many individuals and organizations have contacted the Secretary General so far regarding the program and inquiries keep coming in.

To keep on top of these enquiries and to provide the necessary follow up, ICEVI has nominated its Secretary Mrs. Nandini Rawal ([bpaiceviad1@sancharnet.in](mailto:bpaiceviad1@sancharnet.in)) as the nodal officer for the GLOBE All program. She will be working with the regional chairs of ICEVI to develop plans for expanding the use of this opportunity. Those interested in enrolling for the wide range of courses may contact the Hadley School directly or through the website of ICEVI. We need constant feedback from learners to help us maximize the immense potential of the GLOBE All program.

Some initiatives have also come up from Governments. For example, the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) which is the apex body for standardizing the human resources development programs on disability in India (see page 37) has expressed interest to sign a Memorandum Of Understanding with ICEVI and Hadley to make use of the distance education courses through the Open University systems in India. This is a significant development and entering into a MOU with the RCI will generate thousands of takers for these courses. The Principal Officers authorized the Secretary General to facilitate discussions between the RCI and the Hadley School and see how this initiative can be taken forward. Universities in the Philippines are also showing interest in offering distance education courses in collaboration with ICEVI and the Hadley School for the Blind.

Human resource development is the key to expanding educational services and ICEVI is determined to take a proactive and facilitative role in this area in collaboration with the Hadley School for the Blind and other organizations responsible for human resource development around the world, especially in developing nations. Regional chairs are encouraging learners to take up registration through ICEVI for the courses that are available free of cost.

## *Dates for your diary – the 12<sup>th</sup> World Conference of ICEVI*



The 12th World Conference of ICEVI will be held from **16 to 21 July 2006** at the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ICEVI extends its thanks to The Malaysian Association for the Blind who will be the host organisation for the conference. We are delighted that Dr. Heather Mason, the Chair of the Program Committee for the memorable Golden Jubilee Conference in the Netherlands has again agreed to be the Chairperson of the Program Committee of the 12th World Conference. The members of the Program Committee are:

1. **Dr. Heather Mason**, *Chairman, Program Committee*
2. **Larry Campbell**, *President – ICEVI*
3. **Prof. Ismail Md. Salleh**, *President, Malaysian Association for the Blind*
4. **Jill Keeffe**, *Regional Chairperson, ICEVI Pacific Region, Australia*
5. **Liew Yoon Loy**, *Vice-President, Malaysian Association for the Blind*
6. **M.N.G. Mani**, *Secretary General, ICEVI*
7. **Lucia Piccione**, *Regional Chairperson, Latin America, Argentina*

8. **Henoch Schoeman**, *Deputy Regional Chairperson, ICEVI Africa Region, South Africa.*

The Programme Committee met in October 2003 and discussed various issues related to the conduct of the conference. The overall theme of the conference is **“Achieving Equality in Education: New Challenges and Strategies for Change”**. Details of the Conference will be made in the first announcement which will be out soon.



*Dr. Heather Mason*



*Program Committee Members*

## ***ICEVI / ON-NET Mathematics Project: The Need of the Hour***

*ICEVI and the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) have begun development of a mathematical package for teaching secondary level mathematics to visually impaired children. The project team co-chaired by the Secretary General and Ms. Aree Plernchaivanich from Thailand and assisted by Mr. G.R. Ramesh (India) is in the process of developing and field-testing a comprehensive package covering six areas.*

### **1. Methodology of Teaching Mathematics**

This section deals with the general methods used for teaching mathematics in general and teaching the subject to visually impaired children. This section also enumerates the methods of preparing mathematics text material, learning characteristics of visually impaired children, and evaluation procedures in mathematics.

### **2. Use of Abacus**

This section provides detailed self-instructional procedures to learn abacus effectively. The exercises include addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fraction, decimals, square roots, and percentages.

### **3. Use of Mathematical Braille Code**

This section provides illustrations on how to use Nemeth Braille codes for all mathematical notations at the secondary level. Each code is described in detail and accompanied by illustrations.

### **4. Instructional Strategies**

This section provides instructions on how to adapt procedures for teaching more than 500 mathematical concepts at the secondary level. This section is also useful for non-mathematics teachers to understand the concepts before teaching the same to visually impaired children.

### **5. Creative Mathematics**

This section deals with a whole range of creative activities such as using paper folding and the natural environment for teaching and understanding mathematical concepts.

### **6. Low-Cost Teaching Aids**

This section provides guidelines on the preparation of low-cost teaching aids to teach mathematics.

The above package will be accompanied by an instructional material on low-cost teaching aids kit for secondary level mathematics instruction.

The ON-NET is organizing a “master trainer workshop” for teachers and teacher trainers from eight countries in Southeast Asia at its regional center at Ratchasuda College, Mahidol University, Thailand from 16 February to 3 March 2003. These master trainers will then use the package and provide feedback during the second phase of training so that the materials can be refined before being distributed for wider use in late 2004.

ICEVI hopes to collaborate with other organizations to help develop such need-based learning packages on other topics of interest to educators around the world.

## ***What do they say about Human Resource Development?***

*The current issue of The Educator is "Human Resource Development". In recent times, many declarations related to disabilities have made special mention about human resource development, curriculum, etc. Here are **some extracts on training, curriculum, etc.**, from different policy documents.*

### **Reference to Training programmes found in the Salamanca Framework for Action:**

- ❑ *Pre-service training programmes should provide to all student teachers, primary and secondary alike, positive orientation toward disability, thereby developing an understanding of what can be achieved in schools with locally available support services. The knowledge and skills required are mainly those of good teaching and include assessing special needs, adapting curriculum content, utilizing assistive technology, individualizing teaching procedures to suit a larger range of abilities, etc. In teacher-training practice schools, specific attention should be given to preparing all teachers to exercise their autonomy and apply their skills in adapting curricula and instruction to meet pupils needs as well as to collaborate with specialists and co-operate with parents.*
- ❑ *The major challenge lies in providing in-service training to all teachers, taking into account the varied and often difficult conditions under which they serve. In-service training should, wherever possible, be developed at school level by means of interaction with trainers and supported by distance education and other self-instruction techniques.*
- ❑ *Specialized training in special needs education leading to additional qualifications should*

*normally be integrated with or preceded by training and experience as a regular education teacher in order to ensure complementarity and mobility.*

- ❑ *The training of special teachers needs to be reconsidered with a view to enabling them to work in different settings and to play a key role in special educational needs programmes. A non-categorical approach encompassing all types of disabilities should be developed as a common core, prior to further specialization in one or more disability-specific areas.*
- ❑ *Universities have a major advisory role to play in the process of developing special needs education, especially as regards research, evaluation, preparation of teacher trainers, and designing training programmes and materials. Networking among universities and institutions of higher learning in developed and developing countries should be promoted. Linking research and training in this way is of great significance.*

### **Reference to Training programmes found in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (UN Programme on Disability)**

- ❑ *Significant advances in teaching techniques and important innovative developments have taken place in the field of special education and much more can be achieved in the education*

*of disabled persons. But the progress is mostly limited to a few countries or only a few urban centres.*

- ❑ *Personnel should be trained to work with the parents of disabled children.*

***Reference to Training programmes found in the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities***

- ❑ *States are responsible for ensuring the adequate training of personnel, at all levels, involved in the planning and provision of programmes and services concerning persons with disabilities.*
- ❑ *States should ensure that all authorities providing services in the disability field give adequate training to their personnel.*
- ❑ *In the training of professionals in the disability field, as well as in the provision of information on disability in general training programmes, the principle of full participation and equality should be appropriately reflected.*
- ❑ *States should develop training programmes in consultation with organizations of persons*

*with disabilities, and persons with disabilities should be involved as teachers, instructors or advisers in staff training programmes.*

- ❑ *The training of community workers is of great strategic importance, particularly in developing countries. It should involve persons with disabilities and include the development of appropriate values, competence and technologies as well as skills which can be practised by persons with disabilities, their parents, families and members of the community.*

The extracts above illustrate the importance that the international community places on human resource development as a key element in the move to enable persons with disability to participate fully in society. They provide ample justification for those seeking to improve the access of children with visual impairment to teachers with training in this area.

ICEVI confirms its commitment to promoting quality services for children with a visual impairment through a range of capacity building programmes to update the skills of teachers, parents, and other professionals.

*The public must learn that the blind man is neither genius nor a freak nor an idiot. He has a mind that can be educated, a hand which can be trained, ambitions which it is right for him to strive to realise, and it is the duty of the public to help him make the best of himself so that he can win light through work.*

***- Helen Keller***

## ***Teacher Training in the Philippines – Short Term Training with Long Term Benefits***

*Randy Weisser, Resources for the Blind, Manila, Philippines*

Imagine trying to create and administer a national program of any kind in a country that consists of 7100 islands scattered over 2000 kilometers from north to south and 1000 kilometers from east to west. Add 70 million people, and over 100 ethnic groups, and the logistics of such a task are almost unthinkable. Despite these obstacles, the Philippines Department of Education has been able to reach into the farthest corners of every inhabited island, and to set up school programs in virtually every community. The result is an enrollment rate of ninety six percent of all elementary-aged children. This is an accomplishment that the Philippines, in our estimation, can be justly proud of.

