

The Educator



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Reaching Children with Visual Impairment who have



Additional Disabilities

A Publication of



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

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The Educator :

Future Directions and Subscription Rates

The Educator, the bi-annual journal of ICEVI, is in increasing demand. As a result, the distribution of The Educator needs to be even more carefully monitored to ensure that, within its budgetary constraints, the journal is able to make maximum impact upon the policy makers, organisations and service providers who shape the education and welfare of people with a visual impairment.

At the recent meetings of the Principal Officers and the Executive Committee, 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:

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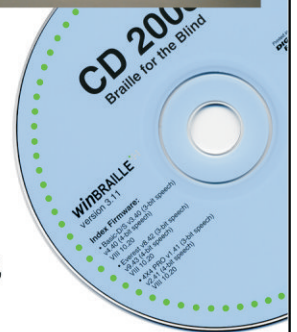
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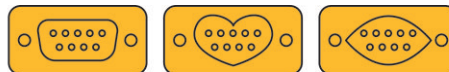
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This conference, organised by the Royal National Institute of the Blind, is an exciting event for professionals who are interested in technology and the role it plays in learning, work and life for people with sight problems.

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Letter from the President

Philadelphia, PA
June 18, 2004



Lawrence F. Campbell
President

Dear Colleagues:

Last night I attended the graduation ceremonies here at Overbrook, which is always a very special event. The graduation speaker was a former Overbrook student who had gone on to become a doctor and fifty years later was returning to accept the distinguished alumni award. He shared with the graduates a personal approach he has used for setting his goals and achieving them, even in the face of great odds. His system seems to have worked!

The pride and self-confidence on the faces of the graduates and their parents always give one a special feeling. Yet, as I looked at the faces of those young people, some with significant additional disabilities, and listened to them speak with enthusiasm and conviction of their dreams, I could not help think of the 5 million visually impaired children in other parts of the world who will never know the excitement of a graduation day. This is a situation we cannot allow to continue!

Today, as many of us go about our daily work with children and youth with visual impairment; access to education is something we take for granted. After all, access to education is a basic human right! However, it is a right that is denied to the vast majority of children and youth with visual impairment. ICEVI is determined to change the status quo.

The task before us is not an easy one but the new "ICEVI EDUCATION FOR ALL CAMPAIGN" is getting underway. We hope to engage

educators, parents, individuals with visual impairment and strategic allies throughout the world in an organized and sustained effort to turn "Education for All" from a phrase to reality for the millions of children with visual impairment who now find a lock on the schoolhouse door.

While the initial fundraising target for our campaign are major schools and agencies serving children with visual impairment, we hope that many of you who regularly read *The Educator* will decide to become involved by making a voluntary contribution.

Over the past several years ICEVI has grown substantially. Much of that growth we owe to a small and dedicated group of generous international partner organizations.

However, we cannot continue to rely on these longtime and loyal supporters alone.

If you are an educator who shares our concern for children in the developing world and are in a position to make a personal contribution to the "ICEVI EDUCATION FOR ALL CAMPAIGN" I invite you to join me to send your contribution. Let make equal access a reality for all children!

Enjoy this issue of *The Educator* and please give special attention the "first announcement and call for papers" for our 12th World Conference that accompanies this issue of *The Educator*.

Sincerely,

Larry Campbell
President

Letter from the Editor



Steve McCall
Editor

In this edition we focus on the issue of children with a visual impairment who have multiple disabilities or, as they are described in some countries “children with MDVI”. This has proved a more difficult theme to encompass than you might imagine because there appears to be little shared understanding about exactly who these children are.

Although there is no widely agreed definition of MDVI the term is usually applied to children with complex needs that often include a visual impairment accompanied by severe learning difficulties and physical disabilities. The estimates of the incidence of MDVI vary enormously according what part of the world you live in. Recent surveys in the UK (eg Keil 2002) suggest that children with MDVI account for between a third and half of the British population of children with visual impairment. In the UK all of these children are entitled to education and can be found in a range of educational provision.

As we can see from the contributions in this issue, in other countries these children appear to constitute a tiny minority of the population of children with a visual impairment and they are often excluded from education altogether. For example in Nigeria, Sr Justina Obiajunwa (the principal of the Pacelli School for the Blind in Lagos) reports that from her perspective that although there is some provision for children who are Deafblind, “we do not have any program for Multiply Handicapped Visually Impaired persons”.

Why are these children so often excluded from education? One possibility is that given the complexity of their other disabilities, the visual impairment of children with MDVI may not be recognised and they do not come into contact with visual impairment services. However even

when these children do come into contact with specialist services, they are often turned away. As Akhil Paul in India comments in this issue (p25) this rejection of these children is often rationalised by schools for the visually impaired on the grounds that “they do not fall within their designated target group. Sometimes real concerns such as lack of information and expertise, inadequate infrastructure and poor staff-student ratios are offered as excuses, but it is mostly schools’ lack of ...willingness to work with these children that forces them back to their cocoon of isolation”.

The extreme hardships that face many children with MDVI and their families are graphically illustrated in the article by Isuwa Jurmang (pp22 to 24). However on the happier side, there is also evidence in this edition that an understanding of the distinct needs of these children is beginning to take shape and that opportunities for teaching and learning are starting to emerge.

We can see in this edition how specialist provision has developed in Indonesia, Hong Kong and Thailand. The pattern often seems to be that services for children with MDVI emerge from provision for children who are Deafblind. Although some of the techniques commonly used in the education of children with MDVI (such as the use of Objects of Reference or Object Symbols) were originally developed for use with Deafblind children, the needs of children with MDVI and the techniques for teaching them are beginning to be recognised as distinct. The challenge that faces us as educators of persons with a visual impairment is to see children with MDVI as a natural part of our responsibilities. If *Education for All* means anything it means education for these children.

Steve McCall
Editor

Strategic Update

POINTS EMERGING FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF ICEVI

The second meeting of the ICEVI Executive Committee during the current quadrennium was held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 6 to 7 February 2004. ICEVI wishes to share the following key points that were discussed at this meeting for the benefit of the readers of The Educator.

1. Lee Projects – Region Specific Strategies for 2004

The experience of implementing projects in 2003 has helped identify the strategies that work best in each region and in close consultation with the regional chairs, the next phase of projects are currently being finalised. Mazars Worldwide, a Hong Kong based accountancy firm, has generously offered to audit the accounts of the Lee Foundation free of charge. At the meeting of the Executive Committee the regional chairs discussed how the preparation of accounts could be managed to meet national as well as international requirements, and agreement was reached on procedures that would allow each region to fulfil its obligations. The ExCo agreed for a vote of thanks to Mazars Worldwide for its invaluable support.

2. Memorandum of Understanding with IBSA

In order to formalise collaboration between ICEVI and the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA), a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the president of ICEVI and the President of IBSA, Mr Enrique Perez. In his address Enrique emphasised the importance of

developing opportunities for people with a visual impairment to participate in sport and confirmed that IBSA would be working closely with the regions of ICEVI to promote this aim.

3. ICEVI-WBU Policy Paper on Education

ICEVI-WBU Joint Educational Policy Statement was adopted by the ExCo with only minor modifications in phrasing.

4. Position Paper on Education for All Children

The members of the ExCo were divided into three groups to work on the background paper on "Achieving Education for All Children with Visual Impairment" prepared by ICEVI. While appreciating the efforts taken in preparing the paper, members suggested that it could be improved further by incorporating the following key suggestions.

1. *an introductory statement that identified the intended audience and the scope of the paper*
2. *a clearer distinction between the analysis and the recommendations*
3. *an increased emphasis on the Human Rights dimension*
4. *a strengthening of the situation analysis*



5. *a clearer definition of the resource implications of the proposals for the expansion of services*
6. *a need to recognise and capitalise upon legislative and policy commitments made by Governments towards disability issues and EFA*
7. *the development of a section providing an overview of the international documents and agreements and relating to EFA*
8. *support for the representation of parents on the EFA Task Force*

The paper is being revised now and will be ready by the end of 2004.

5. Recruiting institutional members of ICEVI

The ExCo endorsed a proposal to invite organizations to become subscribing members. The recommended subscription rates were determined in relation to the turnover of the donor organisation i.e.,

Less than 1 million US dollars :

US \$ 100 per annum

1 to 5 million US dollars :

US \$ 500 per annum

More than 5 million US dollars :

US \$ 750 per annum

The President will send a cover letter with an appeal to the potential organisations inviting them to become subscribing members. The regional chairs and other members of ExCo were requested to provide details of potential subscribers in their region to the Secretariat in order to update the database prepared by the ICEVI Secretariat.

6. Charges for The Educator

The ExCo endorsed a proposal put forth by the Principal Officers to make a charge of US \$ 50 per quadrennium to individual members for subscription to The Educator. The current issue is the last that individual members will receive free of charge.

7. Development of Concept Papers:

Members also discussed at length the need to develop ICEVI concept papers that would not only layout the position of ICEVI on key

issues but would provide guidelines to those involved in planning and providing services for people with a visual impairment. Members drew up priorities for themes to be addressed by the concept papers:

1. *Braille versus Print*
2. *Low Vision*
3. *Minimum competencies for regular classroom teachers*
4. *Role of Residential Schools*
5. *Guidelines for Living Conditions in Special Schools*
6. *Early Childhood Intervention*
7. *MDVI*
8. *Technology*
9. *Sports and Co-Curricular Activities*
10. *Formulating Guidelines for Developing Minimum Standards*
11. *Personal Autonomy*

ICEVI will soon begin work on the first of these position papers and that the three that seem to be most needed by our regions are : 1) Minimum competencies for regular classroom teachers, 2) Early Childhood Intervention, 3) MDVI.

8. Selection of delegates for the world conference

The members of the ExCo discussed and unanimously endorsed a plan for delegate selection for the General Assembly that will immediately follow the World Conference and will make decisions on a number of matters related to future ICEVI policy and strategies. The delegates for the World Assembly of ICEVI will be constituted as follows:

All ExCo Members	..	22
Deputy Regional Chairs (2 per region)	..	14
Delegates (10 each selected by the Regional Committee)	..	70
TOTAL	..	106

The Regional Chairs were requested to explain this procedure to the members of their regional committees and country representatives so that the delegates for the World Assembly may be decided well in advance.

Implementation Status

DRS. RICHARD CHARLES AND ESTHER YEWICK LEE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION GRANT

Lee Projects — Making a Difference:

On almost every day in 2003, the Dr. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation was making a contribution to the improvement of the education of persons with visual impairment in some part of the developing world. Through the year the ICEVI/Lee initiative supported 79 projects which benefited 3,855 teachers, parents, and other support personnel and impacted on 55,634 people with visual impairment. The scheme has generated heightened awareness of the educational needs of children with visual impairment throughout the world and built confidence in those that teach these children.

In the words of **Lungile**, a teacher from Swaziland, Africa, the program on Mathematics organized with the help of the Lee Foundation enabled her to “get over the fear of mathematics” and she adds that she is “a confident teacher now”.



Ashwini Agarwal, the ex-Director of the National Association for the Blind (India), who is himself blind, says that the E-text materials his organization has developed as a result of the ICEVI/Lee initiative will now help thousands of blind children every year.

John, a visually impaired counselor from Baguio in the Philippines says his knowledge and understanding of the principles of the

inclusion of children with visual impairment in community schools is now greater than ever before as a result of the orientation programme organized by ICEVI's East Asia region with the support of the Lee Foundation.



Lucia Piccione, the regional chair of Latin America is grateful and proud and of her association with the Lee Foundation. For many countries in the vast Latin America region, the Lee projects were the only capacity building programmes in the education of children with visual impairments available to teachers and parents.

These are just a few examples of the impact and the ripple effect that the collaboration between Lee Foundation and ICEVI has generated in 2003.

Major themes addressed in 2003:

During 2003, projects were implemented around the following themes.

- ☐ Awareness on information and technology for persons with visual impairment
- ☐ Inclusive education for children with visual impairment
- ☐ Developing teaching and learning materials
- ☐ Community-based rehabilitation
- ☐ Parental Education

- ☐ Braille codes
- ☐ Computer literacy
- ☐ Evaluation strategies
- ☐ Education of low vision children
- ☐ Teaching Mathematics
- ☐ Education of deafblind children
- ☐ Education of children with multiple disabilities
- ☐ Orientation and Mobility
- ☐ Early Childhood Intervention
- ☐ Visual Stimulation
- ☐ Regional and national networking
- ☐ Non-formal education
- ☐ Effective teacher preparation programs
- ☐ "Plus" curriculum activities for children with visual impairment

The 79 projects were implemented in the following 25 countries in 2003:

Argentina	Bangladesh	Bolivia
Brazil	Cameroon	Chile
China	Colombia	Ecuador
Egypt	El Salvador	Ethiopia
Gambia	Honduras	India
Indonesia	Kenya	Malawi
Mexico	Nepal	Peru
Philippines	South Africa	Uruguay
Venezuela		

ICEVI looks forward to further collaboration with the Lee Foundation in the years to come; this is a collaboration that is having a very positive impact on children with visual impairment in developing countries. ICEVI and the Lee Foundation share the goal of equal access to education for all children and judging by response to our achievements in 2003 we are truly making a difference in **"reaching blind children who have been denied their basic right to education"**.

