

The Educator



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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



A Publication of

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

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Low Vision Toolkit



RNIB and ICEVI are proud to announce the availability of the Low Vision Toolkit, which has been funded by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Low Vision Toolkit is a modular, structured and flexible training programme to teach children and young people with low vision how to make the most of their sight and when and how to use their low vision aids. The Toolkit consists of seven

Modules, which can be used either on their own or together as a complete training programme.

- Module 1** Eye conditions, vision and sources of support
- Module 2** The importance of lighting, colour and contrast
- Module 3** Understanding magnification and large print
- Module 4** Introduction to low-tech low vision aids
- Module 5** Using low-tech low vision aids for near tasks, e.g. bar magnifiers
- Module 6** Using low vision aids for distance viewing, e.g. monoculars
- Module 7** Using hi-tech low vision aids and computer technology

Each Module has differentiated learning objectives, resources that can be copied, ideas for practical activities and assessment materials.

The Low Vision Toolkit can be purchased on CD-Rom from the RNIB Shop.

For international enquiries and orders, please contact the RNIB Shop:

Telephone : **+44 (0)1733 37 54 00**

Email : **exports@rnib.org.uk** or **shop@rnib.org.uk**

Website : **<http://onlineshop.rnib.org.uk>**

For more information about the Low Vision Toolkit, please contact **Nathan Davies** at **Nathan.davies@rnib.org.uk** or on **+44 (0)1558 650281 (UK)**.

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The Educator Survey

Dear Readers

We are making a survey on the usage of The Educator, ICEVI's bi-annual magazine to improve its quality and style of presentation. Could you please take a few minutes and answer a few questions using the following link <http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/brl-challenge-survey/icevi-educator-survey/> which will immensely help us improve the publication in the years to come.

Harry Svensson

Editor of The Educator and Vice-President, ICEVI

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Guest Editors : Steve McCall and Paul Lynch

Message from the President



July 20, 2010

Dear Colleagues:

This, my last message to you as your president, will of necessity be a bit longer than normal. The length has nothing to do with the fact that this will be my last, but rather because I want to use this opportunity to not only thank you for your support over the last decade but to explain the unintended consequences of the cancellation of the 13th World Conference and General Assembly.

The civil unrest in Thailand forced us to make the very difficult decision to cancel the 13th World Conference and General Assembly scheduled for Jomtien August 9-13. This decision was particularly hard given the wonderful work that had already been undertaken by the Host Committee chaired by Pecharat Techavachara, Thai Union of the Blind and the Program Committee, so ably chaired by our 1st Vice President, Dr. Jill Keeffe. However, throughout late April and into the month of May we were receiving more and more messages indicating that people who had intended to participate had changed their plans. By early June we regretfully concluded that the conference and general assembly were not viable and thus our decision on June 3 to cancel.

Well, my friends that was just the beginning of the story. The implications of this decision had many ripple effects.

First we needed to inform hundreds of our members, who had already been notified that their papers had been accepted for presentation of our decision. Then there was the matter of setting in place mechanisms to return registration fees and hotel deposits to those persons and organizations who had preregistered and paid. All of this went reasonably smoothly thanks to the excellent work of the Host Committee, our Secretary General and our Treasurer. During this period the Principal Officers met on a weekly conference call to be sure we had this phase under control.

Next, we faced the more difficult task of addressing the question "What now?" As active members of ICEVI will know our organization's General Assembly follows the World Conference and is the meeting where the formal business of the organization is conducted. Without a General Assembly how would we elect new Principal Officers or make any needed changes in our Articles of Association? For a short while I was feeling like one of those dictators who proclaim themselves "president for life".

However, the Principal Officers continued to meet to discuss a sensible way forward and after careful review of the Articles of Association and consultation with the full Executive Committee we have arrived at a solution. While none of the solutions we discussed was ideal, what we arrived at meets the legal requirements of our Articles of Association and will allow us to conduct the business of ICEVI before the end of the calendar year and do so in a fiscally responsible manner.

The formal business of ICEVI is generally taken up by 109 official delegates composed of the 25 members of the current Executive Committee plus 12 additional delegates from each of our 7 regions.

Our Articles of Association state that a quorum of one-third is required for a General Assembly. This means that at least 36 persons be present to constitute a General Assembly.

Our next challenge was to find a way to bring a minimum of 36 delegates together at the earliest possible date to hold an ICEVI General Assembly. This proved to be quite a logistical challenge but one that we have finally overcome. Through the gracious invitation of the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) the General Assembly and related meetings will be held in London on December 2, 3 and 4.

I would like to take this opportunity to express special thanks to Ms. Lesley-Anne Alexander, CEO of RNIB for her willingness to host these meetings and to Lord Low of Dalston for the arrangements he is making for a reception at the House of Lords for all participants.

In addition to the 25 members of the Executive Committee we will be joined by 2 additional representatives from each of our seven regions giving us a total of 39 delegates.

In order that we make the best possible use of the time and resources required to convene such a General Assembly we have arrived at the following sequence of events during this three day period:

- one day devoted to the 2010 Executive Committee meeting,
- one half-day devoted to our General Assembly where we will elect new principal officers and deal with any needed changes in our Articles of Association and Bye-Laws and

[Note: Those suggested changes are included in this copy of The Educator to provide our membership the requisite 3 month advance notice called for in our Articles of Association.]

- one and half days will be devoted to a "Strategic Review" of our organization and its programs led by a professional facilitator.

To assure that all regional committees have an opportunity to review the proposed slate of new principal officers well before the meeting in December I have asked Bhushan Punani, Chair of the

Nominations Committee to have the work of his committee completed by October 1 so that the proposed slate can be circulated to all regional committees and posted on our website.

I do apologize for this rather long explanation of our current situation. However, I have always tried to conduct the business of ICEVI in the most transparent manner possible and therefore I wanted all of you to be aware of how your Principal Officers and Executive Committee are handling the unexpected outcomes caused by the cancellation of the planned General Assembly scheduled for Thailand in August.

For the past decade it has been my great pleasure to lead ICEVI. All of you have been so supportive during this decade that I hope I have justified your faith in me and that you feel that together we have been able to move ICEVI forward in a positive direction.

As you will read elsewhere in this issue of The Educator, the Global Campaign that we launched at our 12th World Conference in 2006 has made some good progress in bringing to school more than 30,000 children with visual impairment.

While we still have a long road ahead to achieve our goal of universal access, I am stepping down as your president feeling that the momentum is building and that these numbers will dramatically improve in the decade ahead. My recent participation in a planning meeting on the West Bank, Palestine is the most recent confirmation that this optimism is not misplaced.

There are literally hundreds of persons that I would like to thank personally, in this, my final message as your president. However, I will not do that for fear that there will be someone I will overlook.

By the time the December issue of The Educator goes to press ICEVI will have new leadership and I hope that you will provide these persons with the same kindness and support you have given to me and my fellow Principal Officers. A change in leadership will, I am sure, bring new ideas and new energy to ICEVI.

Once again my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you who have provided me with the vital support needed over the past ten years. Now, with a bit more time available for personal travel and other pursuits I will not say farewell but will close with the hope that our paths will cross again many times in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Larry Campbell
President

Message from the Editor



Dear reader,

This is the last time I write to you as the editor of The Educator. In 2006 the General Assembly of ICEVI appointed me to become the 2nd Vice President of the organization. This position includes a responsibility for The Educator.

I must say that I have had four wonderful years as the editor. With the assistance of a group of guest editors ICEVI has presented a number of issues of The Educator based on a specific themes – low vision, independence, literacy and inclusion. Thanks to the efforts of the guest editors Jill Keefe and Collin McDonnell, Peter Rodney, Cay Holbrook, Steve McCall and Paul Lynch it has been possible to fulfill the thematic idea.

I would also like to thank the authors from all over the world who have written articles for The Educator. It is by sharing knowledge we can develop the education of children and young people who are visually impaired.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the ICEVI Publications Committee – Cay Holbrook, Peter Rodney and MNG Mani – for your involvement and enthusiasm. Your creative thinking has been much appreciated.

There is one thing that worries me. That is the lack of direct feedback we have received from you and other readers. We know that each issue of The Educator on our website is read by a great number of people. We also know that there is a great demand to receive the printed versions of the journal. However, we need to know more in order to present a content that meets your need.

I urgently ask you to spend a few minutes answering our reader survey on Internet. You'll find the survey on <http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/brl-challenge-survey/icevi-educator-survey/>

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Harry Svensson

Editor

Second Vice President

Message from the Guest Editors



In the last edition of *The Educator* we looked at systems of inclusion around the world. While there were marked differences between the circumstances in different countries, the excellent contributions revealed surprising level of agreement about the factors necessary to promote the successful inclusion of children with visual impairment in mainstream settings: access to appropriate learning resources and equipment; support from well trained teachers; coordinated planning between health and education; schools that welcome children with visual impairment and recognise the right to the same quality of education as their sighted classmates. In this edition we maintain the focus on inclusion but this time we shift the focus away from the 'planners' perspective' to that of the child and their teachers.

The views of children are rarely taken into account in decisions about their education. This is, on one level, very strange because it is children who are ultimately the consumers of education and are the people who are most affected by decisions about where, when and how they are to receive it. It seems odd that they are casually excluded from decisions relating to their own inclusion.

In the minds of administrators, planners and legislators, it is usually considered enough to consult parents about their children's education and to establish what the parent wants for the child – and in some countries even this is seen as a radical development. Perhaps the justification for excluding the voices of children and young people is the assumption that that they don't know enough about education to offer informed opinions, they can't express an independent opinion about their educational needs, their thinking is too easily swayed and formed by what

they hear from adults. In short – they have nothing meaningful to bring to the table.

In this edition we put to the test the conclusion that children should be seen but not heard at the inclusion table. The lead article by Rory Cobb presents authentic voices from children and young people with visual impairment in the UK. It demonstrates beyond doubt that children with visual impairment do have a lot to say about their experiences of educational inclusion and are keen to make their voices heard. A similar conclusion was reached by researchers in Malawi who found that in situations where they feel their word is valued, children with visual impairment can express with clarity their views on inclusion and can provide unique insights into what is working and what is not. One thing that struck me when listening to children in Malawi was how similar their basic wants are to children I'd heard talking in the UK. They wanted to be successful in school, they didn't want to be treated differently by their classmates, they had career ambitions, in short they just wanted a chance to show what they could do.

The article by Annica Winberg, Anders Rönnbäck, and Kim de Verdier reports on a longitudinal study in Sweden of seven blind children who receive their education in local mainstream schools. The children have been interviewed twice a year and they were asked to comment on their school situation and their opportunities to participate and be included in classroom activities. Inevitably there were a range of responses, some of the children felt they were included, others felt isolated. Annica and her colleagues convincingly use the children's voices and those of the adults around them to come up with suggestions to strengthen the

systems to reduce the barriers that some children still encounter.

Equality of access is an essential attribute of any educational system that sees itself as an inclusive one.

We hear from Prof Dorine in 't Veld about the range of factors that endangered access to mathematics and science education for children in the Netherlands who are blind in mainstream schools. In her sharp analysis Dorine identifies systemic weaknesses that can blight the ambitions of children who want to study maths and science at higher levels. She makes the excellent point that the national expertise required to give young people access to such subjects can quickly become an unintentional casualty in the move towards inclusion. Fortunately the situation in the Netherlands was recognized and retrieved by teachers acting together.

As Dorine suggest this anxiety about how to give blind children access to technical subjects such as mathematics is widespread around the world. In our final article we hear from Mary Valera that in Peru teachers in mainstream primary schools often see access to mathematics as a fundamental barrier to blind children's inclusion. The most frequent question that teachers in inclusion support services encounter from classteachers is 'how can we possibly be expected to teach mathematics to children who are blind?' In the best tradition of problem solvers, Mary and her team have listed the most common concerns that classteachers have voiced and they offer their very practical solutions.

Ultimately inclusion is a continuous process of development, and the process involves identifying and overcoming the barriers that inevitably arise. One certainty is that barriers are best identified by the people closest to them. If administrators and planners want to know how best to include children and young people in education, then the lesson from this edition is clear - give children and those around them a voice, and listen to it!

Steve McCall & Paul Lynch
Guest Editors

ICEVI wishes Dr. Natalie Barraga a happy 95th Birthday

Dear Natalie:

Your many friends,
colleagues and
admirers around the
world want to send
you their warm and
loving greetings on

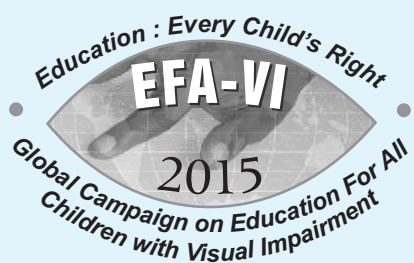


your 95th birthday. Your pioneering work in the area of education of children with low vision has changed the lives of countless children and teachers in a powerful and positive manner. Your selfless dedication to ICEVI for whom you carried out countless training courses throughout the world will always be remembered. We wish you much happiness and good health in the years ahead and we look forward to posting a bigger and better message in The Educator in 2015 on your 100th birthday.

