

The World Health Organization (WHO) disability and rehabilitation newsletter is produced three times a year and distributed via e-mail. Subscription/unsubscription requests should be sent to WHO's Disability and Rehabilitation Team (DAR) at the following e-mail address: pedersenr@who.int

IN THIS ISSUE

Features

- WHO Task Force on Disability
- WRDR Regional Consultations
- RI World Congress
- Wheelchair Guidelines
- CBR Congress
- New faces at DAR

Editorial

This month sees the halfway stage of development of the World Report, a moment to celebrate and take stock of how far we have come and how much more there is to do before we launch the document in eighteen months time. Another milestone has been the first meeting of the WHO Task Force on Disability, part of the Organizations' response to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These are exciting times for WHO's work in disability and rehabilitation, and we have an expanded and enthusiastic team of staff working to deliver change. We are particularly grateful to all our collaborators and funders who have worked with us to help us achieve our ambitions to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Alana Officer,
Coordinator
Disability and Rehabilitation

Task Force on Disability

WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, has set up a Task Force on Disability, chaired by Assistant Director-General Dr Ala Alwan, with representation from each regional office and from each cluster within HQ. This exciting initiative comes in the wake of the

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and will work to raise the profile of disability at WHO. Key tasks will include: conducting audits of WHO premises and making access improvements; reviewing websites and printed information to improve their accessibility; promoting employment opportunities for people with disabilities; and providing disability equality training for staff.

The Task Force will also work with the Technical Programmes of WHO to assist them to make their programs inclusive of and accessible to people with disabilities. For example, what about the needs of people with disabilities in disaster and emergencies? What about the needs of women with disabilities during pregnancy and childbirth?

Task Force focus: Information

So, what is WHO doing to ensure better access to all the information it produces? Ian Coltart of WHO Press, responsible for publishing guidelines and standards across WHO, writes...

"With a global audience and a mission to disseminate WHO's information as widely as possible, WHO needs to ensure that its published information is accessible in appropriate formats for different audiences, including partially sighted and blind people, as well as people with learning difficulties.

WHO Press has developed and published a large print version of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The book is produced in A4 size with a clear page layout designed for partially sighted people. The book is available from the WHO online bookshop, at: <http://bookorders.who.int/bookorders/anglais/detart1.jsp?sesslan=1&codlan=1&codcol=15&codcch=4088>. WHO Press also plans to develop a Braille version of ICF for the blind.

WHO Press is working with WHO's Disability and Rehabilitation Team (DAR) to develop publishing guidelines for WHO staff on producing specific formats such as large print and Braille, but also to improve the general design and layout of WHO's mainstream printed products to accommodate partially sighted audiences.

World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation Regional Consultations

In May and June 2008, regional consultations on the preliminary draft of the World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation were held in San José, Costa Rica for the Americas Region; Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania for the African and Eastern Mediterranean Regions; Rome, Italy for the European Region; and Manila, the Philippines for the South-east Asian and Western Pacific Regions. Each consultation brought together a diverse group of experts with complementary knowledge and experience, including people with disabilities. Participants included editors of the Report, chapter authors, academics, service providers, policymakers, government officials, NGO representatives, and disability advocates.

Claudia Sánchez, a Columbian architect and participant in the consultation in San José, felt that the process was vital because "it brings into the report experiences from around the world that come from the real people", i.e. those who have direct knowledge of the issues. While it was most helpful to gather constructive criticisms of the preliminary draft, it was also encouraging to witness how many participants were excited by the potential of the Report to advance work in disability and rehabilitation. As Kudakwashe Dube, CEO of the Secretariat of the Africa Decade of Persons with Disabilities remarked at the Dar-Es-Salaam event, "the report challenges countries to take serious steps to mainstream disability and capacitate all actors in order to achieve an improvement in the quality of life of persons with disabilities".

The participants' feedback, cultural perspectives on the draft and the sources of regional information they identified, will help ensure that the final document is relevant in diverse global contexts. They also proposed recommendations for action and generated ideas for regional dissemination of the Report and related events. The comments and suggestions from the four consultations will be collated and reviewed by the Editorial Committee. Lead authors will then use the input to help guide development of the next draft.



Participants at the Regional Consultation for Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Wheelchair Guidelines

The wheelchair is one of the most commonly used assistive devices for enhancing personal mobility. For many people, an appropriate, well-designed and well-fitted wheelchair can be the first step towards inclusion and participation in society.

The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and World Health Assembly Resolution WHA58.23 all point to the importance of wheelchairs and other assistive devices for the developing world, where few of those who need wheelchairs have them, insufficient production facilities exist, and all too often wheelchairs are donated without the necessary related services.

When the need is not met, people with disabilities are isolated and do not have access to the same opportunities as others within their own communities. Providing wheelchairs with related services not only enhances mobility but begins a process of opening up a world of education, work and social life. The development of national policies and increased training opportunities in the design, production and supply of wheelchairs are essential next steps.