There is one important group of children, though, who have yet to be fully included. Scattered throughout the islands of the Philippines are 40,000 visually impaired children. In 1991, only 300 of these children were enrolled in school, an enrollment rate of less than one percent. Recognizing that new strategies were needed to increase the enrollment of blind children, the Dept. of Education met with representatives from Christoffel Blindenmission (an international NGO), Resources for the Blind (a national NGO), and the Philippine Normal University, (a teacher training college), to discuss ways that they could work together meet the educational needs of these children.

We concluded that most of the facilities to make enrollment possible for these children was already in place. By making use of existing resources, these children could be provided an education with very little extra expense or added burden.

There is certainly no need to create a separate school system for these children. There are already more than 400,000 public school teachers in the Philippines, providing education in more than 40,000 public schools. Every morning, 16 million sighted children head off to a nearby public school where they can avail of their free education. These sighted children are learning to read and write. They are studying history, language, geography, civics, art, math, and music. They are involved in sports, in academic competitions, in social activities, and in community affairs. All of this was already solidly in place and working very well, but in most cases, blind children were being excluded.

The solution seemed simple. We only need to give the blind children access to the existing school system. Let them use the same buildings, the same teachers, the same school desks, and the same curriculum as their sighted peers are using. Let them join their brothers and sisters in going to school every morning. Almost everything that they need to get an education was already in place and working well. With a few simple modifications, the blind child could easily join their sighted classmates.

Unfortunately, it was not so simple. When the local schools were asked if they would accept blind children into the regular classroom, their answer was predictable. They were horrified and almost recoiled at the very idea of having a blind student join their class. Some teachers even threatened to quit teaching if a blind child was put in their class. School administrators and teachers were almost always initially resistant to

the concept of including blind children in the regular classroom.

So, our first and foremost task became both persuading and preparing teachers and administrators to accept blind children into their schools. If we could accomplish that, we could open schools for thousands of blind children around the country.

### **Making inclusion possible**

There were three components to the strategy for accomplishing inclusion. The first strategy was to provide a short three day orientation course for administrators. This course introduces the administrators to special education and explains how integration can be successful in their schools. Its main purpose is to simply allay their fears about having blind children in their schools.

The second strategy has been to offer summer training courses for teachers in how to include blind children into the regular classroom. These are graduate level, accredited courses, conducted over three summers, and offered on a scholarship basis. By the end of the first summer, the teachers immediately begin enrolling blind children in their schools. Along with their other responsibilities, they serve as a resource teacher, both for the blind student and for the regular teacher, to make inclusion successful. They also become the advocate for the blind student, to help overcome resistance to inclusion in school activities.

The third component has been to assure the schools that the needed special equipment and materials for reading and writing will be made available to their blind students.

Our experience over the last eleven years has shown that when these three components are in place, blind students are quickly and easily included in local schools. The only direct cost to

us has been to provide the scholarships for the training courses and to help provide the special equipment and materials. We feel that these inclusive programs are not only the best hope for blind children in the Philippines, but they are the only hope for enrolling the thousands of children yet to be reached.

### **Training the teachers**

A key element in the strategy was the training of the local class teachers. The aim was to give regular school teachers enough of the basic skills to begin immediately enrolling blind students into their classes.

The first course was implemented in 1992 with twenty scholars/teachers participating. On completion of the course, all twenty immediately begin enrolling blind students in their respective schools. The following summer these teachers were invited back for a second summer of training, and following that year they were invited back for a third and final summer of training. Each summer a new batch of teachers also was invited to begin, resulting now in three batches of teachers being trained simultaneously each summer.

We realized, of course, that the teachers hardly had even the barest minimum of training needed. Our premise was, however, that it was better for the children to be in school, even with a minimally trained teacher, than to spend another year sitting alone at home. We would continue to provide additional training to the teacher for as long as necessary, but we felt the children couldn't wait any longer to enroll.

This summer training course has been offered every summer since 1992, with more than 300 teachers from each of the 76 provinces of the Philippines undergoing the training. These teachers have in turn enrolled approximately 1500 blind children into programs in regular school.

Now approximately 100 new children are enrolled as a result of the programme each year.

We feel these training programs are an essential part of the efforts to increase the enrollment of blind children in the Philippines. In the last two years, the same model has been used to initiate similar courses at two regional universities—one in the central Philippines city of Cebu, with the help of *Foundation Dark and Light*, and one in the southern island of Mindanao, with the help of Hildesheimer Blindenmission. Participants from these regional courses are now building the enrollment of blind children in their regions. We hope to continue duplicating this model in other regions of the Philippines.

*We will list below twelve components of this training program that we feel have contributed to its success in the Philippines.*

1. **The Training Venue.** Developing the course at a state university has two important advantages. First, the course is an accredited course, providing graduate level units in Special Education. Completing the training can lead to extra benefits to the teachers, in the way of promotions and salary increases. Secondly, we realize that courses started at government institutions, while sometimes difficult to initiate, are likewise not easily discontinued.
2. **Scholarships.** Historically there had not been enough interest in special education to persuade more than a few teachers to undergo training at their own expense. By providing a scholarship, (which includes the tuition, travel expenses, and a small stipend), teachers who might not otherwise have considered special education are willing to take the training. It requires a one-time expense for us in getting the special education

programs started, but the teachers are at all times salaried by the Dept. of Education.

3. **School Administrator's Support.** One requirement before the teacher is accepted for training is a written agreement from their school administrators that the teacher will be released from their other responsibilities, at least part time, in order to set up their program for blind students. This is especially important in the Philippines, where there is a chronic shortage of teachers and of classroom space. Without this agreement, there is little hope of the program's survival.
4. **Teacher Contract.** In exchange for the scholarship, the teacher must agree to serve the visually impaired students for at least three years for each year of training. If the teacher does not make the necessary effort to enroll visually impaired teachers, they are required to refund the cost of the training.
5. **Target Schools.** Because blindness is a relatively low incidence disability, we try to target central schools in population centers. There are usually enough blind children in the population centers to start a program. For this reason, we try to avoid training teachers from remote, small villages, where there may only be one blind child in the community. In such a case, if the family of the blind child happens to transfer to another location, then teacher is unable to make any use of her training.
6. **Teacher Qualifications.** Other than the standard qualifications for scholarships, we also insist that the teacher has already identified at least three, school-aged blind children in her community before she comes for training. If a secondary level teacher is

applying for the scholarship, there must already be an elementary level program for blind children established in her community that can promote students into her secondary level program.

7. **Training Schedule.** The course is conducted during the summer school break so that more teachers can easily participate and so that a more intensive training schedule can be maintained.
8. **Course Content.** The first year of the course focuses primarily on the basic skills that the teacher will immediately need, such as braille reading and writing, abacus, and O&M, along with teaching techniques and strategies. We want to give the teacher enough of the basic skills and the confidence to begin her program for blind students. During the second and third year more time can be allotted for theories and philosophies of special education.
9. **Monitoring Visits.** Visits by regional and national level Special Education supervisors to the teacher's school often are an important part in helping the teacher to begin her program for blind children. The teacher needs to know that there is someone she can turn to for help in overcoming obstacles to her program, and also, that someone is expecting her to have a successful program.
10. **Non-performing Teachers.** Generally, teachers fail to start programs for one of two reasons. The first is a lack of initiative on the teacher's part to locate and enroll blind students. In this case, we work with the teacher to try to get the program started. If necessary, we may try to bring administrative

pressure to bear to get the program started. There comes a point though, after two or three years of effort, where it is best just to cut our losses and recruit a new teacher for training. The second reason teachers will fail to start a program is due to a lack of administrator support or enthusiasm for the program. In recent years we have discovered that a three day orientation in special education for school administrators will almost always win their support for the program.

11. **Incentives.** If, after the first summer, the teacher is successful in setting up a program for blind students, she is invited back for a second and third summer of training. After the three summers, teachers with good performance are provided with a scholarship to complete their Master's Degree in Special Education, which will lead to further promotions and salary increases. We feel it is important that the teachers know that special education is not a dead end career path.
12. **Instilling Professional Pride.** It is important for the teacher to know that she is part of a much bigger national, and even international, effort to provide education for the visually impaired. This is an important role of ICEVI. At the national level, we present Outstanding Teacher awards every two years to as many outstanding teachers as we can. In addition, we help host a National Congress of Teachers of the Visually Impaired, with presentations from both national and international experts in special education for the visually impaired. These help to instill a sense of pride and professionalism necessary to keep up teacher morale and to keep them committed to the program.

### How do blind children fare under teachers trained in this way?

From a strictly academic point of view, it is our observation that residential schools for the blind, on average, will do a better job of teaching braille reading and writing. But in the Philippines, residential schools for 40,000 blind children are not a realistic option. Even if they were an option though, there are still several other important advantages of inclusion that we believe outweigh the possible academic advantages of residential schools for the blind.

First, the child is able to live at home, with his family, while attending school. Especially for younger children, we feel that the family is important for the normal development of the child. If the child has the security and love of a family, a slight delay in braille reading speed will not keep him from succeeding.

Secondly, an inclusive program is better, by its very nature, at teaching the skills needed for successful integration into a sighted world as adults. In a residential school for the blind, everything the child needs is generally provided. In an inclusive program, the child is required to be a little more responsible for their own needs. This skill will serve them well as adults.