ICEVI-MAB - the signing of the MoU for the 12th World Conference



Prof. Ismail Saleh, the President of the Malaysian Association for the Blind made a presentation at the Executive Committee Meeting of ICEVI on February 7, 2004 in which elaborated on the arrangements made by the MAB for hosting the 12th world conference at the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 16 to 21 July 2006. Following his presentation, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the President of ICEVI and the President of MAB before members of the EXCO of ICEVI, staff of MAB and senior officials from the Government of Malaysia. The conference is expected to be attended by nearly 1000 participants from all over the world. See pages 20-21 of this issue for details of the "Call for Papers".



Regional Up-dates

From the beginning of 2004, the **Africa Region** worked hard to help make the Africa Forum (see page 13) a success and to use it as a launching pad for the many ICEVI-related activities in the region. The organizers of the Africa Forum generously provided ICEVI opportunities to address delegates in various sessions and the results were rewarding. The “Friends of ICEVI” meeting held during the Africa Forum was attended by members from many parts of Africa and they pledged to promote the objectives of ICEVI in their own countries. One of the most significant achievements is that a “quadrennium plan” for the region has been drawn up and in relation to the plan, Sight Savers International and the CBM International have come together to explore the possibility of supporting co-funded projects. The ICEVI Africa Regional Committee meeting took place after the Africa Forum on 28 to 29 May 2004. The Committee identified teacher preparation, mathematics, and low vision as the three priority areas for the region in the years to come and it believes that the quality of educational services for children with visual impairment in Africa will improve substantially in the future.

Following the meeting of the Executive Committee of ICEVI held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004, the **East Asia Region** announced that it planned to organize a regional conference in Jomtien, Thailand, where the “Educational For All” movement started in 1990. (The EFA initiative has encouraged many countries to explore the possibility of updating the skills of teachers of children with visual impairment through the GLOBE-All distance education courses of the Hadley School for the Blind, which has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with ICEVI). A meeting was held in Bangkok from 16 to 17 June 2004 to plan the regional conference which will be facilitated by the ICEVI Thailand Network. A

quadrennium plan for ICEVI activities in Vietnam has been finalized and the East Asia region has facilitated networking between voluntary and government organizations in Indonesia to encourage joint initiatives in the provision of services to persons with visual impairment.

The **European Region** held its regional committee meeting in Barcelona in May 2004. Besides reviewing sub-regional activities, it also discussed issues of regional fundraising and the development of a regional membership structure. It continues to publish its regular newsletter which serves as one of the main vehicles for promoting ICEVI in Europe. Two major events - a Teacher Training Seminar from 23 to 28 September 2004 in Budapest, and a Balkan Conference in October 2004 in Belgrade will be the highlights of the regional activities in 2004. The 5th European Conference will be held from 14 to 18 August 2005 in Chemnitz, Germany. For further details of these events and of other initiatives in the European region visit the ICEVI European website www.icevi-europe.org.

The **North America Region** is expecting the largest number of participants ever at the Conference of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation (AER) of the Blind and Visually Impaired which is being held from July 13 to 18 in Orlando, Florida. The conference theme is “Where Dreams Come True”. Drs. Susan Spungin of the American Foundation for the Blind, Michael Bina of Hadley School for the Blind, and Kathleen Huebner of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry will present a joint poster session on ICEVI. Kathleen Huebner, Regional Co-Chair, will receive the Mary K. Bauman Award for outstanding contributions in education. Dr. Diane P. Wormsley will receive two awards from two

separate divisions of AER: the Itinerant Division and the Curriculum Division for the book 'Braille Literacy: A Functional Approach' published by the American Foundation for the Blind. ICEVI extends its congratulations to Kathy and Diane on these deserved honours. Teleconference calls for regional representatives of the region continue on a regular basis.

The **Latin America Region** continues to conduct its regular sub-regional committee meetings and programmes with the support of the Lee Charitable Foundation. Lee activities in Uruguay, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Brazil, Venezuela and Argentina have so far benefited more than 500 teachers and other personnel.

The ICEVI **Pacific Region** is helping the South Pacific Educators of the Visually Impaired (SPEVI) to organize its conference in 2005. Members are also planning to promote services for persons with visual impairment in the Pacific islands.

The **West Asia Region** successfully completed its Lee projects during the year 2003 and initiated further schemes in the year 2004. Preparations are underway for conducting a Regional Conference and this is likely to be attended by more than 200 delegates from all over Asia. The West Asia Regional Chairperson visited the Middle East Countries to encourage networking and the planning of projects. It is proposed that a Middle East sub-regional meeting will take place prior to the West Asia regional conference. Lee Foundation projects are underway in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. A national workshop supported by ICEVI will be organised in September 2004 in the Maldives to orient NGOs to services related to blindness.

Taken as a whole, the regions of ICEVI are striving hard to strengthen ICEVI's regional/ sub-regional and national structures in order to improve educational opportunities for children with visual impairment.



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

Founded 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

Currently, more than 4000 individuals and organizations in 170 countries are actively involved in ICEVI.

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's biannual magazine "The Educator" is available in inkprint and Braille in both English and Spanish and is also posted on our website www.icevi.org. A Japanese language version is available in electronic format on the website. ICEVI also publishes a biannual electronic newsletter that is currently distributed to 4000 individuals and organizations in 170 countries.

Website of ICEVI

www.icevi.org

Message from the President - World Blind Union



Kicki Nordström
WBU President

Dear Readers,

I am glad to meet you once again through *The Educator*. I am extremely happy with the release of the ICEVI and the World Blind Union's Joint Educational Policy

Statement at the Africa Forum in May.

As a document, the policy statement is comprehensive but its success will depend on whether its strategies are adopted and translated into action. Therefore I urge you to press the statement into the hands of the policy makers of your countries!

Although the policy lists a range of various measures for augmenting educational services for persons with visual impairment, I will draw particular attention here to Section E of the Statement that talks about the special needs of children with visual impairment with additional disabilities.

Though in many countries these children are seen as constituting a small segment of the overall population of persons with visual impairment, they require special attention to their overall development in order that they may be capable of developing to their maximum potential.

The example of Helen Keller provides testimony to the abilities of persons with visual impairment and additional disabilities. Helen Keller, though blind and deaf, demonstrated to the world that multiple disability is not an insuperable hindrance to development. She remarked that it is not

blindness itself but the attitude of the public towards blindness that is the hardest burden to bear!

Therefore, I urge both service providers and the public to develop a positive attitude towards the capabilities of persons with additional disabilities. Teacher preparation programs should prepare teachers to teach these children adequately. I am glad that the current issue of *The Educator* is devoted to MDVI and I am sure that the articles in this issue will generate increased interest in services for visually impaired persons with additional disabilities.

The World Blind Union has been active in pursuing the United Nations to start the process of drafting a Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. WBU is glad that disability issues are featuring in many international forums today and that awareness about disability is becoming increasingly heightened.

We have now to ensure that awareness of the issues facing persons with disabilities becomes translated into action. We need to work together to convince national and local governments to give a special thrust to education and services for persons with disabilities in general, and to those with visual impairment in particular.

The World Blind Union will discuss strategies for maximizing educational opportunities for persons with visual impairment in its forthcoming General Assembly to be held in Cape Town, South Africa in December 2004.

Let us work together and make a difference in the lives all blind and visually impaired persons, "In the Era of New Opportunities".

IBSA - Sports for the Blind

The future of blind sports in Asia



Enrique Pérez
IBSA President

International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) members from Asia and Oceania gathered to discuss the future development of blind sports in the regions at the recent IBSA Asia-Oceania Strategic Planning Conference in Manila, the Philippines. Member nations from the two continents

collaborated to identify current challenges and reach agreement on a series of recommendations aimed at maximising the opportunities offered to the blind to practise sport.

The IBSA Asia-Oceania Conference brought together more than 50 delegates from around 20 countries, and we were honoured to have Mavis Campos, ICEVI East Asia Chair, address the meeting. The participants, representing countries as diverse as Cambodia and Fiji (for the first time East Timor took part in an IBSA event), were updated on the IBSA-ICEVI agreement and future plans to strengthen relations at world and regional level. Ms. Campos outlined ICEVI's intention to promote joint projects aimed at increasing the opportunities provided to blind children to take part in sport. The main aims of the gathering were to improve contact between member countries and IBSA, and for members to exchange experiences on national programmes and strategies. IBSA also hoped to strengthen relations between blind sport organizations and National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) and reach consensus on future initiatives aimed at promoting IBSA sports and getting more visually impaired people involved in sport.

The principal problems the nations have to deal with are a lack of resources and materials, a scarcity of volunteers, a lack of support from public authorities and private sponsors and insufficient technical knowledge of IBSA's sports. In addition, some countries pointed out that there is little "sports culture" in some regions of Asia, and as a result the practice of sports is not given the importance it deserves.

The agreed strategy to overcome these obstacles includes the following:

- placing more emphasis on sports for the blind and developing promotional strategies and tools to gradually raise awareness.
- tapping into existing networks, organizations and facilities (e.g. ICEVI), taking advantage of these to increase sporting opportunities in the regions.
- putting in place effective lobbying strategies to ensure blind athletes are afforded the same level of support and recognition as able-bodied athletes.
- promoting the health aspects of sports to encourage increased participation.
- organizing a series of sports-specific technical seminars in Asia and Oceania, with expertise provided by IBSA technicians.

In connection with the conference, IBSA Medical Director Dr. Georges Challe chaired a highly successful medical seminar. The seminar was attended by more than 40 local ophthalmologists who were informed of the IBSA classification and medical policy. Through initiatives such as this, IBSA hopes to recruit new international classifiers for future championships.

IBSA President Enrique Pérez commented that "the conference and medical seminar were a tremendous success. We now have to build on the work carried out in the Philippines and make sure the strategy is implemented if we really want to engage visually impaired people in Asia and Oceania in IBSA sports. It's a difficult task, but we are looking forward to seeing some real progress in the medium term. With ICEVI's help I am convinced we can make it happen."

Given the success of the conference and seminar, IBSA hopes to repeat the experience in other continents in the near future and we look forward to ICEVI's participation and input. For further information on sports for the blind, contact IBSA at ibsa@ibsa.es.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Signed this 6th Day of February 2004

between

INTERNATIONAL BLIND SPORTS FEDERATION

(hereinafter referred to as "IBSA" which term shall mean and include its officer bearers)

and

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

(hereinafter referred to as "ICEVI" which shall mean and include the members of its Executive Committee)

Whereas IBSA is an international organization promoting sports for persons with visual impairment throughout the world and whereas ICEVI is a global association of individuals and organizations working for the expansion of educational opportunities for persons with visual impairment and

Whereas IBSA promotes sports as an integral component of comprehensive services for persons with visual impairment and whereas one of the objectives of ICEVI is to promote collaboration with world bodies working for the promotion of services for persons with visual impairment and,

Whereas IBSA has the capacity to provide technical assistance and input to sports and recreation programs for persons with visual impairment and whereas ICEVI, is the professional organization representing educators of children and youth with visual impairment that conducts capacity building programs for teachers and professionals including those involved in sports,

Therefore IBSA and the ICEVI affirm through this Memorandum of Understanding their agreement to collaborate on matters related to the promotion of sports and recreational activities for persons with visual impairment under the following mutually understood conditions.

1. The ICEVI will encourage its regional chairpersons to include in their project submissions proposals for the promotion of sports among visually impaired children which may be considered for co-funding by IBSA and ICEVI.
2. IBSA and ICEVI will work to create consumer, family, and professional awareness about sports for visually impaired persons by:
 - 2.1 *facilitating communication links between their regional and continental representatives,*
 - 2.2 *including columns in their respective publications regarding the programs of each others organization,*
 - 2.3 *encouraging participation and the presentation of papers and workshops at each others regional and international conferences and*
 - 2.4 *creating links to each others websites*
3. ICEVI, during the 2002-2006 quadrennium will devote one issue of **The Educator**, its biannual magazine to the theme of sports and recreation and invite IBSA to nominate the thematic editor for that special issue.
4. Wherever IBSA and ICEVI organize national or regional sports related projects, the certificates for the participants will be jointly issued by IBSA and ICEVI.

This Memorandum of Understanding shall remain in effective from the date of signature until either party decides to terminate it by providing the other with ninety days prior notice in writing.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have executed these presents at KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, on the date herein before mentioned.