In the light of the realities of the developing world and the immediate need to develop functioning systems of wheelchair provision in less-resourced parts of the world, the World Health Organization (WHO), the US

Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) and Disabled Peoples' International (DPI), in partnership with the Centre for International Rehabilitation, the Motivation Charitable Trust and Whirlwind Wheelchair International, have developed the *Guidelines on the provision of manual wheelchairs in less-resourced settings*. These will assist WHO Member States to develop a local wheelchair provision system and thereby implement Articles 4, 20 and 26 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Update from the WHO Ghana Country Office

As part of measures to strengthen the capacity of the Rehabilitation Services in Ghana, a joint WHO and International Society of Prosthesis and Orthotics (ISPO) mission was carried out. Details of the mission were provided in the fourth Newsletter (<http://www.who.int/disabilities/publications/newsletter/en/index.html>). In response to the mission's recommendations, the Ghana Health Service, the Ministry of Health and the WHO Ghana Country office selected two candidates for certificate level training in prosthetics and two candidates for certificate level training in orthotics. The training will be carried out in the WHO collaborating Centre: Tanzania Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologies (TATCOT), Moshi, Tanzania. The certificate courses, each of one year duration, comprise theoretical, laboratory and clinical practice to prescribe and deliver the appropriate lower limb prosthesis or orthotic in consultation with the intended user. This is an important step towards developing prosthetics and orthotics service provision in Ghana. The training has been made possible through support from ISPO and full scholarships from the Leahy War Victim Fund of USAID.

RI World Congress

Rehabilitation International (RI), a partner of WHO, is a global organization bringing together expertise from all sectors in the disability field advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. RI is organizing its 21st World Congress in Quebec City from 25 -28 August 2008, attended by more than 1000 participants, including people

with disabilities and their organizations, human rights activists, experts, rehabilitation professionals, government representatives, service providers and leaders of civil society. The vision statement of the Congress is "Disability Rights and Social Participation: Ensuring a Society for all" and the key areas of discussion are: Human Rights, Independent Living and Social Participation and Implementation of the UN Convention.

WHO will be launching the new Wheelchair Guidelines during the plenary session of the first day of the Congress. Additionally, WHO is hosting three sessions during the event and will be supporting the ICF conference, a dedicated two-day track, within the RI conference:

1. CBR Guidelines -- 25 August (Block 63 - 2:10 pm) with Barbara Murray (ILO), Karen H. Motsch (CBM), Venus Ilagan (RI), Tomas Lagerwall (RI), Alana Officer (WHO) and Chapal Khasnabis (WHO).

2. World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation -- 25 August (Bloc 62 - 4:20 pm) with Anne Hawker (RI); Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo (World Bank); Sebenzile Matsebula (RI); Kicki Nordstrom (WBU) and Alana Officer (WHO).

3. Wheelchair Guidelines -- 27 August (Bloc 72 - 10:30 am) with David Constantine (Motivation); Dan Blocka (ISPO); Rob Horvath (USAID); Anna Lindstrom (Swedish Institute of Assistive Technology - SIAT); Venus Ilagan (RI) and Chapal Khasnabis (WHO).

4. International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) - August 26 and 27.

The 14th annual North American Collaborating Center (NACC) Conference on the ICF will be hosted by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), Statistics Canada and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) in collaboration with Rehabilitation International. The theme is *Evaluating Social Participation: Applications of the ICF and ICF-CY*.

Conference website: www.riquebec2008.org/

1st CBR Asia-Pacific Congress

This event, taking place on 9-11 December 2008 at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Bangkok, Thailand, will be the first meeting of CBR practitioners from countries in Asia and the Pacific. The Asia-Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, promoted by ESCAP, has given an impetus for Governments and NGOs to create an inclusive, barrier free and rights-based society. A regional policy guideline, the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) for Action and its supplement, the BMF +5, promoted a paradigm shift from charity to a rights-based approach to disability. Meanwhile, the CRPD heralds a new era of state recognition of the human rights of people with disabilities.

The Congress will bring together key stakeholders to share resources and to be updated on CBR as an effective multi-sectoral strategy for rehabilitation, equalization of opportunity, poverty reduction and social inclusion of people with disabilities. It will promote research and evidence based practice related to CBR, and facilitate the development of an alliance and resource base for the Asia-Pacific region – comprising UN, Governments, NGOs, DPOs and others.

Satellite workshops pre- and post-conference will be held on CBR and mental health; CBR, human rights and the CPRD; CBR and Leprosy for up to 45 participants each.

The Congress is jointly organized by WHO, UNESCAP and the Government of Thailand and supported by ILO, UNESCO, JICA, CBM, HI, AIFO, NAD, ILEP and others.

Conference Website: www.cbr-asiapacific.org/

E-mail: secretariat@cbr-asiapacific.org

New faces at DAR

Three short term staff have brought their wit and wisdom to bear on WHO's projects on disability and rehabilitation. Bliss Temple is a trainee physician from North Carolina, USA, and she has been supporting the development of the World Report. Tom Shakespeare is a disability studies academic from Newcastle, UK, and has been working for the Task Force on Disability. Veronica Umeasiegbu is a physical therapist from Nigeria, currently studying Rehabilitation Counselling at the University of Pittsburgh, USA and has been working on CBR. As well as their solid academic and professional credentials, as people with disabilities they bring personal experience of the issues.



Bliss



Veronica



Tom

More information

For further information please contact: Disability and Rehabilitation Team
Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability, WHO
20 Avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland
E-mail: pedersenr@who.int
or visit our web site: <http://www.who.int/disabilities>

© World Health Organization 2008

All rights reserved. All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use.