

Focus on Employment

pages 6-15

A New Constitution

pages 4-5

DEAFBLIND EDUCATION

Deafblind Education appears twice yearly, the two editions are dated January-June and July-December.

The editor will be pleased to receive articles, news items, letters, notices of books and information on coming events, such as conferences and courses, concerning the education of deafblind children and young adults. Photographs and drawings are welcome; they will be copied and returned.

All written material should be in the English or Spanish language and may be edited before publication. It should be sent for publication to arrive by the date below.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and should not be understood as representing the view of Dbl.

Deafblind International was formerly known as the International Association for the Education of Deafblind People.

Deafblind Education is also available in Spanish. If you are interested in receiving the Spanish edition please contact:

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

According to our own Dbl Calendar we are living *After Madrid Time* - and of course *Before Lisbon Time*.

First I would like to look back to Madrid. The European conference was a real inspiration for the participants and hopefully through the Publication of the Proceedings for many others as well. A very nice "spice" to the conference was the family camp which the organisers hosted on the same site as the main conference. We were cheered and inspired by the presence of the deafblind children and their families every day. Again we must thank ONCE and all the Spanish people for a very rich programme and good arrangements.

Internationally we are heading for the next conference in Lisbon in 1999. The theme *'Developing through Relationships; Celebrating Achievements'* follows up the previous conferences by, once again, emphasising deafblind people as members of the community and the importance of the qualified partner who can give them access to real



People who give speeches usually get comments on the content of their address. Can you guess what I had most comments about in Madrid? It was JOY, which I mentioned in my opening speech to the conference as one of the most important aspects of quality of life. Joy comes often from contacts, sharing, working together, succeeding. That is something I wish to everybody!

Marjaana Suosalmi

relationships. This conference is something to look forward to!

We have also heard exciting news from the Helen Keller Conference which was held in Colombia in September: a new world organisation of deafblind people has been founded. We welcome the new organisation and wish it the best of luck - and of course we do look forward to developing a good co-operative relationship with it in the future.

Valery Chulkov

It is with sadness that we report the death from cancer of our friend and colleague, Valery, on 4 December 1997. Valery was Head of the Deafblind Department at the Institute for Special Education in Moscow, and was Dbl's representative from Russia. A longer tribute will appear in the next edition of Deafblind Education. His funeral took place on 8 December 1997.

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EDITORIAL

The theme of employment is the focus for this new issue of *Deafblind Education*. Not only is it the subject of four key articles, but all the project and country reports reflect the ways in which colleagues and deafblind people are involved in working together in many different parts of the world to make things happen in our field.

Change is also in the air. The Dbl Executive reports its constitutional discussions and introduces us in more detail to the concept of Networking. Already a number of new groups are evolving. The magazine itself is having a bit of a shake-up, not only looking for a new name with a new editor, but wishing to actively encourage much wider participation and reader involvement in its pages. The contribution of our new regional correspondents is very welcome and we look forward to extending it.

Many of you will also know that last year a twin issue was created - the Spanish edition of *Deafblind Education* was produced and published and it now has the potential to vastly increase the number of people with whom we can have contact on a regular basis in Latin America and other Spanish-speaking countries around the world. I'm very grateful to Judith Varsavsky for all her work in the translation, editing and production.

As a hybrid publication, *Deafblind Education* is part-magazine and part-journal. To be effective, it needs to reflect the interests and concerns of its global readership, to tackle themes and ideas which are current for families, professionals and deafblind people, and through the content of its pages, to challenge and inform. In order to do this, it needs your support, either as an experienced professional, family member or someone new to the field.

It may prove difficult to stimulate satisfying discussion in a journal which is only published twice every twelve months, but the "Internet Forum" that Malcolm Matthews is working on should provide space for those who wish to "talk-back".

For most of us, however, the printed page will still remain our touchstone with friends and colleagues around the world, so get in touch, we're keen to hear from you.

EXECUTIVE NEWS

A New Constitution

The Dbl Executive Committee, the main Governing Body under the old constitution, had its final meeting during the 2 days prior to the European Conference in Madrid this July. 42 members from 16 countries were present.

The new constitution, following an extensive consultation exercise, was discussed and approved at the meeting.

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of Dbl now go much wider than education:

Deafblind International is the world association promoting services for deafblind people through international collaboration.

Its objects (purposes) are:

- **to promote and improve the recognition and awareness** of deafblindness as a unique congenital or acquired disability that affects children, adults and elderly people;
- **to support the civil rights** of deafblind people and the equalisation of opportunities in all aspects of life;
- **to encourage the development of networks** and opportunities for association and learning for professionals and to the benefit of deafblind people and their families;
- **to enable interaction** between deafblind people, families, professionals, organisations in the field and the wider community;
- **to promote and improve education** and opportunities for the personal development of deafblind people;
- **to encourage support and services** for deafblind people that lead to self-determination and good quality of life, and
- **to promote and improve quality** in services for deafblind people by encouraging research, staff development and training, policies that lead to good practice and the dissemination of information.

Membership

There are now voting and non-voting members. There are 2 main groups of voting members, which represent the two main dynamic constituencies within DBI: corporate members (divided into large and small according to the size of the subscriptions fees paid), and international networks.

The non-voting members can be any applicant not meeting the criteria for voting members, for instance, individuals, non-paying corporate members or national networks.

General Assembly, Council and Management Committee

The General Assembly remains as at present - a meeting for all voting members which is held at the World Conference. Its main role is to elect the Council, the President and Vice-President. It also approves the Report and Accounts of the Council and is the only body that can amend the constitution.

The Council is the new Governing Body of DBI. It is composed of 25 members plus the President and Vice-President. Up to 10 members will be large corporate members, and the remainder of the places are filled by election from the small corporate members and the recognised international networks. Members sit on the Council for the 4 years between World Conferences.

The Management Committee is responsible for the detailed management of DBI. It is elected by Council and is composed of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and 2 others. At the meeting, Rodney Clark (UK) was appointed Secretary and Jan van Dijk (Netherlands) Treasurer, both holding office until the first meeting of the new Council. The Management Committee is to meet in Dublin in November to organise the first meeting of the new Council.

These are then the main elements of the new constitution. Any reader wishing to have a full copy should contact Rodney Clark at the DBI Secretariat.

Networks

This is a new concept for DBI, although it recognises a reality that has existed for a long time. Networks enable people to share information and ideas, usually for their mutual benefit. In relation to DBI, there are probably two kinds of networks that may be appropriate - project-based networks and interest-based networks.

Project-based Networks

These are groups that form to tackle a specific project. They exist only for as long as it takes to complete the specific task. A project must have an outcome (e.g. production of training material, establishment of assessment service, organisation of series of training seminars, agreement of definition of deafblindness within a region) and a definite start and finish point.

This kind of network will function through exchange of information, discussion and decision-making. This may be face-to-face or through electronic media. 'Meetings' will be organised as necessary to move the project toward completion.

In a new and rapidly developing field such as deafblindness, there may be many projects that can be set up to help in development work.

Interest-based Networks

These groups will be made up of like-minded people who share a common interest. This interest may be characterised in many different ways (e.g. parents from a wide area, people from different professional backgrounds working within the same region, teachers of young children from several different countries).

These groups are likely to be long-standing, and will probably exchange information on a regular basis, whether or not they have anything specific to discuss.

In our low-incidence field, the opportunity to be in contact with others and to share good quality discussion is an important benefit of this type of network.

Network Co-ordinators

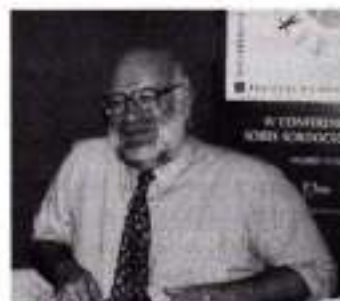
For both types of networks, co-ordination is required that is efficient and effective. Networks may have a single convenor or propose a committee approach. However this is organised, the efficient exchange and distribution of information (whether by meetings, newsletters, Internet bulletins, etc.) is essential. Networks do not require a single 'chair' or 'leader' of the network, but must demonstrate the facilities to make contact with network members. The way in which co-ordination is handled will be critical to the successful operation of a network!

The DBI Context

Some networks can be the same as the regional groups that have been proposed and, in some cases, have operated in the past. But the idea allows for a number of new possibilities, that will enable DBI to more completely meet the needs of its members.

Many busy professionals cannot give time to regular meetings to exchange information, but are very willing to join a group for a time-limited period to solve a problem or produce something of benefit to each member. This possibility has now been introduced to our structure.

In our new and developing field networking allows more experienced members to give support to new members. Both project and interest networks can operate at different levels - they can work both horizontally and vertically. By focusing on co-operative and collaborative approaches, Networks can develop dynamic forms for both the exchange of information and the development of language.



Rodney Clark

FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT

A different aspect of the term "Employment"?

Knut Johansen

**Leader of Solveigs Hus, Norway
- a centre for congenitally
deafblind people**

First of all, I think we ought to clarify what we actually are referring to when we talk about employment. Do we differentiate between ordinary employment "with a salary" and employment in the context of "something to do"?

What should be the purpose of employment? Is it because an individual needs to earn money for a living, or is it because the individual needs more challenges in order to increase his/her quality of life?

To put these questions into the right context, I will have to explain a little bit about our centre. Solveigs Hus is part of a private foundation called Hjemmet for Døve (Home for the Deaf), and is currently a residential centre for congenitally deafblind adults and a resource centre for congenitally deafblind people of all ages.

Our resource centre is one of four centres in Norway that the Ministry of Social Affairs has established, in collaboration with the Ministry of Research and Education. The three other centres are located in Oslo, Bergen and Tomsø.

Our resource centre provides services to congenitally deafblind people in the southern part of Norway. In co-operation with local networks, the services include observation, assessment and supervision. Specially

designed courses are provided according to the networks' individual needs. A network could be the staff members in a group-home, a school, a kindergarten, a respite care unit and/or the individual's family. All our services are provided on a voluntary basis. That means that it is always the individual's home community that has to take the initiative in order to receive services from our centre. Because the home communities have this responsibility, we have to be sure that they receive proper information about our services. So far, the communities are aware of our existence through information from The National Central Team for Deafblind people in Norway.

The resource centre was developed from the original part of Solveigs Hus, which was the residential service. Solveigs Hus was the first residential service for congenitally deafblind

adults in Norway, established in 1986.

The residential service provides housing and supported living for congenitally deafblind adults, in order to promote the individual's development of self-identity and quality of life. There is a continuous search to motivate and develop daytime activities, at different levels of complexity. It is our belief that through social interaction and communication, these activities will serve as options allowing the individual to create his/her own quality of life.

The formal agreements concerning the residential service are signed by the individual's home community. The costs are determined by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the home communities have to pay the decided amount of money. This money is supposed to cover the cost for the staff and for the entire day-to-day service

throughout the year.

Some of this money is spent on specially adapted working facilities for our residents, within another centre belonging to our organisation.

This centre provides a wide range of working tasks, and its employees are ordinary employment-seeking deaf people, deaf people with additional handicaps and people with both acquired and congenital deafblindness.