With much affection,

Larry Campbell, President
on behalf of our Executive Committee
and Members

Photo courtesy : www.aph.org



EFA-VI Updates

The Global campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) is being implemented in Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Honduras, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, The Dominican Republic and Vietnam. A research study pertaining to education of children with visual impairment is going on in China and preparatory work is underway in Burkina Faso, Cambodia and Palestine. We have data from 7 countries (Ecuador, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, The Dominican Republic and Vietnam), which implemented the campaign in prior to 2009 and the results are encouraging as detailed below:

1. National Task Forces:

National Task Forces of the focus countries met at least 2 times since the implementation of the campaign.

2. Awareness Programmes:

Awareness programmes were organized on various themes such as Inclusive Education, EFA-VI Global Campaign, Basic Eye Care, Community Based Rehabilitation, Low Vision, Legal Framework on Education for All and these programmes were attended by government officials, parents, and general public. The details of programme conducted are given in the following table.

S. No.	Country	Programmes	Participants
1	Dominican Republic	6	99
2	Ecuador	12	22311
3	Nepal	2	81
4	Nicaragua	4	General Public
5	Pakistan	4	361
6	Paraguay	5	Government officials and Professionals

3. Capacity Building Programmes:

Capacity Building Programmes were organized on various themes such as Low Vision, Early Detection and Assessment, Adapted Learning Materials, Abacus, Braille, Education of MDVI, Inclusive Education, Visual Stimulation, Orientation and Mobility, Child Protection Policies, Role of Parents in Education of Children with Visual Impairment, Activities of Daily Living. The details of programme conducted are given in the following table.

S.No.	Country	Programmes	Participants
1	Dominican Republic	24	1067
2	Ecuador	15	2081
3	Nepal	5	90
4	Nicaragua	15	2700
5	Pakistan	2	107
6	Paraguay	25	692
7	Vietnam	35	5447

4. Additional Enrolment:

The campaign has contributed to the additional enrolment of children with visual impairment in schools. The following table describes the country wise data on additional enrolment.

Country	Gender	Early Intervention	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Programmes for MDVI	Total	Grand Total
Dominican Repub.	Boys	46	19	105	62	0	62	294	558
	Girls	25	16	105	63	0	55	264	
Ecuador	Boys	10	54	117	64	0	117	362	609
	Girls	15	30	67	36	0	99	247	
Nepal	Boys	0	0	417	532	95	0	1044	2134
	Girls	0	0	410	572	108	0	1090	
Nicaragua	Boys	0	21	364	21	0	25	431	684
	Girls	3	22	165	39	0	24	253	
Pakistan	Boys	0	110	650	185	64	0	1009	1710
	Girls	0	95	472	92	42	0	701	
Paraguay	Boys	28	35	36	23	0	40	162	336
	Girls	26	36	66	23	0	23	174	
Vietnam	Boys	3594	4366	3735	2190	1700	0	11991	24765
	Girls	4290	5292	3696	2553	1233	0	12774	

More information on the progress of the EFA-VI campaign will be posted on ICEVI website www.icevi.org

Palestine becomes part of the EFA-VI Global Campaign

Report from Bethlehem

A three-day long cross sector planning National Workshop on Inclusive Education for persons with Impaired Vision was held in Bethlehem from 13th to 15th July 2010. The goal of the workshop was on program for persons with visual impairment, as part of the Global Education for All Initiative.

The Global Education for All Initiative is led by UNESCO and meant to serve the Millennium Development Goals. As part of this program, the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation (BASR), CBM and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) organized a three day National Workshop in Bethlehem.

The purpose of the National Workshop was not just the goal of informing or sensitizing the community, but to actually develop a 5-year cross-sector national program for people with Visual Impairment in Palestine. The major stakeholders were identified and roles and responsibilities were defined and divided, which resulted in a concrete time- and action plan.

The importance of the National Workshop was proven by the fact it was organized under the auspices of both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The participants of the National Workshop were government representatives, NGOs, DPOs, persons with visual impairment as well as parents of children with visual impairment.

The Minister of Social Affairs Majida Al-Masri kicked off the programme with a speech setting out the goal of the program: inclusion and empowerment of the Visually Impaired. She made clear that the ministry is especially aiming at helping out the poorest among the Palestinian population.

The Deputy-Minister of Education Dr. Jihad Zakarneh declared that Inclusive Education is a principle which must be respected and promoted, and stressed the importance of genuine



partnership with the various stakeholders / institutions. At the end of his speech, Dr. Zakarneh pointed out the importance of the adoption of national policies in education based on the following: The acknowledgement of the right to education for all, comprehensiveness and accessibility for all, coordination among all stakeholders concerned, flexibility and adaptability of the curriculum and related activities and the evaluation process as well as enhancing learners' creativity.

Larry Campbell, President ICEVI stressed that the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) should become an integral part of the national EFA initiatives thereby contributing to increased enrollment of children with visual impairment in mainstream schools.

The organizers of the National Workshop stated that students with visual impairments need an educational system that meets the individual needs of ALL students, fosters independence, and is measured by the success of each individual in the school and community. Vision is fundamental to the learning process and is the primary basis upon which most traditional education strategies are based. Students who are visually impaired are most likely to succeed in educational systems where appropriate instruction and support services are provided in a full array of program options by qualified staff to address each student's unique educational needs.

ICEVI is glad that Palestine is becoming a focus country for the EFA-VI Campaign.

EFA-VI Workshop on Early Childhood Care and Education of Children with Vision Impairments and Other Disabilities (ECCE VI & MDVI)

Suva, FIJI ✧ 5th to 9th July 2010

Background of Early Intervention in Fiji

Currently in Fiji there are community-based field workers with the Ministry of Health and the Fiji Society for the Blind who come into contact with children aged 0 – 6 years. It appears that services for children in this age group are not adequate, and early intervention support for young children and their families is not considered a high priority. The focus of screening, identification and intervention has mainly taken place in the school-age population due to limited knowledge and skills in the area of early intervention.

A research project conducted by Dr Ana Cama from Fiji strongly suggested that prevention and awareness were key areas to address in early intervention in Fiji. Much of Dr Cama's research showed that many of the incidences of vision impairment in young children could have been prevented and there are increasing numbers of children with vision impairment in addition to other disabilities.

The vision testing currently being used with young children in Fiji requires that children are able to match symbols. This puts a limitation on Fiji's capacity to identify vision impairment in children under the age of three years, including children with additional disabilities such as intellectual or physical impairment. In 2008, the Fiji EFA-VI (Education for All Children with Visual Impairment) National Task Force prioritized training in the identification of vision impairments at an earlier age so that children and families could benefit from early intervention.

Currently there appears to be only one early intervention centre based in Suva, which caters for children with a range of disabilities, including autism, and cerebral palsy. Children can attend this

centre with their parents and receive an individualised educational program. The centre appears to be functioning really well and it would be wonderful to see more of these types of centres set up around the Fiji Islands.

Cultural beliefs in Fiji play a big part in the level of family access and participation in early identification and intervention programs for children with vision impairments, and will continue to create barriers to providing early intervention programs for children less than six years of age and their families. This is an area that the community-based rehabilitation staff (CRAs and CBR field workers) will need to continually work on, promoting and developing an awareness of vision impairments and other disabilities and the importance of appropriate early intervention.

Training

The Suva training program took place from 5th to 9th July 2010 at the Fiji Society for the Blind. The content areas covered during the week were Human development, Research of low vision in Fiji, Assessment and Programming, Visual



conditions, Strategies for teaching, Low vision Aids, Pre-Braille and Early Braille Literacy, and Communication. A combination of lecture, panel discussions, audiovisual, demonstration and interactive hands on sessions were used to deliver the material. The final day provided program participants with the opportunity to evaluate what they had learnt and how they would be able to put it into practice. The final day was also an opportunity to develop a priority list of future training and activities to help grow and develop early childhood care and intervention programs in Fiji.



Trainers/facilitators

The training program was coordinated and delivered by five facilitators: Mrs. Barbara Farouk, Director, Fiji Society for the Blind, Mrs. Vilisi Salafabisi, Coordinator, CBR, Fiji Society for the Blind, Mrs. Mareselina Tabailalai, Senior Officer, Special Education, Ministry of Education, Mrs. Maraia Matakibau, Coordinator CRA programs, Fiji Ministry of Health, and Mrs. Harzita Hashim, Coordinator, Early Learning Program (VI), Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.

Participants

A total of 39 participants took part in the training program, consisting of the following personnel CBR field workers, CRAs, Teachers, Principals, Project Supervisors, Parents, Lecturers, Doctors and Support staff.



Equipment and Resources Supplied

Handouts, Booklets, CD-ROMs & DVDs, on visual impairment and related topics were provided to the participants. A kit for conducting functional vision assessments and Low vision aid activity resources were also provided to participants.

Achievements

All participants were extremely interested in information and could see the benefits of early intervention and the need to promote awareness of early identification. Participants showed a real interest in seeing how to work with the children – the video footage taken from Australia were an invaluable resource. The “Hands-on” sessions such as the making of tactile books were really worthwhile as participants were able to take resources away with them. All the participants were able to develop a greater understanding of early intervention services that workers and families could already tap into.

Recommendations

Several recommendations such as conduct of separate training program for parents, conduct of hands-on workshops, strengthening primary eye care, capacity building programmes, inclusive education to be made as a compulsory part in the curriculum of teacher education, revision of teacher student ratio, and to develop publications on ECCE-VI were made by the participants at the end of the ECCE - VI training program.

Proposed changes in the Articles of association

The Executive Committee of ICEVI is proposing some changes in the Articles of Association for voting by the Delegates at the General Assembly to be held in London on 2-4 December 2010. We request the ICEVI Constituency to go through the suggested changes and express their views through their regional committees. For convenience, both the original Articles of Association and the proposed changes are given in this section.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF ICEVI

1. Membership:

- 1.1. Membership of the Council is open to any individual or organisation subscribing to the objects of the Council as laid down in the Memorandum of Association.
- 1.2. Members shall pay an annual subscription as shall be determined from time to time by the Executive Committee. Subscriptions shall reflect the diversity of the financial resources available to different organisations and in the different regions of the Council.

2. Regional Structure:

- 2.1. The basic structure of the Council is a regional one and the members of the Council are primarily members of a region. The Executive Committee shall determine the number of regions into which the Council is divided and the countries making up each region.
- 2.2. The Regional Members shall elect for each term from the region a Regional Chairperson and one or more Regional Deputy Chairpersons. The length of a term shall be as prescribed in the By-laws.
- 2.3. The Regional Chairpersons shall be responsible for establishing a Regional Committee of not less than 5 members. Representation on the Regional Committee shall reflect the diversity of

the region. The immediate past Chairperson and any Principal Officer belonging to the region shall ex officio be a member of the Committee.

- 2.4. The Regional Committee shall be responsible for the planning and implementation of regional activities and conducting the business of the region in consultation with the Principal Officers of the Council.
- 2.5. The Regional Committee shall have power to levy a regional subscription with the agreement of the Executive Committee.
- 2.6. The audited regional accounts shall be sent to the Council's Treasurer within three months of the end of each financial year.
- 2.7. The Regional Chairpersons, together with the five Principal Officers, are the Officers of the Council.
- 2.8. The Regional Chairpersons shall report regularly to the President on an agreed schedule.
- 2.9. If a Regional Chairperson is unable to fulfil his/her duties, one of the Deputy Chairpersons shall take over by agreement among themselves. If neither the Chairperson nor any of the Deputy Chairpersons is able to fulfil these duties, the Regional Committee in association with the President shall take decisions about the continuation of the region's work.

- 2.10. The Regional Committees shall appoint delegates with voting rights to the General Assembly using a process which respects diversities within the region. The number of delegates per region shall be laid down in the Bye-laws.

3. General Assembly:

- 3.1. A meeting of the General Assembly shall be held at the end of each term.
- 3.2. Those entitled to vote at the General Assembly shall consist of the Executive Committee, not more than two Deputy Chairpersons from each region and the other delegates with voting rights appointed by the Regional Committees in accordance with Bye-law 4.
- 3.3. At a General Assembly, there shall take place a business meeting at which the Regional Chairpersons and Principal Officers shall present a report on their activities during the past term and their plans for the next term. The business meeting shall elect the Principal Officers of the Council, who shall be the President, the First Vice-President, Second Vice-President and the Treasurer. The Immediate Past President is also a Principal Officer.
- 3.4. The General Assembly may also include a professional conference, which non-delegates may attend.
- 3.5. At a business meeting of the general assembly, a quorum shall be one third of the members entitled to be present and to vote.