Even if a blind child does not excel academically, we feel that almost without exception, it will be better for a blind child to be in school with his peers than to be left at home alone. Even with teachers who are only minimally trained, the child has a far better chance of normal development by attending school than they would have by being left alone at home, isolated and unattended.

Our experience, though, has shown that once blind children are allowed to enroll in school as

integrated students, and once they discover that they can not only learn, but achieve, and even excel, most of them will more than meet the requirements for promotion and graduation.

### What of the long term for the program?

One major benefit of the program is that many of the teachers trained by this method have gone on to become full-time Special Education teachers and in many cases they are instrumental in setting up Special Education Centers catering for all disabilities at their schools. Conversely a major threat to the program is the heavy recruitment of these teachers to work overseas. This year the program has lost four excellent teachers to recruiting agencies who are placing Special Education teachers in the United States. With salaries on offer that are 20 to 30 times greater than the salary for teachers offered by the Philippine Government there is very little that can be done to persuade these teachers to stay. This is a challenge we need to address immediately in order to preserve the gains we have made.

Another side effect is that as the training program evolves we are seeing more of our trained teachers promoted into administrative positions. However we have never really considered this a threat. In fact we wish all school administrators had a special education background. Even if we have to train new teachers, we can always accomplish more in schools with administrators who have some knowledge or experience in special education.

Our eventual goal is help universities throughout the Philippines to develop and offer courses in special education, and for teachers to enroll in these courses at their own expense. At that point, I think our work will be finished.

# *A Problem Based Learning Approach to the Training of Teachers of the Visually Impaired*

**Mike McLinden and Steve McCall**

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Birmingham University has a long established tradition of training teachers of the visually impaired. Campus based courses began in the 1960s and in 1983 a Distance Education programme was developed which grew to replace the campus-based option in the 1990s. Over one hundred students are currently registered on the two year Distance Education programme and approximately fifty new students join the programme each year.

The Distance Education programme as it currently stands comprises four core modules and an additional dissertation or project module. Students, who are already experienced teachers in mainstream schools, are also required to undertake an assessed teaching placement in each year of the programme and to pass an examination in Grade 2 British braille. The programme is supported by a network of regional tutors and placement supervisors and students are required to attend regular regional seminars and residential training weekends that are held at the University twice a year. The four core modules are presented mostly in the form of written units that are sent to the students by post at the start of each semester and that are assessed through written assignments (for further details about the present organisation and delivery of the programme, see Arter et al., 2002). However in response to a number of developments and challenges, we are currently undertaking a major revision of the Distance Education programme. Our decision to change the programme was motivated by a number of factors:

## **Changing Needs: Children**

The needs of children with a visual impairment in the United Kingdom have become more complex. The proportion of the population of children with a visual impairment who have additional disabilities has steadily increased (Keil 2003) and now accounts for more than half of all children registered with a visual impairment. In the last ten years there has been a shift in Government policy and resources towards supporting early intervention and inclusion. Special schools designated for children with a visual impairment are closing at the rate of almost one a year and the majority of children with visual impairment who do attend special schools, attend schools for children with Severe Learning Difficulties and not schools for children with Visual Impairment.

## **Changing Needs: Teachers**

When the Distance Education training programme was established, most teachers on the programme came from special schools for the visually impaired where there were colleagues with expertise and experience they could draw upon. Now teachers are more likely to be part of a generic visiting teacher service or to be working in schools for children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) where they may be the only specialist in visual impairment. Much of what they will be expected to do is to solve problems, sometimes in collaboration with other professionals but often in isolation. The knowledge, understanding and skills that these teachers require have also changed. For example teachers working with blind children who have SLD need a good knowledge of tactile codes and

symbol systems other than braille to facilitate the development of communication and early literacy. The shift towards early intervention means that teachers are likely to be spending more time working with very young children in their homes with their parents, and the shift towards inclusion means they need specific training in advising and consultancy.

### Changing Expectations: Policy

The UK Government's policy agenda is now more firmly focused on evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning and upon target setting for both children and teachers. The Government's Teacher Training Agency has laid out a set of "standards" that define the "knowledge, understanding and skills" required by specialist teachers of the visually impaired, and in order to be approved, training courses in visual impairment must provide evidence that their programmes produce teachers who meet these standards.

In response to the more varied and complex needs of teachers working in this area, we are currently restructuring our programme for the September 2004 intake. The restructured programme will make greater use of online resources and will incorporate a novel method of instruction: Problem Based Learning (PBL).

Since its beginnings in Canada in 1969, Problem Based Learning (PBL) has become a well established approach to the training of medical personnel in many countries. The approach was developed as a response to disillusion with didactic, lecture-based approaches as a method of imparting knowledge in a field where practice and treatments were changing rapidly and patient care was becoming steadily more complex.

In the United Kingdom, many undergraduate training courses for doctors, nurses and physiotherapists are structured around PBL. Although implementation of PBL varies from institution to institution, typically students on PBL

courses will work together in small groups to address a true life problem that is drawn from every day practice. The group will be supported by a facilitator, usually a member of the teaching staff, whose role is to support rather than direct the students' learning. In PBL the problem is often presented in the form of a case, e.g. a child is brought by ambulance to the emergency room of a teaching hospital after apparently having a seizure at home. Details of the child that are available to the doctor on duty may be provided to the students, together with the findings of the doctor's initial examination of the child. The students are encouraged to consider the problem from several different perspectives at a range of different levels, for example the students will consider the possible diseases that may account for the child's seizure, they will take account of possible contributing factors such as the home environment, and they will consider a possible range of treatments available. Their considerations will take account of the resources available and the policies in place.

The preliminary discussion of the problem will inevitably generate lines of enquiry that need further investigation and research. These are defined as the "Learning Issues" that drive the students' study (Dolmans et al. 1997). As the students progress, additional information may be "dripped in" by the facilitator as they work towards the possible solutions of the problem. At the end of the process the students will feed back their findings to their tutor and the real life solution to the problem is revealed before they are introduced to the next case.

Although PBL training has now been adopted in diverse fields such as architecture, psychology and education, as far as we know it has not been used in the training of teachers of children with a visual impairment in the UK. The multi-level analysis that PBL requires was commended by Aitken, Millar and Nisbet (2000) as a useful tool

for helping to optimise the environment for children with multiple disability and visual impairment and it was after reading Aitken's article that we first began to consider whether PBL could be applied to our courses in Birmingham as part of the general restructuring we were planning.

While we could see the advantages that a PBL approach affords for training in our area, we also saw a number of challenges. The application of PBL to Distance Education is still relatively untried. As we have seen, PBL requires students to work together in small groups and we felt that this was likely to be far more difficult when the telephone and the internet were the main methods of communication. Moreover the role of the online facilitator would need to be carefully defined and thought through. Access to resources would be more difficult for distance students than campus based students and the students would need confidence in dealing with the technology involved. We therefore approached our University's Learning Development Unit for a grant to investigate the area further. Our bid for funding was successful and a pilot study is now underway involving two groups of six students from different parts of the country.

The students will be trialling the use of PBL over a twelve week period in relation to one module of the new programme. The aim of this module is to enable participants to develop knowledge and understanding of vision and the human visual processes and the impact of visual loss on learning and development. We chose the area of visual processes partly because it had an obvious overlap with the medical field in which PBL had developed, and also because it was an area of the programme where knowledge was rapidly developing and where we knew that there was much information already available through the internet. The area also seemed to lend itself well to the skills of problem synthesis, hypothesis generation, critical appraisal of available

information, data analysis, and decision-making that we saw as central to the PBL process.

The broad objectives of the current study are:

1. *to determine what online materials have been developed to date in this area and their relevance to the project.*
2. *to establish through interviews with colleagues who used PBL in the University's Medical School the key factors in effective practice*
3. *To plan, develop and trial a pilot set of on-line resources, drawing upon the principles of PBL*
4. *To evaluate and refine the materials for inclusion in the restructured programme of study in visual impairment (to run from September 2004).*
5. *To disseminate the findings of project through relevant journals, conferences and research seminars and consider their relevance to other DE programmes offered within the School of Education.*

We expect that by the end of the module students should be able to meet the standards in this area that have been defined for teachers of the visually impaired and they should be able to:

1. *define key anatomical structures involved in human visual processing and explain the function and role of each component;*
2. *identify a range of common childhood visual conditions in relation to key anatomical structures and analyse the potential impact of each condition for learning and development;*
3. *define the visual and learning needs of a range of children with visual impairments, including the physical, emotional and social aspects, and analyse these needs within the context of inclusive education;*
4. *identify the interrelated nature of the physical, biological and behavioural mechanisms that must be considered during the process of generating an intervention plan when supporting children with visual impairments;*

5. *provide evidence of an effective reasoning process including the skills of problem synthesis, hypothesis generation, critical appraisal of available information, data analysis, and decision-making;*
6. *demonstrate skills necessary to become self-directed as a learner, acknowledging personal educational needs as well as those of group members, and make effective use of available learning materials, including online resources;*
7. *provide evidence of effective use of a range of ICT skills when using assistive technology to develop learning, including contribution to on-line tutorials/discussion groups, on-line search for key information, completion of on-line Module Portfolio etc.*

Work has begun on the development of cases for study by the students. With the help of an experienced Head of a Visiting Teacher Service for the Visually Impaired we have drawn up a range of short scenarios relating to children with a visual impairment.