When we talk about employment in our context, we most often refer to the activity taking place in this centre. One of our residents, however, has her employment outside our organisation.

What is our philosophy and practice?

Bearing the needs of our residents in mind, I think we need to differentiate between the various aspects of employment. Of course I recognise that for a lot of deafblind people we talk about ordinary work, with ordinary payment.

For congenitally deafblind people in particular, I suggest that the term *employment* also relates to the work carried out in sheltered workshops, adapted workplaces and individual arrangements for developing meaningful activities that will not necessarily lead to income of some sort.

I know this will not be appropriate for a number of congenitally deafblind people either, but my emphasis is on congenitally deafblind individuals who are not able to perform ordinary work at the speed and rate that would be expected of their fellow-workers.

In our centre, we understand employment as job-related, motivating and meaningful activities, rather than a means to an income. The background and reason for this is that the deafblind residents at Solveigs Hus all receive social benefits, which is why they don't need the income to support their own living.

There are many aspects connected to the employment we help provide. We seek to fulfil the needs of interaction through various working tasks. Because the income is of less

importance, we have the opportunity to constantly search for meaningful working activities in order to increase the individual's quality of life.

The aim is to find meaningful activities that can be carried out in a secure environment, with familiar staff members, and encourage interaction with other people. In addition to this, we seek to find secure social settings which allow the deafblind individual to be him/herself, regardless of the type and degree of additional handicaps.

Because the residents do not have to work for an income, we see no point in striving towards a high productivity level. It is the activity itself that is essential, and the feeling of self-competence through succeeding in different working tasks. Lately, however, the concept of *money* has been introduced for some of the residents: when the work is done, money is received. Money can be used to buy something. In this context money has to come immediately after the work is done, and the amount of money will just be symbolic - just enough to buy an ice-cream, a magazine or whatever gives an immediate reward.

The main purpose of employment for the congenitally deafblind residents at Solveigs Hus is that the work should be defined as a meaningful activity performed in close interaction with staff members or co-workers. The work should be performed in a logical context and could also function as a contribution to the community in the group home. Whether this work results in a payment of some sort is not so important - we value other forms of reward, rather than by the pay-check.

We search for secure, adapted work in a framework that allows the individual to be in charge of his/her own working hours and breaks. By this, the individual can take control of his/her own situation and working day. To achieve this, we need staff members who have a positive and interested attitude towards the task in question. The staff members have to be acquainted with the individual, in order to read and interpret the vague signals that may be uttered by the person in question. That is why the residents at Solveigs Hus are accompanied by our own staff members, and do not have to be dependent upon unknown people who cannot understand their particular

ways of communication. This creates better situations where much frustration is avoided, and as a result we are able to follow-up the work in a consistent manner.

One example is wood-cutting and the packing of wood logs for sale. The deafblind residents have no difficulty in fulfilling the task, but they achieve it at quite a different pace from their deaf co-workers. In this work they can follow the whole process of wood-cutting; from cutting down the tree, transportation of the tree through the woods to the place where they participate in cutting the tree into suitable logs for stoves and fireplaces. The activity ends with lighting a fire to observe the burning of the logs, and to experience the feeling of the warmth that comes from it.

While some residents perform the work in this chain of events, another resident prepares something good to eat, and serves the food in the coffee break.

Another example is art work. One of our residents visits an artist living not far from our centre. This particular resident has for many years been a productive artist herself, and has had her own exhibitions in several European countries. In order to further develop her artistic activities she works regularly with another artist, to gain inspiration and new techniques for her art.

If this is going to work out successfully and if she is *really* going to obtain this inspiration, it is obvious that she will be dependent upon someone with similar interests and a wider "know-how". She will, however, also be accompanied by some of our staff members due to her need to be interpreted and understood, and in order to transfer some of the artist's knowledge and experience to our staff.

In this article I have just mentioned two examples of how we try to arrange individually designed employment for the residents at our centre. We feel that we are on the right track, but constantly need to search for optional work tasks in order to present the residents with a real choice of work, because in addition to the need for consistency, there is also a need for variety.

This is what we understand by employment.

FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT

Alison's Diary

Janet McNeill and Alison Jameson
Sense East

At Sense East, we provide residential and day services for 66 deafblind adults, aged between 16 and 60. Provision therefore needs to be appropriate for a wide variety of ages, backgrounds and abilities. An important part of this provision is attendance at our vocational training workshops, which are situated both in the north and south of the region. The largest workshops are in the south, at Peterborough, where 5 units on a light industrial estate house 7 different departments and 3 classrooms. About 30 students attend the workshops daily, producing woodwork, pottery and jewellery, whilst learning new skills in the pre-vocational department. The items produced by students include clocks, cabinets, jewellery and ceramics, as well as decorative items such as packs of pot pourri, oil burners and a range of gift cards.

This is just a small selection of the many items supplied to a network of Sense shops, as well as craft outlets, and membership of the Guild of Master Craftsmen ensures that the goods are of the highest quality.

One of the students who has been at Sense East for about 6 years is Alison Jameson, who is deaf, partially sighted, and a fluent signer. Her weekly timetable is quite varied, consisting of college courses, helping in the local Sense shop, and working in the Peterborough workshops. Here Alison takes us through a typical week ...

Monday

First, I spend the morning doing a practical language and literacy course, for which I hope to gain a qualification. I enjoy this, as I sometimes have to write letters to my friends. Last week I wrote to my old school teacher, telling her all my news.

In the afternoon, Alison works first in the Despatch department where she helps to pack up the shop orders ready for transportation.

I put gift cards in their packets, price them, and then put them in the boxes. I also make cartons ready to be packed.

After coffee Alison works in the General Crafts department where gift cards and dried flower arrangements are produced and craft ideas are tried out for new products.



Tuesday



This morning I study 'Numberpower' which is a practical numeracy course. I fill in bank cheques, add up shopping receipts, go to travel agents to get brochures, and to

the Post Office. I enjoy using the adding machine most.

In the afternoon, Alison goes to work in the Pottery department where she makes sunflower plaques, finishing them with glaze and putting them on the shelves ready to go to the Despatch department. She also helps produce the ever-popular slipware, and completes some hand built pottery, which is usually sold through local craft shops.

Wednesday

On Wednesdays I work upstairs in the offices where I have my own 'in-tray'. I have to work quietly, and I only ask someone if I have a problem. Each Wednesday I collect all the tokens which the students have earned in the departments during the week, and add them up for each individual student. On Thursday I return and make up the pay packets.

The Assistant Manager at the workshop helps Alison to make these up, although she works quite independently and accurately. The students are only allowed to earn up to a set amount, as more would affect the benefits they receive, but within that amount, each student's wages are individual and based on work produced, or the amount of effort put in.

In the afternoon I work in the Jewellery department, where I make necklaces, earrings, brooches and bracelets. I also price and box them.



Thursday

This is my favourite morning! I go on my own on the bus to the Sense shop in Peterborough, where I help sort and price the clothes which are sold in the shop.

All the helpers at the shop, apart from the Managers, are volunteers, and for this reason, Alison does not get paid for her work. The Manager communicates with Alison through sign language and helps her to learn new tasks. Alison returns to the workshop in time for lunch with the other students.

After making up the pay packets in the afternoon, Alison joins a small group of peers for a weekly session of Personal and Social Development, which involves discussion and role play.



Friday

My second favourite activity of the week is going to Peterborough Regional College to study catering. I spend all day with 4 other students choosing, buying, preparing and eating a meal, and learning about hygiene, safety and healthy eating.

Each evening Alison returns to her one bedroom flat, where she prepares a meal, carries out basic chores and takes part in leisure activities, such as swimming and ballroom dancing with her friends. After a week as busy as this, she gets a well-deserved rest at the weekend!

Success Brings Some Difficulties

One of the problems encountered at the workshops is maintaining a balance between the demand to produce goods, and the desire to provide an environment which meets communication, behavioural and social needs, as well as physical and training needs. Many of the students have failed repeatedly at tasks and skills in the past, and anxiety often means that they prefer to 'opt out', rather than to risk failure when presented with new tasks.

Unfortunately, as the workshops produce high quality goods, there is a demand for them, and in this day and age, the workshops have to run on a sound financial basis. This can put pressure on staff and students to produce goods on demand, rather than to progress individually through the acquisition of new skills.

The workshops are constantly developing and expanding, and some of the students are ready to move out to work placements in the community. This will either be on a paid or voluntary basis, as with work experience, and will need to be accompanied by a member of Sense staff to help with communication difficulties. It is hoped to broaden the experience of the students, while at the same time creating spaces to enable other students to access the workshops on a daily basis. We are hoping to build these new developments into next year's schedule at the workshops, and to build on the success of our existing structure.

FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT

Creating Jobs for Deafblind People

**Richard Hawkes, Sense International, UK
and William Green, Lega del Filo d'Oro, Italy**

For most people the concept of holding a meaningful job is of central importance to their lives. Not having a job often results in a lack of dignity and respect. For congenitally deafblind people the subject of employment and jobs has rarely been given proper consideration; in some countries there are sheltered workshops, usually offering repetitive, low paid opportunities in areas such as woodwork, but little attention has been paid to creating possibilities on the open employment market.

In Europe today there are a number of innovative projects, supported by the European Union, that are actively considering ways of enabling deafblind people to enter the normal employment market and compete with everyone else for jobs.

Richard Hawkes and William Green give details of projects being developed in five different countries.

One of the primary social aims of the European Union is to look at ways of improving opportunities in life for "disadvantaged" groups, including disabled people. The European Union has recognised the importance to these groups of being able to work by establishing the EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE, a programme specifically designed to improve employment and job opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Within the initiative there are four sub-programmes, one of which HORIZON, is aimed specifically at disabled people.

HORIZON is a unique programme that involves partners in different countries developing a project of activities in their own country and also coming together with international partners to develop a joint transnational project.

There are currently two HORIZON programmes that are concerned

specifically with deafblind people: "Towards Employment for Deafblind People" and "New Opportunities in Working Life for Deafblind People".

"Towards Employment for Deafblind People"

This project started in 1995 and will finish at the end of 1997. It involves Lega del Filo d'Oro (Italy), Casa Pia de Lisboa (Portugal) and the Institutionen for Døvblinde (Denmark).

■ Denmark

The Institutionen for Døvblinde offers services for congenitally deafblind people. With regard to employment opportunities for this group of people, until now this task has been solved

throughout Scandinavia by establishing sheltered workshops. The Institutionen for Døvblinde has a sheltered workshop that makes it possible for deafblind people to be involved in metalwork, carpentry and plastic packaging. These activities are repetitive and low paid and, for some, provide little stimulation. The Institutionen for Døvblinde believes that some of the deafblind people with whom they work are capable of holding down jobs on the open employment market, something that has never before happened in Denmark.

The purpose of this HORIZON project is to identify the abilities, the competencies and the support structures necessary to guarantee an efficient and effective placement in companies for deafblind people. One of its aims is that two deafblind people will be placed for a period of five months in a company producing lemonade bottles and another

FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT

producing chips. So as to facilitate communication with other employees an assistant will work side by side with the employed deafblind person in the company. The project includes a training programme for assistants/interpreters to prepare them for this.