1. For International Blind Sports Federation

Enrique Perez, President

2. For The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment

Lawrence F. Campbell, President

The Africa Forum

The third Africa Forum held from 23 to 27 May 2004 at Midrand, South Africa was an occasion that underlined the enormous capabilities of persons with a visual impairment. The visually impaired delegates from the 26 countries of Africa represented at the meeting took the lead role in the preparation and organisation of the Forum and in the management and conduct of the programme, proving that they have the potential to become the “Voice of Africa”. The inaugural session was addressed by Honourable Essop Pahad, Minister in the Office of the State President, Government of South Africa, who urged the Governments and service providers to collaborate over service development for people with visual impairment. He argued that developing countries with scant resources need to define their priorities carefully and collaborate to ensure the effectiveness of services for people with visual impairment. He was proud that the South African parliament has a greater representation of people with disabilities than most other parliaments in the world. International

organisations present at the Forum were recognised and the representatives of these organisations greeted the delegates.

The opening ceremony was also attended by Judge Zak Yacoob, the Constitutional Court Judge of South Africa, Dr. William Rowland, Second Vice-President of the World Blind Union, and Mr. Aubrey Webson, Coordinator of the

Forum. Mr. Pahad also opened the exhibition of the conference. The ICEVI booth was visited by the Minister where he was appraised of the activities of ICEVI in the vast Africa region.

ICEVI used the occasion to promote education for all

children with visual impairment and lobbied for closer cooperation between governments, international organisations and organisations of and for the visually impaired. ICEVI was represented by Larry Campbell, President, Mani, M.N.G., Secretary General, Wilfred Maina, Regional Chairperson, Africa Region, Deputy Regional Chairpersons and many country representatives of the Africa region. ICEVI was



Section of the delegates



Mr. Pahad at the ICEVI Exhibition



Releasing ICEVI-WBU Education Policy



Larry with Steve Rothstein and Aubrey Webson

involved in a number of key sessions throughout the forum.

During the plenary session on the second day, Larry Campbell and Wilfred Maina presented a global overview of ICEVI activities with specific attention to current and planned actions for the Africa region. They stressed the importance of bringing national organisations to form ICEVI chapters. During the session, the joint ICEVI-WBU educational policy statement was released in both English print and braille.

Mani, M.N.G., Secretary General made a presentation on the on-going research initiative of ICEVI in Uganda, which is aimed at identifying the most critical factors that should be in place to make education of children with visual impairment successful in local primary schools. By presenting the interim findings of the research, he mentioned that the final results of the study will be available by the end of December 2004 and opined that the research study can be replicated in other countries in the region in order to provide hard data to the policy planners about the pre-requisites that should be in place for making inclusive education for children with visual impairment successful.

He also organised a workshop on mathematics and described various components of the ICEVI/ON-NET (Overbrook Nippon Network for Educational Technology) mathematical package which is likely to be ready in early 2005. The workshop generated a lot of interest among the

participants who wanted to know more about the methodology of teaching mathematics as knowledge in this subject is vital for visually impaired students to pursue higher education.

A networking session under the title of "Friends of ICEVI" was attended by representatives of various countries who worked in groups to consider the role of ICEVI in formulating policies and facilitating services to persons with visual impairment. The groups also discussed the priorities for each country or sub-region that should be considered by the Africa regional committee.

At the initiative of ICEVI and the Force Foundation, a session was organised to discuss issues relating to braille production in the region. A large number of delegates attended this session and opined that braille production centres in Africa need to share soft copies for reproduction of braille materials locally and also to share information to avoid duplication. Mr. Dick Tucker from the Force Foundation has created an interest group on this subject to follow-up braille production issues regularly and complement the services of each other organisations in the region.

On the whole, the Africa Forum provided an excellent platform for ICEVI to push forward its global agenda of education for all children with visual impairment. In the process, ICEVI took on board scores of young persons with visual impairment, who can really make a difference in the future. The long trip to Midrand resulted in a number of valuable outcomes for ICEVI.



ICEVI Network Meeting in progress



**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION OF
PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (ICEVI)
and
WORLD BLIND UNION (WBU)**



JOINT EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT

PREAMBLE

Reaffirming the right to elementary, fundamental and compulsory education of all individuals enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and renewed by the world community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All and the subsequent World Education Forum, 2000;

Recalling the principles contained in the 1982 UN World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons;

Acknowledging the right to education as it is stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989;

Noting with satisfaction the 1993 United Nations Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which urges States to ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the general education system;

Endorsing the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education;

Affirming the Millennium Development Goals;

Supporting the UNESCO Flagship, "Education for All: The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion";

Endorsing the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action: towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific;



Advocating to the United Nations for the adoption and subsequent implementation of the International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities; The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) and the World Blind Union (WBU) jointly formulate and endorse the following principles related to the education of blind and visually impaired persons:

POLICY STATEMENT

ICEVI and WBU:

A. Urge governments to:

1. Guarantee to blind and visually impaired children, youth and adults the same rights and access to educational services as is guaranteed to all children, youth and adults in accordance with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.
2. Place the educational services for blind and visually impaired children and youth under the same government bodies as that of children without blindness or visual impairment.
3. Guarantee all blind and visually impaired children and youth in integrated, inclusive, or special school programs - as well as their teachers - access to the equipment, educational materials and support services required, such as:
 - *books in Braille, large print or other accessible formats, and*
 - *low vision devices for those who require them,*



at the same time as non-disabled students in order to facilitate their equal access to all aspects of the educational services provided to other children.

4. Offer education of a high quality and standard in a range of educational options, including special schools.
5. Give prominence to the voice of parents and (where appropriate) children and youth in decisions about placement.
6. Provide quality literacy and independence skills and lifelong learning opportunities for adult blind and visually impaired persons who have not been given basic education in their childhood.



B. Teacher Training:

ICEVI and WBU will work together to:

1. Promote special training of teachers, parents, rehabilitation workers, and others, who provide education and instruction to blind and visually impaired children, youth and adults.
2. Assure that teachers, who are in integrated and inclusive school programs and have blind or low



vision students in their classrooms or those teachers who are in special schools for such children, receive adequate training and skills in Braille and other educational means in order to provide quality education.

3. Encourage remuneration commensurate with qualifications and training to ensure that investments in human resources are not lost.
4. Organise local, national and regional seminars, training courses and conferences to update the skills and knowledge of teachers and others working with blind and visually impaired children, youth and adults.

C. Support from ICEVI and WBU:

ICEVI and WBU pledge:

1. While there is agreement between them, their willingness to work with governments to assist with information, knowledge and guidance regarding the full range of educational options for blind and visually impaired children, youth and adults, on the clear understanding that their education is primarily a government responsibility.
2. To assist government initiatives by helping to secure information about equipment and materials to ensure equal access of all blind and visually impaired children and youth to obtain a good education, regardless of their socio-economic level.
3. To promote the development of programmes to educate and sensitise the general community to the needs of blind and visually impaired children, youth and adults.

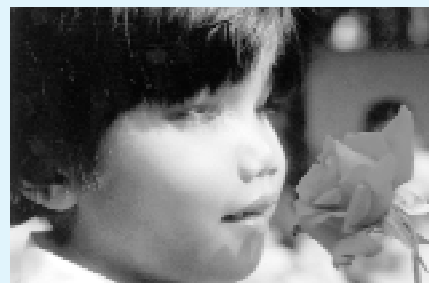
D. Early Childhood Intervention Programs:

ICEVI and WBU shall:

Acknowledge the critical importance of the pre-school years to the long-term social, emotional and educational development of blind and visually impaired children.

Recognise the need for the development of appropriate services for very young and pre-school blind and visually impaired children.

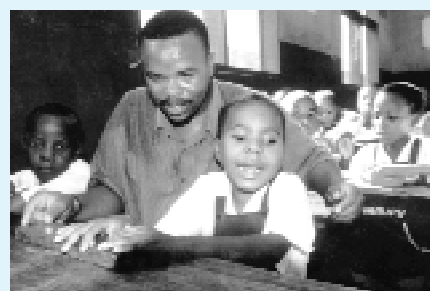
Encourage the screening, early intervention and quality habilitation of blind and visually impaired children by specially trained teachers and instructors.



E. Additional needs:

ICEVI and WBU will:

1. Promote the establishment of programs and services for blind and visually impaired children and youth with additional disabilities.



2. Promote programs and services for deafblind children through efforts at community levels, awareness raising, screening and human resource training.
3. Provide special attention to the education and literacy needs of blind and visually impaired children, youths and adults from especially vulnerable groups such as refugees and indigenous populations.

F. Toward Action by the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment and the World Blind Union :

Therefore, ICEVI and WBU agree to:

1. Establish at an international level, an ICEVI/WBU Joint Education Committee to:
 - a. Identify priorities*
 - b. Request from governments, non-governmental organisations and United Nations Agencies, the necessary material, technical and human resources to improve and expand educational access for blind and visually impaired children, youth and adults.*
 - c. Offer their services and support to UN Specialised Agencies, governments, local communities, educational organisations and authorities, NGOs, and organisations of and for blind and visually impaired persons that are represented within ICEVI and WBU.*
 - d. Establish common strategies and coordinate efforts aimed at improving and expanding access to educational services for blind and visually impaired children, youth and adults throughout the world, in line with (c) above.*
2. Encourage establishment within each region of a joint ICEVI/WBU Committee with regional goals that are reflective of the tenets of this document. Such regional committees should:
 - a. Include parents and other family members of the blind or visually impaired child, or the youth himself/herself, where appropriate, in an effort to ensure that established needs have taken into consideration all perspectives.*
 - b. Ensure maximum impact of lobbying efforts directed at governments, international bodies, and UN Specialised Agencies.*
3. Promote the active participation of ICEVI and WBU in international forums on education and related matters to ensure that their respective memberships participate in decision-making at all levels.
4. Jointly follow the progress and work of Education for All programs to ensure the inclusion of the needs of blind and visually impaired children, youths and adults.



5. Include information and articles on joint actions in their respective publications : **The Educator** and **The World Blind**.
6. Regularly update the readership on the work of the other.
7. Establish a link to each other's web pages.
8. Take all other necessary actions to ensure that information concerning the educational needs of blind and visually impaired persons is included in national and international publications in the field of general education.



Larry Campbell
President, ICEVI



Kicki Nordström
President, WBU

APPENDIX 1

INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS & INITIATIVES

1. 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>
2. 1990 World Conference on Education for All: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/index.shtml
3. 2000 World Education Forum: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf>
4. 1982 UN World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/diswpa00.htm>
5. 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>
6. 1993 UN Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dissre00.htm>
7. 1994 Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education: http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF
8. 2000 Millennium Development Goals: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
9. UNESCO Flagship, "Education for All: The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion": http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/know_sharing/flagship_initiatives/index.shtml
10. Asian & Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003 – 2012: Biwako Millennium Framework for Action: towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific: <http://www.unescap.org/sps/disability.htm>
11. Proposed United Nations comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/a_ac265_2003_4e.htm



ICEVI

12th World Conference

Achieving Equality in Education - New Challenges and Strategies for Change

CALL FOR PAPERS RELEASE

The 12th World Conference of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) will be held at the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 16 to 21 July 2006. The Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) is the Host Organisation of this conference. Come to Malaysia - Truly Asia and enjoy making your contribution to this vital conference.

The conference will be jointly managed by the ICEVI Secretariat and the Malaysian Host Committee. Registration and accommodation will be organised by MAB and ICEVI will manage the programme and the processing of conference papers. **Please log on to ICEVI website, www.icevi.org for more details.**

For registration and accommodation, contact:

Malaysian Association for the Blind

Kompleks MAB, Jalan Tebing,
Off Jalan Tun Sambanthan 4,
50470 Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA
E-mail : mablind@po.jaring.my

For submitting abstract, contact:

ICEVI Secretariat

IHRDC Campus,
Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalya
Coimbatore 641 020, Tamil Nadu, INDIA
E-mail : officevi@vsnl.net

CONFERENCE DETAILS

Conference Aims

Achieving Equality in Education: New Challenges and Strategies for Change

- ✧ To promote dialogue at the highest level on the international issues reflecting the key issues of the theme of the conference Equality in Education, Challenges and Strategies
- ✧ To facilitate an exchange of perceptions, experiences, practice and research during formal and informal interactions.
- ✧ To provide a current international overview of the equality of access to education and rehabilitation for children and young people with a visual impairment.
- ✧ To enable participants to hear, question and work alongside respected international experts in the field of visual impairment as they respond to the conference theme.

To enable you to write your abstract, the Programme Committee has identified three main areas of focus:

- ✧ Achieving Equality in Education: Attitudes and Policies
- ✧ Achieving Equality in Education: Human Resource Development
- ✧ Achieving Equality in Education: Strategies for Change

And we invite you to develop a presentation within the framework of the following topics with special preference being given to the papers that address New and Innovative Strategies.