4. Executive Committee:

- 4.1. The business of the Council between General Assemblies shall be conducted by an Executive Committee, which shall consist of:
- a) the Principal Officers of the Council, namely

- *the President;*
 - *the Immediate Past President (or other person appointed by the Executive Committee if the Immediate Past President is unable or unwilling to serve);*
 - *the First Vice-President;*
 - *the Second Vice-President*
 - *the Treasurer;*
- b) the seven Regional Chairpersons representing Africa, East Asia, West Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America/Caribbean, and the Pacific;
- c) one representative of each of the Founding Members of the Council as follows:
- *American Foundation for the Blind*
 - *Perkins School for the Blind*
 - *Royal National Institute of the Blind;*
- d) one representative of any international non-governmental organisation which supports the objects and plans of the Council and makes a significant financial contribution to its work, the level of such contribution to be determined by the Executive Committee from time to time as part of the dues structure of the Council.
- e) one representative of each of the following:
- *International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness*
 - *Deafblind International*
 - *World Blind Union.*

The Executive Committee may also invite to any of its meetings the Chairperson of any Standing Committee or Working Group established by the Executive Committee.

- 4.2. The Executive Committee may either ad hoc or for the full term appoint additional members with special tasks who may be

invited to participate in meetings of the Executive Committee, but shall have no voting rights.

- 4.3. The Executive Committee shall evaluate regional developments in terms of the Council's policy, the global targets set for the term and regional plans.
- 4.4. The Executive Committee shall keep under review the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Bye-laws of the Council.
- 4.5. The Executive Committee shall appoint the members of the Programme, the Nominations, the Finance, the Publications and any other global Standing Committees of the Council.
- 4.6. A Regional Chairperson who shall be appointed by the Executive Committee shall act as Chairperson of the Nominations Committee. When a member of the Nominations Committee wants his/her name to be considered for one of the Principal Officer positions, he/she shall send a letter of resignation to the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee, who in turn will consult the President and have a substitute appointed in the place of the member who resigned from the Committee.
- 4.7. The President is ex officio a member of the Programme Committee.
- 4.8. The Treasurer is ex officio Chairperson of the Finance Committee.
- 4.9. One of the Vice-Presidents shall be the ex officio a member of the Publications Committee.
- 4.10. The Executive Committee shall have power to appoint paid staff in order to further the work of the Council.
- 4.11. At a meeting of the executive committee, a quorum shall be one third of the members entitled to be present and to vote.

5. Principal Officers:

- 5.1. The Principal Officers are the executive officers of the Council who shall act on behalf of the Council and on behalf of the Executive Committee. They shall report on their activities to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly, and shall meet as necessary. Three shall be a quorum.
- 5.2. Each of the Principal Officers, in addition to the duties of their post, shall have specific duties as agreed amongst themselves from time to time.
- 5.3. Each Principal Officer is authorised to act on behalf of the Council on condition that the action is based on the Memorandum and Articles of Association or Bye-laws of the Council; its policy, custom and practice; or a decision of the Executive Committee or of the Principal Officers.
- 5.4. If the President is unable to discharge his/her responsibilities, the First Vice-President shall take over responsibility from the President. If for any reason he/she is or becomes unable to do this, the Second Vice-President shall take over.
- 5.5. The Secretary General will normally be in attendance at meetings of the Principal Officers and Executive Committee unless asked to withdraw while matters relating to his/her position as Secretary General are discussed.

6. International Consultative Committee:

- 6.1. The International Consultative Committee is an advisory body to the Executive Committee. It is intended to promote global co-operation and linkages between global organisations active in the education of people with visual impairment.
- 6.2. The Executive Committee shall draw up a list of organisations that will be invited to serve on the International Consultative

Committee. These organisations shall meet the conditions laid down in the Bye-laws.

- 6.3. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once each term with the International Consultative Committee. These meetings shall discuss the Council's general policy with a view to promoting co-operation and linkages with the invited organisations.

7. Terms of Office:

- 7.1. All office holders shall take up their positions at the end of the General Assembly at which they were elected. Elections or appointments taking place between General Assemblies shall have immediate effect.
- 7.2. All office holders shall remain in post until the end of the next General Assembly after their election or appointment.
- 7.3. Ad hoc appointments shall come to an end when the task for which they were made has been completed, but in any event not later than the end of the next General Assembly after they were made.
- 7.4. Regional Chairpersons and International Members of the Executive Committee should normally serve for no more than two full terms.
- 7.5. No Principal Officer shall serve in the same position for more than two full terms, not including any unexpired portion of a predecessor's term.

8. Postal Ballots:

Postal ballots may be used for deciding any question which requires decision within any organ of the Council. Ballot papers, clearly stating the proposal to be voted on, shall be sent to all persons entitled to vote on the matter in question. All means of written communication may be used.

9. Finance:

The Council's financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December. The accounts of the Council shall be subject to annual audit by a qualified auditor and the Principal Officers shall appoint an external auditor for the purpose. The audited accounts shall be presented to the Executive Committee who shall have responsibility for approving the financial report. The Executive Committee shall also approve the annual budget of the Council.

10. Use of the Council's name:

The use of the name of the Council for any purpose, including fund raising, income generation or the production or sale of publications, irrespective of whether initiated and/or executed by members of the Council, is only permitted if authorised in writing by the Principal Officers.

11. Amendment of Articles of Association and Bye-laws:

- 11.1. These Articles of Association may be amended by the General Assembly.
- 11.2. Proposals for amendment of the Articles of Association shall be recommended to the General Assembly by the Executive Committee.
- 11.3. Proposals for amendment of the Articles of Association shall be published in the Council's journal and on the Council's website not later than three months prior to the General Assembly at which they are to be discussed.
- 11.4. Amendment of the Articles of Association shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes either of the members present and voting at a General Assembly or voting in a postal ballot, provided in each case that not less than 50% of those entitled must have voted in order for the proposal to be carried. In the event that less than 50% of those entitled shall have voted, a second

ballot on the same proposal may be organised not earlier than two weeks and not later than six months after the first ballot. In this event, not less than 25% of those entitled to vote either at a General Assembly or in a postal ballot must have voted in order for the proposal to be carried.

- 11.5. The Executive Committee may change or add to the Council's Bye-laws by a simple majority on a recommendation of the Principal Officers made not later than three months before a meeting of the Executive Committee or a postal ballot on the same. The quorum for votes on such recommendations shall be two-thirds. If there is no quorum, a second ballot may be organised not earlier than two weeks and not later than six months after the first ballot. For the second ballot on the same proposal, the quorum shall be 50%.

- 11.6. The text of any changes to the Articles of Association or any additions or changes to the Bye-laws, together with the result of any vote, shall be published in the next issue of the Council's journal following their agreement and on the Council's website.

12. Dissolution of the Council:

On the winding up and dissolution of the company the provisions of the Memorandum of Association shall have effect as if repeated in these Articles.

13. Miscellaneous:

In cases for which there is no clear provision either in these Articles of Association or in law, the Executive Committee shall decide issues according to the spirit of the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

PROPOSED CHANGES

We propose to amend Article 8 of the Constitution, which currently deals with postal ballots, so that it reads as follows:

"8. Alternative methods of decision taking:

- 8.1 With the prior agreement of the President, a member of any organ of the Council may validly participate in a meeting of that body through the medium of telephone or video conference or any other form of electronic communication equipment, provided that all persons participating in the meeting are able to hear and speak to each other throughout such meeting. A person so participating shall be deemed to be present at the meeting and shall accordingly be counted in the quorum and be entitled to vote. A resolution passed at any meeting held in such manner and signed by the Chair of the meeting shall be valid and effective as if it had been passed at a meeting of that body duly convened and held.
- 8.2 A postal ballot may be used for deciding any question which requires decision within any organ of the Council. Ballot papers, clearly stating the proposal to be voted on, shall be sent to all persons entitled to vote on the matter in question. All means of written communication may be used."

Hear Me Out: Listening to Blind and Partially Sighted Children and Young People

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In 2008 RNIB embarked on an ambitious project to interview around 40 blind and partially sighted children, most of whom were receiving their education in mainstream schools, talking about their lives at school and at home. The contents of these interviews were edited and grouped under headings to reflect key aspects of children's lives. The result was over two hours' worth of audio material which was produced as an audio DVD entitled 'Hear Me Out'. In this article we present a sample of children's views taken from the interviews. If you would like to find out more about what the children have to say, the DVD is on sale from RNIB either on its own or as part of a package with 'Count Me In', a video DVD showing good practice in the inclusion of blind and partially sighted children in a range of educational settings. Details of how to purchase both resources are given at the end of this article.

Listening to children is a fundamental part of meeting their needs. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that

parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

In his introduction to the UK government publication 'Working Together - Listening to the voices of children and young people (DCSF, 2008) Jim Knight, Minister for Schools, wrote:

Giving children and young people a say in decisions that affect them can improve engagement in learning, help develop a more inclusive school environment and improve behaviour and attendance. Through effective pupil participation, schools give young people the opportunity to develop critical thinking,

advocacy and influencing skills, helping every child to fulfil their potential.

Listening to children is therefore a starting point rather than an end in itself. The same publication quoted Shier (2000) who defined levels of participation for children in the following ascending order:

1. Children are listened to
2. Children are supported in expressing their views
3. Children's views are taken into account
4. Children are involved in the decision-making process
5. Children share power and responsibility for decision-making.

This commitment to listening to children forms part of a wider aspect of recent UK educational policy known as the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Every Child Matters was the name given to a major government report in 2003 into the systemic failings of the care system for vulnerable children. The

report defined five key outcomes which are intended to underpin all developments in services for children in future. These are that all children should:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

These outcomes are mutually reinforcing. For example, children and young people learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and are enjoying activities. The five outcomes are used by schools and local authorities as a basis for deciding their priorities, planning change and evaluating the impact of their work. They are also embedded in the inspection criteria for all services for children and young people. It made sense, therefore, to ensure that our questions could be linked to the five outcomes, although we chose not to make this explicit on the DVD itself in order not to limit its relevance to people working in other legislative contexts.

RNIB had previously carried out an extensive research survey in 1998 and 1999 for a report entitled 'Shaping the Future' (Franklin et al, 2001). This involved asking over 1,000 blind and partially sighted children and young people, or their parents, about their experiences, needs and aspirations. When designing the current DVD project we were mindful that it was not a research study, in that the children and young people involved were not chosen as a representative sample and the interview process was largely informal. The intention was simply to capture the thoughts and views of a group of individuals as a way of enabling their voices to be heard. However, the interview process can create its own effect. It was important to avoid the danger of children giving us the answers

they thought that we as adults wanted to hear or that they felt would be socially acceptable among their peers. Care needed to be taken that children understood the questions and felt able to answer them openly and honestly.

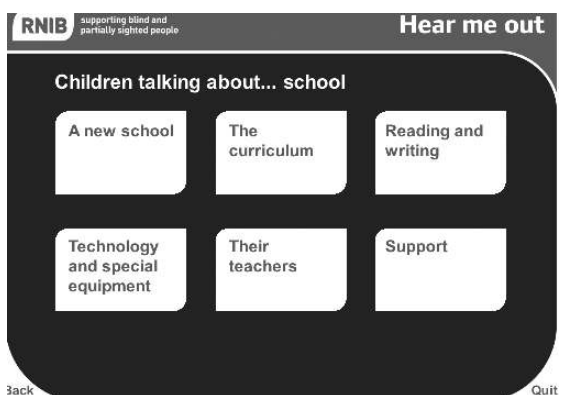
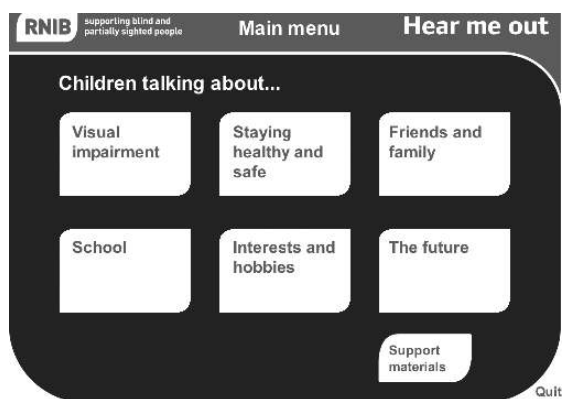
In talking to children it is clearly essential to adhere to strict ethical guidelines. We based our work on RNIB's ethical research guidelines which were derived from those of the UK Social Research Association (<http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethical.htm>) as follows:

1. Informed consent - participants should be clear about the aims and outcomes of the activity, why they were taking part and what they would be asked to do.
2. Voluntary participation - their participation must be voluntary, and they must not have been put under any pressure (implicit or explicit) to take part.
3. Confidentiality - no participant should be identified by name or linked to a particular school.
4. Right to refuse to answer a question - if participants did not want to answer an interview question they could just say so and the questioner would go onto the next question.
5. Right to withdraw from an activity at any time - just because participants had agreed to take part they did not have to see it through to the end. They could opt out at any time if they chose to do so.
6. Child protection - All interviews should meet RNIB's child protection standards and those of the school/setting concerned.