■ Italy

The ultimate aim of the project in Italy is to find jobs for four deafblind people but there has also been a huge campaign to raise awareness about the employment of deafblind people. A range of activities has been carried out including seminars for employers and social operators, research studies and a variety of other actions aimed at the many players in the job market (employers, entrepreneurs, trade unions, human resource managers etc.)

The project includes four large research studies concerned with issues such as attitudes to employing disabled people, professional profiles for disabled people, the problems of providing work placements for disabled people and attitudes to providing work for deafblind people.

Five courses for "intermediate beneficiaries" (human resource managers, social operators, representatives of employers' organisations etc.) have covered subjects such as the job market and professional profiles; evaluation of the general and specific prerequisite abilities; work in structured environments; models of work placements for deafblind people; and evaluating abilities.

■ Portugal

This project consists of different activities aimed at supporting the integration of deafblind people in the free market. It involves both the identification of professional abilities for people who have never been employed and the measures concerned with the adaptation of the workplace. Another important objective has been the creation of a network among the various services working with deafblind people and governmental and private institutes. Of primary importance has been the raising of awareness amongst the general public and employers about the specific needs, and capabilities, of deafblind people. The project has also concentrated on the training of

support workers / interpreters in order to develop a network of guide workers who could support deafblind people in employment.

Transnational Activity

This has been the first ever international project looking at the employment of deafblind people. As such it has been absolutely vital to ensure an effective exchange of experiences, ideas and information learned from each national project and this has been the focus of the transnational work. To do this the three partners have met at regular intervals throughout the project and there have been a number of specific seminars concerned with employment issues relating to deafblind people.

"New Opportunities in Working Life for Deafblind People"

This project will commence at the beginning of 1998 and continue for two years until the end of 1999. It involves Lega del Filo d'Oro (Italy), Casa Pia (Portugal), Resurscenter Mo Gard (Sweden) and Sense West (UK)

■ Italy

The aim of the project in Italy is to build on the work done in the last HORIZON project and to identify the ways in which training and work reconversion opportunities for deafblind people and people with Usher Syndrome can be adapted so that they can become trainers and job consultants themselves.

Through the activities that will be carried out in this project deafblind people will be able to make themselves available on the open employment market with a new professional identity. This will be achieved by looking at changing the attitude that deafblind people have of their own image and also at ensuring that deafblind people acquire the "know-how" necessary to reconvert their professional abilities.

A number of different activities will be carried out. A large research programme will look at the deafblind and Usher population of work age

considering specifically the target characteristics and conditions, quality of life and needs. Another element of the project will be concentrating on the necessary adaptations that must be made to enable deafblind people to work as trainers. There will also be the formation of a target group which, at the end of the project, will work in the training system as a team of job consultants.

■ Sweden

The target group for the project being co-ordinated by the Resurscenter Mo Gard is deaf adults with additional disabilities, congenitally deafblind adults and people who have become deafblind in later life. At the moment this group of people cannot find work. Resurscenter Mo Gard has observed, through their habilitation and rehabilitation work, that many of these people have the ability to work and if it was possible to find a job it would give them a more meaningful life. The aim of the project is to reach 30 people to create a core group to find methods which can be applied to the wider population. It is hoped that these 30 people will gain a permanent and satisfying occupation which accords with their interest and ability.

The project will consider methods of identifying the specific work opportunities that exist to allow individuals in the target groups to work with a company. The work will be adjusted to the individual and a co-operative will be formed to offer support to all parties. This will allow the individual to work in a limited way but the work will be important for the individual and for the company.

The project will create work opportunities that are not currently available through special plans that involve both the individual (analysis, education, adjustment) and the organisation (eg. sign language education for the staff, special adjustment of technical aids in production, development of social support and networks). The idea of creating co-operatives for social support that serve as a link between the participants is also new.

The participants are to be the subject of an analysis of their own interest and ability to work. For the project they will need to work out tasks with the company, take part in

the activities of the co-operative and to co-operate in conferences at work and follow-up conferences organised during the project.

■ United Kingdom

Sense West is the largest region of Sense, the national deafblind organisation in the UK. Its central administration is based in Birmingham and provides a range of services for deafblind people and families with deafblind members throughout the West of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A sheltered workshop has existed since 1991 providing opportunities in craft based activities such as enamelling, flower arranging and basic metalwork and carpentry. It has recently become obvious that these activities were offering very little "work-based" opportunities to the students using them. What was required were activities and product lines that allow the students to develop good all round skills and also produce quality items that would be attractive to the public. There is a strong belief that, with appropriate support and training, a number of the deafblind people would be able to undertake this more meaningful work and some of them would be capable of passing on their knowledge and get involved in the training of others.

The HORIZON project will establish a supported employment environment within which 26 deafblind people will receive training. It will be integrated into a local community and include a number of different environments - horticulture, crafts, woodwork and catering. For six of the students the service will be developed further and they will receive further training with the aim being for them to move into more open environments. They will be supported by sensory-impaired people employed as trainers, facilitators and employment support workers.

Sense West will work with local employers to assess the employment opportunities for deafblind people and to provide training and support to employers in adapting the workplace. Local networks will be established, involving local employers, in order to discuss the issues involved.

■ Portugal

This project will build on the work undertaken in the previous project, specifically concentrating on the development of professional abilities for people who have never been employed. Support for the network among the various services working with deafblind people and governmental and private institutes will continue as will the training of support workers / interpreters.

Transnational Project

This transnational project aims to build on the work of the work of the previous HORIZON project by undertaking a number of international activities and specifically developing international projects. The exchange of experiences learned from the national projects will continue to be vital but in addition the partners will produce information and guidelines that will be relevant to the future employment of deafblind people anywhere.

- International guidelines on the training and employment of deafblind people will be produced and disseminated throughout Europe.
- A database of models of good practice concerning the employment and training of deafblind people will be developed.
- International guidelines on preparing deafblind people in sheltered employment for the transition to social enterprises and open employment will be prepared.
- All of this information will be developed in conjunction with employers bodies, trade unions and other relevant organisations from throughout Europe.

Further details of all of these projects will be circulated, through Deafblind Education, as they develop. More information can be obtained from any of the centres involved in the projects or from Richard Hawkes or William Green.

■ Denmark

Institutionen for Døvblinde
Sohngaardsholmsvej 59
Postboks 142
DK-9100 Aalborg
Denmark

■ Portugal

Casa Pia de Lisboa
Colégio A A C Ferreiro
1700 Lisbon
Portugal

■ Sweden

Resourcenter
Mo Gard AB
612 93 Finspang
Sweden

■ Italy

Lego del Filo D'Oro
Via Montecerno 1
60027 Osimo - Ancona
Italy

■ UK

Sense West
Princess Royal Centre
4 Church Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 3TD
UK

Access to Work

at C.A.T. de la Chaume
St Benoit, France

Jean-François Guerineau

The passage to adulthood is an important stage in the life of a disabled person, and also for his or her family. The priority is to look for good provision that is specially adapted to meet the care and living requirements of each individual while allowing maximum opportunity for social integration.

In certain countries, it is possible that services close to home allow disabled people to organise themselves in their local environment. Unfortunately, such services near to home are not well-developed in France, and in fact they do not exist at all for deafblind people.

So, for a lot of disabled people, the priority will be to look for a place like a rest home or group home, for instance, which can offer appropriate specialist support in daily living skills and offer activities adapted specifically to take account of each individual's disability or handicap.

Unfortunately, there are still a lot of young disabled adults who can't yet find satisfactory places where they are welcomed with appropriate activities and care, as there are still too few specialised institutions or services.

This is especially true for the deafblind young adults. More particularly, as there are so very few specialist institutions it means that the young person is often a long way from their local environment and their family with whom they have special bonds.

Access to Work for the Deafblind

Young disabled people and their families have many concerns, but among them is the idea of having access to work. However, many of us



Residents of the C.A.T. in the workshops

will have noticed in our contact with others at conferences and seminars that this question of access to work has rarely been approached until quite recently.

Probably, this question of access to work appears to most of us to be a very distant aim for most of the deafblind people we usually meet in our specialist work places, so, during the last seminar on acquired deafblindness in Poitiers (March, 1996) the discussion centred on what services may be the best for people who become deafblind and which services promote social integration successfully. Even though the UN Charter gave us ideas to reflect upon, including rehabilitation,

accessibility, access to information, and definition of services, we did not consider the question of access to work even though we know is a very important part of social integration¹. Given the fact that deafblind people like others in the community are all different, with different needs, particularly in the area of access to autonomy, a simple objective we can all share is to create the conditions which allow each individual to live and develop themselves in an appropriate environment. Our plans, when working with the young adults, include these targets:

- to develop autonomy;

FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ to develop independence;
- ▶ to develop an active social life;
- ▶ to encourage personal independence;
- ▶ to develop capacities of social participation.

All these things can be made possible through adapted surroundings and these targets are connected to a trend which aims to allow disabled people to be fully recognised as adults. These principles are prompted by the ethical position that each person is viewed as somebody who is constantly evolving.

We know that employment is an important component of social life and it is one of the components of adult status. In general, we accept that the notion of work includes different aspects. In terms of the law, it can be seen as a target that everybody has a right to reach. In more sociological



terms, it is one of the criteria of social participation. When participating in work an individual can create something, or provide a service, that can be valued. In more psychological terms, it can make an individual feel that she or he is recognised as somebody who is capable and responsible. Work creates and builds identity through social integration and by presenting opportunities to belong to a social group. At a philosophical level, representation of work as a valuable thing makes it, in our society, an essential fact of social integration. The place of work itself, workshop, factory, office, is in itself one of the important places where socialisation and personal development can be improved. The workplace is one of the places for relationships and can be seen as a nucleus of social life.

The "C.A.T. de la Chaume"

Established in 1991, the Centre is a classical medico-social centre. The "CAT" means "Centre d'Aide par le Travail" (Centre for care and help through work activities). This CAT has a specific purpose. It was established to especially welcome people with a dual sensory handicap: deaf people with additional handicaps and congenitally or adventitiously deafblind people. The CAT, which have been widely developed in France since the 70s, are medical/social centres to support social welfare. Their function and way of functioning is defined within the legal framework for disabled people, passed 30 years ago (June 1975). The CAT are designed to allow disabled people access to sheltered work and to benefit from the support that they need.

So, this CAT has a double purpose. On the one hand, it has an economic purpose whereby deafblind people can develop their professional activities which may give them the opportunity to move into appropriate work. On the other hand, it has a social and educational purpose which is necessary to improve the social integration of disabled people. All CATs set up training activities aimed at maintaining and developing knowledge and competencies. The professional activity which is carried out is the foundation on which the different aspects of working with individuals is organised.

The "CAT de la Chaume" has special status and staff to meet the needs of people who are deafblind or deaf, with additional handicaps. Because of its specific experience in this handicap, it has a national responsibility. People are welcomed between the ages of 20 and 60 years old.