- ✧ Equality of Access to Education
- ✧ Multi-disabilities and Visual Impairment (MDVI)
- ✧ New /Innovative Service Models
- ✧ Low Vision
- ✧ Personnel Preparation - teacher education and other professionals
- ✧ Assessment Procedures - theory and practice
- ✧ Inclusive Educational Practices
- ✧ Working with Families
- ✧ Life Skills including Orientation and Mobility, Social Skills
- ✧ Innovative use of Community Resources
- ✧ Early Childhood Intervention
- ✧ Life-long Learning
- ✧ Access and Information Technologies and Adaptive or Assistive Technology
- ✧ Professional (multi-disciplinary) Collaboration
- ✧ Access to Literacy through Braille or Print
- ✧ Alternate Education Models for Young Adults
- ✧ Creating Educational Equity for Women and Girls
- ✧ Access to Curricular and Extra-Curricular areas
- ✧ Rebuilding Educational Systems in Countries affected by War or Natural Disasters.

Supported Places

A scholarship committee chaired by Grace Chan, J.P., ICEVI Treasurer is being formed and guidelines are being developed for the equitable distribution of the limited funding available to support needy and deserving persons who would otherwise be unable to participate in the conference. As with the last conference those funds will be administered by ICEVI regional committees. Check the ICEVI website and future issues of The Educator for further information.

**A full copy of the Call For Papers may be obtained
by contacting the MAB, ICEVI Secretariat or
the Regional Chairpersons of ICEVI.
(See front inner cover for addresses)**

MULTIPLE DISABILITY IN WEST AFRICA: THE CASE OF CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAFBLIND IN GHANA AND NIGERIA

ISUWA J. JURMANG

Department of Special Education, University of Jos

Introduction:

In present day Ghana and Nigeria, the need for appropriate identification and intervention programmes for individuals who are Deafblind or multiply disabled cannot be overstated. There are hardly any formalized programmes for these groups and the only school for the Deafblind in the entire West African region is Manpong Akwapim in Ghana. Kelley and Vergason (1978) define persons who are Deafblind as “persons whose vision or hearing are deficient as to require specialized methods of communication different from those used in the fields of the deaf and blind”. Such individuals may not be equally disabled in each modality and might not meet the legal definition of either deafness or blindness and many will have additional disabilities.

However, the term “Deafblind” is used in this article to refer to a range of conditions including:

- Dual Sensory Impairment
- Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)
- Hearing Impairment with additional disability
- Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment (MDVI)
- Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)

The main objective of this article is to consider the challenges that face children who Deafblind, their teachers and their parents and to provide an overview of the principles and materials used in

instructing these children in our region. It focuses on the curriculum and provides suggestions for positive action by advocates and other professionals interested in the welfare of Deafblind individuals in Ghana and Nigeria, and in the African region as a whole.

Case Study 1

This boy attended school for the deaf in Manpong Akwapim in Ghana. His performance in academic work as a deaf child was outstanding. He later developed a visual impairment which led to his transfer to the Unit for the Deafblind. When his parents saw that their child had become both deaf and blind, they withdrew him from his new school because they feared that their neighbours would get to know of their child’s condition. At home, the boy was kept locked up in a room. His food was delivered to the room and he had to crawl around to find it. He stayed there alone and ate, slept, urinated and defecated in the same room. He was kept in this confinement for two years. The hazard to his health and the psychological torture the boy went through is beyond description.

By the time the teachers discovered his situation, the boy was in a terrible physical, mental and psychological condition. When he was brought back to school he exhibited many abnormal behaviours. At mealtime while other children sat at the table, he squatted on the table to eat. He resisted any attempt to sit him down on a chair and tried to bite anyone who touched him. After

every meal he lay down behind the door and folded himself up. After tremendous efforts by his teachers, especially the head of the Unit, the boy's behaviour and his relationship with others improved significantly.

Four years later the boy left the Deafblind school and was enrolled in the regular primary school in his local community. He was taught craft skills and members of the community have now accepted him. People are proud of him and he makes a living with the sale of his products.

Case Study 2

Grace was fifteen years old when I first met her. She was the third child in her family and lived at home. She was partially sighted and hard of hearing and she had no speech except for a babbling sound. She displayed a pattern of self abuse which involved her continuously hitting and wounding her head. Grace had extraordinary energy and strength and she destroyed items around her in her house. Her mother was still changing her nappies for her.

Mama Grace (her mother) had a great deal of difficulty looking after Grace. Once Grace was awake the mother would have to stop all her household chores. She often had to grasp the girl's two hands and pin her legs under her in a sitting position to prevent her from wounding herself or destroying things in the house. Sometimes after several hours of being in that position, the mother could quickly feed the girl and Grace would go back to sleep.

The mother then quickly did all her jobs before the girl woke up again.

The local women wanted to help Mama Grace. The few that tried giving her a helping hand could not cope. When the news went round, other women declined to offer a helping hand. House

girls that were employed to look after Grace did not come back after their first experiences.

The mother did not know the whereabouts of Grace's father and her two oldest children. They could not tolerate the presence of Grace in the family and left. Mama Grace was always in trouble with her landlords. Co-tenants complained about the disturbances the girl caused especially when she began crying out aloud. Three times they were evicted from the house they lived in. It became increasingly difficult for the mother to find a new place to live. Friends and relatives advised Mama Grace to get rid of the girl to enable her to have some rest in her life but the woman was determined to take care of her daughter.

One day I took Grace and her mother out in a car for an enlightenment television programme with the Plateau Radio / Television station in Jos, Nigeria. When we were driving along the road, Grace remained quiet, calm and stared at the trees. Her face was full of joy and an expression of pleasure. A few weeks after the making of the television programme, Grace passed away. It was clear that what Grace wanted was not confinement. She wanted to see outside like any other child.

Priorities in Ghana and Nigeria

There is little or no formal training and education available for many children with impaired sight and hearing in Ghana and Nigeria and for those in the community who are involved with them. Very little use is made of residual hearing and vision, yet we know that children can benefit enormously from early training and development in this area. Modern optical and auditory aids can be of real help in teaching the child to understand their environment but these are usually not available in the community.

If a child with defective sight and hearing can be identified early, even in infancy, the preschool years can be made profitable and the margin of delay due to lack of communication can be narrowed considerably. If a mother can be taught to show her child how to explore the environment and understand it through touch, if she can enable her child to relate to other people and play with other children, then she can give her child a basic preparation for school and life. Resources in the community such as mainstream nursery classes can sometimes be of great help, and (with the right training) various types of professionals can offer useful counseling and advice to parents. Social Workers, public health nurses, occupational and physical therapists and teachers of nursery school classes can also make valuable contributions if they are provided with specialist advice.

Our schools for the Deafblind and Multiply Disabled have not published pamphlets or offered advice to parents of Deafblind children or to the professionals who come into contact with them since up to now they have not been properly involved with them. It is of the utmost importance therefore that specialist schools take on the role of furnishing guidance and counselling to others in the wider community.

Principles and approaches:

The fundamental principles of teaching have not changed, approaches to an individual child must be adapted to take account of that child's special needs. When working with children that have sensory impairment with additional physical, emotional and learning difficulties, the teacher must understand the significance of all these factors and create a favourable climate for learning. The teacher must initially develop rapport with the child and watch closely for signs of an inner language. The teacher who recognizes

that the child has concepts that are unexpressed will be able to break through the barrier of communication and reach the mind and personality of the child.

The development of communication is a crucial element in the life of any individual who is Deafblind or multiply disabled. Communication is a process of the exchange of information by any means possible in which the person who is Deafblind plays an active part. Activities in the process need to be meaningful and motivating. The child must have a need to communicate something to another person and therefore the environment and the context in which interaction takes place is crucial. The child must be given opportunities that will promote communication and this includes the use of a range of approaches including speech, gesture, signing, finger spelling, the written word (both print and tactile) and symbols such as Objects of Reference. In order to give the child an understanding of the realities around him, the teacher must aim at providing the child with a variety of concrete experiences that are in line with the child's individual needs.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Multiply disabled persons in Ghana and Nigeria can take their places in the community if appropriate programmes are in place for them to develop the necessary skills. A team approach to identification, assessment and programming should be initiated. The Ghanaian and Nigerian governments should consider the training of teachers of Deafblind children and the provision of services for children in specialized and regular settings. Government should also consider the approval of separate funding for multiply disabled persons in Ghana and Nigeria. Tertiary institutions of learning that train special educators should include in their training courses for producing personnel for children who have multiple disabilities.

THE CHANGING SCENARIO FOR DEAFBLIND AND MULTIPLY DISABLED CHILDREN IN INDIA

AKHIL S. PAUL

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The Present Scenario:

The field of sensory impairment and multiple disability is a new and emerging field in our country but one of the strengths of this field is its professional and cohesive approach. Professionals have been learning from each other and even at this at this early stage are adding a component of work with children with additional disabilities to their work with children who are deafblind. To date, the initiatives taken in this field have been very needs-based. As a result, services vary according to the characteristics of the region, the target groups and the purposes they serve. This has led to the development of a wide variety of forms of intervention and a diversity of models in the field in a short time span.

Deafblindness is a condition in which there is a combination of visual and hearing impairments that cause “severe needs in the areas of communication, mobility and accessing information”. Children who are deafblind or multiply disabled are often isolated from schools because they require thoughtful and unique educational approaches to help them towards their full potential. For deafblind children and their families, the Salamanca Statement was a breakthrough. It was the first major international declaration to make reference to the specific needs of deafblind children¹. However, in the experience of Sense International (India) and its partners, Salamanca has had little or no positive affect on

the numbers of deafblind children² gaining access to formal educational opportunities, and there continues to be little understanding of how a deafblind child can be helped to flourish within either mainstream or specialist settings. On the contrary, the Salamanca Statement has been used as a rationale by governments for reducing the funding available to the special education sector. The overwhelming majority of deafblind children remain as excluded now as they did in 1994.

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act gave a major boost to the disability sector of the country. By identifying the major disabilities and specifying parameters for identification and service delivery, it attempts to build an infrastructure in the country that will be appropriate and accessible for the population of people with disabilities in India. However “Multiple Disabilities” is not recognised as a separate and unique category of disability within this Act, which was passed in 1995. Subsequently many professionals and parents of people with multiple disabilities and visual impairment came forward and lobbied the Government about the needs of such people. These efforts resulted in increased identification and the establishment of preliminary services for persons with multiple disabilities, which in turn led to stronger lobbying for the recognition of people with multiple disabilities as a distinct group.

¹ “Educational policies (can) take account of individual differences and situations... (since) Owing to the particular communication needs of deaf and deaf/blind persons, their education may be more suitably provided in special schools or special classes and units in mainstream schools”.

² There are no comprehensive statistics relating to the numbers of deafblind people. The most effective identification of deafblind people to-date has been carried out by Bradford City Council in the UK, which identified 90 deafblind people per 100,000 (2003). This hints that, in India, we will have around 500,000 deafblind people.

“The National Trust for Welfare of People with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities” does recognise Multiple Disability as a separate and unique category of disability. It supports the needs of multiply disabled persons and their family members by promoting and facilitating awareness workshops in rural and urban communities; collating and disseminating information on multiple disability; and helping local organisations set up day care and respite care services for children and adults with multiple disabilities. The National Trust has been a boon for parents of children with multiple disabilities and one of the major strengths of the Trust is its vision for the parents of these children. It believes that parents are the key persons in decisions involving the present and future of their children and this principle is being promoted through its various Local Level Committees and activities.

Present Schemes and Deafblindness/Multiple Disability:

We all agree that there should be free education for primary school children and free midday meals for schoolchildren from families living below the poverty line. In a true sense there should be – “Education for all”. Such schemes have reportedly pushed up the school enrolment ratio, and more and more younger children are coming to school – including the girl child. Families of deafblind and multiply disabled children in rural areas often decide to send their child to the school on the basis of the availability of a midday meal (which is quite logical). As educational professionals, this provides a tremendous opportunity for us to include these children in mainstream classes and to help them to learn and be independent.

However village classes often contain 35 – 45 children and lessons are delivered in the open air in front of a dilapidated blackboard. A class will typically include children from the ages of 6 to 10 years because there is only one teacher in the village primary school! The teacher is aware that every child can come to school but has no idea

about how to make changes for teaching a child with disability, let alone a deafblind child or a blind child with multiple disabilities!

There is a different perspective in the special schools. Traditional schools for the deaf and schools for the blind often have small groups of students with additional disabilities. Such students are usually categorised as ‘retarded’. If there are about 4 or 5 of them, they may be moved to a special classroom for ‘slow learners’. Such classes will often stop following the school curriculum and start with wooden puzzles, craft activities and chair caning.

It is imperative to state here that the key issue therefore is not whether deafblind or blind children with additional disabilities should be included in the mainstream school or taught in the special school. The more important question is – when will we identify and include the support needs of these children in our educational policies? For example Deafblindness is not recognised as a distinct disability; national education plans for achieving “**Education for All**” do not make reference to deafblindness; no statistics exist to undertake planning; assessment tools are not available; children and parents themselves are excluded from consultation.

Community Based Rehabilitation programmes address the issue of inclusion in an understated way in India. Field workers visiting families in the village to ‘teach’ the deafblind children and blind children with multiple disabilities also signal the message to the community that these children are educable and that there is the possibility of special provision to support their learning. CBR programmes also ensure that children are identified as early as possible. This makes sure that crucial early development period is not lost.