We also sought written consent from parents that they were willing for their children to take part in the interviews and for their voices to be heard on

the DVD. We felt it was essential for the sake of authenticity that the voices were the children's own, but this raised concerns that they might be identified by people who knew them. We decided that this risk was minimised by the fact that each interview would be edited down and not heard in its entirety, so each 'clip' would be quite short and isolated from its wider context. However, concerns about anonymity did lead us to one significant change of plan. The original intention had been to include a series of still photographs to appear on screen to accompany the audio clips of children speaking. While this might have made the DVD more attractive to sighted users we realised it would seriously undermine any guarantee of anonymity.

The final design of the DVD menus was based on a series of buttons which navigate the user to different sections of the disc. The main menu breaks the content down into main themes and each theme is then broken down further into individual sections, as shown in the following screen shots:



What the children and young people said

We found no difficulty in getting children to talk to us about their lives. Their views and experiences varied widely, as one would expect in any collection of individuals. The rest of this article consists of extracts from the transcribed interviews. These give a good indication of the range of issues the children chose to discuss, but inevitably they lose the immediacy of being spoken in their own voices. To hear that you would need to listen to the DVD itself. Some of the comments have been slightly edited in the interests of space. All the names used are pseudonyms.

People's attitudes

Elton, aged 14

There's one boy who's in my class who's fantastic with me. If my lens drops out it's like a police operation - everyone clear out, like, he's got to find this lens. And if it's lost he'll take me straight to the special needs unit where they can sort me out there and he's brilliant in that way. There are more good people that help me than don't.

Lara, aged 14

In school, most people are very understanding about my sight and they treat me normally. Some people are a bit stereotypical, if you say you got a visual impairment they just think straight away that you can't see anything and that's it. Some people can take advantage of you but most people don't.

Babette, aged 12

Some people would say that visually impaired children can't do as much as other people can, but sometimes visually impaired children can do a hell of a lot more than other children think they can. It don't matter what people say, I'm just not going to listen and I'm just going to try to carry on being myself.

Hakeem, aged 15

A visually impaired person is the same as everybody else in the world. Think about what somebody can do, not what somebody can't do because, chances are, they can probably do a lot more than you think they can.

BULLYING**Faith, aged 9**

Some people are really nice to me and some people are really horrible because sometimes they just don't like to play with me. Because I'm blind, some people think I'm a loser and some people in this school are really mean and I would really, really, really like them to treat me how I am and how I'm good and what I do and what I don't do to them.

Hailey, aged 11

Most of the people are understanding for my difficulties but some people don't understand. Sometimes if someone really, really winds me up – you know, like name-calling and just annoying constantly, I lose my temper a bit. But I've learned not to now. You've got to respect people who can't see properly or who are blind, like not push them or don't even be nasty to them. Treat them like your friends.

Pablo, aged 12

I haven't had no bullying because of my sight problem. I think it's because my friends they're always behind me and the school doesn't allow bullying of any sort. If I did get bullied, all my friends would stick up for me.

SPORT**Gareth, aged 15**

I like tandem bike riding, because you go a lot of places on a bike where you haven't been before. I ride at the back of the tandem bike and do the hand signals and it's good because you're getting fresh

air on it as well. When you're going down the hill, you just freewheel all the way down. We don't say anything, we just, like, sing along and stuff.

Nabil, aged 14

In PE I like doing football, cricket – outdoor sports, team sports. My sight doesn't give me that much problem but sometimes it just makes it harder. To stop it being harder, you just have to concentrate more on the game.

Ian, aged 16

I had no confidence in sport until I joined secondary where I got introduced to games that relate to my abilities of sight. For example, goalball is one where you wear blacked out shades, so everyone is the same sight level, so everyone's just got the same chance. I play blind cricket, blind football, which I only began to play in Year 11.

Lara, aged 14

I find PE difficult because of my visual impairment. When there's a game going on I don't take part in it because there's too much movement and I can't see the ball. I can see the people but sometimes not that clearly. Sport is not really one of my strong points.

MOBILITY**Ralph, aged 7**

School can be a bit of a problem because I can't see very well, so when I'm focusing on one thing, I can't see very many other things. So, if people are coming, I can't really see them very well. So, I get bumped quite a bit.

Caleb, aged 13

Because I don't look visually impaired, I use this cane to warn people that I'm visually impaired. It is very useful, because I don't have to explain to people, they just know straight away that I'm visually impaired.

Elton, aged 14

I can't go out on my own at all because I'll step off the gutter a lot. I've got some mates I would go out with but I wouldn't fully rely on them because, you know, they don't look out for my eyes as much as some friends, which is why my social life is obviously dampened a little bit. I do have to go out a lot with my mum and dad, which I don't mind, but sometimes I would like to get away from that and go out with mates.

Dalton, aged 14

I am looking forward to doing public transport because it will give me more independence to get around. My mum's all for me getting more independent. Some people would be kind of protective if, say, their child had a disability and they were trying to get really independent but mine don't worry at all. Mine aren't over-protective in the slightest.

Pablo, aged 12

I do sometimes get frustrated with my eye problems because of driving, I won't be able to drive.

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

Otis, aged 9

In Pakistan, the freedom is different because here I just have to stay in my house, but there you can just go outside and play and everything. You can go anywhere. My parents just think it's safer for me in Pakistan to just go out than here. There's less traffic, there's not that many people.

Daisy, aged 15

I wish that I didn't have vision problems because I'd just like to be a bit more independent, because I look at my younger sister and think, well she can go off with her friends and my mum and dad don't have to worry about her crossing the roads, or she can cook and they don't have to really worry about her using sharp knives.

Otis, aged 9

In school I've got lots of friends. I like talking to them, playing games. My friends don't look after me because I don't really need looking after. In the playground I can play like anybody else.

Kai, aged 17

I do avoid doing things which require my eyesight because, basically, I don't like being embarrassed. So, if I'm going to do something and I'm going to make a fool of myself I'm not going to do it. I want to be treated as the same as everybody else really. When I meet new people I don't tell them that I've got an eye problem if it's not necessary. Most of my friends don't know, just my one best friend knows.

SCHOOL

Hailey, aged 11

Moving from a small primary school to a big high school is kind of scary because you don't know where any of your classes are or who anyone is, or if they're nice or nasty and tell if you're going to get along or not. It's full of really tall people. It works out all right. Once you get to know the school and who to stay away from and who's all right – it's all right. It's cool.

Victor, aged 15

I like the lessons at school because they're good fun. I like science. I like woodwork because I like making, like, a bird box out of wood. I use a saw to do cutting. I use a hammer to put nails in. I had to use a brace to drill the holes. I hold it against my tummy, wind the handle round. I don't cut myself or anything because they help me.

Ian, aged 16

My teachers inspired me with ideas or techniques that I could use to present my work. I've just finished my exams and Art is one of my favourites because it gives me a chance to show my creativity. I did painting, drawing, all sorts of mixed media. And I've

been predicted an 'A', which would be lovely, for next year.

Quentin, aged 12

I don't need any support in music because we just play instruments. We've played a guitar, African drum, a piano and a tambourine. The teacher who does music, on the keyboard he writes the letters in a big felt tip so the people who are visually impaired can see what keys they're playing. It's easy for me – for everybody as well.

READING AND WRITING

Quentin, aged 12

I prefer large print books because I don't have to bend down and read on the table. I can just get it and read it.

Hakeem, aged 15

I started learning how to touch type when I was in year one and I can type pretty damn fast for someone who can't see the keys.

Caleb, aged 13

I want to use my sight but then I've got to do braille as well because my reading speed's slow and if I carry on with braille it might speed it up. So, the way forward is to do braille as well.

Samson, aged 16

I'm learning braille at the moment because I wanted to learn it just in case I turn blind, so I'd know it before I actually turn blind. And it's the same thing with touch typing as well. I just wanted to prepare myself just in case.

Otis, aged 9

At school when everybody else is looking at the whiteboard (*i.e. an Interactive Whiteboard - a large interactive display that connects to a computer and projector*), I've got a monitor that connects to the whiteboard, so I can see what's on it on my desk. The difference is now that Mrs Young doesn't have

to sit next to me and write down what's on the board. I just like to be on my own and to do my work and show that I'm independent.

Hakeem, aged 15

The only thing is, the Perkins Brailler can cause a lot of distraction to other people because it's so loud and it clunks and it has a big bell that goes ding at the end of the line. The only real subject I use braille worksheets now is maths.

Warren, aged 15

My handwriting isn't very good and using ICT makes things easier to read for me and makes it easier for other people to read something I may have written.

TEACHERS

Pablo, aged 12

Some teachers are good at getting stuff ready on their own without the support teachers but most teachers don't remember about me. I think it's because the teachers just don't understand what my problem is.

Gabriela, aged 12

Say the teacher never gave Mrs Crowther the braille, then that makes me mad because then I can't do my work and then the teacher just says, "Well get someone to work with you". But sometimes they want to work on their own, maybe. So, that ain't fair really.

Pablo, aged 12

I think it's important to ask people with sight problems what they need or what the teacher could do to help them, instead of the teachers just doing what they think is right. Sometimes, I think that the teachers think that they know what I need more than I do. Like, sometimes, the teacher will say, "You can see in size 14 and if we do it any bigger it won't fit on the page". But if it doesn't fit on the page it doesn't matter because at the end of the day it's not you who is going to be reading it, it's going to be me.

Gabriela, aged 12

Sometimes the people get a bit nervous when they haven't worked with VI before, so they don't know what to do. They don't have to do anything really, but I think they should ask me what to do to help me.

SUPPORT**Kacey, aged 11**

When I was at primary school I did most things myself like getting all my worksheets and my Brailnote (*i.e. a portable Braille computer*) ready. And now I am at secondary school that's all done for me. And I liked doing that when I was at primary school, so I would have rather done it here.

Fabian, aged 15

If you've got a support assistant your classmates and your friends behave slightly different in class because they've still got this extra teacher sitting next to them. I'd like to be the same as everyone else as much as possible and also it helps for the future because, if I go on to college and university, there's not going to be trained assistants there.

Pablo, aged 12

Sometimes, in school I do think that I'm not doing as well as I could do because of my eyesight. It's because it takes me longer to do things. It's a long process, like, if a teacher tells you to go and research something, you rely on somebody else and they choose what you read. I do wish I could be more independent. If everything was enlarged then I could be more independent than I am now.

INTERESTS AND HOBBIES**Hakeem, aged 15**

I also DJ online, for an internet radio station. I am in charge of like hip-hop R'n'B, that lot, and grime. Because I use analogue stuff, I don't need anything special. I do everything by ear. There are so many different ways of doing things. Touch screen is really

not good if you're blind because you can't see where to touch, sad because a lot of blind people are being excluded from using a lot of good equipment that is out there.

Fabian, aged 15

I have done a couple of school plays. My sight's never actually been a problem and that's one of the reasons I enjoy it because, while you're doing it, absolutely everybody is thinking about where everybody else is. So if you have a bit of trouble they can help you out in a subtle way, but particularly if it is a scripted piece or directed piece, you just need to memorise it.

Daisy, aged 15

I love cooking. Sometimes I worry about cutting myself but that's one of my mum's biggest worries with sharp knives and everything. And sometimes I say to my mum, "Mum, please I want you to be able to trust me," and the more I do it the better I get at it. One of the good things about school is they let me practise with sharp knives and other equipment. They let me have a go at trying out new things.

THE FUTURE**Hakeem, aged 15**

Just because I can't see doesn't mean you're going to stop me from doing what I want to do. I've always lived with this, "if at first don't succeed try and try again". And if you don't have determination, you're not going to get far in life.

Hailey, aged 11

I've decided I'm going to college and university and I'm going to study law and science. At first, I was going to become like just under a Prime Minister and gradually work up to being the Prime Minister. I want to do stuff for other people and make the world a better place, make it the law to recycle and just help the planet as much as possible.

Baines, aged 12

I'd like to be an MP (*i.e. a Member of Parliament*), because I'd be able to fix what's wrong with the country, because I think the country's a bit soft, not hard enough. I'd try and change the law for discrimination on disabled people. I am a school council representative. I've been doing it for about a year. I represent my class. I sort out things around the school.

Gabriela, aged 12

When I leave school, I'm going to be a fashion designer because I like designing and drawing and stuff. I used to like doing textiles. I like fashion. I like to be fashionable too. Julia's up to date, so Julia tells me the shapes and colours of the things and then I'll imagine it, like I do in art.