At the moment, the CAT has 26 people in residence. 13 of them live in Group Homes, and 13 are living in their own flats, and only come to the Centre every day for work or other activities. Now, of the 26 people, 8 are deafblind (2 are congenitally deafblind and 6 have acquired deafblindness), and 9 are deaf with sight impairment (2 congenitally and 6 "acquired" with a strong likelihood of becoming nearly blind or blind); 8 are deaf with

additional handicap, 1 is blind and hearing. Depending on each person's capabilities, it's possible to work full time or part time. The Centre, in addition to the workshops, is made up of different services: group homes, which are in the city of Poitiers; a structure for special activities for people who are working part-time; and a special service to support people living independently. The Centre has no medical service: all the medical services are provided by doctors in the city or in the hospital.

Workshop Activities

■ Print in Braille

This activity was set up about 15 years ago to respond to a demand from a group of deafblind people who were living independently. They couldn't access information either from the radio or TV, so they asked for a special weekly newspaper in Braille. This was how the "Braille-Info" was created. It's a normal newspaper containing national and international news of a political, economical, cultural or sporting nature. Its production has changed from one relating to crafts to a more up-to-date computer orientated one. Now this workshop can produce Braille for everybody who needs it.

■ Repairing Chairs

This is a very traditional activity in the field of blindness, but fewer and fewer people are now able to repair old chairs. A lot of people in our area appreciate having this workshop because they see their great-grand mother's chair or arm-chair coming to life again, thanks to deafblind people!!

■ Ironing

People can bring their clothes in the morning and find them well ironed in one day! The team works extremely efficiently, considering there are only 5 of them.

■ Sub-contracts

Different factories or agencies require mailing, packaging, manual setting - the CAT team can take this on.



Educational Activities and Social Events

In the C.A.T. people are supposed to work 35 hours a week. In this 35 hours, it's possible to organise training and rehabilitation activities: professional training, sports, school, mobility, training in communication (sign language, French, teletext, Braille...). For people working half-time, special educational activities are set up every afternoon. They can be individually related (working with a psychologist, speech therapist, etc) or in groups (incorporating school training, video workshops, "information workshops", etc).

Outside the working hours, social workers organise leisure activities such as visits to the library, swimming pool, judo, music, theatre, and from time to time visits to varying places of interest, and dinners in restaurants.

Holidays can be organised by the C.A.T. itself or in collaboration with different associations, for example, with ANSPSA (National Association for the Deafblind). Last year, LORM (Czech Republic) organised a very successful stay in Prague, and a visit to the mountains.

For all these activities, the staff tactfully encourage people to participate, and for them to take responsibility for their actions and enlarge their relationships.

Every week, a meeting for all the residents is planned to exchange any useful information, verify that everybody can access and understand information, and above all to let everybody express their point of view and be able to propose new ideas. The principle concern is that the communication between the different participants works, in order to avoid misunderstandings, and also to encourage everybody's participation. Sometimes a personality is invited to discuss a special subject. For example, a member of the City Council came to explain his policy concerning young people in Poitiers.

Beyond the question of access to work, which is the prime object of the CAT, what we want to promote is personal development in the best possible surroundings. This is governed by access to information, access to all adapted means of communication, a listening attitude, respect of individuals and the quest for a quality of relationships that promote togetherness.



Organisation of CAT

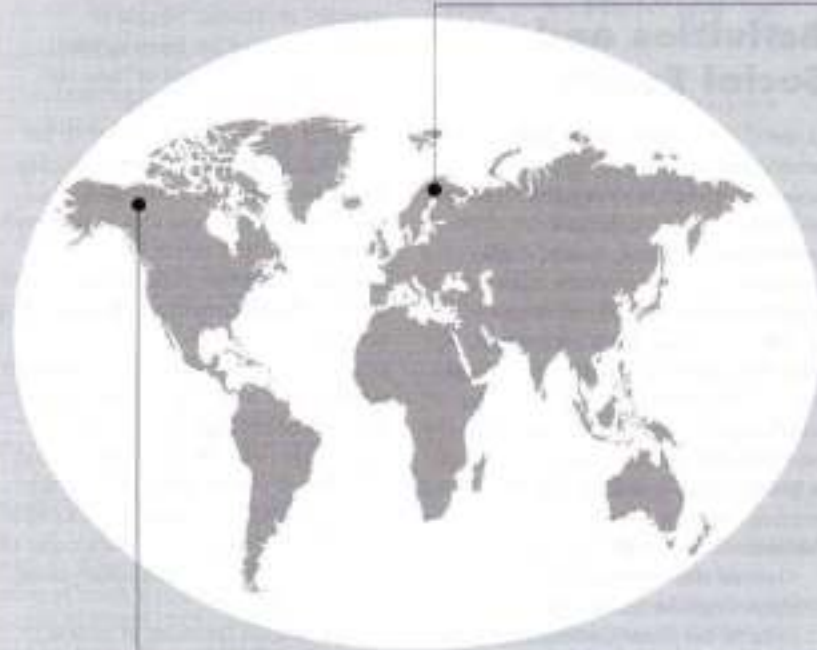
An individual programme is developed for each resident, taking into account the different wishes and capacities of each individual. Programmes can be made up of

- training
- living skills (in group homes or an individual's flat)
- professional activities (people can choose their workshop activities and work at their own pace)
- cultural activities
- plans for holidays, and also
- personal support (help on a daily basis, help in administration, social or family relationships...).

Of course, for all these activities it's necessary to take into account the particular sensory impairments, and the necessary adaptations (technical or human) required to help overcome those impairments.

But the most important aspect of CAT is the "social climate" in which things are managed. The creation of a convivial atmosphere, the respect for each person's differences and this expression of solidarity between people are essential aspects in bringing the institutional project to life. In making all this happen, the project members are supported by a staff of 125, including administration, social workers, rehabilitation, and workshop managers.

REGIONAL NEWS



Canada

Stan Munroe writes

Conference Planning

On the heels of the 5th Canadian Conference on Deafblindness in Vancouver in May 1996, organisers are planning for the next Canadian Conference. "Let's Celebrate Our Harmony Together" is the theme for the 6th conference which will be held in Mississauga (Toronto), Ontario, August 12-15, 1998. The Canadian conferences are usually sponsored by a regional chapter of the Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association. True to form, the 1998 conference will be sponsored by the Ontario Chapter, CDBRA.

The harmony theme, with a music focus, will celebrate the very successful cooperation among parents, professional and advocacy groups that has typified services for people who are congenitally deafblind in Canada. Organisers are planning to accommodate a similar level of attendance as in Vancouver which attracted almost 400 participants.

Organisers sent out an initial call for papers with a November 30, 1997 deadline. General information packages will be widely distributed in the new year. For additional information, please contact the

Conference Coordinator,
c/o CDBRA, 350 Brant Avenue,
Brantford, Ontario, Canada N3T 3J9.

Washington Conference

Several Canadian professionals attended the Washington conference last June and delivered presentations and held workshops. Again, the Canadian model of intervention was of wide interest.

Study of Rubella Late Onset Manifestations

The CDBRA is excited about its plans to survey late onset manifestations in the small Canadian population of individuals who were affected by the maternal rubella epidemics since the 1960s. The findings from the Helen Keller National Centre study (O'Donnell, 1996) indicated an alarming rate of late onset medical conditions in the US population of rubella victims born in the mid-1960s. These findings supported an urgency to extend this study to the Canadian population to add further to the knowledge about how this special population of individuals continues to be affected by the rubella virus.

Scandinavia

Krista Lauritzen writes from NUD that, in spite of a turbulent year, NUD is now back in business! A new Principal has been appointed and her name is Anny Koppen. She is from Norway where she has been Acting Principal of a resource centre for deaf and congenitally deafblind people. She began her four year appointment on 1st October this year.

The Institute for the Deafblind in Aalborg

The School in Aalborg is having three of their theme booklets translated into English. This is to give everybody the opportunity to read about the Institution and the basic issues that are tackled in its programme. The three booklets will describe the Institution, its residential home for deafblind people and the services for congenitally deafblind adults which are provided there.

Courses and Conferences

A number of courses and conferences have been arranged in 1998 and they are listed in the Courses Section at the back of this magazine.

Establishing a Deafblind Registry

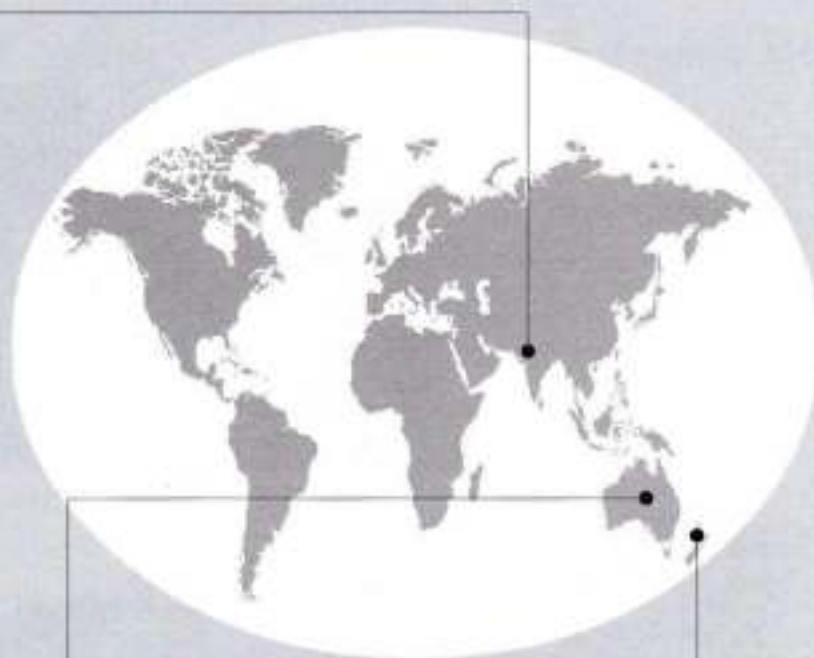
The Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association would like to establish a voluntary registry of persons who are deafblind. Various reports to government over the years pointed to the need to develop a registry, but to no avail. With a country the size of Canada, this is a daunting but a highly necessary task. Several countries and regions smaller than Canada have successfully developed a registry of deafblind persons. Canada intends to seek advice from jurisdictions, but at the same time will be seeking advice from other countries about launching such a project in an area like Canada. No offer of advice will be ignored!

REGIONAL NEWS

India

As Akhil Paul reports, in India at present there is no hard information about the incidence of deafblindness, so Sense International has taken on this responsibility and has so far contacted more than 130 organisations in the country. All these organisations have shown a keen interest in the work for deafblind people, but are also unaware of the total number which may be found in their region. With the help of these willing contacts it should be possible to gather information about the deafblind population, although a full survey isn't likely to be undertaken. However, the information provided should help support the development of services India-wide. In Ahmedabad the Blind Mens' Association will be implementing a project which will include a unit for deafblind people in Ahmedabad city and in addition offer some community based rehabilitation, providing services to deafblind people in the adjoining rural areas.

The Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf and Deafblind in Bombay is developing some work which is aimed at vocational rehabilitation of young deafblind adults at the Institute. It is hoped that this project will help in providing training for these young people in trades which will eventually result in self-employment and other employment in open settings.



New Zealand

See Here Issue 3 has just been published in New Zealand with support from the New Zealand Vision and Hearing Impaired Persons Society Incorporated and the Trust Bank of Canterbury. It contains material from the many contacts the New Zealand Society has, as well as providing useful information. This particular issue focuses on the successes of a young deafblind man who has recently become qualified as a massage therapist and is now looking to get on with his career.

Australia

Alan Baynham and Sharon Barrey Grassick write that Federal bodies are considering major reports on Aborigines with sensory disabilities. A report on Aboriginal people with significant dual-sensory disability has now been updated and referred to the Minister.

Also, a report on the situation of people who are deafblind living in institutions has been submitted to the National Equal Opportunity Commission, to be considered in tandem with extensive work on the

overall situation on abuse and neglect within institutions currently been considered by the Commission. A national survey was conducted and widely supported and this groundbreaking work has had an impact in placing this concern on the national agenda.

Training is a big issue in Australia, as in other countries, and a feasibility study is being conducted into the possibility of establishing training in various places in Australia. The University of Newcastle, Australia, is

considering offering an intensive Winter School in Deafblindness for July 1998.

The Australian Deafblind Council is the chief body in the field of deafblindness in Australia and its members are independent associations located in Western Australia, New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. Each will be contributing to the National Conference in May 1998 in Melbourne.

REGIONAL NEWS

Latin America ...

In Argentina the Parents Organisation for Deafblind People holds a well attended workshop ▶ ▼



◀ *In Medellin, Columbia, teachers and children work together under the auspices of the Hilton Perkins Programme*

REGIONAL NEWS

Deafblind Education
July - December 1997

It's amazing what you can do with cardboard! Teachers in Venezuela meet at a five day training course in Caracas to create very unusual equipment using the simplest of materials and their skilful hands ► ▼



Parents meet together to share ideas as part of the Association of Families of Deafblind Children ►



◀ *In Brazil, children and families at the Early Intervention Centre, Casa de Misericordia, Sao Paulo, Brazil*



Distinguished Service Award 1997

It was one of the high spots of the European Conference in Madrid this year when Dbl's Distinguished Service Award was presented to one of its most worthy recipients, SONJA JARL from Sweden. The setting was the Conference Banquet for which a sports hall on the site of ONCE's school had been converted into a luxury restaurant and ballroom.

The award was instituted in 1987. It is given to an individual who, in the opinion of the Dbl Management Committee, has outstandingly served the cause of deafblind education, both nationally and internationally, over very many years. Until now, the award has only been made at World Conferences of Dbl, and only when a suitable recipient is identified.

The award has been made to just 5 recipients, at the World Conferences in 1987, 1991 and 1996. This year we made the award for the first time at a European Conference because of the exceptional regard we have for Sonja. She began her career in the 1950s in Lund in Southern Sweden in an institution called Annetorpshemmet, working with both children and adults. At this early stage, Sonja showed great interest in the deafblind group, and the elderly ladies there still remember her and talk warmly about her.

In 1964, Sonja started to build up Ekesholan, a school for multi-handicapped blind children and when it opened in 1965 she became its first Deputy Headmistress. From 1967 - 1980 she was the Headmistress. In 1980, she ran a project on interpreter training and from 1981 - 1996 was Head of the school's Outreach Services. The school works with all kinds of blind children with additional disabilities, but deafblind children have always been close to her heart.

When we spoke to some of her colleagues from different times in her career, they mentioned different things. We asked them to tell us something for which she is well known - they said that that was easy. She is always running - she likes to be busy and she is always aware that there is

headmistress who, for the first time within this Nordic co-operation, was so interested in this relatively small area of her total responsibility and who gave such warm support and encouragement to her teachers and to their colleagues from other countries.

And, of course, we have known this for many years, in Dbl, or as its former incarnation IAEDB, or indeed before there was an international organisation at all. Sonja was present at the very first international gathering of teachers of deafblind children held at Condoover Hall in the UK in the early 1960s. She was rarely absent through all the succeeding years. In 1987, when there was no obvious host for the 1991 World Conference, it was to Sonja and her colleagues that the then President, John McInnes, turned. Sonja was given the responsibility for running the conference,

and what a stimulating and well-organised event it was, not forgetting of course that Marjaana was Chairman of the Scientific Committee.

When this history of her distinguished career was given in Madrid, Sonja corrected just about every statement that was made. So, we are sorry if we have again given any wrong information, Sonja, but nonetheless, we are proud to be able to recognise your immense contribution to our work through Deafblind Education.

Rodney Clark



something that needs to be done for the people to whom she has devoted a lifetime's career.

Beyond Ekesholan, Sonja has supported families, young adults and participated in the development of new services in Orebro and across Sweden. Marjaana Suosalmi, Dbl President, told us of her first contact with Sonja. This was in the early 1970s at a small Nordic Conference on Deafblindness held at Ekesholan. It was a modest affair, participants' being accommodated in each others' houses. But it was so good to have a

Sixth Helen Keller World Conference in Colombia

Ximena Serpa Conference Coordinator

"Rights and Services for deafblind people in accordance with the Standard Rules of the United Nations" was the title of the Sixth Helen Keller World Conference developed in Paipa, Colombia, from September 13 to 19, 1997.

Paipa is peaceful town 150 kilometers north of SantaFe de Bogota, the Colombian capital.

Thirty six (36) countries were represented and a total of 200 delegates were present including professionals and deafblind people and their interpreters. The Conference heard a general presentation of the Standard Rules, the Poscal project, and the use of telecommunications for deafblind people. The participants worked hard making Regional presentations, workshops and plenary sessions for the most relevant Standard Rules.

The International Federation of Deafblind People was created. It has a temporary committee with participants who represent different regional areas.

The "Richard Kindley Award" was created as a recognition of the deafblind person that works to increase services, supports other deafblind people and motivates others to start associations in their countries. For the first time this important award was given to Stig Ohlsson from Sweden.

Before the world conference, we had the third Poscal Seminar with Latin-American deafblind people in SantaFe de Bogot . This was a very good opportunity for the fourteen Latin-American countries to participate in this international event. Thanks are due to FSDB and Shia (Sweden) for their support.

These two international meetings were also an opportunity to develop the practical part of the training course for interpreters for deaf and deafblind people that is given in Colombia. It also illustrates an example of good practice in a developing country of which we are very proud.

The Colombian government became

involved for the first time in the deafblind field.

The television, radio and newspapers informed the community about deafblindness and the conference.

In their free time the participants enjoyed the natural thermal waters, the bowls and tennis. They also enjoyed strolling around the town of Paipa.

At the end of the Conference the following resolutions were passed:

The Conference urges:

- all states to apply the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- all states to recognize Deafblind people and their needs
- all states to secure economic support, guides, personal assistants and interpreters, accessibility and education for all deafblind people.

European Usher Syndrome Study Group

Ninth Meeting - July 1997, Madrid, Spain

Mary Guest Secretary, EUSSG

This year over 90 people applied to attend the Ninth European Usher Syndrome Study Group. Held in Madrid at O.N.C.E., it attracted many Spanish families and professionals, as well as participants from new countries such as Croatia. This is encouraging because it shows that Usher is no longer the forgotten syndrome.

The growth in numbers and diversity of need now poses a problem for the Study Group. How do we meet the informational needs of newly diagnosed families, as well as continue to study and share ideas with the professional fraternity who need a

different level of exchange?

At the end of the Madrid meeting in July, Mary Guest, Secretary of the EUSSG put two ideas to the meeting. The first proposed the development of a network or association made up of families, people with Usher, as well as professionals across Europe. Such an association could begin to meet the information and social needs of families as well as promote greater awareness of Usher. This would be important in countries especially where Usher is under-recognised.

The idea of developing a network was welcomed by the members;

several volunteers offered to take this a stage further and as a result there will be an inaugural meeting in Denmark in Copenhagen from 30 January to 1 February organised by Steffen Plum and Vibeke Leth.

The study aspect of Usher work will continue; it is hoped that a small group of up to six people committed to dissemination of knowledge between the various disciplines will be constituted early in 1998.

The EUSSG has also been invited to mount a Focus Day at the World Conference of the DBI in Lisbon in 1999.

Working together - home and school

Bringing up and educating children in the Boarding School for Deafblind Children in Sergiev Posad, Moscow Region, Russia

by Alexander Fyodorov and Galina Epifanova

For 35 years, funding an appropriate system of bringing up and educating multi-sensory impaired children has been the focus of the Children's House. Methods are constantly being reformed and transformed, including new aspects of work with deafblind children.

In 1990, the school's move into a newly-built complex was followed by the admission of an increasing number of children, to include not only deafblind children with normal intellect, but also multi-handicapped children with lower intellect.

Taking into consideration that the problems of multiple disability are still largely unstudied, we studied ways of improving the upbringing and education of these children. One of the most important aspects of educating these children is mastering the theory and practice of child development. The theory and practice show that it is necessary to develop special methods for deaf children with low vision, for multi-handicapped children, for blind children with low hearing and for children with acquired deafness. The children who had contracted congenital Rubella Syndrome have very specific needs and, again, require special methods when working with them.

Presently 116 students study in the Children's House, among them:

- ▶ 8 totally deafblind;

- ▶ 83 deaf with low vision;
- ▶ 8 blind with low hearing;
- ▶ 12 low vision, low hearing;
- ▶ 5 blind with speech defects.

Among these children there are those who are deafblind with low intellect.

Students are organised into groups, taking into consideration the levels of hearing, vision, intellect, speech development, social experience, age and, most importantly, the results of experimental work already undertaken over a number of years by teachers and educators. This allows for a differentiated and individualised approach to each child with an emphasis on accomplishment, which is achieved in a purposeful and consistent way.

In accordance with the different characteristics of children at varying ages there are several departments in the Children's Home. They are: the pre-school groups, where three to four year olds study; the preparatory classes, the primary classes and the senior classes. Each of these departments also has responsibility for

the diagnostic groups where the newcomers and therefore uneducated, children are placed. Several professionals are involved in organising the work in the different groups: teachers, educators, the psychologist, audiologist, visual perception specialist and doctors, who are specialists in various areas. They all contribute to the process.

In connection with this, the daily routine for each group of students is different. In the pre-school groups, the teachers place an emphasis on self-help and behaviour, and encourage physical training, good mathematical habits, as well as fulfilling the children's sensory needs by using special methods of teaching.

In parallel with the general pedagogical tasks, we can also identify special tasks, such as:

- ▶ the formation of the means of communication;
- ▶ the orientation in the local area;
- ▶ the teaching of enunciation;
- ▶ the development of the residual vision and hearing.

The success of the whole programme depends a lot on the correct and consistent application of the special ways of communication between the teacher and the deafblind pre-school child. This is achieved through direct demonstration, co-active interaction, natural gestures, symbolic pictures and verbal instruction.