Promises from the Future:

Special schools need to open their doors:

Special Schools, which include schools for children with mental retardation, blindness, deafness,

orthopaedic impairments, autism and cerebral palsy, are crucial for taking forward the cause of children with multiple disabilities. It is certainly a fact that the parents of children with multiple disabilities approach these schools/centres for guidance and help. Family members contact school authorities desperate for some kind of positive feedback about the condition of their child, often after a series of discouraging medical interventions. The teachers in these schools are the first point of contact for such parents and children so it is important for specialist teachers to be aware of the characteristics of children with multiple disabilities, their needs and demands. Specialist teachers need to develop skills in conducting assessments and developing rehabilitation programmes within the purview of their schools. Often the right information or the right referral at this point for such children makes a huge difference.

Unfortunately the reality has been that children with Deafblindness or MDVI have been turned away at these special schools as they do not strictly fall within their designated target group. Sometimes real concerns such as lack of information and expertise, inadequate infrastructure and poor staff-student ratios are offered as excuses, but mostly it is the schools' lack of sensitivity and willingness to work with children who are multiply disabled that forces such children back to their cocoon of isolation and desperation.

Need for better utilisation of services:

As was mentioned earlier, this field is still at a very young stage. Parents, local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and government officials are gradually beginning to look at the presence of Deafblindness/MDVI as separate and unique categories of disability and are slowly discovering that they are different in nature from the broader categories of mental retardation, visual impairment, hearing impairment and even from mental illness. Awareness about the importance of identifying persons with multiple disabilities and of providing them with the appropriate services is beginning to

emerge. However, many more bold initiatives and actions are needed on this front.

The infrastructure that is presently available in the country has great potential to take this initiative forward. The **Persons with Disability Act** could identify Deafblindness/MDVI as distinct categories of disability, which would ensure better identification and establishment of services for this target group. The **National Trust** has the potential to facilitate and establish services to support persons with multiple disabilities and their family members across the life span, providing services for very young children into adult hood.

Various **National Institutes** could become instrumental in spearheading the identification process and help set up model services for children and adults, and could also take the lead in developing and disseminating information on multiple disabilities to various target groups.

Strong **NGOs** operating at state, district and block level have a major role in making an impact in the local community. Local NGOs have wider acceptance within their own regions, and thus are better empowered to increase awareness. The NGOs are in a perfect position to raise sensitivity, to screen and identify persons with these needs. They can interlink with other existing government and private organisations to create a local infrastructure to provide services for persons with deafblindness / multiple disability and their family members.

Parent Associations also have a role in bringing about positive changes in this area. They can seek to influence government and local organisations to move towards policies and schemes for people with deafblindness /multiple disabilities.

In India the following priority areas have emerged:

- **Identification:** The need of the hour is to identify deafblindness/multiple disability as a separate and unique category of disability in all relevant statutory laws and documents.

- **Incidence and Prevalence:** It is extremely important at this stage for Deafblindness/MDVI to be recognised as distinct in surveys, such as the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO).
- **Assessment and evaluation:** For effective assessment, it is necessary to develop a mechanism that could be used across the country (with some regional variations), for identifying persons with deafblindness/multiple disabilities and their needs. Such a system will empower even the grassroots level workers to identify persons with multiple disabilities in their respective regions.
- **Human resource development:** As the field is growing, it is essential to involve more and more professionals from the single category disability areas. We need to look at introducing specialist programmes for these professionals to create a well trained pool of human resource.
- **Philosophy of Multi Sensory Impairment education:** the time has now come, to promote what may be called “The Philosophy of MSI Education’. This approach, while it incorporates many ideas and practices of all the other disability areas such as visual & hearing impairment and mental retardation, however has a set of codes and good practices that are distinct to the field of Deafblindness/MDVI.
- **Social Communication:** The development of appropriate advertising and information material is key to spreading awareness about Deafblindness/MDVI and its various implications.
- **Networking:** People around the country are beginning to realise the hazard of ‘professional isolation’ that often comes when working with such low incidence disabilities. Therefore there is an urgent need to develop and sustain continuous networking activities both within the NGOs and with the government sector.
- **Advocacy:** It is important that the community takes responsibility for people with Deafblindness

/ MDVI in their own community programmes. And this could be done by advocating for the rights of this target group and their family members at the local community levels as well as in a regional and national level.

- **Involvement of parents:** Children with Deafblindness/MDVI, their parents and other family members are the primary stakeholders in the services established around the country. It goes without saying that that they should be involved in the decision-making processes which affect them.

Conclusion

The needs-based initiatives of the Deafblindness/MDVI field have led to the emergence of a range of new models of intervention and an array of services adapted to local and regional need. These initiatives are now forcing us to look beyond traditional approaches and we are seeking ways in which the best of these new endeavours can be strengthened and incorporated within the field.

There are several key initiatives currently being undertaken by government and non-government organisations. There have been regular workshops on Deafblindness/MDVI to orient teachers working with single disabilities such as visual impairment, hearing impairment and mental retardation to the needs of this group. Such workshops aim to equip teachers with the basic skills needed to identify and work with children who have multiple disabilities.

More significantly, all the Diploma courses on such single category disabilities now include a specific module on multiple disabilities. At the end of the course the special teachers are expected be able to identify additional disabilities in children and to plan appropriate intervention programmes. The possibility for developing a distance-learning course on multiple disabilities for teachers trained and working with single category disability is also being explored.

Special Interest Group for "Deafblindness and Multiple Needs" in Latin America

From June 2nd to 4th this year, a group of professionals specializing in the education/ rehabilitation of persons with deafblindness and multiple needs met in Buenos Aires- Argentina. The event was organized by ICEVI and the participants came from a range of countries in Latin America.

Representatives of international organizations who are involved in work on this theme also participated in the meeting. Among the organizations taking part were HPP, SENSE, CBM, "Asociación de Padres de Personas con Sordoceguera de Argentina" and FLASC 'Federación Latinoamericana de las Personas Sordociegas'.

The result of this meeting was the formation of the special interest group. Lic. María Luz Neri de Troconis (Venezuela) was confirmed as the General Coordinator for the region and a Coordinator for each of the five Latin American ICEVI sub regions was appointed.

In addition, the Strategic Plan for the Region was drawn up defining the mission, objectives and activities of the group.

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AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE REHABILITATION TRAINING OF MDVI IN HONG KONG

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Introduction

In most countries in the Asia Region services for the disabled have been built around single disabilities. Most training programmes for professionals also concentrate on meeting needs in a specific area of disability.

However in 1986 the Hong Kong Society for the Blind established a Day Activity Centre-cum-Hostel for “the Mentally Handicapped Blind” under government subvention. It remains the only centre that provides rehabilitation services specifically designed to meet the training needs of persons with multiple disability and visual impairment (MDVI) in Hong Kong.

The Morning Glory Day Activity Centre cum Hostel has a current capacity of 62. Since we came into operation we have used a Functional Assessment Checklist developed by the world renowned Perkins School for the Blind as the major assessment tool for our service users. The assessment results form the basis for the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) (otherwise known as the Individual Training Plan) and an Individual Service Plan (ISP) for each service user designed to meet their needs and develop their potential. Both the IEP & ISP are reviewed annually to see if the goals set have been achieved and to modify the service objectives according to the changing needs and potentials of the service users.

Although the Morning Glory Day Activity Centre cum Hostel was initially established to serve visually impaired adults with mental retardation, over the past eighteen years we have been serving

visually impaired adults with multiple disabilities including those with dual sensory loss (Deafblindness) epilepsy or paraplegia.

An Innovative Approach to the Rehabilitation and Training of Persons with MDVI

In helping persons who have MDVI, the conventional mode of service delivery is based upon a highly structured environment with activity based “training” classes. Schedules are usually fixed and clients are directed to various activities. Clients tend to be passive and learning is rarely found to be self-directed.

Since 2000, we have adopted a new rehabilitation approach that aims to stimulate the realization of an individual’s full potential as far as possible, irrespective of their degree of disability.

Learning with ‘**CHOICE**’

- C – Clients’ choice**
- H – Happiness— the programme provides happiness to client**
- O – Ownership — the client is the owner of the programme**
- I – Innovation**
- C – Community integration**
- E – Empowerment**

The CHOICE approach has focused on a continuum of care, a client-centered approach, and the promotion of self-motivation in service users. It aims to develop in clients a positive life experience, to help them to face their difficulties and be ready for risk-taking so as to mingle with normal people. It is an ongoing life process.

2. Enhancement of Individual Functioning

a. Integrating technology and adaptive equipment for training and communication

Communication is a two way process. To enable the disabled to be an active participant, objects of reference and tactual signs are used to build up their understanding of surroundings. Furthermore, we believe technical aids can increase motivation, attention, verbal communication, language skills and academic skills of the service users. Therefore, an extensive use of technical aids and adaptive equipment in training sessions, leisure time and social communication is encouraged

b. Reactive & Multi-Sensory Environments

Due to multiple handicaps, the service users may be passive to their surroundings. The provision of a “Reactive environment” that the disabled would become aware of how their actions will make things happen is promoted. Trainees can explore objects by themselves at their own pace and in their own time. They are given the opportunity to look at or listen to objects and leisure equipment, which they have selected. They begin to understand that this particular environment is a safe place within which to experiment. A Multi-sensory training room, supported by the Queen’s Elizabeth Foundation for the Mentally Handicapped in Hong Kong, was established in 2003 to conduct multi-sensory training for the MDVI.

3. Family Partnership

Family members are our partners in the service delivery process for service users. Right from intake assessment, family members are involved as partners to gather information about the client and to set goals

for the Individual Training and Service Plans. They are encouraged to attend case conferences, training programmes as volunteer instructors to strengthen their skills in handling their handicapped members of the family and join social and recreational activities together with the multiply handicapped service users. Partnership is thus built upon mutual help and support.

To make partnership a success, a Parent-staff Committee and Parents Association have been formed in the early 90s to review the services of our Morning Glory Day Activity Centre cum Hostel from time to time and to set up strategic plan for its service development. Parents always know their children better than anyone else. They have the right to obtain first hand information about the services their children are receiving. They work in partnership with our staff members and professionals.

4. Integration into the community

Community integration is our ultimate goal for the rehabilitation of the MDVI. It can be done through the mobilization of volunteer service to promote understanding of the MDVI among the people living in the community, as well as to demonstrate the potential of our MDVI trainees by encouraging them to provide simple volunteer service to community in return.

Community and Rehabilitation Networking

Close liaison with different community-based service teams has been pursued to provide a wide range of care and support services that assist the MDVI to integrate to the community and maintain their independence, dignity and quality of life as far as their potentials permit. Consultation service in the form of case conference, inter-professional consultation and collaboration for joint programmes have been launched to promote the general well being of the MDVI adults.

To prepare MDVI trainees for transition to higher level of training, we have started to engage them in some form of supported employment some years ago. Since 1999, six trainees have been arranged to take turn on alternate days to do cleaning for the Parents Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired Children located in a commercial center near to our Morning Glory Day Activity Centre cum Hostel.

5. Staff Training & Experience sharing

The training of the MDVI with deaf blindness has been a difficult task. However, since early 1992, the Hong Kong Society For the Blind had started to send staff to the Perkins School for the Blind for training in deaf blind rehabilitation. With support from the Community Chest in Hong Kong, the Deaf Blind Rehabilitation Project was started for adults at the Hong Kong Society for the Blind. Realizing that communication is essential in facilitating the link between the deaf blind and the people around them, a set of tactual signs that modified from local sign language used by the deaf people in Hong Kong was developed between 1993 and 1996. In year 1999, a pilot study was launched with the Ebenezer Training Centre and the Caritas Jockey Club Lok Yan School on the teaching of tactual signs for deaf blind children at school age. In 1994, 1998 and again 2003, we are pleased to have invited experts from the Perkins School for the Blind to conduct staff training for our rehabilitation instructors and special school teachers in MDVI training. Through such training, new ideas and new training approaches have been adopted to improve the performance and progress of our service users. In addition, the Perkins experts came to Hong Kong from time to time to review our training programme and to cultivate staff with new insights that can be adapted to fit the local context. We had learnt a lot from the experts and had been able to

improve and strengthen our outcome effectiveness in MDVI rehabilitation. Hence, we are always on the forefront in the service.

On the other hand, we receive visitors from other NGOs serving in related service units for an exchange of experience from time to time. Also, we carry out training for the rehabilitation workers who wish to acquire knowledge and skills in handling multiply handicapped clients with visual impairment for knowledge and experience sharing. In 2003, we published a training manual on deaf blind rehabilitation in Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese, and produced a CD-rom on Tactual Signs in both Cantonese and Mandarin versions. The training manual and CD-rom is considered as a good reference for people working with the multiply handicapped persons including the deaf blind. They are distributed to rehabilitation personnel in Hong Kong through sale. People working with MDVI in the Asian region who can read Chinese and listen to Cantonese or Mandarin may find it a useful reference.