Quentin, aged 12

I want to go to college and university, be a pharmacist because I like science. I think that will be a bit difficult but I'll get used to it.

Gareth, aged 15

I want to be independent. I'm getting older, so I have to get used to doing stuff myself now. In the future, I might get married or have kids, get my own house or a flat and get a job. I don't know what kind of job - being a rugby coach for big lads, not like children who are doing rugby.

Fabian, aged 15

I work at Oxfam (*i.e. a charity shop*) on a Saturday. Because I can't read a (*cash*) till they put me round the back, out of harm's way, doing some sorting for them. And then two months in they decided that they would let me run the computer side of things as well. So now I put products onto the internet, as well as do the sorting.

Dalton, aged 14

If you're visually impaired, you have to try and be better than everybody else because if you want to

get a decent job, say you're going against a sighted person who is very clever as well, they are probably going to choose the sighted person over you unless you have a particular strength. Apparently, 98 per cent of visually impaired and blind people don't get decent jobs. I suppose you have to try and be in that minority, that 2 per cent.

CONCLUSION

Listening to children provides a powerful insight into their lives. Many of the comments made by the children interviewed for 'Hear Me Out' capture essential truths about their education and development far better than we as adult professionals will ever do. Putting all this material together on a DVD is a useful way of making it available to a wider audience, but the real value of the exercise lies in carrying it out in the first place and in paying attention to the messages that emerge.

Count Me In DVD video and Hear Me Out Audio CD Rom Set

"Count me in" is an interactive video DVD illustrating the principles and practices of effective inclusion of children with visual impairment in a range of educational settings. "Hear me out" is an audio CD Rom which complements "Count me in". It gives blind and partially sighted children the opportunity to speak for themselves about their lives at school and at home.

To order visit rnib.org.uk/shop

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Inclusion – Listening to Children and Young People's Voices in Malawi

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The following extracts of children talking about their experiences of inclusion are drawn from research that was conducted by the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR) in the School of Education, University of Birmingham in the UK, the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) and the Montfort Special Needs Education College in Limbe in Southern Malawi.

The eighteen month study was designed to identify the 'barriers' that face children learning through braille in local mainstream schools and took place in Malawi during 2008-09. This project focused on eight children (7 who are blind and one with severe low vision) who are attending mainstream primary schools in five districts in Southern Malawi. The full results of the research are contained in a report called 'Literacy for All' – Developing Literacy through Touch in the Mainstream Classroom' which was presented to the Ministry of Education in Malawi in February 2010.

The quotes from children in this article were taken from case studies compiled during an eighteen month study which investigated the teaching and learning of Braille in relation to eight children and young people in mainstream schools in Malawi. The first source of data was transcriptions of interviews conducted by researchers from MIE and the Montfort College who visited the children to collect their views on learning in mainstream classes. All the interviews were conducted at the child's own school, and were recorded, transcribed and, where necessary, translated into English by the national research team. Other responses presented here were extracted from video interviews conducted during vacation braille schools that the same children attended as part of the research. The responses by younger children were given in the local language, Chichewa, and responses from the older children were given in English (which is the principle language of

instruction in the second half of primary education).

The children were asked to reflect on their experiences in relation to their inclusion in their local school and their answers are grouped under three main themes.

- Support at school
- Support at home
- Personal concerns about their learning

As can be seen in the table, the children and young people's ages ranged from 7 years to 22 years, there were 5 boys and 2 girls (Jessie and Liziuzayani). The children's names have been changed to protect their identity. Each child receives regular visits from an Itinerant Teacher (IT) who has training in supporting children with visual impairment.

Key details about the learners

Name	Age (at beginning of study)	Visual status	Standard Class in class	No. of children	District
Mandondo	7	Blind	1	200+	Blantyre Rural
Jessie	8	Severe low vision	1	200+	Blantyre Rural
Liziuzayani	9	Blind	1	175	Zomba Rural
Thambo	12	Blind	2	275	Chikwawa
Christopher	14	Blind	7	92	Blantyre Urban
Isaac	15	Blind	3	287	Machinga
Azibo	16	Blind	8	71	Blantyre Urban
Gilbert	22	Blind	6	40	Machinga

Reflections on support at school

Although the children had mixed views about the level of support they received at school, they generally felt happy going to school and all had made friends with children and felt included in the school yard at break times. One boy said he had initially experienced bullying in class whenever the teacher left the class alone. He felt that he was seen as different and was worried he would not be accepted by his class. In this particular case the IT was able to intervene successfully when he learnt about the problem.

Mandondo: *Children were coming up to me and hitting me across the head when the teacher wasn't there. They would take my handframe and paper away and shout at me.*

Interviewer: *How did this make you feel?*

Mandondo: *I felt sad and wanted to hit them.*

Interviewer: *Did you tell the teacher?*

Mandondo: *I told Mr C** (IT) and he told the classteacher.*

Interviewer: *Are you still getting bullied?*

Mandondo: *No, not now.*

Similarly, one of the girls said that she was not happy when she started school but she is enjoying it more now as a result of intervention from the CIT.

Liziuzayani: *When I went to school I was alone and didn't know anyone.*

Interviewer: *How did that make you feel?*

Liziuzayani: *I was lonely and didn't know what to do in class.*

Interviewer: *Who helped you in class?*

Liziuzayani: *My sister M** helped me in class. She took me to the class and to the toilet.*

Interviewer: *Did anyone else help you?*

Liziuzayani: *Mr** (CIT) helped me sometimes.*

Interviewer: *What did he do?*

Liziuzayani: *He took me to meet the headteacher and other teachers in the morning.*

The children were asked about the role played by their Itinerant Teacher. All the children knew their ITs well and said that they enjoyed working with them. It was clear that ITs had a role in facilitating social, emotional development as well as supporting academic progress. One of the older participants described how his IT had helped

rebuild his confidence through counselling and regular Braille tuition.

Azibo: *When I lost my sight I didn't think I could learn to write again. I felt useless and unable to do anything at school. I wanted to stop going to school. But Mrs ** helped me so much. She visited me at home and talked me about what she can do. I didn't know I could learn Braille and she showed me how to do it.*

Interviewer: *How do you feel about learning Braille now?*

Azibo: *I haven't mastered Braille but I'm working hard. I think through hard work I can master Braille. I now have a Brailier, an abacus for maths and a handframe.*

Interviewer: *What have been the most challenging parts of learning?*

Azibo: *I sometimes feel alone and not able to do the work. Mrs** is able to help me with course work and prepare for exams.*

Interviewer: *How prepared are you for your exams?*

Azibo: *I'm getting ready for the exams and working hard to pass them... I want to go to secondary school and become a radio announcer.*

Reflections on support at home

Poverty was a significant barrier to children's attendance and progress at school. Some children talked about the problem of hunger and how they sometimes found it difficult to walk to school or stay awake during lessons because of a lack of food. Nevertheless the children we spoke to felt a strong sense of commitment to their school and did not want to miss lessons.

Mandondo: *I don't want to miss school or I won't learn. I like school and want to go. When I'm hungry, I feel tired at school and want to sleep.*

Gilbert: *I sometimes don't have breakfast but want to go to school. My mother says she can't find food so doesn't let me go to school.*

The children's observations were born out in separate interviews recorded with parents.

Mandondo's mother: *I have noticed some changes...he doesn't want to miss school...he wants to keep his things in order. He is able to do some household chores like drawing water and doesn't want someone to wash him. He wants to go to school even when there is no food, but he still wants to go'.*

Isaac's mother: *Isaac fails to go to school due to the lack of food or soap at home. My husband does not assist me in any way.*

The children were asked to comment on the visits ITs made to their homes. They described the additional academic support they received during these visits.

Isaac: *My teacher listened to me read a story and I had to write some words.*

Interviewer: *Did he give you homework?*

Isaac: *He told me to read my books and use my Brailier.*

Interviewer: *Where do you like learning?*

Isaac: *I like to learn at home because it is quiet.*

We were also interested in learning more about the role of the children's 'siblings' and the extent to which they were able to help their brother or sister. As part of the research project, siblings had received some basic braille tuition at the braille summer schools. Five children were positive about the help or encouragement they were receiving from their siblings but the support seemed to be difficult to sustain.

Thambo: *My brother is telling me to go to school and is assisting me with Braille. He helps me to read the books.*

Interviewer: *Do you enjoy learning with your brother?*

Thambo: *Sometimes it is good, but he is always away working or doing other things. I usually have to learn by myself.*

Personal concerns about their learning

A number of children raised concerns about their education and the level of support they were receiving. All the children seemed to have some reservations about their school and one boy said that he would prefer learning at a residential resource centre for children with visual impairment, even if it meant living away from his family.

Isaac: *I don't have friends in my class. My friends are books. I find it difficult to concentrate and would like to go to a resource centre like M***

Interviewer: *Would you not miss your school, home and family?*

Isaac: *Yes I will miss my family. (But) I want to learn Braille well.*

The older children (standard 3 – 8) also seemed to be aware of the barriers their teachers were facing on a day-to-day level. They were aware of the lack of appropriate resources, i.e. the necessary books in Braille to learn. They were also conscious of how their sighted peers were able to read and write faster and felt that a Perkins Braille could help level the playing field in terms of writing.

Interviewer: *'What message would you like to give to the people who are in charge of your education?'*

Christopher: *'I think the government and other well wishers should support learners who are blind by providing them with learning resources'*

Families too are sensitive to the issues around the educational placement of their children. They generally seemed happy to support the education of their children at their local schools as long as they felt that their children were supported in class and were making progress. However, there is a perception among some families that specialist educational provision is the best long term option for their children.

Azibo's brother: *We considered and tried sending him to a resource centre so that he can learn Braille and have a future!*

Summary

The research suggested that children are able and often keen to articulate the barriers that face them in their learning. Allowing children opportunities to express their opinion regarding their education to an independent advocate and having those opinions officially regarded could be helpful in establishing appropriate intervention strategies.

Our findings support the conclusion that all children, especially older children, should be consulted in a sensitive way about decisions about provision and support requirements whenever possible. The voice of children and young people with visual impairment can be a powerful tool in assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness of the educational services they are offered and can be used as a source for gaining unique insights into services about how they might be improved.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt within the heart.

- Helen Keller

Inclusion in Swedish Classrooms

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Sweden led the way for inclusive education in the 1980s, moving nearly all the blind and partially sighted children out of special schools and into mainstream. More than 20 years on, a Swedish research team is taking a fresh look at the system, in an attempt to identify the factors that must be in place for successful learning to happen. This report is from research team members Annica Winberg, Anders Rönnbäck and Kim de Verdier.

Until 1986 there was a single special school in Sweden where all children with sight problems were sent as residential students. This school was closed in 1986. Since then the majority of children with visual impairment have attended mainstream schools.

Now, 20 years after closing the special school, what have we learned? How well have we succeeded with the goal of inclusion? This question inspired us to start an interdisciplinary research project to explore factors for successful inclusion, from a pedagogical, psychological and social perspective. The overall aim of the project has been to deepen our knowledge about how a student who uses braille can be included as fully as possible in the teaching situation and in the social life of the classroom.

The Project

The project consists of two studies. The first study is an explorative survey, based on a questionnaire that was sent to all classroom teachers who taught a braille reading student in a mainstream school in a certain year. The main aim of the survey was to get

an overview of the learning experience for the braille reading students in Sweden. The second part of the project is a long term case study. The target group in the case study was all seven braille reading children who started school in a mainstream setting in a certain year and also their teachers, support teachers and parents. This article focuses on the case study findings.

The target group consisted of four girls and three boys; four were blind and three had residual vision. They were all at different mainstream schools. Some of the children were highly functioning both intellectually and socially, while other children had delayed intellectual and social development, some with behaviour problems.

The children were studied during their first three years of school. Twice a year we interviewed the children, teachers and support teachers. Three years after the children began school, we also interviewed the parents. The interviews focused on the children's school situation and their opportunities to participate and be included in classroom activities.

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Important Factors for Inclusion

Organisational factors

Today, classroom teachers are expected to meet the needs of braille reading students with the assistance of a support teacher. Teachers attend training courses at the national resource centre for children with visual impairment, and they can also receive support from local advisers for visually impaired children.

The teachers who took part in the study felt that two full time teachers in the classroom are necessary. "Since I have a colleague who is also a trained teacher, I feel quite confident. I know that she is qualified to teach the way I do, and therefore we can change roles very easily." The teachers need to have an equal level of education, in order to create flexibility in the role of the teacher and the methods used. Extra time for planning and preparation is necessary to enable the braille reading student to be part of the same activities as their classmates.