For example our first online scenario relates to a child with cataracts and nystagmus whose family have recently moved to a new part of the country and who is about to start in her new school. The cast of main characters includes the Head teacher, the pupil, the class teacher, the child's mother and the newly recruited specialist teacher of the visually impaired who has just started her training. The students will be able to enter a restricted website to see an onscreen picture of each of the characters along with recordings of imaginary key telephone conversations between the main characters, and copies of referral forms and notes. The students are asked to take on the role of the specialist teacher and each group is set a number of tasks for completion by the next week. Communication between students will take place asynchronously through the internet, supplemented where necessary by phone conversations. The tasks will vary in complexity.

For example in Week Two the students are asked to identify the challenges that the child might encounter in relation to particular aspects of her new environment e.g. classroom layout/seating/lighting; communication /interaction with peers; reading and writing skills; movement and orientation etc. In Week Three the students have to prepare for an interview with the child's mother and are given some questions that it is possible the parent will ask e.g. exactly what is nystagmus and will it get worse? What is the difference between an optician and an ophthalmologist? Are there any support groups or voluntary organisations that the family can turn to? What do these specialists do - LVA specialist, mobility officer, educational psychologist?

The programme is based upon a WebCT format and we are liaising with the School of Education Computer Officer who is an experienced web designer to produce the learning environment. The potential of the new approach seems great. For example we can incorporate video clips into the online scenarios, we can create links to websites and articles in online journals, and we can create an online version of the classroom that allows the student to rearrange the layout of the furniture or adjust lighting levels. Moreover because we will be able to record and capture the progress of each group online we can collect the new resources that each group unearths and make them available for the benefit of future students.

We have organised an introductory day for the programme at the University in which each student is assigned to an "Activity Group". The students will meet face to face to discuss what will be expected of them and to familiarise themselves with the technology and the onscreen environment. They will then be introduced to the first scenario and begin to address the issues set out in the first week's task. Future success depends heavily on the development of a clear structure within each group. We have defined

two key roles : “the coordinator” who will liaise with the tutor and keep the team on task, and “the summariser” who will summarise the discussion and findings of the group and present these along with an analysis of the findings to the tutor at the end of the week. As each week begins a new coordinator and summariser will be appointed from within the group. Each group will investigate two scenarios over the twelve week period. The proposed main method of assessment is a Module Portfolio submitted by each student that provides evidence that they have met the learning outcomes defined for the module. Then portfolio will include a reflective discussion which considers the processes by which knowledge and understanding was acquired through the PBL activities. Feedback from module tutors will be provided about the portfolio and about the performance of the individual during both campus and on-line components.

We hope to have our initial findings from the pilot study available later this year and we would be

interested to hear from other colleagues who are using this or similar approaches in their training of specialist teachers.

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# ***Human Resource Development for Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools in Uganda***

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## **Introduction**

In Uganda, the education of children with visual impairment started in early 1950s. In 1954 the first special school for the blind was established at Madera School for the Blind in Soroti District. This was followed by a number of units for children with visual impairment which were started in ordinary primary schools by missionaries in different parts of the country. In these mainstream units the curriculum, included additional elements such as training in orientation and mobility.

## **Training of Teachers for Children with Blindness**

The establishment of these schools meant that more teachers of children with visual impairment needed to be trained, so a specialist training programme was started in Iganga District which became known as known as the “The Centre for Training Teachers of the Blind.” This programme started as a certificate course that lasted for nine months. The teachers were introduced to the basic methods of teaching children with visual impairment. Areas of the curriculum in mainstream primary schools where children with visual impairment used to find difficulties were emphasised and specialised skills were taught. The curriculum areas included: Science, Mathematics and Social Studies, and the specialised skills taught included: Braille, Production of tactile diagrams, Guidance and Counselling, Orientation and Mobility techniques.

The Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE) was established in 1988 by the Ministry of Education and Sports. DANIDA, the Danish Aid Organization, also supported teacher education in special needs at the Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo (ITEK). This was the beginning of an aggressive strategy for developing human resource for children with special educational needs in Uganda.

Initially, the main objective for establishing UNISE was to:

- ❑ *establish a training centre for teachers and other personnel to work in the field of special needs and rehabilitation to cater for all categories of persons with disabilities and special educational needs*

Later on, a number of other objectives were developed as shown below:

## **Objectives**

*UNISE was to:*

- ❑ improve capacity building to address Special Needs Education (SNE) and Rehabilitation in Uganda

- ❑ improve the quality and quantity of gender balanced human resource in the field of SNE and Rehabilitation
- ❑ improve strategies for the sustainability of the Institute's Programmes

The training programmes were based on the philosophy of SNE and Rehabilitation in line with the Salamanca Statement of 1994 which laid emphasis on quality education and 'Education for All'/'Inclusive Education'.

The need for massive changes in the provision of education for learners with special educational needs was recognised within the introduction of Universal Primary Education in January 1997, which stipulated that a child with disability in the family was to be given first priority for free education. This development gave most learners a chance to go to school, including those with disabilities and other barriers to learning and development. One of UNISE's roles was, and still is, therefore to train teachers and other personnel to meet this increased demand.

### UNISE Academic Programmes

In Uganda, the main development of human resource for children with Special Educational Needs takes place at UNISE. There are a number of courses that are highly specialised and are conducted under the semester system and cover the following:

- ❑ One year Post Graduate Diploma in Community Based Rehabilitation (PGD CBR)
- ❑ Two year Bachelors Degree in Education, (Special Needs Education) B.Ed., SNE.
- ❑ Three year Bachelor of Adult and Community Education (BACE)
- ❑ Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting
- ❑ Two year Diploma in Special Needs Education (Dip. SNE) Conventional
- ❑ Three year Diploma in Special Needs Education External (DSNE-E) Distance Learning
- ❑ Two year Diploma in Community Based Rehabilitation (Dip. CBR)
- ❑ Two year Diploma in Mobility and Rehabilitation (Dip. MBR)
- ❑ Certificate in Special Needs Education (Cert. SNE) Conventional
- ❑ Diploma in Sign Language (Dip. SL)
- ❑ One year Certificate Course in Special Needs Education (CSNE7-E) Distance Learning
- ❑ Three months Certificate courses in
  - ★ *Audio Video Production,*
  - ★ *Management of Special Needs Education,*
  - ★ *Computer Training*

- ❑ Proficiency courses that include Workshops and Seminars tailored to the specific interest of stakeholders, e.g.,

★ <i>Workshop for Itinerant Teachers</i>	– <i>Primary Teachers</i>
★ <i>Training in Braille</i>	– <i>Primary Teachers</i>
★ <i>Training in the use of Sign Language</i>	– <i>Primary and secondary teachers, and Tutors in Colleges</i>
★ <i>Training in production and use of Educational Materials</i>	– <i>Primary Teachers</i>
★ <i>Management of Inclusive Education</i>	– <i>Primary Teachers</i>
★ <i>Consultative Meeting with stakeholders in SNE</i>	– <i>NGOs for/of PWDs</i>
★ <i>Annual General Meeting</i>	– <i>DEOs, DISs, AIS, SNE/EARS Staff</i>
★ <i>Consultation with stakeholders on Policy Development</i>	– <i>Teachers, DISs, DEAs, CAOs</i>
★ <i>Training in Supervision of SNE activities</i>	
★ <i>Workshop on Speech &amp; Language Difficulties</i>	– <i>Teachers</i>
★ <i>Workshop on Sports for the Blind</i>	

New courses have also been planned and will be introduced in the near future. These include:

- ❑ *Post Graduate Diploma in Special Needs Education (PGD SNE)*
- ❑ *Masters in Special Needs Education (M. SNE)*

UNISE also organised a number of workshops for Tutors in Primary Teacher Colleges (PTCs). These were intended to equip the tutors with the knowledge, understanding and skills to teach the 60 hour special needs education component being introduced in the PTCs. The student teachers are given this basic knowledge in SNE so that when they qualify, they are able to support learners with special educational needs when teaching in the mainstream classroom.

Other workshops were also organised for teachers in secondary schools in order to prepare them to meet the needs of UPE learners leaving primary education and joining secondary schools. All these are strategies in the development of human resource for learners with special educational needs and are an essential part of the strategy to develop inclusive education for all learners.

### Rehabilitation Training at UNISE

In addition to teacher training programmes, efforts have been made to establish Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) activities for persons with disabilities, their families and the community. A Mobility and Rehabilitation (MBR) training programme for persons with visual impairment has been established by the government to strengthen rehabilitation services. This training comes under the department of community disability studies. In this area, the Ministry of Education and Sports works in close collaboration with the Ministries of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Ministry of Health.

The aim of the programme is to prepare students to understand the philosophy of CBR and MBR training and management by focusing on the equalization of opportunities and inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in society. These courses are intended to prepare potential rehabilitation workers, administrators, and managers of CBR and MBR programmes at national, district and sub-county levels.

*The objectives of the Community Disability Study programmes include:*

- ❑ *developing comprehensive and sustainable rehabilitation and community development services to include as many PWDs or PSNE as possible within their local communities.*
- ❑ *establishing mobility and rehabilitation capacity building for persons with visual impairment through training of professionals in mobility and rehabilitation who can train clients to become independent and self reliant in everyday activities and self sufficient in travel and mobility.*

### Curriculum and Awards

The curricula for the various courses were developed by UNISE in collaboration with stakeholders involved in the field of special needs education and International Institutions of Higher Learning in Special Needs Education.