In organising the daily routine, medical and pedagogical recommendations are strictly followed, and the specifics of each child's vision and levels of fatigue are also taken into consideration.

It was necessary to create six variations to the education timetable for activities happening in the Children's House. Besides this, every teacher develops programmes suitable for the different special school and pre-school departments. Because there are no special textbooks, the teachers write the tasks themselves, taking into consideration the visual, intellectual and oral abilities of the students. The teachers focus on the educational needs of each child and adapt texts from fiction and literature.

Educating deafblind children is impossible without using special technical aids. Accordingly, the study area for hearing diagnostics is equipped with modern audiometers, to measure the child's hearing, its usage and development, and to help to define the child's condition.

In the Russian literature and language classroom there is a special film projector which allows for education films to be shown on all subjects. There are special film and video theatres in the Children's House and videos about the Children's House are being made. Relevant technology and modern equipment is used, for example, sound-intensifying aids and special computer programmes are used by pedagogical staff who can access information about each child on a computer database. This helps the child to successfully fulfil, amongst other things, work on enunciation, development of hearing and visual perception, and social adaptation.

Communicative Area

Specifically important in the Children's House is the communication area, which not only fosters an environment which is conducive to communication, but places an emphasis on the methodical organisation of the

teachers' and educators' activities to enhance the children's communicative development. We do this through:

- a) the creation of communicative situations;
- b) the ongoing work in developing reading activities and reading interests for students;
- c) the writing together of books about the students' families and friends;
- d) the students' writing of letters, diaries, opinions and notes for the in-house magazine "Our Life" which has been published in the Children's House since 1988;
- e) establishing a list of typical phrases for everyday usage, which are constantly being extended, depending on the level of the child's communicative skills and his/her pronunciation abilities;
- f) the creation of special methods of teaching communication to deafblind children, which involves step-by-step preparation, the holding of activities and the subsequent analysis of the language materials which give good results in developing the children's cognitive and communicative abilities.

A Good Environment

When developing the children's integral conceptual abilities it is especially important, when working with children who have visual and hearing loss, to create a good working environment and formulate activities which they can respond to in a favourable way. A good environment and stimulating activities help the children formulate positive attitudes towards the tasks they are given. In connection with this, the celebrations, performances, entertainment, competitions and lesson topics are included as part of the whole educational programme.

Using Drama

The use of drama is one of the most important directions in the work with children, which has traditionally commanded a lot of attention. For five years, 15 performances have been staged by students under the leadership of their educators. These

are mainly the tales of Russian writers and folk-tales. The use of pantomime is especially relevant, as it is accessible, easily understood and close to the children's hearts. The master of the pantomime club regularly prepares mini-performances with the children. All the children take part in the pantomime, irrespective of the level of their language and cognitive development.

The wider world

Organising opportunities for informal communication is very important when we consider the limited number of people with whom deafblind children can communicate. We are constantly looking for such contacts, in order to develop our relationship with them, and to utilise their skills on an ongoing basis. Informal communication helps integrate deafblind children into the wider circle of people with normal vision and hearing. Informal communication is encouraged in different ways: meetings with friends, camps, exchanging letters with different people, talks at festive occasions and by holding a variety of school activities. Together with students from other schools and boarding schools we hold excursions to different towns, museums and theatres.

Workshop Activities

The social activities in the Children's House are fulfilled in different ways. Everyday routines are reinforced by involving children in workshops. A variety of workshops are held, such as carpentry, weaving, papier-mâché, ceramics, and sewing, amongst others, which give the students an opportunity to choose an occupation to his/her liking and ability. The student's work carried out in these workshops is accomplished to a good artistic level and is regularly shown in different exhibitions.

Looking After Ourselves

There is a domestic committee of the students at the Children's House, which helps to keep order in the school area, bedrooms, corridors and halls! The members of the committee also look after the furniture, using the educator to work out the claims and write out the orders for repair works. There is a nature corner at school which houses a cow, sheep, ponies and dogs which the children take care of. They also look

PROJECT NEWS

after the gardens and keep the grounds clean.

The work is organised in such a way that the teachers can observe the children's activities, which helps them draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the particular activities.

Our Experience

The teachers have extensive experience in teaching deafblind children as well as the appropriate qualifications for doing so.

At present there are 24 special education teachers, 39 teachers with higher education, 6 people are Senior Teachers, 3 are Honoured Teachers.

The work of the pedagogical staff is constantly aimed at raising the level of teaching skills and assimilating new methods of teaching and bringing up deafblind and multi-handicapped

children. The pedagogical council plays a major role in the staff's activity, assuming the traditional role of organising and directing the work while solving the urgent theoretical and practical questions that arise.

Many of the Children's House teachers are constantly working on creating new programmes and methods of teaching, instigating and following national and foreign achievements in this area. In order to coordinate all research, a council which establishes and implements new methods of teaching was founded.

During the last few years a number of new methods of teaching, reading and social skills have been introduced, which have helped the children develop higher levels of communication skills to lead more independent lives. The teachers and

professionals in the Children's House were all involved in establishing and implementing the new methods of teaching. These methods are clearly set out in the institution's annual plan which reinforces the different methods used by the teachers, depending on their area of expertise.

The Children's House provides a solid base for trainee teachers to further develop their skills through pedagogical practice and, in turn, they are able to take with them the valuable skills and knowledge they have acquired.

The work in the Children's House is the "total pedagogical process", taking into consideration all the aspects of bringing up and the educating deafblind children, whilst supporting all staff members in developing their skills and knowledge.

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Conditions and syndromes that can result in deafblindness

In the fourth of our occasional series on causes of deafblindness, this edition examines



Meningitis

Meningitis is a condition in which inflammation of the lining (meninges) of the brain and spinal cord occurs due to a bacterial or viral infection. Meningitis is usually bacterial or viral, but in rare cases it can be caused by fungus. In its bacterial form the condition is life threatening. The viral form is usually less severe.

Bacterial Meningitis

At least 50 species of bacteria can cause meningitis, but the main types are: *Meningococcal*, *Pneumococcal*, *Group B Streptococcal*, *E. coli*, *Listeria*, *Haemophilus influenzae B (Hib)* and *Tubercular (TB)*. In some of these forms of meningitis, namely *Meningococcal* and *Group B Streptococcal*, septicaemia occurs. Septicaemia is a form of blood poisoning and when it occurs on its own it is more life-threatening.

Most adult cases of meningitis are Pneumococcal, although it can also occur in children. It is the most dangerous form of meningitis, having the highest risk of death, of long-term neurological damage and of relapsing. Most cases of neonatal meningitis results from infection with Group B Streptococcal bacteria which are carried by at least 5% of people and are usually harmless. Septicaemia is sometimes the main feature, especially in newborn babies, although a rash is not normally seen. In rare cases adults may also suffer from this disease.

Meningitis is sometimes caused by bacteria such as *E. coli* and *Listeria* particularly in babies, elderly people and those with weakened immune systems. Many other bacteria even more rarely cause meningitis in the same way.

Viral Meningitis

This type of meningitis is usually relatively mild, with symptoms of headache, fever and general ill feeling, although further meningitis symptoms may occur. Since people often recover without medical treatment, the incidence of viral meningitis is

unknown, but it is probably more common than bacterial meningitis. Most cases are caused by enteroviruses that normally produce stomach upsets and diarrhoea, but may also be caused by the mumps virus, the measles virus, herpes and, rarely, insect-carried viruses. Viral meningitis is not normally considered to be contagious. Although most people recover from viral meningitis within a fortnight, it may take longer, and some people experience prolonged after-effects.

Fungal Meningitis

Fungal meningitis is quite rare. It may be caused by *Candida albicans*, a fungus which normally causes thrush. In rare cases, it can cause a dangerous form of meningitis, primarily in premature babies with very low birth weight. *Cryptococcus neoformans*, a fungus commonly found in soil. It causes most cases of fungal meningitis. It generally only occurs in people with weakened immune systems.

Symptoms

Meningitis is a devastating disease which can kill in hours. Early diagnosis is crucial. Knowing the signs and symptoms of meningitis and acting quickly can save lives.

Symptoms of meningitis can include: a rash, though this is not present in all cases, drowsiness or impaired consciousness, fever and vomiting, severe headache, stiff neck and a dislike of bright lights. In addition to these symptoms, septicaemia can also occur and symptoms could therefore include cold hands and feet, rapid breathing, and abdominal, joint and muscle pain, sometimes with diarrhoea. Not everyone develops all these symptoms and meningococcal septicaemia can appear with or without meningitis.

Babies may also suffer from tense or bulging fontanelle, blotchy or pale skin, refusing to feed, fretfulness with a shrill or moaning cry when handled, and body stiffening with involuntary movements, or a floppy body. Babies born prematurely or with low birth weight have a higher risk of all forms of neonatal

meningitis. Prolonged labour after rupture of membranes also increases the risk of neonatal meningitis.

Possible after-effects:

Physical/specific

- hearing impairments/deafness/tinnitus
- loss of sight/changes in eyesight (not necessarily permanent)
- brain damage (severe damage only occurs in 2% of cases)
- stiffness in joints
- loss of balance/'clumsiness'
- fits/epilepsy (in 4% of cases)
- tissue damage (due to acute septicaemia, skin grafts may be needed)
- amputations (due to acute septicaemia)
- arthritis
- weakness/paralysis/spasms or lack of co-ordination

Non-Specific

- temper tantrums (in small children)
- clinginess
- tiring easily
- residual headaches
- moodiness/aggression
- loss of memory, difficulty retaining information
- lack of concentration
- learning difficulties (probably in less than 5% of cases)
- behavioural problems (sometimes short term)
- changes of character (in extreme cases)

Not only do most people survive meningitis and septicaemia, but many people, possibly as many as eight out of ten, make a complete recovery. The reason, however, that it is difficult to give a precise figure, is that some of the after-effects of meningitis are non-specific, and it can therefore be difficult to be 100% certain whether they have been caused by the disease. This can be very distressing to the person concerned, all the more so because it can make it more difficult to get the support you need.

PROJECT NEWS

Training in the Latin American Region

Graciela Ferioli

Programa Hilton-Perkins, Córdoba, Argentina

For many years institutions in several Latin American countries worked without appropriate support with people with visual impairment and additional disabilities.

Despite their efforts, the lack of suitable institutional and professional contacts resulted in services that needed improvement.

In the 1980s these institutions began to make specific demands on international non-governmental organisations working in the region, in particular the Fondo de Cooperación Iberoamericano ULAC/ONCE. This resulted in the need for a survey to be undertaken into how people with visual impairment and additional disabilities were served throughout the region. This survey was coordinated by ULAC and ONCE and was supported later by a grant from the Hilton/Perkins Program.