In Sweden all braille-reading students are taught to use technical aids such as an adapted computer and/or CCTV as early as in first grade. Technical aids seem to be important tools for inclusion, especially when used for co-operation with sighted peers. Used in co-operative tasks, especially the computer, they provide great opportunities for the braille reader to work on equal terms with sighted peers.

Group factors

The children's relationships to their classmates varied considerably, both concerning quality and frequency. Some of the children had completely equal relations to their classmates as their sighted peers. Others were quite lonely or had mainly unequal relations, in the sense that the sighted children acted as "little grown ups" who tried to help and take care of the visually impaired child.

Being in a smaller group (between two and four) seemed to facilitate communication between the children with visual impairment and the sighted children. This was evident both in educational and play situations. The small group made it easier for the children both to understand what was going on and to participate in, and contribute to, the activity. For school tasks, paired activities were by far the most successful way to enable the child with visual impairment to take part in activities.

We also found that a successful way to increase the visually impaired child's opportunities for inclusion was to frequently take part in group strengthening activities, such as drama or discussion groups. This was a good way to make the visually impaired child more aware of what is going on between other children, to straighten out misunderstandings and to encourage all the children to get to know each other better.

Individual factors

Good cognitive and social skills seemed to be important to overcome difficulties that come with the lack of vision. To compensate for the visual disability, teachers need to help the child to develop adequate tools appropriate to their needs.

Several of the children in the target group expressed a very insecure self-concept. One teacher commented on a learner: "He is always afraid when it comes to new activities. He says that he doesn't think he will manage as well as the others."

Learners found it difficult to describe things that they were good at, and often defined themselves as less skilled than other children. This is important information and we need to focus on how to strengthen the children's self-confidence.

Many of the children in the target group developed emotional difficulties during their first years of

school. This experience is reflected by other research that points to children with disabilities having emotional difficulties arising out of being “different”. It is important to be aware of the particular vulnerability in these children and for teachers and parents to correctly interpret behaviors and reactions and give the child the right support.

What's most important to parents?

For parents, long term planning concerning teaching support seemed to be extremely important. As a parent you know how fragile your child's support system can be, both in terms of staff and technical help. For these parents the most important thing was that the teachers had the right qualifications for the job, and acknowledged that their child had special needs that had to be met. As a parent you are constantly aware that your child in some respects doesn't have the same opportunities as other children and as a parent, of course you wish for the best possible conditions to make up for this.

Several parents stressed that a positive attitude from the head of the school is of greatest importance, because it helps to set the agenda for an inclusive environment. Some parents said that they sometimes felt that their child implied an economic burden for the school district, which of course is something parents shouldn't need to worry about.

Teachers' experiences

Teaching a braille reading student within a mainstream setting had been both a learning and development experience for the teachers who participated in the study. It became evident that combining verbal and tactile teaching methods contributed to greater clarity in the teaching, which was positive for all the children in the group.

Some of the teachers thought that increased emphasis on verbal interpretation had a positive impact on the understanding of language for all the children. Similarly the requirement for greater visual interpretation in learning made the other children use a lot more descriptions and adjectives in their language than they probably would have done if the visually impaired child hadn't been in the class.

In addition to the positive experiences, the teachers also stressed that creating an optimal teaching environment puts specific demands on everyone involved – teachers, parents, the other children and the braille reading student himself/herself.

Inclusive education – a challenge

To succeed in creating an inclusive environment we would like to point out the importance of focusing on the whole situation around the child and how different factors continuously interact with each other in an ongoing process. It is important to focus on organisational, group and individual factors to be able to analyse the situation around the child and to find solutions to any problems.

We also believe that for successful inclusion you have to identify certain tensions that have to be dealt with and balanced every day. For example, the child's need for individual teaching versus the importance of spending enough time in the classroom to be accepted as one in the group.

In this brief summary of results from our case study we have put forward some of the factors that we think are of importance for inclusion, but of course there are also many challenges to making inclusion successful. We believe that most important is to acknowledge the challenges for each child and each school environment, in order to make optimal development for the child possible.

More about Education and Special Educational Needs in Sweden

- In Sweden, teachers can become specialist teachers of the blind by completing a postgraduate course.
- Support for a child in class can come from either an assistant or a qualified teacher.
- There are roughly 3000 children up to the age of 19 with sight problems.
- 10 to 15 children per year become braille readers.
- There are 20-25 children in a typical mainstream school class.
- There are still some residential schools for children with complex needs, including Eke School for children who also have visual impairment.
- Children start pre-school at six and school at seven.
- Blind children begin preparing for braille reading before school age, via tactile stimulation and literacy activities. Parents are encouraged to attend braille courses at the Swedish National Agency for SEN and Schools.
- In Sweden teachers in primary schools usually teach the same group of students for a period of at least three years.

FIFTH AFRICA FORUM Call for Papers

The IDP and the Ghana Blind Union (GBU) is proud to announce the call for papers for the Fifth Africa Forum, which will be held at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) Accra, Ghana, on July 3–8, 2011.

Papers for this important Forum should build on the theme **“ACCESS AFRICA: Exploring the full benefit of Social Inclusion for all Persons”**.

Papers should not exceed ten to fifteen minutes' duration. Presenters will work in panels of 3-4 persons based on the subject of their submissions. We are seeking papers built on practical life experience, action for social transformation, academic research and/or the development of knowledge from program implementation. In addition, we encourage organizations that are involved in policy development to submit papers for open discussion on the issues that their work is addressing.

Papers should fit into any of the following sub/themes of the Forum:

- **Technology as a tool for social and economic empowerment**
- **Social responsibility and access to a sustainable and enabling environment**
- **Applying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities! Giving meaning to the convention in creating equality and opportunity for those who are blind and partially sighted**
- **Diversity in the spectrum of vision loss!**

Abstracts should not exceed two hundred words and should be sent via email or fax with the title: **“Abstract for Fifth Africa Forum”** in the subject line of an email. Abstracts should be sent **no later than October 31, 2010** and should be sent to: **aubrey.webson@perkins.org** or, **ongolo@africandecade.co.za** or via fax to **+1-617-923-8076** in the U.S.

Promoting Inclusion in Mathematics and Science in Secondary Mainstream Education

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Introduction

Here in the Netherlands we have a lot of programs, initiated by our government, to encourage more young people to specialize in maths and science. These programs are successful; and the numbers of sighted students at all levels that choose these disciplines are rising. This is important for our economy and it offers students well paid career opportunities.

Over the past decade, I have discussed the question of how to promote equal opportunities in maths and science for children who are blind with many people from all over the world. Although there are a lot of differences in the specific situation of each country, the broad challenges that we face in secondary education in The Netherlands in maths and science teaching to children who are blind are encountered everywhere. I have often heard it said that it is impossible for blind students to participate in maths lessons on equal terms in a class of sighted students. This is clearly not so, and it is high time for those people who have the expertise in teaching these subjects to learners with VI to join forces and share information through international cooperation.

There are many possible solutions, but the problem is that there are very few people with the expertise to apply them and is often very difficult for VI students, and their teachers or parents, to identify appropriate teaching adaptations in maths and science and to understand all the benefits assistive

technology has to offer in these subjects. But this summer, at the preconference of ICCHP in Vienna, 12 and 13 July 2010, a start will be made on addressing this issue through the introduction of a Summer 'university' for students and teachers.

The goals of this programme will be given towards the end of this article, but the central argument of this article is that the subject choices of students in Secondary and Higher Education who are blind should not be determined by whether expert teachers or appropriate learning materials happen to be available in the particular area they want to work. If the student has the talent and motivation to succeed in a subject they should be encouraged and enabled to do it. If not, 'Inclusion' is failing them – and let's face it, it often does. In mainstream settings, the needs and aspirations of many blind students too often go unmet in maths and science and this may account for the rising numbers of applications to specialist schools like the Carl Strehl Schule in Marburg where there is specialist expertise in teaching these subjects to blind students.

The situation in mainstream secondary education in the Netherlands

In order to make it easier for you to compare the situation in your own country with the situation from which I write this article, let me give you some very brief headline information about the situation in The Netherlands.

We have 50 Braille students and roughly the same number of very low vision students in mainstream secondary education in the Netherlands. Our overall mainstreaming rate is 75 %, although for Braille students this percentage is a little lower at around 70 %. About 50% of these students will go to university, with most of the rest going into vocational education. This apparently high success rate possibly needs to be seen in the light of the fact that most VI students who have additional needs are not found in mainstream and attend specialist schools.

In secondary education itinerant teachers do not offer direct teaching to children. They give educational advice and support to schools and classteachers and, where necessary, they offer social and emotional support to the student. Mainstream teachers are invited to in-service training programmes and short courses (although it is not always possible for them to attend), but while a lot of information is made available to them online, they get no extra time or assistance in the classroom for their blind students.

Students in the Netherlands don't learn specialist codes in maths, physics or chemistry and they work in uncontracted Braille. Students are introduced to literacy through 6 dot Braille, and between the ages of 6 to 8 they start working with 8 dot Braille displays. Only very few students learn the music Braille code, and teachers of Braille music are hard to find. For computational mathematics we use a linear notation, and maths is usually recorded using a 'qwerty' laptop keyboard. In secondary education hard copy embossed Braille is rarely available. Blind students work on laptops with screenreader software, refreshable Braille displays, speech output (through a headset) and a qwerty keyboard input.

The educational institutes for the VI have their own specialist schools and provide itinerant teaching. There is a national resource centre that produces some schoolbooks in accessible formats and images can be put into relief at request of the mainstream teacher or the student. This centre is also serving other Special Needs students with reading challenges (especially Dyslexia) and it is quite separate from the educational institutes for the VI.

What are the barriers to maths and science education in secondary mainstream education?

A lack of time for individual explanation

A key barrier to attainment in maths and science is the lack of time for individual explanation. Even very skilled teachers from mainstream schools often don't know how to approach the teaching of maths to a child who is blind. Apart from the lack of Braille knowledge, they often don't have the time to give the amount of individual explanation children need or the time to check that the student has understood the concepts. In the Netherlands, as mentioned earlier, there is the additional barrier of lack of access to hard copy Braille and the lack of specialist codes.

Negative attitudes

Blind students have the same talents as sighted students and some have a real talent for maths and science. However many teachers and other professionals see these subjects as unsuitable options for Braille students and are unaware of the possibilities that higher level Maths and science can offer to them. This negative attitude in turn influences the beliefs of the students involved. Often this negative attitude is a result of ignorance; some people just cannot imagine how students who are blind could tackle maths formulae or read and draw diagrams without sight.

An article that describes very clearly the effects of this negativity is 'Making Sense of Math', by Alicia Verlager. When Alicia was at school she couldn't see what was on the board in maths class. Her teacher told her to sit at the front of the class but did nothing to communicate with her. She describes how she would sit in class passively, pretending nothing was wrong and not participating. She barely passed her exams. When she went to college Alicia wrote: "While I felt confident about my abilities in other subjects, I went to college quite certain I would fail math. I had barely passed those high school math courses when I could still read print and use a pencil; how on earth was I going to do math without those basic necessities?"

"My own anxieties were unfortunately often reinforced by discouraging comments, some blatant and some more subtly offered as "advice" from other people. Some professors still inform blind students on the first day of class that they "don't belong in this class", or that they "might be happier somewhere else".

There are even plenty of people, some of whom should know better, who claim that blind people can't "do" maths, and many blind and low-vision students are encouraged to waive the math requirement or to substitute some other course." In Alicia's case, a little research soon produced a list of famous blind mathematicians but this didn't leave her any wiser about how to handle the basics of her lower-level math course. "Something as simple as reading the math problem can seem quite overwhelming at first, let alone surviving a course which prohibits the use of a calculator."

Alicia was able to break through this impasse by taking an active attitude and really participating in sessions, asking questions and making communication happen. She really got the hang of

maths and wrote a maths handbook containing tips for teachers.

Such negative attitudes can have devastating effects on students who are 12 to 16 years old. Most youngsters do not have the ability at that age to break through such a barrier and may feel that starting to ask questions merely shows that their lack of understanding. By the time they develop the confidence to question their teachers; the damage is often done and is difficult to mend.

Practical problems

This lack of engagement on the side of teachers and other professionals is often caused by ignorance, but there are some genuine practical problems: most classteachers in mainstream have no expertise or experience of how to teach math to Braille students. They often face one or more of these issues:

- *There are no easy and ready made instructions for teachers on how to teach a particular subject to the first and possibly only Braille student that they will ever have in their class.*
- *Braille notation is a potential barrier to communication with sighted peers and teachers.*
- *Reading or drawing diagrams can present particular problems.*
- *Learning material is often late, and is sometimes incomplete or lacking altogether.*

So teachers often have a lot of genuine obstacles to negotiate before the real work can begin. In every country conditions are different, but the above problems are fairly commonplace.