- ❑ *Kyambogo University awards the degrees, postgraduate diplomas and ordinary diplomas offered at UNISE*
- ❑ *Makerere University awarded the Bachelors Degree in Education offered at UNISE until July 2002.*
- ❑ *The UNISE Governing Council, on the recommendation of the UNISE Board of Studies, approves the certificate courses and makes the necessary awards.*

From July 2003, all the courses will be awarded by the newly formed Kyambogo University – which has been made up out of the former:

- ❑ *Institute of Teacher Education (ITEK),*
- ❑ *Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK) and*
- ❑ *Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE)*

### Admission for study at UNISE

- ❑ *Each course at UNISE has clearly stipulated admission requirements.*
- ❑ *All suitably qualified Ugandans and non-Ugandans are eligible to apply at UNISE.*
- ❑ *The courses are offered through both government and private sponsorship. However, government sponsorship is only open to Ugandans.*
- ❑ *All applicants are given equal opportunity to enroll including persons with disabilities.*

### How to apply for Courses at UNISE

- ❑ *All UNISE courses are advertised in the national and International media in January/February of every year. However some courses may be advertised during the year*
- ❑ *Online applications are encouraged through the website ([www.unise.com](http://www.unise.com)). This is especially useful for non-Ugandan Candidates*
- ❑ *Applicants may formally apply directly or through their respective authorities*
- ❑ *Applications must be accompanied by relevant academic documents*
- ❑ *Those who meet the requirement are short-listed for interview (Written and Oral) at UNISE Campus (not applicable to non-Ugandans)*
- ❑ *The academic year starts in September-October*

Short courses are advertised every three months and prospective students are invited and selected for study.

### Conclusion

A student trained at UNISE, Kyambogo University is expected to be able to support all children and adults with disabilities and special educational needs and to promote their inclusion into society and their recognition as productive members of their communities in their own right. Students are equipped with knowledge, understanding and skills in:

- ❑ *teaching and supporting all learners in inclusive schools*
- ❑ *developing and producing essential educational materials for learners with special educational needs using locally available materials and resources.*
- ❑ *supporting and rehabilitating adults with disabilities in the communities.*
- ❑ *promoting greater awareness among teachers, parents, local religious and community leaders, and the general public of the need to appreciate and include learners with special educational needs in all activities of society.*

The kind of teacher or personnel we prepare is expected to be knowledgeable, flexible, creative, skilled, patient and tolerant and committed to the principle of teaching all learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms, schools and communities.

Currently over 4000 teachers and other personnel have qualified from UNISE through the conventional systems of delivery. Over 2000 are currently undergoing training on a Distance Learning Programme and over 4000 more teachers and personnel have attended workshops and short courses in special educational needs. This article therefore tries to show how human resource has been prepared to meet the needs of all children in inclusive schools in Uganda. The future target is to aim at providing at least one trained teacher for every primary school.

## ***Rehabilitation Council of India : Pioneering Advances in Human Resource Development for the Improvement of Services to Persons with Disabilities***

***Dr. J. P. Singh, Member Secretary, Rehabilitation Council of India***

### **Introduction**

India is a large country with a population of over one billion people spread over 3.28 m. sq. km. in a federal structure of 28 States and 7 Union Territories with 32 languages and numerous dialects. There is enormous diversity in urban, semi-urban and rural situations and this contributes to a wide spectrum of region-specific and culture-specific differences. Accomplishing any task in this vast country always poses a great challenge. In recent years, the Government of India has become increasingly concerned about the needs and rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and issues that concern their participation in mainstream civil society. A particularly important issue is the development of adequate and trained manpower to cater for the unique needs of the large disabled population.

The Government of India began taking special interest in the education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities as early as 1947. However progress was slow until the whole disability sector received a boost in 1981 with the declaration of the International Year of the Disabled Persons by the United Nations. Although initiatives to develop human resource in the fields of rehabilitation and special education had been in existence in India since the early part of the 20th century, there had been no standardization in these training programmes. As a result, the syllabi of the courses in rehabilitation and special education

offered by the various institutions in India differed widely. In order to introduce uniformity and ensure minimum standards and quality of education and training in the field of rehabilitation and special education, the Government of India, after wide consultations with experts, decided in 1986 that a Body should be set up to standardize courses at different levels and that brought the **Rehabilitation Council** into being as a **registered society**.

But it was soon realized that a society did not have enough authority to enforce standardization rules on other organizations of similar nature. As a result, the **Rehabilitation Council** was given the status of a **Statutory Body** through a Parliamentary Act (1992) which came into effect in June, 1993. The new body was called the **Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)**. Being re-established by an Act of Parliament, RCI was given statutory powers to enforce the standardization and regulation of all training policies and programmes in the field of rehabilitation and special education over the whole country. The 1992 RCI Act was amended in 2000 to make the Council more broad based by including important duties such as the promotion of research in rehabilitation and special education and the maintenance of uniformity in the definitions of various disabilities in conformity with the **Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995**.

### RCI's Objectives

The main objectives of RCI now include:

- (i) *Regulating training policies and programmes;*
- (ii) *Bringing about standardization of training courses/curricula;*
- (iii) *Promoting research;*
- iv) *Maintaining a Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) for the registration of professionals/ personnel working in the field of rehabilitation and special education; and*
- (v) *Encouraging continuing rehabilitation education.*

### The Categorization of Professionals for Human Resource Development

As a result of the RCI Act, the **Council** has responsibility for developing, standardizing and regulating training programmes for **16 categories** of professionals/personnel to ensure quality services to persons with disabilities. The categories that have been recognized for developing trained manpower are as follows:

1. *Audiologists and Speech Therapists;*
2. *Clinical Psychologists;*
3. *Hearing Aid and Ear Mould Technicians;*
4. *Rehabilitation Engineers and Technicians;*
5. *Special Teachers for the Education and Training of the Handicapped;*
6. *Vocational Counsellors, Employment Officers and Placement Officers dealing with the Handicapped;*
7. *Multipurpose Rehabilitation Therapists and Technicians;*
8. *Speech Pathologists;*

9. *Rehabilitation Psychologists;*
10. *Rehabilitation Social Workers;*
11. *Rehabilitation Practitioners in Mental Retardation;*
12. *Orientation and Mobility Specialists;*
13. *Community Based Rehabilitation Professionals;*
14. *Rehabilitation Counsellors/Administrators;*
15. *Prosthetists and Orthotists; and*
16. *Rehabilitation Workshop Managers*

### RCI Recognized Institutions and Courses on Special Education

RCI has a clearly defined role as a standardizing body for human resource development and it can run courses of its own. But RCI also recognizes a number of institutions and organizations as having suitable infrastructures to offer courses at different levels in specific areas. Such institutions and organizations range from Voluntary Organizations to Universities and Medical Colleges.

Within the span of only last ten years, RCI has grown from having 20 recognized and affiliated training institutions to having 181 validated institutions which conduct 41 regular training programmes in addition to short term refresher courses. Very recently, RCI has also developed a course in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), and a training course for the Deaf-Blind.

New programmes are being continuously developed to meet the manpower requirements in this field and so far RCI has designed 80 different curricula to meet the challenges of manpower development. For example, the Ministry of Human Resource Development requested the RCI to develop a short-term course for the training of teachers in the District Primary Education

programme (DPEP). RCI developed a 45-day Foundation Course for resource teachers working under DPEP for Integrated Education for the Disabled (IED). This course is a prime example of attempts being made for inclusion of disabled children in the general education system and of RCI's efforts to gear itself up to meet specific challenges.

RCI also developed a short curriculum for the National Trust to train care-givers to look after the children with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities. This course will help parents, siblings and relatives to take care of these children.

### Manpower Development through Innovative Methods in Special Education

The annual output in India of qualified professionals and personnel in the fields of rehabilitation and special education is currently between 4500 and 6000. In comparison to an output of only 450 in the year 1993, this number appears very encouraging, but it is not going to solve the vast need for trained manpower in India.

RCI realized that creating enough manpower through the regular training systems will take an unreasonably long time, and it has launched distance education programmes through Open Universities in India to speed up the supply of manpower to provide services to persons with disabilities. Through RCI's collaborative efforts with the Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University (MPBOU), 67 study centers all over the country are now conducting B.Ed. special education programmes. For in-service teachers, a Foundation Course has been initiated through 173 institutions. This will help the teachers in regular schools to manage the educational needs children

with disabilities within their locality because special school facilities are very limited.

So far more than 2800 persons have been trained through this RCI and MPBOU collaborative programme and plans are being made to train more than 2500 teachers every year through the distance mode to meet the demand for trained teachers of adults and children with special needs.

As a result of collaborative efforts between RCI with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) 25 prominent training institutions in the field of disability have been recently recognised as tele-study centers. These centres have been linked with Direct Reception Systems through satellite for conducting distance education programmes..