Survey results:

- Showed that there were 163 institutions serving people with visual impairment and additional disabilities. In these institutions, 2,200 people were pupils or participants in educational or rehabilitation services, of which 4 per cent were deafblind children.
 - Observed that 65 per cent of the institutions started to work with the multi-disabled population from 1970 and that 75 per cent started to work with deafblindness in 1981. So if we take into account the length of time these services have been developing, it is possible to justify the request expressed by the institutions.
 - Determined that only 5 per cent of the teachers who work with children with additional disabilities had specific degree qualifications in Visual Impairment.
 - Observed that many of these services started through a strong request from the parents or caregivers rather than governments or institutions.
- We concluded that there were many areas which needed support in these institutions, but one of the most important tasks was the training of the teachers, because they could influence the people who make decisions and improve the quality of services that were offered.

Network

In 1989 when the Hilton/Perkins Program started in the Latin American Region we saw:

- a) professionals working in isolation without collaboration with other professionals or families. The philosophical concept of individualism was eroded by powerful authoritarian systems that affected most of our Latin American
- b) political decisions which did not prioritise the education system in general and even less the education of persons with multiple disabilities and those with deafblindness. The situation which resulted, was that

there were many committed professionals, but without enough training to work on a daily basis with this population, and their families. Consequently, change was desirable, and encouraged, but there was a lack of confidence and security to move forward. Also, this could have been related to the authority systems, already mentioned, where the individual's decision making was very limited in these countries.

- c) the political and economical situation had not permitted people to have dreams or to plan for the future, and over the years this created frustration for professionals and parents.

From the beginning, Hilton/Perkins believed in a collaborative approach with local organisations, which shared the goals of our programs. They are:

1. To offer support to those institutions/organisations which are conscious of the need for collaboration, and who ask for our support, and are ready to make a commitment to develop.
2. To respect the culture of each place and cooperate to instil individual values in each program valuing local autonomy and without looking for general solutions for all the programs.
3. To implement different actions that contribute to a plan coordinated by different institutions/organisations in order to meet needs together.
4. To develop programs which meet the conditions to become independent of outside support to

guarantee the continuation of the services that have been started.

During the past nine years, the Hilton/Perkins Program has been working with private and public institutions. From the obstacles that we faced and the strategies that we implemented we can give the examples highlighted below.

On the other hand, we could see that some strategies, such as the following, facilitated our work:

- ▶ Focusing our tasks only on those organisations that asked for support and worked together to meet needs.
- ▶ Sometimes orientating organisations to detect their needs and to prioritise those needs.
- ▶ Avoiding over-generalisation.
- ▶ Looking at each program as unique, with its own resources and needs because two identical programs do not exist.
- ▶ Collaborating in the development of action plans in order to meet needs and guarantee the development of the activities.
- ▶ Inviting everyone who took part in the development of the project to

work together. This involved each person knowing their role and responsibilities, and for them to realise the importance of common goals.

- ▶ Offering alternative models on how to write proposals and how to find community resources, using local, national, regional and international resources.
- ▶ Contacting other international organisations to collaborate in one particular program.
- ▶ Strengthening the relationships between the different regional programs to encourage them to be self-sufficient.

The continuation of this program would permit us to spread the work from Central America to the more austral point of South America, implementing strategies and new programs that have previously worked. Consequently, the professionals, deafblind people and their families will be able to have more services available to them and the opportunity to take up the specialist education deafblind people need.

Institution	Difficulties	Solutions
1. Public	A Long periods elapsed after the start of the project, and subsequent continuation, due to bureaucratic reasons.	A To start projects through groups of parents or friends of the school.
	B Lack of recognition from the authorities about the importance of the programs for multi disabled persons.	B To encourage authorities who decide on educational policies, to have a sense of ownership and to feel part of the project.
	C Low salaries for the project directors, so they have to have another job.	C To pay a suitable salary, for example, that of a project supervisor.
	D Curtailment of the development of the project.	D To establish who is responsible, and for what, in all aspects of the project.
	E Difficulties in organising the project and then the program.	E To offer a model demonstrating different alternatives.
	F Difficulties in offering a methodology.	F To develop models to show how to include pedagogical aspects within a clinical/therapeutic system.
2. Private	A Lack of resources to keep the institution functioning.	A To establish contact with other organisations and encourage fees to be charged.
	B Difficulties in writing the project and then in organising the program.	B To offer successful models with different alternatives.

Cooperation Between Norway and Lithuania on Deafblindness

A Preliminary Report and some Suggestions for Further Work

Per Lorentzen, Project Coordinator

Background Information

The overall aim of this project is to increase knowledge and awareness in Lithuania about children, young people and adults who are congenitally deafblind. The project assists in their diagnosis, educational needs and need for support from their local communities and society as a whole. A primary aim of the project is to identify people with this severe condition, and to extend knowledge to their parents, teachers or other people who are in close contact with them about how to communicate and be involved in joint activities which are beneficial to the deafblind person. The project is also aimed at people who have a combination of visual and auditory problems, albeit not of such severity as to warrant a diagnosis of deafblindness.

The project was initiated in 1995 and since then seven visits to Lithuania have been carried out. The last was in June 1997. Our main partner in Lithuania is the Centre for the Visually Impaired and Blind, especially the department for special-pedagogics headed by Mrs Stase Brickute. In addition, we have been working

closely with a teacher, Mrs Dalia Taurience, who also serves as an interpreter for all our activities, and psychologist, Mrs Jurate Nalivaikienė. Several teachers at the Centre for the Blind have also participated closely in our activities. The project was initially planned for three years, but we have received indications from the Nordic Staff-Training Centre that the timescale will be extended.

An overview of our joint activities

Since our primary aim is to locate and identify deafblind children and adults, we began our work together with colleagues at the aforementioned Centre for the Blind in Vilnius. We have visited institutions, kindergartens with special groups for the severely handicapped, special schools and family centres in several cities, towns and villages. Altogether, we have seen between 50 and 60 children and teenagers, their parents, teachers, assistants and other associated people. In these meetings we have tried to make a preliminary diagnosis of deafblindness or visual/auditory impairment, and have supervised and suggested ways for teachers to continue working with the child as well as advising the parents. In general,

we have found that the attitudes towards severely handicapped children in Lithuania is very similar to those in Norway, and this has, in our opinion, made the dialogue and exchange of ideas very easy to accomplish. Also, it has been important and useful to talk to so many parents from all over the country.

Of these 50-60 children, many are multiply handicapped and we would estimate about 15-18 to have a combination of visual and auditory problems and deafblindness. These are the children whom we consider to be a part of our project.

We have been able to talk to many teachers and special-teachers in several kindergartens, schools and institutions. Since the project began, we have taken videos and films of children interacting with parents and teachers. The films have been used in informal supervision meetings at the institutions and copies have been provided. We have always emphasised the importance of having discussions with the local staff on what we have been doing together with the children. All these videos are now kept at the Centre for the Blind in Vilnius and constitute an important collection of data for future studies.

During our visits we have held two seminars to date, and courses for teachers, special-teachers, psychologists and others.

The project so far

In our opinion, the project so far has been able to realise some of its aims which is to identify and locate children with deafblindness or visual/auditory problems. We think and hope that there has been an increasing awareness of the existence of such children and of their very special needs. Since, we have also seen other severely handicapped children without deafblindness, we are inclined to think that these children have also benefited from the project. During our visits we have been able to see many of the same children several times and it is through this consistent approach that they have shown a lot of progress. We feel extremely fortunate to have been able to meet the parents and teachers on more than one occasion, and to have shared experiences and impressions.

There are, of course, many regions of the country we haven't yet seen, especially those on the coastal area and Kleipeda. We estimate that there should be approximately 80-100 congenitally deafblind people in Lithuania (with a population comparable to Norway's). So far, we have found no congenitally deafblind adults, which constitute the majority of cases in Norway. A lot of work remains to be done in this area.

Since we have been able to identify a number of deafblind and visually/auditory impaired children and have started training and supervising their teachers, some new aspects and problems of the project have been highlighted. These will have an impact on the future organisation of deafblind work in Lithuania.

Deafblind service in Norway

In Norway, education of deafblind people started in the early 1960s at a place called Andebu, south of Oslo. In the mid-1970s, the Ministry for Social Affairs decided to establish how many people in Norway were deafblind, both congenitally and adventitiously. The Ministry established the State National Team for the Deafblind, which consisted of three people with a mandate to identify, register and diagnose such people. This national screening started in 1977 and was completed two years later in 1979.

About 250 people were identified out of both of the groups, and they were registered by the Team in the 'Main-Register of Deafblind Persons'. The National Team for the Deafblind still exists and now has the responsibility of keeping this register to help deafblind people to obtain the services they need and are entitled to. Through the deafblind team's work, the Ministry was able to provide educational services for this group and in 1980 the Skådalen Centre was given the task of organising this education.

Currently, there are four centres in different parts of Norway (which is a geographically-specific country) involved in deafblind work, especially to educate the deafblind themselves, train teachers and parents. Skådalen Centre has the overall national responsibility for this work.

Some suggestions for further work on deafblindness in Lithuania

It is with this experience in mind that the following suggestions are made about how to proceed with the organisation of deafblind work in Lithuania. Our experience with the project so far has been described as being very positive, but it is also becoming more evident that there is a lack of independent structure, with regard to work on deafblindness in Lithuania, so that little work can be carried out between our visits. The people we are cooperating with are either occupied with other work, especially for the blind, or they are fully engaged as teachers or in other professions. Their work in relation to deafblindness is performed on a voluntary basis. Thus, we feel there is a need for a system which is solely for deafblind work. Lithuania is facing many challenges and a difficult financial situation, nevertheless the following suggestions present an 'ideal' solution:

- Establishment of a National Team for the Deafblind and visually/auditory impaired in Lithuania. This team should have the mandate of the Ministry to identify, diagnose and register deafblind people. This should be their only occupation and they should therefore be

released from other tasks.

- Try to establish cooperation with medical experts on visual and auditory problems in order to be able to make a proper diagnosis of deafblindness.
- Cooperate with the School for the Deaf in Vilnius and other special schools.
- Travel within Lithuania, visiting institutions, kindergartens, special-schools and so on, in trying to identify and find deafblind people of all ages involving parents and/or teachers in the assessment of their needs.
- Arrange training seminars and courses for parents and teachers.
- Help identify the deafblind populations' educational and social needs.
- Give regular supervision and help to local teachers.

It is our belief that such a National Team for the Deafblind (also taking care of the visually/auditory impaired) could play the same positive role as in Norway, and we hope that the Ministry of Science and Education will contemplate these proposals. Norway would continue to develop this partnership role with Lithuania.

P.S. Per Lorentzen and his team would like to express their sincere gratitude for the hospitality and friendliness they have always received in Lithuania and they do look forward to future work together.

This project is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers and is administered by the N.U.D. The Skådalen Resource Centre is responsible for the project in Norway.

Australian DeafBlind Council

1998 National Australian Deafblindness Conference:

Deafblindness Facing the Future

The fourth National Australian Deafblindness Conference for people with Deafblindness, their parents, families, professionals and other interested parties, is being organised by the **Australian DeafBlind Council**.

The conference, titled *Deafblindness Facing the Future*, will be held on **Friday and Saturday 1 and 2 May 1998** at the **Ibis Hotel** in **Melbourne**.

The conference will include a general session together with workshops on a variety of topics associated with the field. Saturday will be a social day (optional) when delegates will be able to enjoy an outing and socialise together.