Lack of experts

In regards to the Dutch situation, there are small numbers of students with a relatively large geographical spread, so it is not surprising that

it is difficult to maintain expertise. For the mainstream teachers, the blind student in their class is almost always both their first and last blind student. The teachers may become experts, and in the best case scenario will write down their experiences, but only on very rare occasions might they advise or coach another teacher. Their expertise will fade relatively quickly. Our itinerant teachers have no teaching responsibilities, and this in itself adds to the difficulty of building and maintaining their own expertise.

But even in countries where the system provides Braille-certified itinerant teachers who assist the students, expertise is not always available because specialists who can support Braille maths at all levels are scarce. All over Europe students are more and more widely spread and sometimes traveling times alone prohibit the match of need with expertise.

At the same time, due to integration/inclusion policies, special schools for the visually impaired in many countries have more and more trouble retaining their curricular expertise as the population of their school changes to cater for students who have additional care or protection needs. Students who want to do maths at a higher level are already a rare exception in schools for the blind, and as numbers of children in these schools go down and the needs of the students become more complex, it may be that some teachers have no Braille students in his class for years in a row. When that happens specialist schools are no longer a breeding place for expertise on the curriculum subjects we are discussing here.

Finding new ways

Let's go back to Holland. By the beginning of the last decade we were facing the problems described. Students were not taught a Braille maths Code and,

at best, (in primary education) the itinerant teacher introduced occasional maths signs as they occurred in the textbook. The resource centre did use an adapted maths code, but this was a simplified version, often presented as a set of signs and symbols on the first pages of the textbook. As Braille translators became more and more unskilled in working with the code, the Braille sign used for a particular function sometimes even differed from book to book. The resource centre was originally set up to produce (embossed) Braille books so when students started to demand 'digital' versions of maths texts, they often received material in a format that was unreadable on screen. When writing maths, students often developed their own solutions to the problem of recording their maths work on a laptop using a standard keyboard entry.

As a result of concerns about the situation, a working group of maths teachers was set up to develop a notation that would allow clear communication between blind and sighted students and blind students and sighted teachers in maths work. The situation was urgent since we had a couple of students that needed to do maths right away. So we quickly developed a linear notation that came to be called '**Dedicon Maths Notation**' <http://wiskunde.dedicon.nl/> that was based on the notation already used in programs like Maple, Mathematica, sometimes Excel.

It is often difficult for people who were raised with traditional Braille Codes to understand how maths can be taught or learnt through the new technology. Traditional maths codes were built on Braille and tactile perception, and the people designing them were thinking in dots. In our way of working, Braille students are taught to think in the same way as print users. The notation we have developed is not intended to be fully 'representational' as traditional Braille codes are,

but our print linear notation is semantical or meaning based. This meaning-based notation is a simple code that both blind and fully sighted children can understand and it allows blind and sighted children to work on maths together.

It is a success: Maths and science are accessible again in secondary education and several students each year pass the final exams. However we are not yet sure whether this linear notation would prove sufficient for the demands of University-level work. All science students of higher education use a computer language called LaTeX which can be used for editing texts that contain math formulae. It too is a linear notation and University Blind students use it both to read and record their maths and science work. We feel that it would be good to train new students to use LaTeX before they enter university, because at the moment they are in the difficult position of having to read and write at a level higher than at school right from the first day.

No doubt there will be hot debates at the Summer University this year in Vienna over questions such as: Are braille math codes still necessary? Do we need them across all phases of education? Do Braille codes really provide major teaching and learning advantages?

A Summer 'university' on Maths and Science

On 12 and 13 July 2010, in Vienna, at the preconference of ICCHP, there is a Summer university for students who want to follow subjects involving maths, statistics or science. The programme can be found at <http://www.icchp.org/programme/summeruniversity>. Through hands-on workshops, students from many different countries will have the opportunity to try out accessible hardware and software, including technology that gives access to diagrams.

At the Summer university, students will be able to attend workshops in LaTeX, LiTeX and Lambda. In some countries LaTeX is already being used in secondary education, but like braille maths codes, LaTeX is inaccessible to their teachers and sighted peers. A Marburg teacher subsequently developed LiTeX, a macro program that enables users to write and solve math problems and chemical formulae and structures, which can be used both by sighted students and by blind students using JAWS as a screenreader. The Lambda project (<http://www.lambdaproject.org/>) has designed a new code that can easily be learnt and used by both sighted and blind students.

Encouragingly more teachers than students have registered for the Summer University. That is perfect: we need expert teachers to support students in secondary education. They are the people that can help realize our commonly shared goals of making it possible for blind students to make the choices that match their talents and ambitions. With the right training teachers can ensure that VI students are not excluded, but that they can cooperate and participate fully with sighted students.

The Summer university is not being planned as a one-off, the idea is that the people who attend will keep in touch through a network and we hope to make it a regular event. After the Summer University we hope to set up a network, supported by a website with information, a wiki, FAQ's and a forum, to bundle expertise and forces.

If you are unable to attend, but want to join this initiative, you are welcome to our forum: <http://www.accessipedia.info/forum>. Let's make inclusion a reality for this subject. Let's make sure blind students have access to math, science and statistics.

Teaching Mathematics:

Mainstream Classteachers' FAQs

(mostly frequently asked questions)

Mary Valera

Coordinator, C.E.B.E. San Francis of Asís Centre, Lima, Peru. E-mail : maryvalera@hotmail.com

Mathematics is a core subject in primary and secondary education in Peru, and the adaptation of mathematics to allow children with visual impairment equal access to the subject constitutes one of the biggest challenges to integration support services in my country.

The greatest concern that we encounter in our work on inclusion with teachers in mainstream Primary schools relates to the delivery of this subject and in some cases it accounts for their reluctance to accept children with visual impairment in their classrooms. It should be noted that we have an Education Act in Peru that requires all schools to open their doors and accept children regardless of their ethnicity, religion or disability, and, as a result, most of our students attend a school close to their homes.

We have collected together the most common concerns raised by class teachers during our visits to mainstream primary and secondary schools and we present them along with some short answers that we hope you will find useful in your own educational work.

1. How can you introduce mixed numbers and fractions?

Provide the student who is blind with the fractions written on cards, the same as you would for their peers. Using tactile material such as cardboard you can design a circle

puzzle (a sort of brain-teaser). The child has to build the circle, making it up out of 2 sections, or 4 sections or 8 sections as necessary, representing a half, a $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{8}$. You can also paste a small, rectangular card into the child's notebook with raised lines on it to show the divisions. The teacher should explain how, in print, the numerator is placed above denominator.

2. How can a number line be used to help understand decimals?

Make a raised number line, (with the horizontal line thicker than the vertical lines) and emboss Braille numbers under the vertical lines. The number line can be used for large figures (including decimals) but in such cases, exact accuracy should not be the main goal. For example if you ask the student to show you where -3.5273 comes on the line, an acceptable answer would be 'between -3 and -4 '.

3. How do you introduce place value?

Place value is first established using the braille number line, next the children can be encouraged to work out place value in their heads, and finally the student can be shown how to write numbers using the appropriate braille symbols to show their knowledge of relative value, i.e., whether numbers are larger, smaller or equal.

4. How do you introduce diagrams?

You can make simple raised diagrams from a variety of materials such as : matchsticks, string, wool etc.; be careful to explain how they work to the students and allow them to explore any diagrams that you have prepared by touch well in advance of the lesson.

With sufficient practice, students in high school may get to the stage where they no longer need to have a raised diagram in front to them. You might only need to verbally describe the diagram to the student, and once the student understands the principle, they should be able to apply the theories and properties of shape that they have learnt. For example you can say “in a triangle, one angle measures 30 degrees and another measures 80 degrees, how big is the third angle?”. The student will respond: “70 degrees” because they have already learned that the sum of the internal angles of all triangles must be 180° .

5. How do you introduce calculations with mixed terms?

Blind students can record numbers and letters for algebraic terms using Braille symbols and they can use braille to carry out the same tasks as their peers, for example: balancing equations, addition, etc. Preferably mixed terms should contain no more than two variables so as not to make the answer too complicated.

6. How do you teach relationships and functions?

There is no problem writing them down because there are braille symbols to represent them. But when you produce graphs to instruct the student make sure the lines are presented in high relief from the grid; students

generally will not be able to produce graphs themselves but should be able to recognise the functions presented on a chart, the relationships and the table of contents.

7. How do you introduce computation to a blind student ?

The student will write out some model answers in braille, but will mainly work out answers using mental arithmetic. Because recording sums in Braille takes up a lot of time and space, the student can be encouraged to explain verbally to the teacher all the steps they took to reach the answer. The teacher can then check if the steps taken were correct and if the child has taken a wrong step the teacher can help explain the mistake to the student.

8. How do you deal with sets and Venn Diagrams?

To start with you can make diagrams using different textures. It's best to start with simple problems that contain only two sets. For problems with three sets you will definitely need to produce a diagram, without it the blind child won't be able to do it in their own head. Problems with only two sets can be presented orally or treated as equations.

9. How do you teach graphs to a blind student?

The blind student will not usually be able to make their own graphs, but you can prepare a few different examples using the same data set, so that the student comes to recognise different types of graphs and their uses. Graphs can be made up from a variety of materials; card, wool, string, wire (for linear diagrams) plastic paper, corrugated paper, sandpaper, etc. (for bar charts or pie charts) so that the student can tell one type of graph from another.

Then when students hear information about graphs, they at least have some idea what the teacher is talking about, and when they are presented with information they can imagine how it might be represented in graphs.

10. How do you introduce the Pythagoras's theorem?

Use raised line diagrams to explain the theorem to the students and allow them to practise the theorem using a diagram that can change shape. When the students have established a mental representation of the diagram, give them the data and allow them to apply the principles and properties they have learnt. For example: in a triangle, the hypotenuse is 10 cm and one side is 8 cm, how long is the other side? The student then applies the Pythagorean theorem in their head without the graph using their mental

representation of a triangle. The same method can be applied to circles.

11. Do you how introduce complex diagrams?

Obviously raised line diagrams that have a great amount of complex detail in them are not very helpful to blind students. In such cases you must carefully select only clear diagrams that will serve to develop the understanding you want the students to achieve, and avoid cumbersome graphics that sometimes only serve to promote mechanical rote learning.

12 How do you teach students to solve equations with two variables?

Preferably the student should be shown the different methods for solving simultaneous equations, then the student should copy them down in braille and then be given the freedom to choose the method that they find most appropriate and easiest to apply.


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News from Deafblind International

Stan Munroe, DbI Information Officer

Dear Friends,

First, I wish to introduce myself as the new Information Officer for DbI. The handover from Eileen Boothroyd (Sense UK) to the Canadian Deafblind Association (CDBA) and myself took place April 01, 2010. I have been on the DbI Council since 1999 and the Management Committee since 2008. My connection with deafblindness began as a parent of a child born deafblind from congenital rubella syndrome. That situation led me and others to form the Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association, in 1975. The organization is now called the Canadian Deafblind Association or CDBA. Following a number of years of volunteering in various positions, I took contract employment with the organization in various capacities. These have included: establishing a registry for people who are deafblind, a survey of late manifestations of congenital rubella syndrome, managing the 2003 DbI World Conference (Mississauga, Canada 2003) and now outgoing as Executive Director. The information role is an exciting new challenge for me and for CDBA, as we take over this very significant function for DbI during an important transition phase.

DbI wishes to extend our regret that ICEVI had to cancel its upcoming conference scheduled for Bangkok, Thailand this August. As a valued partner, we empathize with your organization as you deal with the many implications of this decision. Not many years ago we considered a similar decision when the Canadian organizers of the DbI World Conference were facing the fear of a widespread SARS epidemic. Fortunately the situation was not as dire as you are experiencing this year.

As we are now in the active phase of planning for our upcoming World Conference in 2011, we must also consider the risks of events that are outside our control. Already within the four year conference planning cycle we moved the conference venue to Sao Paulo (Brazil) because of the fear of violence and the economic conditions from our initial choice of New Delhi, India. Let's hope we can be spared a similar fate as we head towards late September 2011 in Brazil.

We are so pleased that several of our Networks are organizing international special events this year. The DbI Communication Network is organizing a course "The Magic of Dialogue" in Paris, France (late June 2010) and the Acquired Deafblindness Network has its "Building Bridges-connecting people" conference scheduled for 27 September – 3 October, in Aalborg, Denmark. These DbI related events reinforce the type of contribution that our Networks can make towards promoting best practices among professionals working with individuals who are deafblind.

As indicated above, the DbI information program is in a transition phase as we explore ways to enhance the delivery of information on deafblindness to our members and the public at large. This is also a great opportunity to explore further types of collaboration between our two organizations to supply information to satisfy an ever increasing demand for knowledge about and services for people with sensory disabilities.

Again we congratulate you for your continued efforts in your "Education for All" program and we look forward as well to collaboration on this initiative. Best of luck to your organization in the months ahead as you recover from this setback.