Another recent RCI development has been the introduction of a credit-based modular system for its courses. Many people want to acquire higher educational qualifications and update their knowledge while continuing to work full time because it is so difficult to find the time or resources to study full time. For such people credit based courses offer a very encouraging option. The Modular and Credit System has been common practice in developed countries for many years and in India, IGNOU and other institutes of repute have practiced this system successfully for a while. RCI too has now started offering courses through this system in order to make fast strides in human resource development.

Very shortly the Council will be launching a Certificate Course in **Community Based Rehabilitation** through distance mode in collaboration with the Bangalore University, Karnataka and it is also planning some **Parents' Sensitization Programmes** with the help of IGNOU.

### Continuing Rehabilitation Education

Education is a continuous process and to continue to be effective, rehabilitation professionals need to be kept abreast of the latest knowledge and processes in their field of practice. With this in mind, RCI is making efforts to update the knowledge and skills of registered professionals. This is achieved through a number of short-term/ refresher courses/orientation programmes/seminars/workshops supported by the Council. The Council provides Associations/Institutions/Universities/Organizations - both governmental and non-governmental – with financial and curricular support to conduct such programmes for the benefit of professionals.

### Special Programmes for Broadening the Reach

The Council launched a **National Bridge Course Programme** during October 1998 to give an opportunity to those Special Teachers Rehabilitation Workers, who had been working in the area of disability without any formal training/ recognized qualification prior to June 1993, i.e. when the RCI Act came into operation. The main objective of the Bridge Course programme was to provide a one-off opportunity to all those experienced workers who did not have an RCI recognized qualification to entitle them to be included in the Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) of RCI. The Bridge Course was of a month's duration with modules on all major areas of disability. This course made the trainees eligible for registration with RCI as Rehabilitation Personnel as per existing rules. This massive programme was conducted by over 150 institutions throughout India and it was successfully completed in March 2002, having trained over 12,000 personnel.

In July 1999, the Council launched the **National Programme for the Orientation of Medical**

### Officers Working in Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to Disability Management

to help improve the quality of services for the disabled in remote rural areas. The programme sought to promote awareness regarding various disability issues such as aspects of prevention, early-detection/intervention and rehabilitation through a number of government and non-government agencies. PHCs are the only structures within the health care system of India that function in every part of the country. Each PHC has at its disposal the minimum essential infrastructure to provide a range of front line services. It is the first and more often than not, the last contact point for people in the rural areas worst affected by lack of basic services. RCI felt that by sensitizing the PHC Medical Officers to some of the key disability issues, valuable services could be rendered to disabled people and their families in rural areas. Through this programme, the Council has so far been able to reach 28 provinces of India with the help of 71 specialised agencies. So far, more than 600 Master Trainers have been trained who have in turn trained around 15,000 PHC Medical Officers.

To help ensure the participation of a large number of organizations in its activities, RCI has established Zonal Committees in 5 major parts of the country with the active involvement of established NGOs as nodal agencies. The sensitization of law makers, policy makers, administrators, media persons, etc. has been taken up through these agencies in order to ensure attitudinal changes in the society through a multi-sectoral approach.

### Need Specific Publications for Spreading Knowledge

The RCI has published a great deal of material promoting the message of inclusion in the field

of special education. Some of its main titles include:

- ☆ *Catalogue of Teaching Learning Material for Children with Special Needs*
- ☆ *Manual for Training of PHC Medical Officers*
- ☆ *Bridge Course Manuals in the Fields of MR, VI, HI, & LH*
- ☆ *Information and Guidance Booklet for Persons with Disabilities*
- ☆ *Report on Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) Programmes*
- ☆ *Career Opportunities in the Field of Disability Rehabilitation & Special Education.*
- ☆ *Autism Spectrum Disorder- A Resume of Resource Material*
- ☆ *Status of Disability in India – 2000*
- ☆ *Institution Builders in the Disability Sector.*

#### **RCI's Role in the Field of Visual Impairment**

RCI is an apex level institution engaged in developing manpower for all categories of disabilities. It does not have a focus on any particular area of disability. However, it has special relevance for development of manpower in the field of visual impairment in the present millennium. Many of the recent initiatives of RCI

have proved particularly helpful for the field of visual impairment because of their focus on information technology. Information technology is a great equalizer in the context of visual impairment where the rehabilitation and education of the visually impaired persons are intertwined multi-disciplinary processes. Today, high technology is being used to educate and facilitate the employment of visually impaired people. For example, speech software makes it much easier for a blind person to operate a PC. Reading machines are available to reduce dependence on human readers. Automatic transcription from Braille to printed text has become possible. Aspheric plastic lenses have now made it possible for many partially sighted persons to read ordinary print. Devices like close circuit TVs, overhead projectors and the use of satellite technology have greatly widened the possibilities for educating visually impaired people. By embracing the latest technology RCI has transformed educational opportunities for visually impaired persons.

#### **Conclusion**

In its pursuit of excellence in the field of human resource development RCI will continue to strive to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services and special education through trained and qualified rehabilitation professionals and workers, teachers, parents and others.

**Do you want to access more articles on HRD?**

***Many interesting articles on human resource development were presented at the ICEVI World Conference held at The Netherlands during July/August 2002. Please log on to ICEVI website to view these articles.***

## *Research in Uganda: Developing Indicators of Success*

As a part of the Strategic Plan of ICEVI to develop "BEST PRACTICES", ICEVI has initiated a research project in Uganda to identify the critical conditions that need to be in place to allow children who are blind and who have low vision to be successfully educated in local primary schools.

This is an empirical work based around two assumptions: that children with visual impairment have an equal right to participation in education at the equivalent of their peers; and that their participation at the local primary school offers the best chance of widening the education opportunities for most children with a visual impairment.

In order to identify the critical factors, the Research Team is considering the problem at several levels of analysis by looking into child factors, class environment, school environment, family, community, supporting services, policy/political factors.



The ICEVI Research Team is working closely with the Sight Savers Office in Kampala, Uganda in carrying out this study. Mr. Asher Bayo, Lecturer, Uganda National Institute for Special Education is coordinating data collection for this research with the help of trained staff for this purpose. The research team developed appropriate tools for the data collection and provided training on collecting information to 8 research assistants in Kampala from 13 to 14 December 2003. Each research assistant has been asked to recruit 2

teachers from neighbouring regions to assist in the process of data collection ensuring representative coverage of the regions in Uganda. As the study is adopting an emergent design, a participatory approach will be applied in validating the findings of the research at every stage. The preliminary findings of the research will be shared with the stakeholders and professionals in the field and feedback will be sought for the refinement of the next stages of the research. The preliminary data will be available during February 2004.

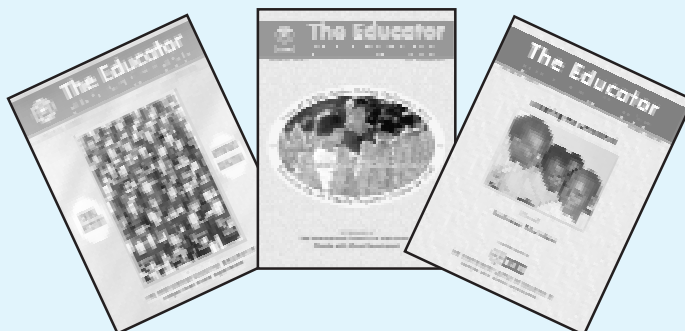
The study is expected to identify the factors that can help maximize the impact of Government, and the efforts of INGOs and NGOs to provide equal participation for children with visual impairment and also provide data that will enable schools in Uganda to create policies and practices that will increase participation of children with visual impairment in learning.

Based on the outcomes of the study in Uganda, research may be undertaken in other countries in Africa and other regions of the world in the subsequent years of the quadrennium.

The initiative is part of ICEVI's efforts to address its long-term objective of the expansion of educational services for children with visual impairment in the developing nations. The research has a long way to go but the first step has been taken.

## ***The Educator : Future Directions and Subscription Rates***

**The Educator**, the bi-annual magazine of ICEVI is becoming popular among its readers. Encouraging feedback has been received about recent editions. **The Editor and his team appreciate this feedback and hope you will continue to send us your comments and suggestions.**



At a recent meeting of the Principal Officers, the costs and circulation base of The Educator were reviewed in detail. We have decided regretfully that it is no longer practicable to send individual subscribers the journal free of charge.

***If you are currently receiving a personal copy of The Educator mailed to you in your name, the July 2004 issue is the last you will receive free-of-charge. If you wish to continue receiving your personal copy of the magazine there will be a US \$ 50 subscription fee for the quadrennium; pro-rated to US\$ 25 for the balance of the current quadrennium.***

***ICEVI will continue to send The Educator to schools and other organizations free-of-charge.***

***If you wish to receive a personal copy of The Educator for the balance of the current quadrennium please remit a check for US \$ 25 made payable to ICEVI and mail it to:***

***Mrs. Grace Chan***

*Treasurer – ICEVI*

*C/o. "Hong Kong Society for the Blind"  
248, Nam Cheong Street, Shamshuipo,  
Kowloon, Hong Kong, China*

## ***From a Parent's Perspective***

**Tula A Baxter**, Editor, Parents' Coloum

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When I was asked to make a contribution to this issue about personnel preparation, I wasn't sure I had anything to say. As a parent, what do I know about current developments in the training of teachers and how teachers should be trained? But the more I thought about it, the more I realised that parents had something to add and something to say - and that our voice should be heard in professional development, for the benefit of our VI children.