A training day conducted by leading professionals will be held on the Thursday before the conference.

Fees:

Thursday \$125. Early bird \$99.

Friday: \$150, \$100 self-funded.

Early bird: \$120, \$70 self-funded.

Saturday: to be advised.

Full details, including speakers, will be provided in a brochure to be issued early in 1998.

If you are interested in receiving further information, please contact the conference organiser, Annie Rose. Please **PRINT** your details.

Up-to-date information will also be available on the ADBC Web site:

<http://internex.net.au/~dba/confer.htm>

PO Box 9 HAWKSBURN VIC 3142

Tel (03) 9827 6733 Fax (03) 9827 8960

Canadian Deafblind & Rubella Association (CDBRA)

6th Canadian Conference

Let's Celebrate Our Harmony Together

The 6th Canadian Conference will be held in **Mississauga (Toronto), Ontario** from **12 until 15 August 1998**. This conference will once again be sponsored by the Ontario Chapter of the Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association.

The theme of the Conference will be **harmony** with a focus on music. It will seek to celebrate the very successful co-operation among parents, professional and advocacy groups that has typified services for people who are congenitally deafblind in Canada.

As with the last Canadian conference held in Vancouver in 1996, the organisers are planning to accommodate a similar level of attendance which attracted almost 400 participants in 1996.

The deadline for papers is 30 November 1997 and the initial call for this has been circulated. General information packages will be widely distributed early in 1998.

For additional information, please contact:

**Conference co-ordinator, c/o CDBRA, 350
Brand Avenue, Brantford, Ontario,
Canada N3T 3J9.**

Finnish Centre for Health Promotion First Announcement for ...

Health Promotion in all languages

In cooperation with the Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired, the Finnish Association on Mental Retardation, the Finnish Association of the Deaf and the Finnish Deafblind Association, the Finnish Centre for Health Promotion is organising this Seminar which will take place in:

Helsinki, Finland on 18-19 September 1998.

The Seminar will discuss the production of Health Material for blind, deaf, mentally handicapped and deafblind persons in Europe and is part of the European Union's project entitled *'Strengthening health related information and communication for blind, deaf and mentally handicapped in Europe'*. The purpose of the Seminar will be to map out what health material of this type has been produced in the EU member countries. The main themes are:

- **Challenges of health promotion for special groups, and meeting those challenges**
- **Health material situation in the EU countries**
- **Networking**
- **Making use of technology.**

The Seminar will be held at the Light House, the headquarters of the Finnish Association of the Deaf, in Helsinki and the official language will be English.

For further information, please contact:

Finnish Centre for Health Promotion
Karjalankatu 2 C 63
00520 Helsinki, Finland
Home pages: <http://www.health.fi/>

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VI World Congress on Isolation - Isolation & Handicap

Searching for new strategies of intervention & communication

The VI Congress on Isolation & Handicap will be held in:

Rome, Italy on 16-18 October 1998

The Congress will be held at the Congress Center of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Department of Medicine and Surgery "Agostino Gemelli".

The Congress will focus on a high-level of debate on all

- **medical**
- **social**
- **pedagogic**
- **rehabilitation**

and related topics regarding Isolation and Handicap.

The Organising Committee have already received many abstracts of communication and a thorough examination and research of the main aspects of handicap is currently being undertaken.

For further information, please contact:

PROGRESS Promozione Congressi
Via Giacomo Treviss, 88
00147 Roma, ITALY

Mrs Carolina Martino
Tel: (06) 516 00 647/648
Fax: (06) 516 00 131

NUD - Nordisk Uddannelsescenter for Døvblindepersonale

For further information on any of the following courses please contact: NUD, Sløtsgade 8, DK-9330 Dronninglund, Danmark; telephone +45 98 84 34 99, fax +45 98 34 88, or email: nud@inet.uni-c.dk

Conference: Elderly deafblind person (adventitiously deafblind)

24 - 28 January 1998

To exchange and discuss results from demographic research with reference to the special needs which this group of people with age determined deafblindness have.

Conference: The developmental profile of congenitally deafblind people

7 - 12 February

To focus on references for the suggested model for identification of, and intervention regarding congenitally deafblind people.

Basic course: Congenitally deafblind people, part B

22 February - 13 March

The basic course, part B, completes part A accomplished at NUD in 1997 or an equivalent national basic education

Workshop: Computer based communication with adventitiously deafblind people

21 - 28 March

Which communication possibilities and access to information do adventitiously deafblind people have with help from computer based aids.

Workshop: The consultant's functions working with adventitiously deafblind people

18 - 24 April

To give consultants an opportunity to discuss different aspects of their work.

Video-analysis

Study week 9 - 15 May

Priority has been given to video-analysis and the following three groups are invited, staff working with:

- Congenitally deafblind adults
- Adults with congenital rubella syndrome
- Adventitiously deafblind adults

Workshop: Interaction of the senses in communicative interaction

25 August - 5 September

To put focus on functional diagnostics of the senses of congenitally deafblind children and adults. All the relevant groups of professionals are invited and the aim is to reach an interdisciplinary diagnostic practice in the field of congenital deafblindness.

Basic course: Adventitiously deafblind adults, part A

20 September - 9 October

To provide basic information about medical, pedagogic, psychological and social aspects in the work with adventitiously deafblind people.

Workshop: The development from pre- linguistic to linguistic communication

24 - 31 October

To educate the participants so they can enhance linguistic development in congenitally deafblind people who have the prerequisites for it.

Basic course: Congenitally deafblind, part A

15 November - 4 December

To provide participants with knowledge and skills about important principles in planning for optimal development, learning and living conditions for each individual deafblind person.

NOTICE BOARD

Research Project

I am trying to make contact with parents of children born with agenesis of the corpus callosum. I am particularly interested in the incidence of agenesis with scoliosis.

My hope would then be to perhaps minimise the effect of scoliosis by early detection and treatment on future children.

Please contact Joan Spriggs at Sense West, The Princess Royal Centre, 4 Church Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3TD, or telephone +44 121 687 7564 or fax +44 121 687 1656 if you have any information.

Establishing a deafblind registry?

The Canadian Deafblind & Rubella Association will welcome advice or support on this topic.

Please contact Stan Munroe
c/o CDBRA, 350 Brand
Avenue, Brantford,
Ontario, Canada N3T 3J9.

Courses, conferences and training

If you are arranging or know of any courses, conferences and/or training programmes which you consider would be of interest to readers of Deafblind Education, then please forward details, including date, topic and venue, to the Editor, Deafblind Education, 11-13 Clifton Terrace, London N4 3SR or fax +44 171 272 6012 or email ebcoothroyd@sense.org.uk or jgalley@sense.org.uk

Forthcoming editions

Deafblind Education welcomes any contributions or ideas you may have which will help the magazine develop.

The theme of the next edition will be on Deafblindness and the Arts. If readers would like to contribute on this subject or contribute towards any of our regular features then please write to The Editor, Deafblind Education, 11-13 Clifton Terrace, London N4 3SR or fax +44 171 272 6012 or email ebcoothroyd@sense.org.uk

Holiday '98

Following the success of the 1997 holiday to Prague and the Czech Republic, C.A.T. de la Chaume have decided to organise a 1998 holiday for deafblind people to the delightful coastal resort of La Rochelle in France from 19th to 26th September 1998.

For further information and application form please contact: C.A.T. de la Chaume, Jean-Francois Guerineau, Florence Chevallier, 131 Avenue des Hauts de la Chaume, 86280 Saint-Benoit
Tel: (05) 49 43 65 34
Fax: (05) 49 37 99 41

Higher Education Network

University staff have been considering how they can start a Network. Staff in six different countries have already registered their interest in sharing ideas and issues in research and teaching in the field of deafblindness in Higher Education. Marian McClarty would be delighted to hear from you and send more information:

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DEAFBLIND EDUCATION

THE JOURNAL OF DBI - THE WORLD ASSOCIATION PROMOTING SERVICES FOR DEAFBLIND PEOPLE

EDUCACION DE PERSONAS SORDOCIEGAS

REVISTA DE DBI - ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL QUE PROMUEVE LOS SERVICIOS PARA PERSONAS SORDOCIEGAS

What's in a Name?

Choose a new one for this magazine!

Dbi Constitution

Through Constitutional change the objectives of Dbi go beyond the remit of education. The focus of Dbi's interest has expanded to include many issues relating to and affecting all deafblind people; whether with congenitally or acquired deafblindness and including children, adults and elderly people. As well as continuing to promote and improve education, Dbi are also interested in pursuing issues such as civil rights, equalisation of opportunities and the encouragement of support and services for deafblind people.

As part of this constitutional change, the importance of developing and nurturing networks has been recognised by Dbi and is discussed in more detail in this issue. The development of technology has resulted in the development of global networking whether in the metaphorical electronic sense or in the people sense. The world wide web on the Internet is essentially a global network of networks with a focus on sharing information. In terms of Dbi, Deafblind Education represents an aspect of the networking culture allowing deafblind people, families, professionals, organisations in the field and the wider community to share knowledge on issues relating to deafblindness.

Deafblind Education

The word "name" is defined as being a word by which a thing is spoken of or to in terms of "reputation, fame and identification". The name by which someone or something is known by is therefore very important.

As Dbi and Deafblind Education evolve beyond educational issues, there is the opportunity for a change of name to allow the magazine to be identified with all the issues it deals with. In this issue of Deafblind Education the focus has been on employment and the next issue will focus on deafblindness and the arts. To help us decide on a new name for Deafblind Education which best identifies it, please enter the following competition.

There will be a prize!!



I think **Deafblind Education** should be called _____

Name _____

Address _____

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Please fax back on
+44 171 272
6012

or email your
details to
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or send to:

**The Editor,
Deafblind
Education, c/o
Sense, 11-13
Clifton Terrace,
London N4 3SR**



Deafblind International, formerly known as the International Association for the Education of Deafblind People, was founded over 30 years ago to promote the education of deafblind children and young adults throughout the world.

The Association originally brought together professionals working with congenitally deafblind people. In recent years it has begun work with adventitiously deafblind people. Professionals, researchers, families, deafblind people and administrators are now involved.



DbI

DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL

**The World
Association
Promoting
Services for
Deafblind People**

**JOIN
NOW!**

Membership

There are two categories of membership: *corporate* and *individual*.

For details of *Corporate membership* please contact the DbI Secretariat, 11-13 Clifton Terrace, London N4 3SR.

Individual membership is open to anyone and is without charge. An annual donation of £10/US\$20 is requested. Each country can have a representative on the Executive Committee for every 10 individual members. There is a maximum of three representatives.

I wish to receive *Deafblind Education* in ☐ English/ ☐ Spanish

☐ I wish to become an *individual member* of DbI. I enclose US\$30

☐ Please debit my Access/Visa/American Express card

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Please return this to DbI, c/o Sense, 11-13 Clifton Terrace, Finsbury Park, London N4 3SR, United Kingdom.

[Please note that as Sense is Treasurer of DbI, credit card payments are made to Sense who then credits DbI]

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