News from International Blind Sport Federation

Visually Impaired Athletes conquer the hills and trails of Whistler:

Report from the 2010 Paralympic winter games

The 2010 Paralympic Winter Games were officially declared opened by IPC President, Sir Phillip Craven, in front of over 50 000 enthusiastic screaming spectators on March 12, 2010 at BC Place in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The opening and closing ceremonies were a sight to be seen and for the first time ever, both ceremonies were described.

Those who were visually impaired could request a headset. Thanks to this service those who were blind or visually impaired could appreciate the spectacular costumes, daring stunts that were performed by people with disabilities and really experience the wonder and excitement of the moment. Some events, such as sledge hockey and curling offered audio commentators as well. All the events were broadcast on IPC TV via the internet. This all served to allow visually impaired spectators to be able to get the blow by blow description of what was happening in these elite competitions.

There were some outstanding performances by athletes who are blind or visually impaired. Verena Bentele (Germany) was the star of the show, winning 4 Gold Medals in the Women's 15 km cross country, the women's 12.5 km biathlon, the women's 5 km cross country classic and the women's biathlon 3 km pursuit. Viviane Forest (Canada) also excelled, winning 5 medals, topped by a gold medal in Women's Downhill. Henrieta Farkasova (Slovakia) did extremely well; she won 3 Gold and 1 Silver in the downhill disciplines. The winner of the Women's Slalom was Sabine Gasteiger from Austria. Sabine is

53 years of age! She also won a Silver in the Women's Giant Slalom. Although Nikolay Polukhin (Russia) won no Gold medals, he did win a total of 4 medals in the cross country events. Jakub Krako (Slovakia) will be pleased with his 3 Gold medals in the downhnhill events. A surprise success came from Spain: Maiztegui Santacana won 1 Gold and 2 Silver in the downhill disciplines.

One of the stories that gained a lot of attention in Canada was that of Brian McKeever. He qualified for the Canadian Olympic Cross Country team but at the last minute the coaches decided to let another team member race in the men's Olympic 50 km ski marathon rather than Brian. He took that disappointment and turned it into 3 Paralympic gold medals at the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.

IBSA is very proud of the successes of all these athletes and all the visually impaired athletes who competed in the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. Many of these athletes started as young adults being supported by their national blind sports organizations. Although International Blind Sports Federation celebrates excellence we encourage participation in all physical activities by individuals who are visually impaired. Getting involved in sports and physical activity doesn't just benefit a person's body, but also provides social and psychological benefits by interacting with their visually impaired peers.

For more information about International Blind Sports Federation please look at our website at www.ibsa.es.

Readers of “The Educator” will recall, from a previous article, that one of the key initiatives included in the WBU Strategic Plan is our Right to Read Campaign whose goal is to make print information accessible to blind, low vision and other print handicapped individuals at the same time and the same price as the general public.

The reality that we face is that, even in the wealthiest markets, less than 5 percent of published books are accessible to people who are reading disabled. The WBU is leading the campaign, along with partner organizations such as: the International Federation of Library Associations, the DAISY Consortium, ICEVI and other partners to end the book famine. A key element of our campaign is the development of a copyright exceptions and limitations treaty with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). This article attempts to explain the purpose and rationale for the treaty, its importance to blind, low vision and other print disabled persons and in particular, its potential impact on improving educational opportunities for blind and low vision persons.

The objective of the treaty is to create an equitable situation around the world by enabling reading disabled persons to access published material and facilitating their participation in every part of life they choose. The treaty would create limited exceptions to the exclusive rights of authors under copyright, in order to make an accessible format of a work, and to distribute copies to persons who have reading disabilities. The treaty would also allow the cross-border export and import of accessible works that are created under such exceptions.

Ideally a treaty would not be needed if publishers published in accessible formats enabling persons with reading disabilities to buy books in the format

of their choice, although it is likely that a treaty might still be needed to enable the adaptation of charts, graphics, maps, particularly for textbooks as these would likely still need to be done by specialist agencies. But until the day comes that publishers routinely publish books in accessible formats, we need the treaty to enable resources to be shared worldwide. This will avoid duplication of expense and effort and provide a wider range of resources for education, life long learning and recreation to the millions of people who are currently denied this access.

Most accessible books are presently made by specialist agencies using charitable money. In over 90% of cases they use copyright exceptions to produce accessible books. Their resources are scarce even in high-income developed countries. Moreover, specialist agencies in different countries, often transcribe the same book because the copyright exceptions they use to make the accessible version are national in scope. To achieve the sharing of accessible books between reading disabled people’s organisations and resolve the problems mentioned above, there is a need for international harmonization of limitations and exceptions to copyrighted works. An international treaty on copyright exceptions for reading disabled people would be an effective way to do this.

Therefore, in May 2009 Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay proposed a “WIPO Treaty for Improved Access for Blind, Visually Impaired and other Reading Disabled Persons”. Mexico has now also joined as a co-sponsor of this treaty. Copies of this proposed treaty, in various languages, can be found at the following link : http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=122732

Importantly, the treaty ensures that reading disabled people’s organisations can help

themselves (while doing no harm) rather than leaving them to merely hope for help from others - help which the 5 per cent figure of accessible published material proves has been lacking for many years.

Even with the best will from all parties, and great progress, nobody can argue that ALL books will be provided by ALL rights holders to ALL reading disabled people in the foreseeable future. For the many instances where the rights holder files cannot be obtained, national and international law should provide for reading disabled people's organisations to make and share accessible copies.

The World Blind Union is lobbying governments which meet at the World Intellectual Property Organization, (WIPO) for a treaty to improve access to books for print disabled people. If the treaty proposal became law, it would be the first treaty on intellectual property to deal with the rights of users. (The others all strengthen copyright protection for rights holders such as publishers). As such, this battle is hugely political and we have faced ardent opposition from most rights holders and developed countries.

Consequently, our lobbying efforts include asking governments to support the treaty proposal tabled by Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay at the WIPO SCCR in May 2009. Specifically, we would like them to support the creation of a working group or diplomatic conference to work on the exact wording of the treaty in 2010. While clearly some progress has been made in our advocacy

efforts with many governments, other governments are still not on side and some rights holders, including publishers consider this treaty to be a threat, so our negotiations and advocacy efforts continue. It is our view that such a treaty would have no negative financial implications for authors or publishers as they themselves have chosen not to produce their materials in accessible formats.

Clearly, the adoption of the copyright exceptions treaty and our success with the Right to Read campaign will have positive implications for improved education for blind and low vision students. The adoption of such a treaty will facilitate the requirement of fully formatted Master copies of textbooks, thus facilitating their adaptation into accessible formats. And the ability to share accessible books across country boundaries will dramatically improve access to materials in all countries and, in particular developing countries.

Technology and electronic communications methods have removed many barriers to our ability to make printed material accessible in a timely and cost-effective way. It is for us now to remove some of the attitudinal and political barriers that continue to impede access to education for all visually impaired persons. The WBU welcomes the involvement of ICEVI in our Right to Read campaign and we would welcome the support and involvement of ICEVI members as we work with our governments and rights holders to end the book famine.



OBITUARY

Johanna Enqvist (wife of Mr. Harry Svensson, Second Vice-President, ICEVI) from Sweden who served as the coordinator of ICEVI's committee on Early Childhood Intervention during 1992-97 passed away on August 15, 2010. Johanna also took active role in the work of ICEVI Europe Regional Committee. ICEVI expresses its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

CONGRATULATIONS LARRY
ON THE CONFERMENT OF DOCTORAL DEGREE
ORATION
LAWRENCE FRANCIS CAMPBELL
HONORARY DOCTORATE OF HUMANE LETTERS

By
Kathleen Mary Huebner

Graduates, distinguished guests, supportive families and friends; faculty, administration and staff of Salus University, it is my honor to introduce you this afternoon to Mr. Lawrence Francis Campbell, originally from Boston, Massachusetts; today, truly a man of the world. Today, Salus University is honoring Larry Campbell with a Doctorate of Humane Letters.

Universities confer the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters upon individuals who have distinguished themselves through lifetime achievement and made contributions to society in the humanities. Lawrence "Larry" Campbell today is being granted this honorary degree for his extensive professional achievements in the area of education of children and rehabilitation of adults who are blind and visually impaired including those with multiple disabilities--throughout the

world. He has, since graduating from college worked in the United States and throughout the world, but in particular he has worked in developing nations.

Upon earning his undergraduate degree from Boston College he joined the Peace Corps and did community development work in Jamaica. That was the beginning of his commitment to service. He then earned his graduate degree from Boston College in Orientation and Mobility for individuals who are blind and visually impaired, and that was the beginning of his dedication to improving educational services for children who are blind and visually impaired.

He served as an Orientation and Mobility instructor, moved on to administrative positions at Oak Hill School for the Blind and later coordinated the teacher preparation



program in Deafblindness at Boston College. He spent 10 years at Helen Keller International in New York City where he was responsible for worldwide education and rehabilitation initiatives. In 1988, he became the first Director of the Hilton-Perkins International program where he developed, organized and supervised programs of individuals who were blind and visually impaired in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. In 1993, the Overbrook School for the Blind, here in Philadelphia, recruited Larry to administer their international programs and to direct the Overbrook Nippon Network on Education Technology for children who are blind and visually impaired.

The International Council for Education of People with Vision Impairment (ICEVI) is a professional non-governmental organization which was formed in 1952. It 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. Larry's involvement with ICEVI began very early in his professional career. In 1992, at the 40th anniversary of ICEVI's establishment, he became its Vice-President and in 2000 its President.

In the museum hall at Salus University there is a quote on the wall by Ralph Waldo Emerson that is applicable today. It is – "An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man". As one examines ICEVI today, it is quickly and clearly concluded that under the leadership of Larry Campbell, ICEVI grew significantly in size, scope, influence, activities, actions, policy implementation and financial stability.

During Larry's tenure as President he conceptualized and chaired the Global Task Force on "Education for All Children with Visual Impairment", strengthened the regional infrastructure and international conferences, and increased collaboration, partnerships and recognition by both inter and non-governmental organizations.

Larry's influence on improving rights, educational opportunities and global policies for those who are blind and visually impaired is beyond measure. Henry Adams stated, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops". We cannot measure the breadth of Larry's influence. We do know however, that there are children, adults, elderly persons who are blind and visually impaired throughout the world who are no longer scorned, shunned, refused an education, and deprived from living quality lives. Today, there are educational programs in remote villages in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and other regions of the world because of Larry Campbell's tireless work, talent, commitment, leadership, and appreciation of all mankind.

Larry is a child of the 60s and a Bostonian, so I am duty-bound to end my remarks with a quote from President John F. Kennedy by which Larry has lived:

"Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength of the nation" July 25, 1961.

Typhlo & Tactus goes Worldwide

The Typhlo & Tactus (T&T) organisation exists to improve the quality and quantity of tactile books available to young blind and partially sighted children. Participants share their ideas, knowledge and expertise, and collaborate on production of simple story books with multi-sensory illustrations which are fully accessible by touch.

Typhlo and Tactus was set up in 1999 and, until now, the activities of the group have been supported by grants from the EU. This funding has, to a large extent, restricted the reach of the group to a limited number of European countries. The money has enabled the group to hold an annual European tactile book competition with winning entries mass-produced by hand at the Les Doigts Qui Rêvent¹ workshop in Dijon, France.



Since 2000, the EU has funded production of 7,689 tactile books, all of which have been sold within the EU at a heavily-subsidised price. In addition, the T&T group has led workshops, presented at conferences and exhibited at large exhibitions and book fairs. This activity has raised awareness of the importance of tactile books and stimulated interest in design and production. In 2009 the group produced a compendium of articles on tactile books and related topics. The Typhlo & Tactus Guide to Children's Books with Tactile Illustrations can be ordered from the publisher, Philippe Claudet, Les Doigts Qui Rêvent (see contact details below); a shorter version is available on the T&T website (www.tactus.org).

The EU project has come to an end, and with it the funding for book production - at least for a while. But the Typhlo & Tactus organisation lives on and is planning a tactile book competition in 2011. This T&T competition will, for the first time, be open to creative people all over the world.

The T&T group is now seeking appropriate organisations worldwide willing to act as the national contact. This will involve promoting the competition, receiving all the entries from their country, carrying out a pre-selection involving blind children and adults, and sending the five best books to the T&T competition organisers. The most appropriate organisation to fulfil this role is likely to be a library for the blind or an organisation already involved in tactile book production, promotion or use. Each country will have just one T&T national contact organisation.

For more information on the activities of the Typhlo & Tactus group and the 2011 competition please contact Philippe Claudet (in French or English) at philippe.claudet@wanadoo.fr

¹ Ldqr : **Les Doigts Qui Rêvent** (Dreaming Fingers)

Charity since 1994

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