As parents, we all want our children to have the best possible chances of maximising their educational attainment. We know that children's best chances of success come when they have access to teachers who understand the particular needs of children with a visual impairment and who have particular skills in meeting these needs. Appropriate training for teachers is obviously a crucial element in the success of our children. So let me just introduce a few ideas.

- ◆ **Brief discussions with the class teacher after school provide opportunities for informal teacher "training" - by which I mean, "providing more information which is relevant to being able to teach the child better".**

The best education involves the parent in partnership with the child's teachers. As parents we have much to offer when it comes to training teachers, not least because we are the ones who know our children best. I still remember my daughter's first teacher calling me in, one day, to talk to me about my VI daughter and how she was settling down in the class. "I can't relate to her" the teacher commented, "I can't get her to participate in class," she added. When I explained how my daughter used her very limited vision and how the direct light affected her sight, everything began to make sense to the teacher. We continued having little chats after school about various issues, which both the teacher and I found very useful and of direct benefit to my daughter - and the rest of the class!

- ◆ **Home visits from the specialist teacher provide us with another informal "training" opportunity to get across information about our children.**

Our peripatetic teacher used to visit us at home once a month. I used to value those visits, as I used to learn more about my daughter's condition and how to help her. One day the visiting teacher asked to see my daughter's bedroom - to admire a special lampshade. After "admiring" the lampshade she commented on the colour scheme. "You like strong colours in bedrooms, don't you" she said. "I most certainly do not - this colour scheme is just for my VI daughter" I replied. I explained about how much easier it was for her to open her eyes without the glare from pastel shades on walls and curtains. Photophobia is helped greatly by appropriate lighting and suitable colours that do not reflect light too much. The visiting teacher was eager to find out what else I did to help my daughter so that she could pass it on to other parents.

These are just two examples from my own experience. I have many more from others. We would be delighted to share them with the professionals. But how often are we invited to help in the formal training of teachers? Where is the parent's voice in the training college or in the University?

In my role as Chairman of a parent organisation in the UK and as a parent of a VI daughter, I was asked, some years ago, to contribute to two teacher training courses. My first contribution was more of a "pilot" attempt on my part and very informal. The following year I was fully prepared, with appropriate material and also a number of handouts that I had prepared especially for the course. My contribution was much appreciated and students kept in touch afterwards, to discuss various issues with me and frequently requested additional information and material on various issues from the parents' perspective. In the third year, only one university included parental contribution in the course and after that it all stopped. Some teacher trainers believe that parents can help in the formal training of teachers, whilst others do not - it is a personal choice rather than an accepted or mandatory requirement.

As chairman of a parent support group, LOOK London and of a European network of Parent support groups, T.E.A.M., I am in the privileged position of being able to make my voice and the voice of other parents heard in relation to the development of professionals, not just within the UK but also at the European Parliament and even, briefly, in far-away Russia. For this to happen as a matter of course, however, parents must be formally included and given opportunities to share their knowledge and experience with the professionals. It must not be done just because it is politically correct to do so but because it is the right thing to do.

Recently two T.E.A.M. parent support organisations - one from the UK, the other from Russia, agreed to participate in a project to get parents and professionals to work together as a team because "together everyone achieves more", with a grant from the UK Government. I went to discuss the project with two government-appointed consultants - I was really trying to find out if a grant would be given to two parent support organisations from two different countries, run just by parents for parents, which had never worked together before. I was not very hopeful, so asked what they felt about it. "You are not "just parents" was their response "you are all professionals in your chosen fields and have the added advantage of knowing your children and how best they can be helped". We were delighted to receive the entire grant that we applied for - but we had to work very hard for it.

Last month, the European Parliament in Brussels opened its doors to disabled people to participate as delegates and to raise issues that concerned them. I was invited to participate as a UK delegate, representing parents and children that cannot represent themselves. The invitation came from someone who believes that parents should be equal partners in the education of their VI children - but who else in that position would necessarily include a parent representative? I was absolutely delighted, therefore, to see in Brussels some other countries having parent representation at such a historic event - but there were many who did not. One must ask "why?".

Parents can and should seek to influence teacher trainers and policy makers about the needs of children. All we need is to be given the opportunities to do so. It might be as well to remember that parents can often say things that professionals might find difficult to say to "their employers". We all stand to benefit from such a change in attitude and approach - but particularly our VI children.

## ***International Updates***

*Compiled by William G. Brohier, Past President, ICEVI*

1. The latest **Economic and Social Council Newsletter** is available on the UNECOSOC website at:  
[www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/ECOSOC.Newsletter.4.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/ECOSOC.Newsletter.4.pdf)
2. For the latest news from the UN, visit the **News Centre** at: [www.un.org/news](http://www.un.org/news). Learn more about the UN and how it affects the lives of people everywhere: [www.un.org/works](http://www.un.org/works)
3. The new **UNESCO Inclusive Education Website** has recently been released: [www.unesco.org/education/inclusive](http://www.unesco.org/education/inclusive). Suggestions on how to improve the site are welcome.

The second edition of UNESCO's **Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/4** launched recently in New Delhi, India, finds that girls continue to face sharp discrimination in access to schooling in a majority of developing countries. Over 70 countries are at risk of not achieving gender parity at the primary and/or secondary levels by 2005, a goal endorsed in 2000. The Report analyses the multiple barriers that hinder girls' access to school, highlights innovative practice, suggests priorities for national action and examines how the international community is meeting its commitments towards the Education for All goals.

Report and Summary online at: [www.efareport.unesco.org](http://www.efareport.unesco.org)

The Secretariat of the UNESCO's EFA Flagship, "**Education for All: The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion**", hosted the East Africa Regional Workshop (Nov. 12 - 13, 2003) and the first Steering Committee Meeting (Nov. 14 - 15, 2003) at Kampala, Uganda. The University of Oslo and UNESCO jointly formed the Secretariat of the Flagship, which organized the meetings with assistance from the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports.

4. Visit website: <http://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/intl/02rnn/index.e.html> for reports on the **Evaluation on the Asia-Pacific Decade (1993 - 2002)** from the viewpoint of NGOs. It included Country NGO Reports, Thematic Task Forces Reports, etc.

5. The **UNESCAP/CDPF Regional Seminar on an International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, Beijing, China, November 4 - 7, 2003** was held to finalise a draft text of the convention on disability, based on participating expert discussions resulting in the Bangkok Recommendations, which were part of the final report of the Expert Group Meeting and Seminar on the subject from June 2 - 4, 2003, and which were presented at the Second Session of the Ad Hoc Committee which was held at New York from June 16 - 27, 2003.

Further material on the Convention is available at: <http://www.worldenable.net/beijing2003/>

6. **World Bank International Dialogue on Disability and Development, Helsinki, May 29 - 30, 2003**: This report was prepared by the World Bank's Office of the Advisor on Disability and Development and further information is available via email to: [Jheumann@worldbank.org](mailto:Jheumann@worldbank.org)
7. The **Seventh Session of UNESCAP Thematic Working Group on Disability-related Concerns (TWGDC)** was held in Bangkok from Dec.1 to 2, 2003.
8. The **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)** took place in Geneva from Dec.10 - 12, 2003. The outcome of this Summit is the Declaration of Principles and Action Plan with respect to a future worldwide Information Society.

The most current documents of WSIS are available at:

<http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/index.asp>

Email Mr Hiroshi Kawamura <hkawa@attglobal.net>, WSIS Civil Society Bureau (CSB) Disability Focal Point, if you have any difficulty downloading the documents and also visit: [http://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/index\\_e.html](http://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/index_e.html)

9. The **Disability and Millennium Development Goals resolution** was passed at the ACFOA Council on September 20, 2003, without any objections or modifications. A copy of the final resolution is on ACFOA's website at: <http://www.acfoa.asn.au/about/policies/disabilities.htm>
10. This year's **International Day of Disabled Persons** was celebrated on December 3. Theme: "A Voice of our Own" - DPI's own motto!
11. The World Blind Union has a new web page: [www.worldblindunion.org](http://www.worldblindunion.org)

12. E-ACCESS Bulletin, an email newsletter on technology issues for people with visual impairment and blindness.

Website (including archives): <http://www.e-accessibility.com>

13. The CCNGO would like to support/partner the initiatives that NGOs are taking with regard to education and learning at the **World Social Forum, January 16 - 21, 2004, Mumbai, India.**

Visit: <http://www.wsfindia.org>

A Discussion Forum has been set up for exchange of views and ideas on the issues being raised, etc: <http://www.unesco.org/education/nfe/forum>

14. The 7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of IAPB will now be held from September 18 - 24, 2004 in Dubai. Email: [agency@lvpei.org](mailto:agency@lvpei.org) for more information.

15. The Sixth Duskin Leadership Training Programme which will be conducted in September 2004 in Japan is open to any young 18 - 25 year old PWDs with leadership potential and who are determined to work for the community and common benefit of PWDs in the Asia and Pacific. The programme will take 10 - 11 months to complete, with full support from the organizer. Contact direct at email: [inquiry@dinf.ne.jp](mailto:inquiry@dinf.ne.jp)

16. The **ONCE International Prize for Research & Development in Biomedicine and New Technologies for the Blind**: Deadline for submission of nominations: May 31, 2004.