Conclusion

Due to disparity in social and economic developments, there are different approaches to training of MDVI in different regions of the World. However, apart from learning from the experts, we believe that an experience sharing and exchange through “The Educator” published by the ICEVI is an important means to learn from each other to upgrade our service and to promote the well-being of the clients we are serving. We welcome feedback from readers, as views expressed by the professionals working with the multiply handicapped may give us further insight in trying out new approaches that would yield better outcome in the rehabilitation of MDVI. If you have any comments to the article presented or you wish to share with us your views regarding rehabilitation of MDVI, please write to genadmin@hksb.org.hk

THAILAND: SERVICES FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS WITH ADDITIONAL DISABILITIES

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Lopburi School for the Blind and the Blind with Additional Disabilities,
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Background

Persons with disabilities have been a part of every society since time immemorial. Thailand is certainly no exception. Given our close-knit family structure and the care and compassion that is characteristic of communities in most agrarian-based societies in Asia, these people have generally been provided with the necessities of life, be it clothing, shelter, food or medicine. Within this family structure, persons with disabilities were more often than not mere recipients of assistance – however generous – rather than partners in development. And though they may have been part of a community, they did not enjoy a sense of participation and equality taken for granted by other members of the society.

The first Thai Law specifically dealing with persons with disabilities was the Rehabilitation for Disabled Person Act B.E. 2534 (1991). In addition to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities to rehabilitation (through among other things, medical attention and education vocational training), this Act provided for the establishment of a National Committee for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons.

The need to provide special education for disabled or disadvantaged children was recognized in the National Education Scheme of 1977. The Department of General Education now runs 41 special schools: 20 for hearing impaired learners, 2 for the blind and 19 for children with other disabilities. It also cooperates with private foundations and state hospitals in providing personnel, equipment and technical assistance to special schools or to programs for children who are visually impaired, hearing impaired or slow

learners who attend classes in regular schools. Perhaps an even more important legal document is the Thai Constitution, the highest law of the land. Adopted in 1997, the present Constitution is the first to make specific provision for persons with disabilities. Section 30 states that all persons are equal before the law and shall enjoy equal rights, and it outlaws discrimination against a person on the grounds of disability. Section 55 states that persons with disabilities shall be afforded access to public facilities and services while section 80 stipulates that the state should provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to promote their own independence, welfare and quality of life.

In line with the Constitution, the Ministry of Education set up 13 Regional Special Education Centers in 1999 and 63 Provincial Special Education Centers in 2003 to cover all the provinces in the country. The function of these centers is to provide rehabilitation for all types of disabilities and to provide a preparatory program to enable children with disabilities to attend integrated education programs in regular schools. Because of the fast expansion of these new centers, their personnel and staff often do not have sufficient training to provide quality services to children with disabilities and their families.

An approach currently being adopted is that of Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR), a system that provides direct services to people with disabilities in their homes. This approach is essential because not all persons with disabilities – particularly those living in remote areas of the country – have access to rehabilitation centers and

institutions. It is recognized that when living in institutions, both children and adults with disabilities miss out on the benefits of living with their own families. The Ministry of Public Health, through the Sirindhorn National Medical Rehabilitation Center, has adopted the concepts and guidelines of CBR from the World Health Organization (WHO) and customized them to the situation in Thailand. CBR has been promoted among public health personnel and those in related agencies since 1992. Responsibility for activities in this field rests with a CBR Sub-Committee that was established under the Committee for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities. At present, 5 provinces are piloting CBR projects, and this number will increase in the future.

Services for visually impaired persons with additional disabilities

There are no government institutions that provide specific services for children with visual impairment and additional disabilities, these children are spread among the 9 Government Social Welfare Homes. These Homes accept persons with disabilities from birth to old age who are either abandoned, homeless or who are in dire straits. There are over 4,000 people in the 9 Social Welfare Homes and the number is increasing each year. There are also visually impaired adults with additional disabilities in these 9 homes who live in separate provision from the children.

The Home for Multiply Handicapped Blind Children of the Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand (CFBT) was established in 1986. Priority was given to taking visually impaired children with additional disabilities away from the badly over-crowded Pakkred Home and 45 children were transferred from this Social Welfare Home to the CFBT Home. In 1988 five small bungalows were built to afford family-type living with 10 children per dwelling and a housemother. Food, medical care, physical and emotional rehabilitation are the primary services needed by this group of children. Their rehabilitation training focuses on encouraging independence in

daily living skills, providing educational opportunities, and prevocational training. Unfortunately because of limited space, the Home can accept at the most 65 children. The 20 other children who are currently in the home were either referred to the Home from the schools for the visually impaired run by the CFBT in the northeast part of Thailand or were brought directly to the home by parents or other organization working for the disabled.

The Roiet Early Intervention Program of the Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand (CFBT) is part of their Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Program. The Roiet School for the Blind opened a small classroom for 10 visually impaired children with additional disabilities and also makes visits to children who cannot come to the School and are being cared for by their parents at home.

The Special Education Department of the Rajabhat Suandusit Institute (a teacher training university) has opened an Early Intervention Center and children and their parents come to the Center and parents are trained on how to best help their children. They attend the Center two or three times a week for half-day sessions. The Early Intervention Center has expanded its services to accept pre-school children with a range of disabilities including children with visual impairment and additional disabilities. The limitation of this type of service is that parents who work or do not have a caretaker are unable to come to the Center.

The Pattaya Redemptorist School for Blind Children provides free residential schooling for poor blind children. The school has the capacity for training up to 200 students with a focus on academic education. The school has also accepted a number of older blind children who have not learnt to manage independently and younger blind children with additional disabilities. The school will provide services until the age of 16 after which the students will be sent home or referred to other centers for the disabled including the Home for Multiply Handicapped Blind Children and The Lopburi

School for the Blind and the Blind with Additional Disabilities.

The Chiang Mai School for the Blind, also has set up a classroom for visually impaired children with additional disabilities but stipulates that the child must initially be accompanied by a parent or caretaker. Last school year they started a Home School Program, which works with children in the Chiang Mai province who cannot come to the school.

The Bangkok School for the Blind under the Foundation for the Blind of Thailand is a residential school for the blind in Bangkok that provides academic education from Kindergarten to Grade 6. They also provide resource teachers for blind students studying in mainstream secondary schools. Some of the students in the school have additional disabilities and this has forced to the school to open a special class for them that is less academic focused and more focused on functional skills. This program is still quite small.

The Lopburi School for the Blind and the Blind with Additional Disabilities under the Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand (CFBT)

The purpose of building this new residential school was to relieve the over-crowding in the Home for Multiply Disabled Blind Children and to organize appropriate services for the adult visually impaired persons with additional disabilities. At the beginning of 2001, 34 visually impaired persons with additional disabilities who were brought many years ago from the Social Welfare Homes to the Home for Multiple Handicapped Blind Children were transferred to the Lopburi School. The Lopburi School also accepts visually impaired children from six other neighbouring provinces and some cases referred to them by families living in the north and northeast regions of Thailand. In 2004, the Lopburi School has 72 students, 60 of these visually impaired students have multiple disabilities and the remaining 12 children are in a preparatory program to prepare them to be integrated into regular schools.

The School has two programs for visually impaired persons with additional disabilities:

1. The Vocational Program has 10 visually impaired adults with additional disabilities who are independent and do not require additional training the Rehabilitation Program. The adults who work in this program produce goods for sale and the profits provide a salary to the students and helps to raise income to maintain the program. Vocational activities include producing tie-dyed cloth, mats, key-rings, new year cards, traditional Thai herbs, and working in inland fisheries, and market gardening. The adults can participate in most of these activities independently for example in the production of tie-dyed cloth over 90% of the work can be managed by the students themselves.
2. The Rehabilitation Program provides services to 50 adults and students who need to be taught ADL skills, self-help skills and social skills. These persons also have the opportunity to work part time in the Work Program.

34 adults with visual impairment and additional disabilities live at the school. They have no families and are the responsibility of the CFBT. We have recently started a two-year pilot program with assistance from the Hilton/Perkins Program of the Perkins School for the Blind to develop 3 Group Homes in the local community near the Lopburi School, each supported by a sighted supervisor. The adults who are visually impaired are responsible for cleaning the homes, doing their washing, assisting with planning meals and cooking, and all the other activities needed to live independently in the community.

The latest survey (1996) of the National Statistics Office of Thailand found 1,024,120 people with various types of disabilities. This represents 1.7% of the population of Thailand. 88% of these people (904,540 persons with disabilities) live in rural areas. By law, only persons with disabilities who are registered with the government can receive

government services and so far only 392,585 persons are on the register. In Educational Region 6 where Lopburi is located there are 7 provinces with 1,774 visually impaired persons. In Lopburi province alone there are 5,298 persons with disabilities, 426 of whom have a visual impairment and 239 have multiple disabilities (including MDVI).

In this area, there is only one school for the blind, so the Lopburi School has to take many older children who have never been to school and have not been taught self-help skills. To overcome this problem we have set up an Early Intervention Program and an Outreach Program to visit families in the community. Presently there are 88 families being served by our staff. The Program gives individual family counseling and trains families in techniques of how to best raise their blind children. One day family workshops for between 6 – 10 families are also organized for families to share experiences and knowledge.

To enable persons with disabilities to remain with their families, the Government in 1997 introduced a monthly family allowance of 500 baht for each person with a severe disability. This policy has given some help to families in our early intervention program. Even though it is not enough it does help to relieve the families of some of their financial difficulties.

Conclusion

There is not yet any government institution that provides quality services to visually impaired children with additional disabilities. From the above information, we can see that there are 3 main locations where people with visual impairment and multiple disabilities (MDVI) can be found:

1. Crowded Social Welfare Homes for the abandoned which have no appropriate support for people with MDVI.
2. Regular schools for the blind which have facilities for a few children with multiple

disabilities, but at the age of 16 these children are returned to their families or sent to the Social Welfare Homes. Even the high quality programs such as the Rajabhat Suan Dusit and the Northern School for the Blind in Chaing Mai need to develop stronger transition programs and support when students leave their programs.

3. The family home, where they are often over protected, and in many cases cared for by grandparents as their mothers and fathers have had to leave the rural areas to find employment in more urban areas.

Just a small number of the MDVI receive services. Most visually impaired children with additional disabilities are cared for at home by families who often lack knowledge of how to best help them and who are often forced to leave them at home alone during the day while they go to work. Families in the community still lack knowledge on the rights of the disabled laid out in the Thai Constitution. Even the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach currently being undertaken by the government is still in the pilot stage and is covering only five provinces.

Nevertheless, services for people with disabilities should gradually improve as the government's CBR program is expanded and as staff in the Regional and Provincial Special Education Centers become more experienced. Each year more and more people with disabilities are receiving services that are being offered through both the government and private sectors.

References:

1. Office of the National Committee for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons, Ministry of Labor and Social Service, Bangkok: 2001
2. Office of the National Education Commission, Education in Thailand 1997, Bangkok: Seven Printing Group, 1997

ICEVI'S REPRESENTATION AT THE LCIF INTERNATIONAL SIGHT SYMPOSIUM

ICEVI was honoured to be invited to make the main presentation on the theme of "Education and Rehabilitation" at the "Sight First Symposium" on "21st Century Challenges in Sight, Vision Rehabilitation and Vision Research". The symposium was held by the Lions Clubs International Foundation on 27-28 March 2004 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. At the outset, Dr. Tae-Sup Lee, International President, Lions Clubs International welcomed the international Directors and the resource persons of the symposium and highlighted the need for revisiting the objectives of the SightFirst program to include comprehensive services including that of education and rehabilitation. By citing the statistics that only one in ten children has any access educational services, he suggested that Helen Keller would be distressed to see how few blind children are receiving education. He recalled the

invaluable contributions made by Lions to the field of visual impairment such as support for the introduction of white cane, guide dogs training, prevention of blindness, etc. In his address, he also recognized the attendance of researchers, educators, etc., working for persons with visual impairment at the meeting. Immediate Past President Kay Fukushima spoke of the importance of this meeting in not only looking at what has been achieved by the SightFirst program but more importantly at what new concerns should be addressed by a second phase of the program. Following his remarks, he introduced the moderator of the symposium Dr. Para Rajasegaram from the World Health Organisation. Dr. Para Rajasegaram recalled the statement made by Helen Keller in 1925 who stated that no blind child should remain untaught and the Lions should become the Knights



of the Blind. He stated that the Lions Seminar held in Singapore in 1988 insisted on the involvement of Lions at the grass root level in the strengthening of the SightFirst program. He described the global and regional structures that were established for implementing the program. Referring to the results of the program evaluation, he suggested that they indicated that the future objectives of SightFirst needed to be revised. He emphasised the need for collaboration in preventing childhood blindness, and for raising public awareness of the need to promote the treatment of visual impairment and for research into visual loss and rehabilitation.