For more information, visit: <http://www.once.es/home.cfm?id=490&nivel=4&orden=6>

17. **Imfundo Partnership and SEN**: Imfundo is an initiative launched by Tony Blair through DFID (Department for International Development) as a contribution towards narrowing the technology gap between the developed and the developing countries.

"Imfundo" have selected six African countries and the topic of ICT and Education as its focus. Visit: [www.imfundo.org](http://www.imfundo.org)

18. RNIB will host **Vision 2005**, the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference and Exhibition organized under the auspices of the International Society for Low-Vision Research and Rehabilitation.

Find out more at: [www.rnib.org.uk/vision2005](http://www.rnib.org.uk/vision2005)

19. An IDDP 2003 Resource Kit is available at:

[www.dpi.org/en/resources/documents/ResourceKit2003.pdf](http://www.dpi.org/en/resources/documents/ResourceKit2003.pdf)

## Tech Talk

### *Why DAISY digital talking books offer a rich literacy experience*

By **Will Pearson**, ICT Development Officer (Pre-16), RNIB

The words “DAISY” and “books” have been linked together in the minds of some individuals working with audio resources for a number of years now. Yet it is only fairly recently that issues about how this innovative technology, which is portable, easy to use and exciting to work with, are becoming more widely appreciated and understood.

DAISY stands for Digital Accessible Information System, and is a worldwide standard for creating digital books that are easy to navigate around, using a limited number of keys, and which uses digitally recorded speech rather than relying on a speech synthesiser. It synchronises the recorded speech with text on screen, linked using a web language “glue”, that could also include images and other sorts of files. The clever and unique feature of DAISY is that it is conceived with the needs of a wide population of users with a print disability, specifically computer users who have sight difficulties.

Cleverly, the DAISY format books (which at present usually come on CD but in the future will be held on all sorts of other small and compact storage media) will also play on DAISY players, which resemble CD walkmen players. In fact, many of the newer models will play MP3 CDs and other music and audio CDs. This means a student might be able to use them whilst on a train or bus, with easy navigation,



and not feel that he or she was carrying around something extraordinarily different, something that separated them from other people.

Historically, those working with DAISY and promoting its use have had to get to grips with issues of Digital Rights Management, that is the assurances that copyrighted material put into DAISY format will not be copied and distributed outside the community of users for whom it was created. This is still being tackled, but many publishers, like Time Warner in the USA, have produced top selling titles in DAISY and sell these alongside other versions. It seems likely that encryption will become a feature of future books to prevent piracy, with a code needed to be entered to access the content of a book. Here in the UK, changes to the Copyright Bill that came into effect in May have ensured that sharing books for use by pupils with a visual impairment has become much more open and acceptable.

The challenge now is getting some high quality resources available in DAISY format, and understanding how users get to grips with the material. Issues about how popular it is, how well used by friends in class, how easy it is to search and bookmark texts, all these will hopefully emerge as themes from current research. Leading one substantial project is the DAISY Literacy materials for the Inclusive Classroom project led by the RNIB, with support from Dolphin Computer Access, the University of Birmingham and three sensory support services across the Midlands. This is funded via the Department for Education and Skills, who are keen to evaluate its educational potential. We are working together on both aspects mentioned above: producing a core of seven highly relevant texts in DAISY, followed by a rigorous and thorough programme of evaluation, which will take in the thoughts of students, class teachers, advisory teachers and the University research team. It is hoped that this will pave the way for greater awareness and understanding of the power of digital talking books in relation to traditional accessible materials, such as standard recorded audio, large print and Braille.

Initially, the power of DAISY software players rests with its inclusive design, the fact that it

looks and feels so much like many other Windows media players, but that keyboard accessibility was central to the build. The fact that current players recognise that “skippable” content would be used, where features such as extra notes, page numbers and line numbers can be switched on and off as needed. But overall, it seems clear that it is going to prove a very valuable tool in the hands of students who are already adept at multi-tasking. The requirements now in many schools and colleges is for students to be able to work in programs like Word and Excel whilst listening to recorded material, and the software players have a “remote control” function that makes this task easy. What is also exciting, and what emerged from an exciting project in Scotland called the DAVIE project, was that many students felt empowered and motivated when creating their own DAISY books, knowing how easy it would be to structure and get around their stories or essays. This has the potential to be one of the most dynamic and revolutionary aspects when DAISY has achieved wider exposure and, critically, a number of enthusiastic users.

#### Screen Shot:

This is Easereader, the software player used in the DfES funded project:

#### Web references:

*DAISY Consortium website:* <http://www.daisy.org>

*RNIB Technology website:* <http://www.rnib.org.uk/technology>

*Dolphin Computer Access Audio Publishing website:* <http://www.dolphinse.com>

*Report into aspects of DAVIE Project:* [http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public\\_pomb1.doc](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_pomb1.doc)

## *News - Here and There*

**The Educator – ICEVI's Magazine goes Japanese**  
ICEVI's biannual magazine, "The Educator" is available in English, Spanish, and in English Braille. ICEVI is proud to announce that the Japanese version of The Educator is also now available. You can see the June to December 2003 issue of The Educator in Japanese version on the Publication Section of ICEVI website [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)

### **The Voice of the WBU**

The World Blind Union has brought out its first magazine by name, "The Voice of the WBU". The second issue will be finalized in December 2003. For an electronic copy of the magazine and for more details, contact [UMC@once.es](mailto:UMC@once.es)

### **ICEVI Co-Chair in the North America and Caribbean Region**

Dr. Kathleen Mary Huebner, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Pennsylvania College of Optometry has been named Co-Chair of the North America and Caribbean region for the rest of the quadrennium. Congratulations to Kathy.

### **Awards and Recognition to ICEVI members**

Dr. Susan Spungin, Chairperson of ICEVI – North America and the Caribbean region received American Printing House's coveted "Wings of Freedom" Award for her outstanding services. Dr. Sally Mangold, a long time member of ICEVI received the "Creative Use of Braille" Award from the APH. Dr. Mangold was also honoured with the 2003 Migel Award, the American Foundation for the Blind's most prestigious award for outstanding service to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Congratulations to Susan and Sally.

### **ICEVI for the non-formal education website of UNESCO**

ICEVI has been included in the non-formal education website of the UNESCO. Organizations which are involved in alternative modes of education are found in this website. As ICEVI is involved in direct and indirect services to persons with visual impairment through formal and non-formal approaches, ICEVI made an application to include it in the UNESCO's website.

### **Golden Key Newsletter**

The Inner Mongolia Golden Key project is promoting integrated education programmes for visually impaired children. The project is involved in teacher preparation programmes too. In order to disseminate its experiences of integrated education, the project publishes "The Golden Key Newsletter". The slogan of the newsletter is "Treasure every life, Value every blind kid." Those who want further information on contact [goldkey@public.bta.net.cn](mailto:goldkey@public.bta.net.cn)

### **Training Course on Low Vision Devices**

You can buy low vision devices for an affordable price. The first international course will be organized by the Hong Kong Society for the Blind, Hong Kong in 2004. The Low Vision Clinic set up by the Society as a part of the Vision 2020 initiative is supplying low cost low vision devices to China and the developing world. To place orders, please contact Mrs. Grace Chan, Director, Hong Kong Society for the Blind.

### **Cyprus Braille Newsletter**

The Cyprus Braille Newsletter is available in electronic form. It can be seen on the website

[www.pot-cyprus.com](http://www.pot-cyprus.com) For further inquiry, contact [pot@cy.net](mailto:pot@cy.net)

### Vision 2005 Conference

The Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) is delighted to host Vision 2005, the 8th international conference and exhibition organised under the auspices of the International Society for Low-vision Research and Rehabilitation. The cutting-edge programme will cover a broader range of themes than ever before, and already includes an impressive array of keynote speakers. Find out more on the conference website at <http://www.rnib.org.uk/vision2005>. Potential speakers are now invited to submit abstracts online via the conference website. A full range of presentation opportunities is available, including oral, round table discussions and posters. Formal registration will begin in April 2004, but you can register your interest online

now. Why not bookmark the site to keep in touch with the latest updates.

### Access Technology

The course "Access Technology: Beginnings" offered by the Hadley School for the Blind provides information to decide which hardware, software, and access technology is needed for the visually impaired child or for anyone in the family who wants to help the child use a computer. The lessons are offered through a distance mode and enable the learner to select the right type of computer, learn about the operative procedures of computers and how visually impaired persons can access computers. The course is free of charge and therefore, any visually impaired person or a family member can take advantage of this facility. For more details contact the Hadley School for the Blind through e-mail [MailingList@hadley-school.org](mailto:MailingList@hadley-school.org)

**You  
can  
Contribute  
to  
The Educator**

***The themes of the forthcoming issues of The Educator will be as follows:***

**July 2004 :**

**Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment**

**January 2005 :**

**Information & Communication Technology**

**July 2005 :**

**Sports, Leisure and Recreation**

**January 2006 :**

**Vocational Preparation**

***The Editorial committee would welcome high quality articles from contributors on the above themes. An electronic copy of manuscripts of up to 5000 words should be sent to the Editor at the address on page 1. If electronic submission is not possible, three hard copies can be posted to the Editor at the above address. A covering statement should be included confirming that the manuscript is original work, not under consideration or published elsewhere.***