Resource persons drawn from various parts of the world deliberated on the challenges of visual impairment including: unmet needs such as those related to River Blindness (Onchocerciasis), Refractive Error, and Emerging issues such as Threats: Childhood Blindness and Diabetic Retinopathy, Human Resource Development, the role of Low Vision services in vision rehabilitation, Low Vision assistive technologies, the future potential of Artificial Vision systems, Rehabilitation Services for the Visually Disabled, Technology for persons with visual impairment and Vision Research.

In the main plenary session on **“Rehabilitation Services for the Visually Disabled: Empowerment,**

Education, Enrichment and Employment”, Larry Campbell, President and M.N.G. Mani, Secretary General of ICEVI made a presentation on Education For All: The Unrealized Dream and requested the involvement of Lions Clubs in expanding educational and rehabilitation services for persons with visual impairment. They argued that Lions Clubs can realize the dream of Helen Keller by embracing those blind persons who cannot benefit from preventive or curative measures and provide them with early intervention care, education, and rehabilitation services. They outlined the direction to be taken for achieving the goals of education for all visually impaired children and suggested that LCIF and ICEVI should collaborate on two initiatives to begin with, namely, 1) Early Childhood Intervention, and 2) Developing Models for Achieving Education For All. The presentation stressed that the involvement of LCIF in Education would not involve fund raising for expensive infrastructure, buildings or technology but would be about facilitating training and capacity building in parents and teachers, and promoting networking and synergy to improve services for individuals with visual impairment. The full paper presented at the symposium is posted on the website of ICEVI www.icevi.org

The symposium ended with a vote of thanks to Dr. Lee and the local Korean Lions Club for their excellent hospitality.

RAWINALA : A SPECIAL CENTER FOR PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES/DEAFBLINDNESS IN INDONESIA

WENINGSIH

Yayasan Pendidikan Dwituna Rawinala

There was tendency in our culture for families who had disabled children to hide them; as a result children with disabilities in Indonesia often became isolated from society. Most children with visual impairment go to special schools for the blind. Unfortunately, it is not same for children with multiple disabilities and visual impairment, they are not accepted in such schools because they are considered ineducable. Because of this situation Rawinala has been proactive in providing information about multi disabled children.

Rawinala is non profit organization that was established in 1973 in Jakarta by the members of Javanese Christian Church. From the beginning Rawinala provided services specifically for blind and low vision children who had additional disabilities. Since it began the number of children served by the centre has grown from 2 to 75. The children come from a variety of different backgrounds and reflect a range of abilities, and most of them are residential pupils.

At the beginning it was not easy to develop the program with very limited resources and knowledge about this field. The staff cared for the children without any education methods or special strategies. It was really miracle that we could manage at all.



But brighter days were around the corner when CBM sent their expert Ms. Nicola Jean Crews from UK and she worked with us for several years from the end of 80-s to the middle of 90-s. She put the basic methods in place to work with these children and expanded our services.

Rawinala today:

Since children come to us with a wide range of abilities, we started to expand the range of our programs to cover Early Intervention, Additional Disabilities, and established a Community Home, a Vocational Program, a Deafblind Program and Social Support.

1. Early Intervention

In this program we work with families of visual impaired children from 0 – 6 years old. These blind or low vision children may be multi or singly handicapped. The main reason for developing this program was the lack of opportunity for families' involvement in education of the children. We had many cases where children lost ground once they returned to stay with their family.

When children have finished this program they may go to on to join the program in Rawinala for the Deafblind or Multiply Disabled, or the integration programme in the public school.

2. Deaf blind Program

Although initially we didn't have any idea about how to work with Deafblind children, we had these children and had to deal with them. To

begin with we tried to work in the way work with children who don't have any communication problems. It was frustrating because we didn't see much progress. Fortunately, before Nicola left she introduced us to Hilton Perkins International Program at Boston. In 1990 we began to develop the special programs with support from Perkins. Almost every year they sent an expert to give in-service training for staff in the Deafblind program and it was blessing when one of our staff had opportunity to attended the ELP (Educational Leadership Program) at Perkins for 9 months from 2001-2002.

Gradually we came to understand the uniqueness of these children, and became more confident in our dealings with children and families. We put communication as the first priority, both verbal and non verbal. It was something new for our society, since a lot of people thought that communication must involve speaking , so it become our other task introduce this alternative communication to society. Behavior was our second priority – we needed to help children avoid inappropriate behavior.

Parents and families are our partners in developing children's abilities and skills. We give training to parents in areas such communication, sign language, how to develop self help skills, etc.. We sometimes also organise the family gatherings, and do practical things that involve the siblings.

The number of children with Deafblindness is increasing and, most children who come have Congenital Rubella Syndrome.

We are glad that we will moving to the new school this year and it will be the first Deafblind school in Indonesia. Hopefully, we can improve our service here.

3. The School for children with Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment

The school provides services for people with visual impairment and additional disabilities from 7 – 20 years old. We receive regular support from the Sensis International Project who have been providing in-service training for Rawinala staff in Jakarta and more recently in their centre in Holland. This support has proved very useful, because since our former consultant from CBM left us, there hasn't been any opportunity to upgrade the knowledge of our teachers. These professional development opportunities have had a great impact on the way we work with children.

This collaboration really helps supplement the knowledge and skills of all our teachers and staff and maintains the development of our programs. Most of the programs at the school are based on a functional curriculum. We seek to improve cognitive, sensory and motor development, and focus on leisure, living and working activities.

4. The Vocational Program

This program is provided for students who are 20 years old and older, to prepare them for employment and independent living. Maximum independence is our goal in this program because there is no social security in Indonesia for people with disabilities so they have to be



able to survive by own efforts or else depend on their families. Rawinala is trying to collaborate with some small industries/institutions to find employment placements. It is not easy in a country where many able-bodied people can't find work. But from time to time we prove that our students can find useful roles in the community, such as church musicians, sales persons, gardeners and handymen.

This program provides transition from school to life in the community. In most cases the program lasts between 2 to 2 and a half years, depending on the need of the student

5. The Community Home

Adults with visual impairment and additional disabilities who have no family homes, live in our community home where they have a programme of organized activities under staff supervision. The most important part of this program is creating a family atmosphere, so that the adults can feel a sense of belonging to a family, neighborhood and community.

Their activities are based on the basic needs of their life, for example: cooking, shopping,

gardening, doing house hold chores and leisure activities.

In most of those activities, we are seeking to improve their quality of life, and make them happy and acceptable to their family and community. These last two years we have been making progress towards a better service. We are fortunate to have a resource center and effective support. We realize that it's also time for us to share our experience with other schools in Indonesia, because there must be many children in the other islands who are not receiving education or special services. Our dream is to become the resource center for Multiple Disabilities/Deafblindness in Indonesia.



Meeting with Steve Bucknor

At the end of the Africa Forum, Wilfred Maina, Regional Chairperson, Tigabu Gebramedin, Deputy Regional Chairperson, Africa Region and the Secretary General met internationally renowned Cricket Umpire Steve Bucknor. In the brief discussions, they described to Mr. Bucknor the activities of ICEVI and its collaboration with the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) which is promoting sports among blind people. They informed that the July 2005 issue of The Educator will be devoted to sports and recreation for persons with visual impairment and invited him to write on this subject. Mr. Bucknor has agreed to do so and so look for Mr. Bucknor's message in next year's Educator!



ICEVI / ON-NET Mathematics Project: Progressing Steadily

ICEVI and the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) have developed a draft mathematical package for teaching secondary level mathematics to visually impaired children. The project team is in the process of field-testing the comprehensive package covering the following six areas.

1. Methodology of Teaching Mathematics

This section deals with the methods used for teaching mathematics in general and teaching the subject to visually impaired children in particular. This section also discusses methods of preparing mathematics texts, the 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 in secondary school. This section also helps teachers who are not mathematics specialists to learn about the concepts before they introduce them 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 package will be accompanied by instructional material on developing low cost mathematics teaching aids for children with visual impairment.

The ON-NET organized a "master trainers workshop" for teachers and teacher trainers from Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam at Ratchasuda College, Mahidol University, Thailand from 22 April to 7 May 2004. These master trainers are using the draft package and will provide feedback during the second phase of training so that the materials can be refined before being distributed for wider use in 2005.

ICEVI is keen to collaborate with other organizations to help develop similar learning packages on other topics of interest to educators around the world.



Growth and Learning Opportunities in **Blindness Education** Free Distance Education Courses for Professionals Worldwide

Who are we?

Founded in 1952, ICEVI is an international association of some 4,000 individuals and organizations located in 155 countries that strives to expand educational opportunities for people with visual impairments.

Founded in 1920, The Hadley School for the Blind is a worldwide educator that provides distance education to thousands of visually impaired people, their families and professionals in the blindness field. Hadley serves more than 9,000 people in 100 countries. The school is accredited by three agencies and its instructors work with students one-on-one via telephone, mail and email.

Who can participate in the GLOBE ALL Program?

The program is open to any individual associated with ICEVI. GLOBE ALL offers a variety of courses appropriate for blindness service providers including teachers, aides and support staff. In addition, blind and visually impaired students and their families may enroll.

What kinds of courses are available?

The courses cover a wide range of subjects including English braille, abacus, the use of raised markers, independent living skills, support groups, adjusting with blindness and technology. Hadley is a leader in distance learning for people who are visually impaired. The Hadley catalog provides details about the more than 90 courses offered, all completely free of charge. The catalog can be found online at www.hadley-school.org or can be requested in large print, audio, braille or on computer diskette.

Do I need access to a computer to take a course?

A computer is not necessary to take a Hadley course; however, email is a good option for sending and receiving course materials and for corresponding with instructors. Course materials and correspondence can also be sent through the mail in large print, braille or on audiocassette.

What does it cost to participate in the GLOBE ALL Program?

All courses are available completely free of charge.

What confirmation will I receive when I complete a course?

When you register for a course through the GLOBE ALL program, you should indicate that you are associated with ICEVI. Then, when you successfully complete the course, you will receive a certificate signed by the presidents of both ICEVI and Hadley.

How can I get a list of courses and enroll?

Please visit our Web site, www.hadley-school.org, for details on the more than 90 courses offered. Catalogs may also be obtained by mailing in the postcard below. Contact us by phone at (847) 446-8111 or email at student_services@hadley-school.org

For more information, visit us on the Web at www.hadley-school.org or www.icevi.org

Please send me more information about the free distance education courses for professionals worldwide.

Name

Address

City

State or Province

Country

Telephone

Email

Please send me a Hadley course catalog in the following format

☐ braille ☐ large print ☐ audiocassette

☐ Please add my name to the list to receive emailed announcements about new courses

ICEVI initiated Research into Education of Visually Impaired Children in Uganda: *Revealing the Realities*

Steve McCall

As we reported in the last edition of the Educator, December 2003 saw the ICEVI research project in Uganda enter a very productive stage. Our research coordinator in Uganda, Mr Asher Bayo who is a lecturer in the Uganda National Institute for Special Education (UNISE), with the close assistance of the Ministry of Education and Sightsavers International's Regional Office, organised an ICEVI research seminar at UNISE on the outskirts of Kampala. The seminar was attended by senior teachers from across Uganda who are involved in the education of children with a visual impairment, including Special Education Inspectors and Special Needs Education Coordinators (SNECOs). They had all agreed to help collect data on behalf of ICEVI in their own and neighbouring districts.

At the seminar Dr Mani and I presented the background to ICEVI's research initiative and, with the assistance of the senior teachers, devised a questionnaire and a system for administering the questionnaire across Uganda. The questionnaire was divided into a number of sections and sought to obtain information from children, parents, class teachers and specialist teachers about the factors that influenced access to education of children with a visual impairment in mainstream schools and the

educational experiences of children when they reached school. It was clear from our discussions with the data collectors that the data had to capture information about a wide range of children including children who were successful at school, children who had dropped out of school, children with low vision, Braille users, children with additional disabilities and the sample had to represent a range of ability, economic circumstances and a proportionate number of girls and boys.

A matrix was agreed that we all felt would offer the best chance of a representative sample and the data collectors agreed to return to their districts and recruit and train three other teachers of the visually impaired to assist in the administration of the questionnaires. We set a date for the return of the questionnaires and we were gratified to receive a few weeks later over 100 completed questionnaires that provided detailed information on children with a visual impairment from almost every region in Uganda. The processing of this data is a lengthy task and it is too early at the time of going to press to draw anything other than broad impressions of what the information reveals. One thing that seems to be clear is the strong link between poverty and disability. The poorest children appear to be the ones who are most likely to be

disadvantaged in education and to be the ones who are most likely to drop out of school. Class sizes in primary schools in some parts of Uganda can often reach above 180 and schools are hard pressed to meet the demands of the numbers of children that free Universal Primary Education has brought into education and the wide range of need that these children display. The research team have collected a breadth of information about the general circumstances of a large number of children with a visual impairment in Uganda but we felt that a second phase of the research was necessary to add depth to the data and to triangulate information received through the questionnaires.

So at the end of June and in early July 2004, I spent ten days in three distinct Uganda regions, travelling hundreds of kilometres and meeting some of the children, parents and teachers who had contributed to the process of data collection in the early part of the year. Again the visit was facilitated seamlessly by Asher Bayo and Sightsavers International. Accompanied by Asher Bayo, I had the privilege of visiting and interviewing parents in their homes, children and their teachers in schools, and district coordinators of services for children with visual impairment in their offices. It was an extraordinary experience for me and one that provided rich and complex insights into the situation of the children I met.

On one level I feel that the most recent visit to Uganda helped to clarify what is possible in conducting research into the education

of children with visual impairment in Africa. With the right contacts and support it is clear that the research initiative that ICEVI has embarked upon, although ambitious, is practicable. It is possible to collect wide ranging and rich data. However on another level, the research is highlighting the enormity of the task facing ICEVI. The cause of achieving equal opportunity in education for children with visual impairment that prompted the research is undoubtedly a just one, but the education of children with a visual impairment in mainstream schools is inextricably linked to the education of all other children.

In education systems that are under enormous strains then children who are visually impaired are particularly vulnerable. In the early stages there are undoubtedly some social benefits to be derived for the child who is visually impaired in simply attending a local school. But just getting children to school is not enough. If children cannot participate in lessons, if they cannot access information, if they have constantly to repeat years in school with children who are far below their chronological age, then they will give up and drop out. Inclusion is about more than attendance, it is about participation. To be successful in local schools children with visual impairment need support and how this support is best provided in educational systems that are under such enormous pressures is a question that will not be easy to address, let alone to answer. Our research journey has only just begun, and we have made a good start but the path ahead is a tough and long one.

ICEVI East Asia Regional Conference

Organised by

ICEVI THAILAND NETWORK

Venue of the Conference

**Hotel Ambassador, Jomtien, Thailand
February 20-23, 2005**

Keeping in mind the global agenda of "Education For All" children by the year 2015, ICEVI will be addressing the issue of how to promote the fundamental human right of children with visual impairment to education. Asia is reported to have the largest number of visually impaired persons in the world and we aim to ensure that in the campaign to educate all children in this vast region, children with a visual impairment are given a high priority. In 1990 lobbying by organizations like ICEVI obliged the Education For All conference held in Jomtien to include disability issues in the global campaign. 15 years have gone by and it is time for taking stock. **What has been achieved in maximizing educational opportunities for children with visual impairment in the region? What strategies are necessary to realise the global objective in the next decade? Come back to Jomtien and show us the way forward!**

THEME

Education For All: So Near and Yet So Far

The conference theme will be discussed in the light of Access, Training and Resources and the plenary sessions will focus on these three main topics. The sub-themes for the concurrent sessions are as follows:

- Access** : Early intervention, Inclusive /Integrated education
- Training** : Vocational education, CBR, MDVI
- Resources** : Braille Production, ICT, Fund-raising/ Resources

- *Audio-visual aids such as TV, LCD projector, Slide Projector, OHP, Flip-charts, etc., will be available for the sessions.*
- *Poster presentations can also be made by the participants in the designated exhibition area.*
- *Translation facilities will be made available in Chinese, English, Japanese and Thai languages during the plenary sessions. However, simultaneous translation cannot be assured for the parallel sessions.*

Abstracts of conference papers not exceeding 200 words (see enclosed "Abstract Form" for details) should reach the Programme Committee Secretariat: Malaysian Association for the Blind, Kompleks MAB, Jalan Tebing, Off Jalan Tun Sambanthan 4, 50470, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA on or before October 31, 2004. Abstracts can also be sent by e-mail to mablind@jaring.pc.my with a copy to Regional Chairperson Mavis Campos mcampos@info.com.ph

REGISTRATION

The Conference Registration Fee is set at the following levels (all prices in US Dollars).

S.No.	Category	Registration	Hotel	Total
1	Foreign delegate – Single Room	200	120	320
2	Foreign delegate – Double Room	200	60	260
3	Thai delegate – Single Room	75	60	135
4	Thai delegate – Double Room	75	30	105
5	Thai delegate – no hotel stay	75	0	75

- Accommodation will be arranged at Hotel Ambassador, Jomtien, on request
 - The registration fee includes airport transfers (except Thai delegates), all meals, and conference materials
 - Accompanying person/Spouse should pay an additional US \$ 100.
 - The fee for organizations wishing to exhibit their products or services at this conference has been set at \$ 500. For arrangements contact the Host Committee.
- Registration Form for the Conference should be sent to the Chairman, Host Committee, on or before December 31, 2004.

Chairman of the Host Committee :

PECHARAT TECHAVACHARA

President

Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind

2218/86, Chan Road, Chongnontri 10120

Bangkok, **THAILAND**

Phone : 66 22 678 07 63

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Chairman of the Program Committee :

PROF. ISMAIL MD SALLEH

President

Malaysian Association for the Blind

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For more details, contact either of the above or :

MAVIS CAMPOS

Cataract Foundation Philippines Inc.

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Phone : 63 34 4350704, Fax : 63 34 4350714.

E-mail : mcampos@info.com.ph

West Asia Regional Conference

Please note the changes

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the ICEVI West Asia Regional Conference planned for Kathmandu, Nepal in November 2004 will be shifted to New Delhi, India, and the revised dates are **23-25 January 2005**. It will be an ICEVI Conference only and the registration fee is US\$ 80. Those who have already registered need not re-register. For further details, contact **Dr. Bhushan Punani**, Regional Chairman, West Asia Region at blinabad1@sancharnet.in or visit the conference website at www.spارش-india.org/asianconference.

Strengthening the ICEVI network in Indonesia



In order to strengthen ICEVI activities in Indonesia, the Regional Chairperson of the East Asia Region Mavis Campos, the Secretary General of ICEVI M.N.G. Mani, and Sri Sodersono, Country Representative of ICEVI in Indonesia had detailed discussions with representatives of Government departments, voluntary organisations, and international non-government organisations on 2-4 May 2004. There was unanimous agreement in the discussions that ICEVI can play a vital role in helping organisations serving people with visual impairment in Indonesia to collaborate effectively and to minimise duplication and maximise impact in service delivery. The following action plan emerged from the discussions.

1. ICEVI country representative to write to all organisations serving persons with visual impairment in Indonesia to collect basic information about their services before the end of June 2004.
2. The ICEVI country representative to prepare a small directory of service providers in Indonesia on the basis of the information received. A separate list of organisations which are willing to be part of the working group to prepare the agenda for a national seminar on "Education For All" will also be drawn

up. This task will be completed before the end of July 2004.

3. A meeting of the working group will be convened in August 2004 to prepare a detailed agenda for the national seminar. The agenda is likely to address issues of policy and practice, and the promotion of cooperation etc.
4. Based on the agenda, the programme for a national seminar on "Education for all visually impaired children – The National Agenda" will be prepared. This seminar is likely to be attended by nearly 100 persons representing the Government, voluntary organisations, international non-government organisations, etc., in Indonesia.
5. At the national seminar, an action plan for services for persons with visual impairment in Indonesia will be drawn up with "networking" likely to be high on the agenda.

ICEVI believes that this National Network will serve as a vehicle to facilitate education for all children with visual impairment, coordinating the work of Government Departments, Voluntary Organisations, Universities, International Non-Governmental Development Organisations and Disabled Peoples' Organisations.



Indonesia Network - NGO's Meeting

News - Here and There

World Bank Toolkit

ICEVI assisted the World Bank in developing a Toolkit (see inset) on "EnVISIONing Education in low income countries", a publication designed for policy makers and planners concerned with developing services to persons with visual impairment. The document will be posted on the ICEVI website (www.icevi.org) soon. For an electronic version of the document, contact Secretary General ICEVI at sgicevi@vsnl.net

Annual Report of ICEVI

ICEVI has published its Annual Report for the year 2003. The report outlines progress made in achieving the objectives of our strategic plan and has been widely distributed and posted on the ICEVI website.



ICEVI-WBU Joint Educational Policy Statement in Spanish and Portuguese

The ICEVI-WBU Joint Education Policy Statement released during the Africa Forum is being translated into Spanish and Portuguese language. It can be obtained by contacting the Regional Chairperson

of Latin America region Lucia Piccione at lpiccione@arnet.com.ar

LOW VISION WEBSITE – www.lowvisiononline.org

Most of the world's 40 million people with low vision have no access to low vision services. Low vision online was produced to help address this problem.

Lack of appropriate low vision care can have a profound effect, not only on the person with low vision, but their family and community. Understanding what low vision means, how it can affect different people, and how to best train someone to use the vision they have is the key a more successful and independent life.

This website is designed for people who know or work with someone with low vision. It was not designed for low vision specialists but those who in their every day life or work need to know more about low vision. The website aims to give basic understanding of low vision, but for those who want to learn more, links are given throughout the site.

The site is designed in separate modules so that people can use all sections or only those of interest. The sections are:

- *Low Vision*
- *Eye Care*
- *Vision Screening*
- *Functional Assessment*
- *Non-optical Devices*
- *Optical Devices*
- *Orientation and Mobility*
- *Children - Assessment of Functional Vision*
- *Children - Training Visual Skills*

Questions have been included in each unit and at the end of each section. These are designed to review the main points.

For a teacher with a student with low vision in the classroom, most sections might be useful. Whereas someone working in community programs for older people might find sections on low vision, eye care, vision screening, functional assessment, optical and non-optical devices and orientation and mobility of most relevance. A Community-based rehabilitation worker might only want the sections on low vision, eye care and vision screening. You can choose the sections that suit you or work through all of them at your own pace.

The website has been designed for an international audience and has been designed so that the content and format is relevant to people in developing countries.

Vision 2005 Conference

Register now for Vision 2005 London, the world's premier event on low vision and sight loss!

The Vision 2005 conference and exhibition will take place from 4 to 7 April 2005 in the heart of London. Vision 2005 is organized under the auspices of the International Society for Low-vision Research and Rehabilitation and hosted by the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB).

Call for papers is open until 30 September 2004. Visit www.rnib.org.uk/vision2005 now to register.

General Assembly of the World Blind Union (WBU).

The General Assembly of the World Blind Union (WBU) will be held in South Africa in December 2004. Following the great success of the Africa Forum held in May 2004, the General Assembly will maintain the momentum by highlighting the development of services for people with visual impairment in the vast Africa Region and continuing to raise awareness of the achievements and needs of the visually impaired. ICEVI will be represented at the General Assembly and the WBU – ICEVI collaboration will go a long way in achieving much cherished goal of Education for All children with visual impairment.

IAPB General Assembly in Dubai

The General Assembly of the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) will be held in Dubai from 19 to 24 September 2004. An ICEVI team consisting of Larry Campbell, President, Jill Keefe, Regional Chairperson, ICEVI Pacific Region, M.N.G Mani, Secretary General, and Godfrey Kimani from the Sight Savers International will organize a symposium on the link between education and eye care services. The symposium will focus on how educators and medical professionals can work together to plan comprehensive services to persons with visual impairment.

Meeting of ICEVI principal officers in Costa Rica

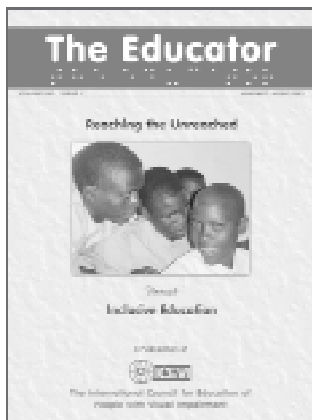
The principal officers of ICEVI will meet in Costa Rica, Latin America from October 25 to 29, 2004 to review the ICEVI activities for the past two years and formulate action plans for the rest of the quadrennium. Among many issues, the Education For All policy document, international collaboration, etc., are going to feature in the discussions. The principal officers will also be acting as resource persons for the sub-regional seminar organized by the Latin America ICEVI region at the same venue at the same time. They will offer specific workshops in the areas of Mathematics, Low vision, MDVI, Teacher preparation etc.,

Inclusive Education Seminar in Nanjing, China

Education for all children with visual impairment can become a reality when large countries such as China, India and Indonesia demonstrate mass implementation of inclusion. The China network of ICEVI is proposing to organize a national conference on inclusive education for persons drawn from government bodies, universities, special schools, voluntary organization etc., during the month of November 2004 in Nanjing, China. This meeting is expected to formulate guidelines for the effective implementation of education for all children with visual impairment in China. The results of the meeting will be published in the subsequent issues of The Educator.

Database of ICEVI

ICEVI is constantly updating its database. The Educator, ICEVI's biannual magazine is sent to more than 4000 people and the electronic Newline is sent to people who have e-mail contact. Please send the e-mail addresses of friends and professionals who may wish to receive the Newline. Please send the addresses of those who wish to subscribe to the Educator too. For previous issues of the Educator and Newline, please log on to ICEVI website at www.icevi.org.



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

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. A covering statement should be included confirming that the manuscript is original work, not under consideration or published elsewhere.